

In summer, maximum temperatures stay well over 40 degrees celsius for weeks.

Their heat resistant house and sustainable habits keep it tolerable for the Guptas in summer.

All of her 46 married years, matriarch Parboti Gupta has lived here. She is not one of every seven people globally needing ACs that use hydrofluorocarbon refrigerants which are potent greenhouse gases.

30 inch thick walls of mud and straw store heat and don't allow it to percolate indoors unlike cement.



Their house has stood the test of the elements – sharp winters, torrential rains and severe summers.

But not everyone in rural India can live in traditional comfort like the Guptas, nor afford modern comforts such as ACs to cope with the heat.

Solidarity is recognising that traditional and environmental friendly ways of living are disappearing, worsening the climate challenge for the majority of South Asians who live in villages.

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Beating the Heatwave the Traditional Way

The Gupta family from Dwaronda village in West Bengal's Birbhum district, India, has been staying in this (nearly) century old mud house for four generations.

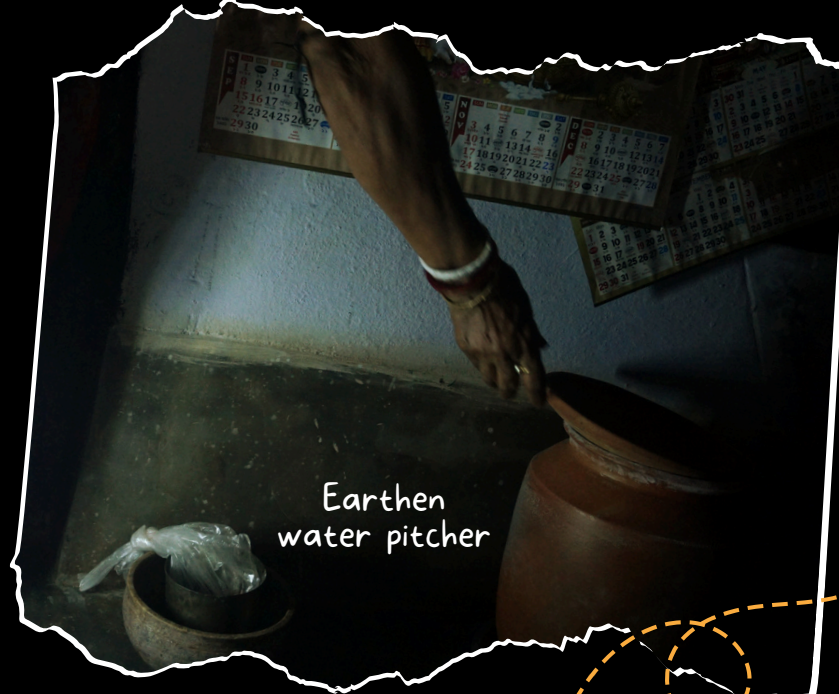


SOUTH ASIA MATTERS
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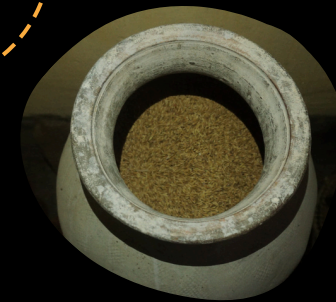
The mud house uses hay on the roof and bamboo strips and dried grass matting below. Natural earth colours and lime on the walls reduce humidity by absorbing moisture.

The native Bengali architecture, popularised by the British as 'bungalow', has a steeply sloping, upturned boat shaped roof for faster rainwater runoff and less surface area heating.



Earthen water pitcher

The low-impact and sustainable habits of the Guptas translates even to their use of natural materials for cooking utensils, brooms, furniture, grain and water storage.



Grain storage



Brooms

Cooling summer time meals include the nutrient-rich staple pantha bhaat - rice that is slightly fermented after being soaked in water overnight.

The leftover rice water, amani, is lightly spiced and served as a cooling drink.



Earthen pan

