

“Nurture Wetlands, Grow Green, Secure Tomorrow”

A REPORT

Framing Wetlands:

Capacity Building Programme for Media Students

**July 19-20, 2024 | School of Journalism & Mass Communication,
Aryabhatta Knowledge University, Patna, Bihar**

#write4wetlands

Supported by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, GOI, and GIZ as part of the BMUV-IKI Project on Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection.

About Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India, The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) is the nodal agency in the administrative structure of the Central Government for the planning, promotion, co-ordination and overseeing the implementation of India’s environmental and forestry policies and programmes.
Website: <https://moef.gov.in>

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Website: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/368.html>

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Summary

The fourth edition of 'Framing Wetlands: Media Students' Capacity Building Programme' aimed to empower future journalists with the necessary skills and knowledge to report on environmental issues, particularly wetlands conservation effectively, held at the School of Journalism & Mass Communication, Aryabhatta Knowledge University, Patna, Bihar on JULY 19-20, 2024.

This workshop was integral to the broader 'Wetlands for LiFE' initiative, which focused on biodiversity and climate protection through wetlands management. The workshop featured a blend of technical sessions, interactive discussions, and a field visit, engaging students in understanding the critical importance of wetlands and their role in environmental sustainability.

This workshop was organized by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) as part of the 'Wetlands for LiFE' initiative under the 'Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection' project by IKI-BMUV and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and GIZ in India.

The workshop saw the active participation of media students from Aryabhatta Knowledge University, who were keen on enhancing their journalistic capabilities concerning environmental issues. The total number of participants was around 50, including students, faculty members, and experts.

The inaugural session set the tone for the workshop, with Dr. Manisha Prakash, Academic Head of SJMC, welcoming the participants, followed by an introduction to the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) and an overview of the programme by Ms. Annu Anand, Director of CMS Programs and Advocacy. The presence of distinguished guests, like Prof. Sharad Kumar Yadav, Honourable Vice Chancellor, Sri Ramji Singh, Registrar of Aryabhatta Knowledge University, underscored the importance of the workshop.

The workshop featured technical sessions on understanding wetlands, environmental journalism, challenges and threats to wetlands, storytelling techniques, and solutions journalism. Interactive elements such as a word search activity and an online quiz competition on wetlands added depth to the learning experience. A key highlight of the program was the on-spot enrolment for becoming Wetland Mitras, which aimed to enhance informed participation among youth in protecting wetlands. The workshop also included a field visit to Rajdhani Jalashay, providing participants with hands-on experience in observing and understanding wetland ecosystems.

Throughout the two days, participants were exposed to expert insights from professionals like Dr. Pranab J Patar, Mr. Nishant Saxena, and Ms. Annu Anand. These sessions covered a wide range of topics, from the science of wetlands to the art of crafting compelling environmental stories. By combining theoretical knowledge with practical experience and interactive learning, the workshop aimed to create a new generation of environmentally conscious media professionals. The program not only focused on imparting knowledge but also on inspiring action and commitment towards wetland conservation, as evidenced by the Wetland Mitra pledge-taking ceremony on the final day.



Certificate Distribution Ceremony and Group Photograph



Participants learning the facts related to Wetlands and Rajdhani Jalashay



Participants in the Campus of Aryabhatta Knowledge University, Patna, Bihar



Felicitation of Sri Ramji Singh, Registrar, AKU by Ms Annu Anand, Director, CMS Programs and Advocacy



Lighting of Lamp



Dr. Pranab J Patar, senior environment sustainability expert briefing the participants about the Mystery and Beauty of Wetlands

Inaugural Session JULY 19, 2024

The workshop commenced with a welcome address by Dr. Manisha Prakash, Academic Head of School of Journalism & Mass Communication (SJMC), followed by an introduction to Centre for Media Studies (CMS) and an overview of the program by Ms. Annu Anand, Director of CMS Programs and Advocacy.

A lighting of a lamp was initiated in the presence of everyone with felicitation, after which Sri Ramji Singh, Registrar of Aryabhatta Knowledge University, addressed the gathering. The registrar in his speech mentioned the increasing depth of water wells in Bihar now required to reach the groundwater compared to before. He also highlighted the urban area encroachment due to increasing development activities. Interestingly, the registrar admitted that he wasn't properly aware of wetlands until he heard about this workshop, and he insisted everyone go home to their communities and share what they learned from this workshop.

