

# Johad

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A **johad** (Hindi: जेहड) is a rainwater storage tank principally used in the state of Rajasthan, India, that collects and store water throughout the year, to be used for the drinking purpose by humans and cattle. In many parts of the state the annual rainfall is very low (between 450 and 600 mm) and the water can be unpleasant to drink. Rain falling during July and August is stored in johads and used throughout the year. Johads are called as "khadins" in Jaisalmer. They are popularly known as *tankis* in most parts of the country. Johads were used extensively by the NGO, 'Tarun Bharat Sangh' by Rajendra Singh which led to revival of Alwar district of Rajasthan. Today there are over 4,500 working johads in Alwar and surrounding districts.



View of a johad in Thathawata village

These are simple mud and rubble barriers built across the contour of a slope to arrest rainwater. These earthen check dams are meant to catch and conserve rainwater, leading to improved percolation and groundwater recharge. They are built across a slope with a high embankment on the three sides while the fourth side is left open for the rainwater to enter. They are very common in the Thar desert of Rajasthan.

## Beginnings

There was a severe drought in Alwar district in Rajasthan during 1985-86. In 1985, volunteers from the Tarun Bharat Sangh (TBS), a voluntary organization led by Rajendra Singh, came to Alwar. The Alwar District had once thrived, but logging, mining, and other industrial activities resulted in land degradation that intensified flooding and droughts. The traditional water management system using Johads was abandoned. TBS revived the tradition of building Johads, an example of traditional technology that provided water for use and recharging ground water. Now Johads are popularly known as Tankas in most parts of the country.

## Present

The water revolution spread by Johads in the Alwar district has spread far and wide. Now there are around 5,000 johads all over Rajasthan and this has greatly facilitated in reducing water shortage and improving water quality.

## References

# Article Sources and Contributors

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