

# Exploring Wular Lake through the Media Students' Lens



**A REPORT**

## **Framing Wetlands:** Capacity Building Programme for Media Students

**Media House Auditorium, Media Education Research Centre (MERC)  
University of Kashmir, Srinagar**

**Jammu and Kashmir | May 7 – 8, 2024**

## #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.

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Website: <https://moef.gov.in>

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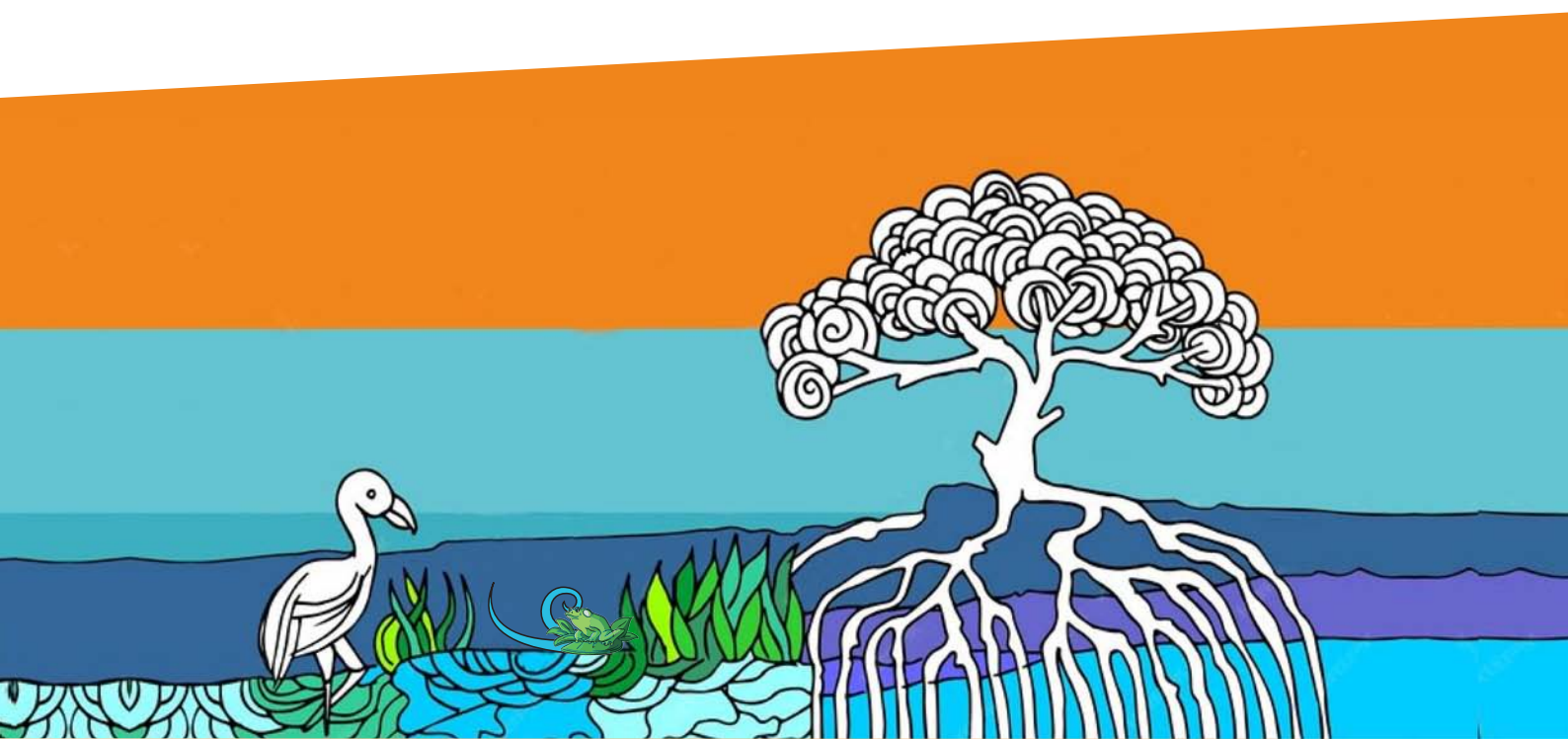
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*Panelists at the Inaugural session*