The session culminated with a special address by Prof. Sharad Kumar Yadav, Honourable Vice Chancellor of Aryabhatta Knowledge University. He expressed optimism about the role of young journalists in advocating for wetland conservation and environmental protection in Bihar. He gave examples from Europe and the African continent about how they have formed community groups to save their wetlands. He announced that the university is starting a School of Environment & Climate Change soon. He emphasized the power of media in the dispersion of information and mobilization, and encouraged everyone to use media positively.

An engaging icebreaker session was then conducted, where participants were assigned random numbers. As numbers were called out, each participant introduced the person next to them, fostering a friendly and collaborative atmosphere. This was followed by an informative video about the wetlands of Bihar, provided by the Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI) Patna, which set the context for the day's discussions. The inaugural session concluded with a vote of thanks.

Group Picture of Organising Team



Technical Session 1: Understanding the Mystery and Beauty of Wetlands

The first session of the workshop was conducted by Dr. Pranab J Patar, a senior environment sustainability expert on the significance, beauty, and challenges of wetlands. The session aimed to deepen participants' understanding of wetlands as vital ecosystems and their critical role in environmental sustainability. In the beginning, Dr. Patar, presented an overview of wetlands, defining them as areas where water is the primary factor controlling the environment and the associated plant and animal life. Citing the RAMSAR Convention's definition, he explained that wetlands occur where the water table is at or near the surface of the land, or where the land is covered by water. This fundamental definition laid the groundwork for the subsequent discussions on the ecological importance of wetlands.

Dr. Patar presented data showing how water is distributed and stored across different sources, underscoring that wetlands are crucial reservoirs of fresh water, which is vital for both human consumption and ecological balance. He emphasized that wetlands are not just water bodies but complex ecosystems that support a wide range of biodiversity. Dr. Patar then discussed the types of wetlands, using visual aids and examples to illustrate the various forms wetlands can take, from marshes and swamps to bogs and fens. He referenced the ongoing initiatives by organizations like GIZ India, which aim to protect and restore wetlands through projects such as the "Amrit Dharohar" initiative. This project, highlighted in the session, reflects the broader efforts to conserve wetlands across India. The session highlighted the diversity of wetlands globally and their essential role as a source of fresh water.

One of the most compelling parts of the session was the discussion on the degradation of wetlands. Dr. Patar presented alarming statistics, noting that wetlands are disappearing three times faster than forests, with over 80% of them lost since the 1700s. This rapid degradation has led to significant losses in biodiversity, with one in three freshwater species and 25% of all wetland species now facing the risk of extinction. The decline of inland wetland species (81%) and coastal and marine species (36%) over the past 50 years further illustrates the severity of the situation. Human activities and climate change were identified as the primary drivers of wetland degradation. Dr. Patar detailed how agricultural expansion, unsustainable agricultural practices, pollution, overfishing, and infrastructure development have all contributed to the ongoing decline of wetlands. This section of the session was particularly impactful, as it connected the global issue of wetland loss to the local context in Bihar, where many wetlands are under threat from similar pressures.



Dr. Pranab J Patar discussing about the issues of the wetlands



Students interacting with Dr. Pranab J Patar during technical session



Mr. Nishant Saxena, climate science communication expert, explaining about environment journalism



Students interacting with Nishant Saxena, climate science communication expert during technical session

The session also included an interactive activity where participants shared their personal memories associated with wetlands. This exercise was designed to evoke emotional connections and raise awareness about the changing state of these ecosystems. Participants discussed how their experiences with wetlands have changed over time and explored potential actions they could take to help protect these vital environments.

Dr. Patar concluded the session by focusing on the specific water bodies in Bihar, providing an overview of the state's wetlands. He discussed the efforts by the Bihar Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (DEFCC) Department to prepare an 'Ecosystem Health Report Card' for 133 water bodies in Bihar under the Wetland Protection Rules. This initiative aims to monitor and improve the health of these ecosystems, ensuring their sustainability for future generations.

Overall, Dr. Patar's session was a comprehensive exploration of wetlands, blending scientific data with personal engagement to create a deeper understanding among the participants.

