

People Taking Action

Water Harvesting

Rajendra Singh, "rain catcher"



PHOTO: UPADHAYE

Villages in the drought-afflicted state of Rajasthan in India were dying. Wells were dry and crops failed repeatedly. Able-bodied villagers migrated to urban centers to look for work.

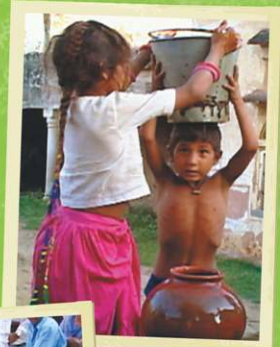
Rajendra Singh, an NGO worker, came to Rajasthan wanting to help. One day an elderly villager told him, "We don't necessarily want what you want to give us. What we need is water. Stop your talk and build *johads!*"

“**Stop your talk and build johads!**”

Johads are **small earthen dams**, part of a traditional store of wisdom on resource conservation that had been all but lost. These dams capture rainwater runoff, allowing it to percolate into the ground and replenish the water table.

Rajendra toiled with a shovel for six months to build a johad near the village. After the monsoon rains, wells that had been dry for years now had water in them. Word spread quickly and soon people in nearby villages were organizing themselves to choose sites for new johads.

The once barren landscape is **green with vegetation**, even during droughts. School attendance has increased dramatically and many young migrants have begun returning to their villages.



Protect and restore the integrity of Earth's ecological systems, with special concern for biological diversity and the natural processes that sustain life.
Earth Charter Principle 5

A johad keeps rainwater in the village and replenishes aquifers

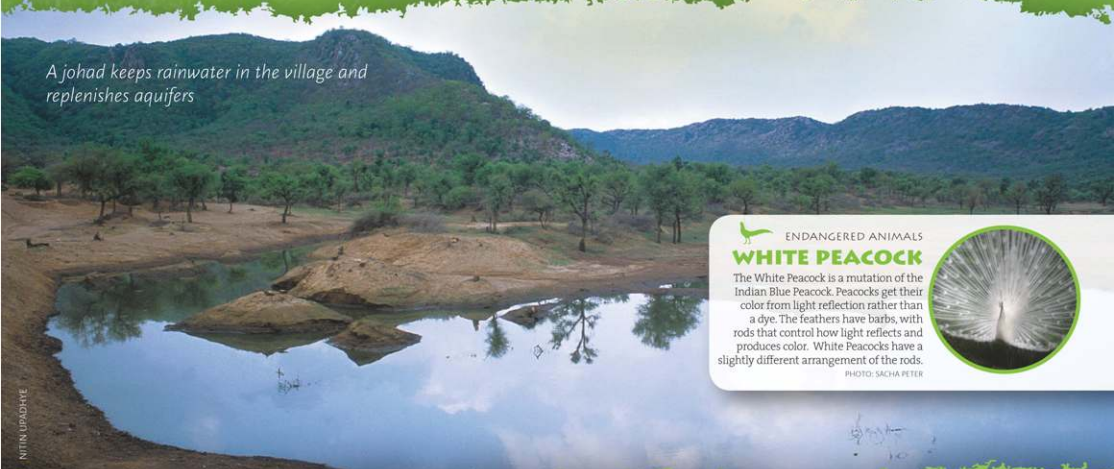


PHOTO: UPADHAYE

ENDANGERED ANIMALS WHITE PEACOCK

The White Peacock is a mutation of the Indian Blue Peacock. Peacocks get their color from light reflection rather than a dye. The feathers have barbs, with rods that control how light reflects and produces color. White Peacocks have a slightly different arrangement of the rods.



PHOTO: SACHA PETER

EMPOWER