*Participants admiring the beautiful sight of the Wular lake*



*Field visit group photo*





*Participants Registering for the Workshop*



*Welcome Address by Prof. Sabeha Mufti, HoD, Media Education Research Centre, University of Kashmir*

## Summary

The ‘Framing Wetlands: Media Student Capacity Building Programme’ was a transformative two-day workshop that gathered a cohort of 60 undergraduate and postgraduate media students alongside 14 esteemed faculty members. Held at the Media House Auditorium, Media Education Research Centre (MERC), University of Kashmir, Srinagar, on May 7th and 8th, 2024, the capacity building programme was a collaborative effort between Centre for Media Studies (CMS) and the Media Education Research Centre (MERC), University of Kashmir, supported by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) under the BMUV-IKI Project on Wetlands Management for Biodiversity and Climate Protection.

The workshop served as a platform to equip media students with comprehensive knowledge and effective communication skills regarding the significance, challenges, and conservation strategies concerning wetlands, with a particular focus on the iconic Wular Lake in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir.

The Wular lake’s significance extends beyond its scenic beauty. Wular, that is one of the Indian wetlands designated as a Ramsar site, is facing environmental threats, including illegal change of its use by converting large parts of the lake’s catchment areas into agricultural land and infestation of weeds that have hidden the lake waters and considerably shrunk it. It serves as a vital habitat for a diverse range of flora and fauna, including migratory birds such as herons, egrets, and kingfishers. The surrounding marshlands and wetlands are rich in biodiversity, supporting a variety of plant species and aquatic life. Wular Lake holds immense cultural and economic significance for the communities living in its vicinity.

These were the few observations and learning lessons that students learnt during their field visit to Wular lake that was organised as a part of the workshop and after interacting with the concerned officials of Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA) officials.

The ambiance of the inaugural session of the workshop was enriched by the distinguished presence of Prof. Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor of the University of Kashmir, Srinagar, Prof. Sabeha Mufti, Head of the Media Education Research Centre (MERC), Assistant Professors Dr. Afsana Rashid & Dr. Hashmat Habib, University of

Kashmir, Srinagar. Also adding to the depth of expertise were Mr. Kunal Bharat and Utkarsh Lal, Forestry and Biodiversity Advisors from GIZ (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit), along with Mr. Owais Farooq Mir of DCF Kashmir Forest Dept and Project Coordinator, WUCMA & Dr. Mehreen Khaleel from Wildlife Research and Conservation Foundation, Ms. Annu Anand, Director of CMS Program.

The technical learning sessions were led by industry experts such as Mr. Nishant Saxena, a distinguished Climate Science Communication Expert, Dr. Pranab Patar, a Senior Environment & Sustainability expert and Ms. Annu Anand, Director of CMS Programs. Through these sessions, participants delved into diverse topics including wetland ecology, conservation stories, environmental journalism, and effective storytelling methodologies.

The workshop's agenda was meticulously curated to offer a blend of theoretical knowledge, practical insights, and hands-on experience. Participants actively engaged in interactive sessions, field visits, and a stimulating quiz competition designed to test their understanding and retention of the workshop content.

One of the most gratifying outcomes of the workshop was the enrolment of 37 new Wetland Mitras, individuals committed to championing wetland conservation efforts in their communities. This achievement underscored the workshop's success in inspiring and mobilizing a new generation of environmental advocates and communicators from Jammu & Kashmir.

Overall, the "Framing Wetlands" workshop stood as a testament to the power of collaboration and education in fostering environmental stewardship and media literacy. It not only equipped participants with valuable skills and knowledge but also fostered a sense of responsibility towards the preservation of our planet's invaluable wetland ecosystems.



*Pictures of Flora and Fauna of the Wular Lake*





*Facilitation of Prof Nilofer Khan, VC by Ms. Annu Anand, Director of CMS Programs*



*Mr Kunal Bharat, Forestry and Biodiversity Advisor, GIZ India giving brief about Wetland Conservation Project*

## Inaugural Session May 07, 2024

The “Framing Wetlands: Media Student Capacity Building Programme” commenced with an opening address by Prof. Sabeha Mufti, Head of the Department at the Media Education Research Centre (MERC), University of Kashmir, Srinagar. She warmly welcomed the participants and expressed enthusiasm for hosting a workshop aimed at equipping budding media professionals with the knowledge and skills to advocate for wetland conservation.

