

**Doon Watch Nature Series for Dehradun Live Hindustan Times  
by Sanjay Sondhi**

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**Water-Every Drop Crops**

A cold winter morning with the sun struggling to break through the mist veil. Cobwebs adorned with water droplets. Lantana leaves with drops at leaf ends. Grass stalks with droplets hanging on for dear life-looking like seeds. The ciliate hairy stem of a plant strewn with a carpet of fine beads of water. A floret of purple flowers adorned with mite-sized dabs of water.

Yes, indeed, water is the lifeline of humans, yet, for most of our daily lives, we take this precious resource for granted. As Mother nature watched me meander through my morning walk, not really “seeing” the water around me, she found a way of knocking my door! Plop. Plop. Plop. Dew drops from the eucalyptus tree fell on the hood of my jacket, and I looked up. And the realisation dawned on me. Mother nature was knocking on my “closed” door. Watch the water around you-its your lifeline, she said. And I opened my eyes.

For the rest of my walk, I observed. Observed the carpet of mist hovering above the fields. My steamy breath fogging the binoculars as I struggled to watch a bird. Hazy photographs of fantail flycatchers as I struggled to take some meaningful pictures through the mist. A Kestrel using the mist for cover while hunting. The dew fighting a losing battle with the rising sun. Large leaves of teak, damp and soggy, knowing fully well that the emerging sun would dry them out in a while. Trails of mist, above the small village rivulet at Danda Lokhand behind Sahastradhara, clutching on to the foliage, wanting to drag out its presence for a few more minutes. Water vapour rising, a trifle sadly, from the muddy earth, and the lantana bushes, twirling its way into non-existence, as the sun's rays got stronger.

Water exists in various forms on earth-in streams, rivers and oceans, in the form of water vapour as mist and dew, as ground water, in the clouds and even in glaciers and ice packs on the earth's poles. 70% of the earth's surface is covered with water, yet only 1% of it is suitable for drinking! Many people believe that water shortage on the planet will be the cause of the next world war! While this may be alarmist, the need to conserve water, with a limited supply and burgeoning demand, is urgent and compelling.



Even as I mused over earth's grave water crisis, a large water droplet, hung on for dear life, at the edge of a broken branch. As I looked closely, I saw the reflection of the horizon, the sky, the clouds and the trees on this tiny water droplet. Even as this tiny drop plummeted to the soil, along with its reflection of the earth, it sent out a telling plea to me. I heard it say-I am water, only a water droplet, save me, save the planet. Every drop counts! Are we listening?

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Making a difference: There are endless ways of making a difference. Pick at least one action and practice it diligently-brush with a glass, use a bucket instead of a shower, stop all leaky taps, don't use a pipe to wash your vehicle, water your garden in the morning or evening to reduce evaporation, try rain water harvesting in your home.....make every drop count.