A word search activity was conducted to engage participants in an interactive and educational exercise. This activity was designed to introduce key terms related to wetlands, helping students familiarize themselves with essential vocabulary that would be relevant throughout the workshop. Serving as both an icebreaker and an educational tool, the word search provided a fun way for participants to begin thinking critically about the significance of wetlands.

Participants were given a puzzle sheet featuring a grid of letters where they had to find and circle words related to wetlands. Some of the words included in the puzzle were "Wetland," "Biodiversity," "Conservation," "Ecosystem," "Restoration," and "Climate Change." These terms were chosen to underscore the critical concepts that would be discussed in the workshop. The activity was well-received, successfully engaging participants and setting a positive tone for the rest of the workshop. It also helped in building vocabulary and provided an introduction to the complex issues surrounding wetlands conservation.

Technical Session 2: Introduction to Environment Journalism and Communication

Mr. Nishant Saxena, a climate science communication expert, delivered an insightful session on the introduction to environment journalism and communication. He began by addressing the core issue: the biggest threat to our environment is the mindless consumption of natural resources by humans. Mr. Saxena explained that this overconsumption leads to excessive extraction and processing of resources, which accounts for half of the global greenhouse gas emissions, contributing significantly to global warming and climate change.

To engage the participants, Mr. Saxena started the session by asking them to brainstorm and share news story ideas. Several students eagerly shared their thoughts, one student proposed investigating the impact of urbanization on local wetlands, one pitched the idea of reporting on community-led initiatives for wetland conservation, and another proposed a story on the changing migration patterns of local birds due to wetland degradation. Mr. Saxena appreciated these ideas and used them to segue into the main discussion. He then drew attention to the surroundings, pointing out a small pond visible through the window next to the venue building. He also noted the new metro line under construction, which could be seen from the same vantage point. This observation sparked a discussion among the participants, with many speculating that the venue building itself might have been constructed on what was once a wetland area. This real-world example served to illustrate the direct impact of development on wetlands.

The session delved into key concepts such as global warming and climate change. Mr. Saxena defined global warming as the long-term increase in Earth's average surface temperature, caused by the greenhouse effect. He emphasized that greenhouse gases, particularly carbon dioxide, trap heat from the sun, leading to the planet's warming. This phenomenon, in turn, results in climate change, which he described as alterations in usual weather conditions like temperature and rainfall in a region over several years. To illustrate this point, he mentioned that India's annual mean temperature has risen by 1.2 degrees Celsius over the past century.



Mr. Nishant Saxena discussing issues related to Wetlands



Quiz Competition related to wetland theme



Ms Annu Anand giving token of appreciation to the student for winning in quiz competition

During this explanation, a student named Anshu Kumari raised a pertinent question about the specific impacts of wetland destruction and restoration. Responding to her question Mr. Saxena elaborated on how wetland destruction can lead to loss of biodiversity, increased flooding, reduced water quality, and release of stored carbon into the atmosphere. He then explained that wetland restoration can help reverse these effects, improving water quality, providing habitats for wildlife, and acting as natural carbon sinks to mitigate climate change.

Mr. Saxena stressed the importance of environmental journalism, citing reasons such as global relevance, impact on communities, public awareness, and accountability, the interdisciplinary nature of the subject, long-term impact, and ethical responsibility. He then introduced 12 key concepts and terminologies essential for aspiring environmental journalists, including greenhouse gas emissions, carbon footprint, carbon sinks, biodiversity, decarbonization, renewable energy, carbon trading, mitigation, adaptation, wetlands, and Ramsar sites. He elaborated on each concept, providing clear definitions and examples. For instance, he explained that carbon sinks are natural or artificial reservoirs that absorb and store carbon compounds, with forests, wetlands, and oceans being prime examples. He also clarified the difference between mitigation (actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions) and adaptation (strategies to adjust to climate change impacts).

Mr. Saxena concluded the session by encouraging the participants to identify local impacts of global environmental problems and generate story ideas based on their understanding. He emphasized the importance of connecting global issues to local contexts to make environmental journalism more relatable and impactful.

Quiz Competition on Wetlands

The workshop featured an engaging quiz competition on wetlands, which saw enthusiastic participation from 40 students. The quiz covered a wide range of topics, including the Ramsar Convention, specific wetland sites in India and Bihar, wetland ecology, and conservation efforts.