Following Prof. Mufti’s address, Ms. Annu Anand, Director of CMS Programs, introduced the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) and provided an overview of the program’s goal to empower media students in effectively communicating the importance of wetlands conservation. “Our goal is to empower media students to effectively communicate the importance of wetlands conservation,” she remarked.

Next, Mr. Kunal Bharat, Forestry and Biodiversity Advisor at Deutsche, GIZ shared insights into GIZ’s work in India and its wetlands conservation projects. “We believe in involving local communities in conservation efforts,” Mr. Bharat shared. “Our aim is to protect crucial wetlands, including those here in Jammu & Kashmir.” He emphasized the importance of community involvement and showcased a video highlighting GIZ’s collaborative efforts with government ministries and local partners across India. “Through these partnerships, we aim to safeguard our precious wetlands for future generations,” he added.

A special address by Prof. Nilofer Khan, Vice Chancellor of the University of Kashmir, underscored the urgency of wetlands conservation and the pivotal role of media students in raising awareness. Prof Khan, talked about the Wetlands of Kashmir and their significance in terms of environmental conservation and said that it is high time to preserve the wetlands that are facing degradation threats and shrinking issues.

“As academics, we have to start the conservation wetlands campaign on a large scale, from universities to schools, to educate the students about the preservation and conservation efforts of these wetlands,” she added.

Commending MERC and CMS for organising this workshop, she said that such initiatives should be continued in the future so that we can educate the students on how to save our environment, water bodies, and wetlands.

Dr. Afsana Rashid, Assistant Professor, conveyed gratitude on behalf of the organizers and followed by the presentation of mementos to the esteemed guests, acknowledging their insights and support in the collective efforts towards wetlands conservation.

The inaugural session brought together various stakeholders and experts, setting the stage for the collaborative endeavour of fostering environmental awareness and media advocacy through the “Framing Wetlands: Media Student Capacity Building Programme.”



*Dr. Pranab Patar, Expert Environment and Sustainability, conducting the session*

## Technical Session 1

### Understanding the Mystery and Beauty of Wetlands

Dr. Pranab Patar, an expert in Environment and Sustainability, conducted an informative session on “Understanding the Mystery and Beauty of Wetlands.” During his presentation, Dr. Patar revealed the fascinating aspects of these crucial ecosystems, captivating the audience with his wealth of knowledge.

Initially, Dr. Patar defined wetlands clearly, highlighting their unique characteristics as areas where water plays a central role in shaping the environment and supporting plant and animal life. He discussed different types of wetlands, such as freshwater ones like rivers, lakes, and marshes, and saltwater environments like estuaries, mangroves, and coral reefs. The participants also learned about man-made wetlands like fishponds, rice paddies, and reservoirs.

Using engaging visuals and data, Dr. Patar emphasized the importance of wetlands as a freshwater source, stressing the need to understand how water is distributed and stored globally. He explored the complex ecological functions of wetlands, emphasizing their role as biodiversity hubs, their capacity to regulate greenhouse gases, and their natural defence against natural disasters like tsunamis and hurricanes.

The session shed light on the socio-economic value of wetlands for local communities, illustrating how these ecosystems are intertwined with people’s livelihoods and traditions. Dr. Patar provided examples of wetlands supporting fisheries, agriculture, tourism, and offering resources like timber, medicinal plants, and weaving materials.

Furthermore, Dr. Patar underscored the critical role of wetlands in mitigating climate change impacts, showcasing them as effective nature-based solutions. He explained how wetlands act as carbon sinks, mitigate sea-level rise, and enhance resilience against climate-related calamities like typhoons and tsunamis.

To encourage interaction, Dr. Patar organized a brief activity where participants shared personal wetland memories, sparking discussions on changing environments and individual responsibilities in conserving and restoring these essential ecosystems.

