

# Amdavadis do their bit to save water



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“To start on the journey of water, we embark on two Sunday mornings recce,” says Renu Desai, the one who initiated water walks and a part-time research fellow at CEPT University. The first walk takes people to the northern end of the city’s Sabarmati River, some 10 kilometers north of where the river ends, just beyond the city municipal limits, near the Narmada canal. The second walk takes people to the southern end, starting from the Vasna Barrage. “Along the way, we look up at water gushing out of the Narmada canal through the Karai dam into the Sabarmati, standing at the western end of the Vasna Barrage and gaze at it stretching over the width of the river with its huge gates,” says Dipani, an ecologist.

Chatting with numerous people is also a part of the walk: a contractor in charge of laying a new water mains, a Sardar Sarovar Nigam official, an engineer from the Water Resource Department, fishermen, and farmers. “We learn a lot, had some questions answered, and came back with more questions. We also tried to trace key ‘water’ landmarks of the city on Google Earth before,” says Gyani Parikh, guide of water walk.

## CAMPUS WITH A DIFFERENCE

We have heard of IIT Gandhinagar (IIT-Gn) winning accolades for their campus buildings. “We have bagged the top prize by Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO) for being earthquake resistant and having rainwater harvesting system in the campus,” says Sudhir Jain, director, IIT-Gn. They aspire to develop the 400-acre campus in the most sustainable manner. The master plan envisages a compact, walkable and low energy use campus. “Apart from rainwater harvesting, we also have a system of reusing the grey water in flushing and a root zone treatment for sewage that would help us conserve and reuse water,” says Jhonvi Fernandes, a student at IIT-Gn. Much to be inspired from?

While AMC does help in bringing awareness to the various households of the city, it is important to bring equal amount of awareness in the colleges. “Our city houses number of colleges. If you sit down to calculate the amount of water they waste, you will be shocked. Things need to change desperately at the basic level. The water that is used in college canteen (to wash vegetables, fruits, pulses) can be saved and used to water plants. Also, maintenance is an important thing. I have visited so

## ASHISH PARIKH

Right from using waste water in the kitchen garden to minimizing the time of taking shower, I conserve water as much as I can. We have beautiful lakes in the city that lack maintenance which invites water borne diseases. With proper planning, let’s reach to that level where there won’t be any need of RO in households. Also by saving more water, we would be able to control the overall temperature of the city.

many colleges that have taps leaking all the time,” says Kartikeya Sarabhai.

## MANAGING THE WASTEWATER

“Wastewater” being the theme of World Water Day 2017, we find out what happens to the wastewater of the city. This is about the waste that goes down the drains after we are done with using water for bathing, cooking, cleaning and what not. What happens to it? A lot of it ends up in AMC’s Pirana and Vasna sewage

treatment plants. But unfortunately, not all of it does.

“Relation between a sewage and river is disturbing. It is a story of how waste produced by some becomes the part of the water consumed by others. We have managed the northern part of the city well, but when it comes to the southern part; things are still disturbing” says Prashant Pandya, deputy director of solid waste management, AMC.

Talking about household water

## SHITAL SHAH

My workplace and house are eco-friendly. Everyone should build an environment that attracts more rain and in a way more water. I ensure that there is no leakage. We use sprinkler to water plants to minimize the wastage of water. Two things that the city needs to improve on is to check the availability of water at public toilets and clean drinking water.

management, Deepen Parikh, secretary of a housing society in Vastrapur says, “Apart from the water meter, it is mandatory for a housing society to have rainwater harvesting plan somewhere in the external site. There is no mandate to have the same for every household, but having a common tank that would collect rain water is encouraged.”

Only when we are aware of the grave situations and sensitive towards water conservation, we can save water.