It consisted of 23 multiple-choice questions, testing participants' knowledge of various aspects of wetlands. Questions ranged from the historical implementation of the Ramsar Convention in India to the identification of specific Ramsar sites in Bihar. The quiz also explored the ecological importance of wetlands, their global distribution, and the challenges they face. Participants were quizzed on topics such as the percentage of wetlands that have disappeared in the last 50 years, the characteristics of wetland soil, and the distribution of mangrove forests in India. The quiz also included questions about the number of Ramsar sites in India and globally, highlighting the international significance of wetland conservation efforts.

Kajal Kumari and Shivani Singh were winners of the quiz competition among others. Kajal Kumari said, "I'm thrilled to have won the quiz! It was a great opportunity to apply what I've learned during the program. I believe that knowledge is power, and I'm eager to share my understanding of wetlands with others to inspire action." Shivani Singh added, "Participating in the quiz was a fun and challenging experience. I'm glad I could demonstrate my knowledge and passion for wetland conservation. This win motivates me to continue learning and spreading awareness about the importance of preserving these vital ecosystems."



Dr Pranab J Patar conducting a session on Challenges and Threats, Conservation Action and Wetlands Restoration



Students Interacting during session

Technical Session 3: Challenges and Threats, Conservation Action and Wetlands Restoration

Dr. Pranab J Patar, delivered the next comprehensive technical session on the challenges, threats, conservation actions, and restoration efforts related to wetlands. The session began by highlighting the growing threats to wetlands, emphasizing the urgent need for conservation and restoration efforts. Dr. Patar then outlined various solutions to counter these threats, including the implementation of national plans, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other tools. He stressed the importance of international frameworks and conventions, as well as local actions by both government and private/non-governmental initiatives.

During the discussion, a student raised a concerning local issue about Bihar's local mafia groups grabbing lands and asked Dr. Patar how to tackle this problem. Dr. Patar addressed this question thoughtfully, emphasizing that addressing such complex issues should be a collective effort involving everyone. He explained that combating land grabbing by criminal groups requires a multi-faceted approach, including strengthening law enforcement, raising public awareness, empowering local communities, and promoting transparent land management practices. Dr. Patar stressed that journalists, environmentalists, local authorities, and citizens all have crucial roles to play in exposing and addressing such issues.

He emphasized the critical role of research, innovations, training, and capacity development programs in wetland conservation. He also highlighted the significance of community-based approaches in ensuring the success of conservation efforts. Interestingly, Dr. Patar pointed out that some plant species brought to India by the British during the colonial era have caused invasive issues, posing additional challenges to native ecosystems and wetlands.

Dr. Patar discussed the impact of national initiatives and international conventions on wetland conservation in India. He noted that India is home to 80 Ramsar Sites, covering an area of 1.33 million hectares. Additionally, he mentioned that 130 wetlands and lakes are being conserved and restored under the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA).

A significant portion of the session was dedicated to discussing the Namami Gange Programme, which has been recognized by the UN as one of the top 10 World Restoration Flagships. Dr. Patar explained how this program has become a people's movement, effectively engaging communities in the conservation of the Ganges river ecosystem. He also touched upon the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), which aims to protect and revive ecosystems worldwide.

To illustrate successful conservation efforts, Dr. Patar presented a case study of the Jagatpur wetland in Bhagalpur, Bihar. This wetland, recognized as an Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measure (OECM) site, is of utmost ecological importance and home to many threatened bird species. The expert also discussed local actions for ecosystem restoration, citing examples from Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR). Additionally, Dr. Patar shared positive stories of community-based initiatives from Bangalore, highlighting how local efforts can make a significant impact on wetland conservation and restoration.

Dr. Patar emphasized the role of consistent media coverage and news reporting in raising awareness about wetland conservation. He also highlighted the importance of promoting citizen science-based research and monitoring, citing the example of Earthwatch Institute India's multi-year drive to monitor hundreds of waterbodies across India. The session concluded by discussing the critical need for regular water and environmental quality monitoring while engaging local community members to develop a sense of ownership and responsibility for these vital ecosystems.