Dr. Pranab Patar’s insightful presentation and interactive approach effectively uncovered the mystery and importance of wetlands, instilling a deep respect for these habitats and a stronger commitment to their preservation among the attendees.





*Mr Nishant Saxena, Climate Science Communication Expert, conducting the session*

## Technical Session 2

### Introduction to Environment Journalism & Communication

Mr. Nishant Saxena, a Climate Science Communication Expert, conducted on 'Introduction to Environment Journalism & Communication' which delved into the vital role of media and communication in raising awareness about environmental issues, particularly wetland conservation. His insightful session shed light on the principles and practices of environment journalism, effective communication strategies, and the importance of accurate and ethical reporting on environmental topics.

Mr. Saxena began by highlighting the global relevance of environmental issues and their profound impact on communities worldwide. He emphasized the critical role that media and communication professionals play in promoting public awareness, fostering accountability, and driving interdisciplinary collaboration to address these pressing challenges.

Mr. Saxena introduced key concepts and terminology essential for environmental journalism. He explained the significance of understanding greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, carbon footprints, carbon sinks, biodiversity, decarbonization, renewable energy, carbon trading, mitigation, and adaptation strategies. These concepts provided participants with a solid foundation for effectively communicating the complexities of environmental issues.

Recognizing the ethical responsibility of journalists, Mr. Saxena emphasized the importance of accurate and unbiased reporting on environmental topics. He encouraged participants to identify local impacts, understand global problems, and generate compelling story ideas that resonate with audiences while maintaining journalistic integrity.

Participants engaged in interactive discussions, sharing their perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in environmental journalism. Mr. Saxena provided valuable insights into effective communication strategies, including leveraging multimedia platforms, crafting engaging narratives, and fostering public dialogue on environmental sustainability.

Throughout the session, Mr. Saxena's expertise and passion for climate science communication were evident, as he inspired participants to embrace their roles as catalysts for positive change. He encouraged them to leverage the power of media and communication to raise awareness, inspire action, and contribute to the collective efforts towards a more sustainable future. By the end of the session, participants had gained a comprehensive understanding of the principles and practices of environment journalism, as well as the importance of accurate and ethical reporting on environmental topics, particularly wetland conservation. Mr. Saxena's guidance equipped them with the knowledge and motivation to effectively communicate these critical issues to diverse audiences.



*Mr. Utkarsh Lal, Jr advisor Forest and Biodiversity, GIZ  
Presenting token of appreciation to the  
winner of Quiz Competition*



*Media Students at Inaugural Session*

## Online Quiz Competition on Wetlands

A quiz competition was organized with the objective of engaging student participants and testing their knowledge regarding the wetlands of India and Jammu & Kashmir, thereby enhancing their learning experience. This interactive session aimed to assess and augment the participants' understanding of the region's wetland ecosystems, their biodiversity, and the challenges they face.

The questionnaire consisted of a total of 23 multiple-choice questions related to wetlands. Some of the questions posed were, "Which of the following is the largest freshwater lake in India?" and "In which year did the Ramsar Convention come into force in India?" These questions were designed to evaluate the participants' grasp of the subject matter.

Out of a total of 60 participants, 90% of them actively participated in the online quiz. Among these participants, 75% managed to select 20 correct answers to the questions, showcasing their general knowledge in the subject. Notably, two participants, Uzma Shabnam & Shahid Habib emerged as the quiz winners, having successfully answered all 23 questions correctly.

In recognition of their outstanding performance, Uzma Shabnam & Shahid Habib were rewarded with a small gift, serving as an acknowledgment of their enthusiasm and interest to the subject matter.

The quiz competition not only provided an engaging platform for students to test their wetland knowledge but also fostered a deeper appreciation for the region's wetland ecosystems and the challenges they face. By incorporating interactive quiz element, this aimed to enhance the participants' learning experience and cultivate a greater understanding of the significance of wetland conservation efforts.





