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Chennai colleges scout for alternative water sources as vacation ends

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CHENNAI: As colleges are going to reopen soon against the backdrop of water scarcity in the city, many colleges are coming up with alternative water resources, such as borewells, artificial ponds and other ways of conserving water in order to meet the needs of the students. Colleges are investing in these facilities as they feel the Metro Water supply may not be sufficient.

Anna University is sinking new borewells besides the existing ones. As there is no additional supply from Metro Water and the existing supply might not be sufficient, the university intends to increase the number of borewells. "We have started looking for locations for borewells. We have asked our experts to find out the locations and arrangements have been made," said T V Geetha, Dean of College of Engineering, Guindy.

L Elango, Head of Geology department, who is in-charge of locating borewells, said at present there are no students, so there is no issue for the time being. "College will reopen from July 3. More than 4,000 students will start their classes. The existing supply from Metro Water may not be sufficient," he said.

Within two weeks, around three to four borewells would be sunk for an estimated depth of 100 to 150 metres. "If there is no sufficient rainfall, then these borewells will be of help," he said, adding that the Anna University campus sits on charnockite rock because of which high yield from borewells is doubtful. Besides the borewell, the university is planning to build a pond at the northwest corner adjoining the Adyar river to improve the groundwater recharge and store additional water. "The alumni association is going to contribute towards the construction of this pond."

A similar initiative has been taken by Loyola College. S Vincent, Dean of Research, said that across the peripheral side of the campus, wherever there is empty space, a hole of 10 feet has been made where the ground water is stored. "Even 10 minutes' rain is enough to harvest water. We collect almost all rainwater. We have a big sump with a capacity of 12 lakh litres. All the rain water is collected in this sump," said Vincent, adding that another important practice is recycling water. "We have a separate facility for waste water recycling. We are also getting Metro Water. If need be, we can also use groundwater facility."

The vice-chairman of RMK Engineering College said that the college has been using borewell water. "We have a robust rainwater harvesting system. We have an artificial pond where we store rainwater. We have three to four borewells. Between one borewell and another, there is a gap of 300 metres. We are planning to dig more such wells," said the vice-chairman, adding that since the college was closed, currently there was no water issue. But after the college reopens, there might be some problem if there is no proper rainfall.

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