Ms Annu Anand, giving presentation on Wetland Mitras

Student interacting during compelling story session

Technical Session 4: How To Tell A Compelling Story

Ms. Annu Anand, Director of CMC Program and Advocacy, delivered an insightful session on “How to tell a compelling story”. The session focused on effective environmental communication approaches, emphasizing the importance of storytelling in conveying complex environmental issues to a broader audience.

Ms. Anand began by highlighting the significance of environmental communication, noting that it touches various aspects of people’s lives, including science, health, agriculture, and livelihoods. She explained that effective environmental reporting can raise awareness, drive change, and inspire action by informing the public and engaging stakeholders. Despite its growing popularity, environmental journalism still faces challenges such as limited prominence in news coverage, editorial priorities, and lack of specialized training for journalists.

Discussing the current state of environmental journalism in India, Ms. Anand pointed out that only a few news outlets, such as The Hindu, have dedicated environment beats. She mentioned that for many publications, environmental issues are still not a priority. However, she highlighted specialized platforms like Mongabay and Down to Earth as examples of dedicated environmental news portals.

The session delved into the current state of environmental journalism in newsrooms, emphasizing that it often focuses on disasters, extreme weather events, and controversies. Ms. Anand stressed the need for consistent and continuous follow-up stories, which she identified as a missing element in today’s reporting. She emphasized that building strong, impactful stories requires proper data and diligent follow-ups.

To create compelling environmental stories, Ms. Anand provided valuable tips for collecting material and writing reports. She advised participants to focus on people and communities to make their stories more engaging while keeping the science of climate change intact. Ms. Anand encouraged students to humanize their stories and practice in-depth story writing to create more impactful narratives. During the session, Ms. Anand engaged students by asking them to name local environmental leaders, and the students were able to share a few names, demonstrating their awareness of key figures in their locality.

Ms. Anand also covered the importance of choosing an appropriate news angle and maintaining a balance between complexity and clarity when presenting scientific information. She encouraged the use of relevant data, expert quotes, and multiple viewpoints to create authentic and balanced reports.

The session included guidance on writing techniques, such as using smaller sentences, and more paragraphs, and adopting a feature-style approach for in-depth stories. Ms. Anand also discussed the need to bridge the gap between scientists, government agencies, civil society, and the media through better communication and mutual understanding. She concluded her session by presenting a good in-depth story written on the issue of rejuvenating spring sheds in the state of Sikkim by the local community under the scheme of Dharavikas. She deconstructed the story and explained the process, structure, and tools being used in this well-written story.

Finally, Ms. Anand shared information about various resources available to environmental journalists, including fellowships, workshops, and awards offered by organizations such as the Earth Journalism Network, Centre for Science and Environment, and Climate Change Media Partnership.

Overall, the session provided media students with comprehensive insights into crafting compelling environmental stories, equipping them with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively communicate critical environmental issues to the public.

Student interaction with Ms Annu Anand





"Orientation for becoming Wetland Mitras," led by Ms. Annu Anand, Director of CMS Programs and Advocacy



Briefing about the planning of exposure visit

Orientation for becoming Wetland Mitras

The orientation session titled "Orientation for becoming Wetland Mitras," led by Ms. Annu Anand, Director of CMS Programs and Advocacy, aimed to engage participants in the vital role of wetland conservation focusing on fostering informed participation among diverse groups, particularly youth, in protecting natural resources.

Ms. Anand introduced the concept of Wetland Mitras, highlighting their essential characteristics. "Wetland Mitras are individuals knowledgeable about local wetlands and their catchment areas, motivated to protect these ecosystems, and capable of influencing others regarding wetland issues, she informed." She also added that they serve as a bridge between communities and local governance bodies, such as panchayats and municipalities, facilitating communication and collaboration in conservation efforts.

The session emphasized the significance of Wetland Mitras in securing ecosystem services, which include biodiversity preservation, improved water quality, recreational opportunities, livelihood generation, food security, and flood protection. Participants learned about the process of becoming Wetland Mitras, which involves taking a voluntary pledge & completing an application form that captures basic information, areas of interest, and the commitment of time they can contribute.

Moreover, the orientation outlined the roles of Wetland Mitras at various levels. Individually, they can promote water conservation, and biodiversity protection, and participate in cleanliness and plantation drives. At the civil society level, they can raise awareness about wetland protection, while educational institutions can contribute by integrating environmental curricula, organizing nature walks, and conducting multidisciplinary studies on wetlands.

Overall, the orientation session was informative and encouraged participants to become active advocates for wetland conservation, fostering a sense of responsibility and community engagement in preserving these critical ecosystems of their locality.

Briefing about the Plan of Exposure Visit on Day 2

The briefing about the Plan of Exposure Visit," led by Dr. Pranab J Patar, aimed to prepare participants for an upcoming field visit to Rajdhani Jalashay as part of the workshop. The session emphasized the importance of hands-on experience in understanding the complexities and significance of wetland ecosystems.

Dr. Patar outlined the key steps involved in planning and executing a successful wetland visit. Before the visit, participants learned about the importance of site selection, planning the trip, studying secondary information, and understanding the dos and don'ts. During the visit, the focus was on maintaining field safety, making observations, collecting data, and documenting the experience.

The session also highlighted the multidisciplinary nature of wetland observations, covering aspects such as biodiversity (flora and fauna), ecosystem services, human dependencies, and potential degradation. Participants were encouraged to utilize secondary information to complement their on-site observations.

The session concluded by emphasizing the need for thorough data compilation, interpretation, and expert consultation to complete the story or news article based on the exposure visit. By sharing this information, Dr. Patar aimed to equip participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to make the most of their wetland visit and contribute to the overall understanding and conservation of these vital ecosystems.



Mr. Nishant Saxena, conducting a session on Solutions Journalism, Resources and Approach



Students learning integral principles of Solutions Journalism

Day 2: Session 5: Solution Journalism, Resources, and Approach

Mr. Nishant Saxena, conducted a session titled “Solutions Journalism, Resources and Approach” on the second day of “Framing Wetlands: Media Student Capacity Building Programme.” He initiated the session by engaging participants in a discussion about the essential qualities of a good journalist. The key attributes highlighted included honesty, objectivity, speed, and accuracy, which are fundamental in fostering trust and ensuring the integrity of journalistic practices.

Mr. Saxena encouraged students to specialize particularly in the field of environment to enter a specialization field of media. He clarified to the participants that their primary role is to write and inform the public only. One student said that he aspires to become an educator rather than a journalist, to this Mr. Saxena said that it is very crucial to practice journalism before becoming an effective educator.

The session emphasized the concept of Solutions Journalism, which aims to shift the narrative from a predominantly negative portrayal of issues to one that showcases effective responses to social and environmental challenges. Mr. Saxena explained that Solutions Journalism is evidence-based and focuses on real people implementing solutions, thus empowering audiences to believe in the possibility of change and take action. This approach is particularly vital in combating despair, inspiring innovation, and informing policy decisions.

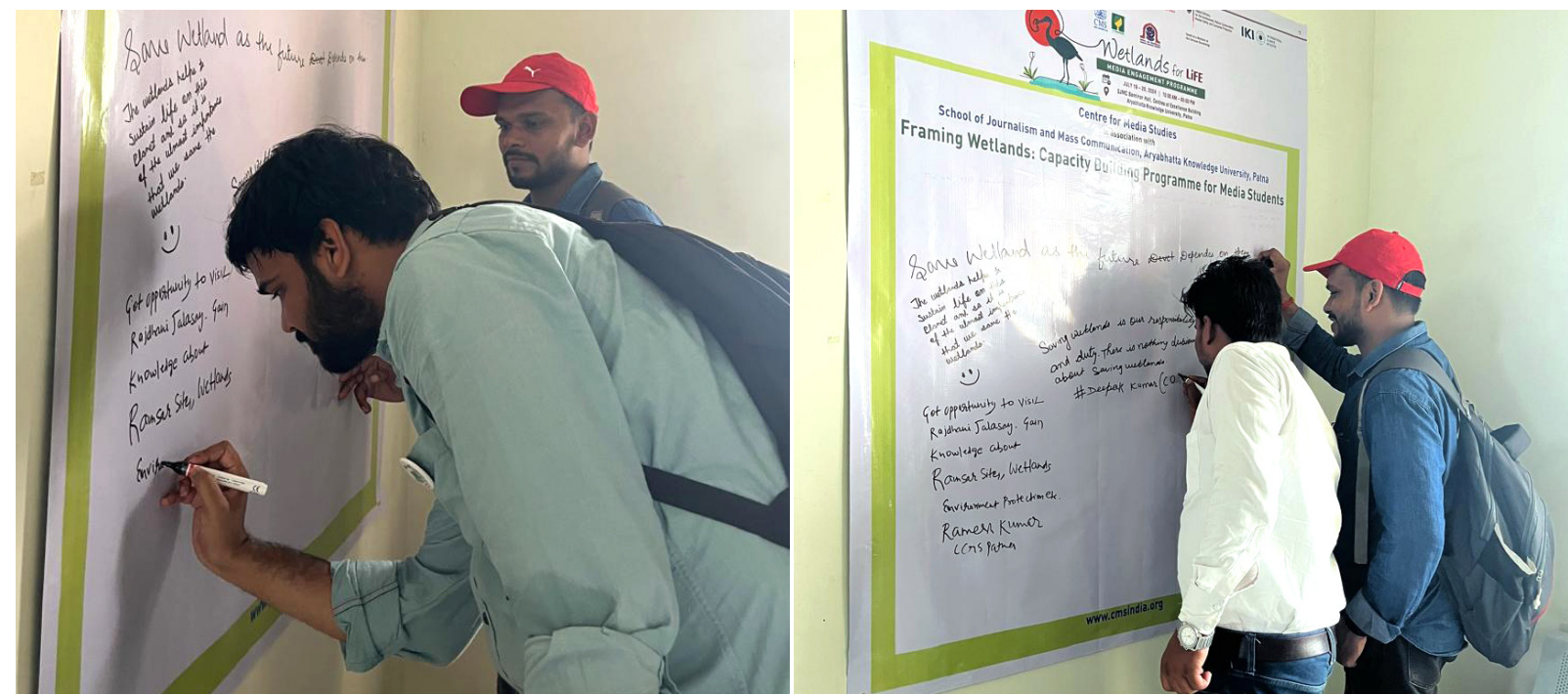
Participants were introduced to various examples of solutions journalism in action, such as “The Better India,” which shares stories of positive change and innovation across the country, and “IndiaSpend,” a data-driven news organization that focuses on solutions-oriented reporting in critical areas like education and health. These examples serve to illustrate how journalism can highlight successful initiatives, thereby inspiring broader adoption of effective solutions.

In addition to discussing the principles of Solutions Journalism, Mr. Saxena provided participants with a range of digital tools and resources that can enhance their journalistic endeavours. Tools like Honestymeter, which assesses potential bias in writing, and Full Fact, an AI tool for fact-checking, were highlighted as valuable assets for journalists seeking to maintain objectivity and accuracy in their reporting.

The session concluded with an interaction with participants who asked questions, that encouraged dialogue about the role of journalists in addressing climate change and environmental issues. Mr. Saxena’s insights and the resources shared during the session aimed to equip the next generation of journalists with the skills and knowledge necessary to approach environmental reporting with a solutions-oriented mindset.

Overall, the session was a comprehensive exploration of Solutions Journalism, underscoring its importance in creating a more informed and engaged public, particularly in the context of environmental sustainability.

Participants writing comments on their experience about Wetlands





Ms. Annu Anand, Director of CMS Programs and Advocacy, delivered an engaging and insightful session on 'Producing Effective Communication Material'

Technical Session 6: Discussion on Producing Communication Material

Ms. Annu Anand, Director of CMS Programs and Advocacy, delivered an engaging and insightful session on 'Producing Effective Communication Material'. Leveraging her extensive experience as a former journalist & media educationist, Ms. Anand shared valuable expertise in crafting compelling communication materials. She emphasized the importance of understanding the target audience and tailoring messages to resonate with them. The session covered key aspects of effective communication, including clarity, concision, and creativity.

Ms. Anand also highlighted the significance of using engaging visuals and storytelling techniques to convey complex information in an accessible manner. Through interactive discussions and practical examples, participants gained hands-on knowledge on producing impactful communication materials that can influence public perception and drive action. The session complimented the media student participants, who were left with enhanced skills and inspiration to create effective communication materials in their future works.

Wetland Mitra Pledge Taking Ceremony

Ms. Anand, led an inspiring pledge-taking ceremony for 37 newly enrolled Wetland Mitras at the workshop. The enthusiastic students pledged to protect and conserve wetlands, recognizing their vital role in social, economic, and environmental well-being.

The new Wetland Mitras vowed to keep wetlands free from solid and liquid waste, create awareness, and motivate others to join their endeavour. Two particularly passionate students shared their commitments. Priyanka Sinha committed, "I vow to use my voice to tell the stories of the incredible biodiversity that thrives in our local wetlands. Through my work, I aim to highlight the urgent need for conservation and sustainability, and to motivate others to take action in preserving these vital ecosystems." Piyush Kumar, a journalism student, added, "I commit to using my media skills to document the biodiversity of our wetlands and share success stories of conservation efforts."

The ceremony concluded with the Wetland Mitras proudly declaring their new roles and their determination to undertake necessary actions to protect these crucial ecosystems. Their enthusiasm reflected a promising future for wetland conservation in the region.

Students taking a pledge to becoming Wetland Mitras





Certificates distribution ceremony



Participants on their visit to Rajdhani Jalashay interacting with field visit co-ordinator Dr. Saroj Kumar Barik

Certificates Distribution Ceremony

The final day culminated in a certificate distribution ceremony, acknowledging the participation and dedication of the 37 newly enrolled Wetland Mitras. Ms. Annu Anand, Director of CMS Programs and Advocacy, Dr Pranab Patar and Mr. Nishant Saxena subject experts, and Dr. Manisha Prakash, Academic Head of the School of Journalism & Mass Communication (SJMC) with other faculty members presented the certificates to the participants, who had undergone an enriching journey of learning and skill-building.

The ceremony was a moment of pride and accomplishment for the participants, who had gained expertise in effective communication, storytelling, and wetland conservation. The participants expressed their gratitude to the organizers and mentors for their valuable guidance and support throughout the program. The certificate distribution ceremony marked the successful conclusion of the program, empowering the Wetland Mitras to become ambassadors for wetland conservation and sustainability. With their newfound knowledge and skills, they are now equipped to make a positive impact on the preservation of India's vital wetlands. The ceremony ended with a sense of accomplishment and a renewed commitment to protecting the environment.

Participants feeling excited after receiving certificates of Appreciation



Exposure Visit to Rajdhani Jalashay, Patna

On the afternoon of July 20, participants visited the Rajdhani Jalashay, a natural habitat for birds in Patna, maintained by the Department of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change. The visit provided an opportunity to witness the biodiversity supported by wetlands firsthand and understand the practical challenges of conservation. The 40 student participants, accompanied by our experts Dr. Pranab J Patar, Ms. Annu Anand and Mr. Nishant Saxena visited the site to observe and learn about the nature and biodiversity of this unique ecosystem. The field trip provided a hands-on learning experience, allowing the students to observe and ask meaningful questions during the program.

As they explored the wetlands, the students were fascinated by the variety of bird species and the conservation efforts in place. Two students, Ms. Manshi Kumari and Ms. Soma Gupta, shared their observations and insights during the visit. Ms. Kumari exclaimed, "Witnessing the diverse bird species and their habitats up close has been an eye-opening experience. It has reinforced my understanding of the importance of preserving these ecosystems for future generations."

Ms. Gupta added, "This field trip has shown me the impact of human efforts in conserving nature. The Department of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has done an exceptional job in maintaining this wetland, and it's inspiring to see the positive results. As media students, we have a responsibility to share these stories and promote conservation efforts."

The field trip included guided tours led by experts Dr. Saroj Kumar Barik who explained the ecological significance of the wetland, its flora and fauna, and the conservation efforts in place to protect this habitat. Students were encouraged to observe and document their findings, fostering a hands-on learning experience that complemented the theoretical knowledge gained during the workshops. The interaction with nature not only enriched their understanding but also emphasized the urgency of preserving such ecosystems in the face of climate change and urbanization.

By combining theory with practical experience, the workshop equipped them with the necessary tools to advocate for environmental conservation effectively. It was a transformative experience that instilled a sense of responsibility in the participants to protect and promote the natural world through their future careers in media.

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