*Mr Pranab J. Patar conducting Technical Session on Challenges and Threats, Conversation Action and Wetlands Restoration*

## Technical Session 3

### Challenges and Threats, Conversation Action and Wetlands Restoration

Dr. Pranab Patar, led Session 3, which delved into the various challenges and threats faced by wetlands, including human activities, pollution, climate change, and habitat degradation. He highlighted the pressing issues causing wetland degradation, such as urbanization, industrial waste, and agricultural runoff, which contribute significantly to pollution and loss of biodiversity in these ecosystems.

Dr. Patar emphasized the need for comprehensive conservation efforts to mitigate these threats. He discussed various national and international frameworks and conventions designed to protect wetlands. For instance, India is home to 80 Ramsar Sites, covering 1.33 million hectares, underscoring the country's commitment to wetland conservation. Moreover, the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA) has targeted 130 wetlands and lakes for conservation and restoration.

One of the notable initiatives mentioned was the Namami Gange Programme, which has been recognized by the United Nations as one of the top 10 World Restoration Flagships. This program aims to rejuvenate the Ganges River and its wetlands, demonstrating a successful model of large-scale ecosystem restoration.

Dr. Patar also explored local actions and community-based approaches as effective strategies for wetland conservation. He cited the example of the Bhindawas Ramsar site in Haryana, where local communities have been engaged in conservation efforts through alternative livelihood programs. These initiatives utilize water hyacinth-based raw materials for handicrafts, promoting both environmental sustainability and economic development.

Furthermore, the session highlighted the role of research, innovations, and capacity-building programs in fostering sustainable wetland management. Training programs and community involvement are crucial in developing and implementing effective conservation strategies.

Dr. Patar's session provided a comprehensive overview of the multifaceted approaches required to address the challenges facing wetlands. By combining national plans, international conventions, local actions, and community engagement, significant progress can be made in preserving and revitalizing these vital ecosystems for future generations.





*Ms Annu Anand conducting the session on Environment Communication Approach*



*PPT Slide for How to write Compelling Story*



*Media Students participating in session*



# Technical Session 4

## How to Tell a Compelling Story

Ms. Annu Anand, Director of CMS Programs, shared insights and techniques on how to craft compelling stories that effectively communicate environmental issues to diverse audiences. Participants learned about various storytelling techniques, narrative structures, and the use of multimedia elements to create engaging and impactful content.

Ms. Anand emphasized the importance of environment communication due to its impact on various aspects of life such as health, agriculture, livelihood, and climate change. She highlighted that effective environmental reporting can raise awareness, drive change, and inspire action among the public and stakeholders.

One key aspect discussed was the importance of planning your story by selecting subjects that are topical and not immediately obvious. Ms. Anand advised conducting thorough research using credible sources like scientific journals, government agencies, and reputable NGOs. She also stressed the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives from local communities, industry representatives, and environmental advocates to provide a comprehensive view of the issue.

Participants were encouraged to use reliable sources and present complex scientific information in a way that is accessible to a non-specialist audience. This involves using plain language and visual aids, providing context, and highlighting solutions through examples of policy measures, technological innovations, and community-based projects.

Ms. Anand shared practical tips for writing environmental communication pieces. She suggested starting with a specific case or example to explain the broader issue, followed by facts and data. The use of direct quotes from people, experts, and scientists was recommended to make the story more interesting and authentic. She also advised giving multiple viewpoints to ensure a balanced perspective and avoiding jargon to keep the narrative clear and simple.

The session also covered the importance of using multimedia elements such as pictures, graphics, and audio clips to make stories more engaging. Selecting visuals that reflect the essence of the story and creating simple graphs or tables to explain concepts were highlighted as effective techniques.

Ms. Anand emphasized the need for better communication between scientists, media, government agencies, and civil society to bridge gaps and foster mutual understanding. Training for communication, understanding media requirements, and developing resources for media were identified as key areas for improving environmental journalism. By employing these techniques, media professionals can create compelling stories that effectively communicate the significance of environmental issues and inspire positive change.

## Technical Session 5: “I am Wular Lake”

Dr. Hashmat Habib, Assistant Professor at the University of Kashmir, presented his PhD research on the fishing villages of Wular Lake, sharing valuable insights into the environmental and social dynamics of the region. His work focuses on the fishing communities, known locally as “Heanz,” and their interactions with the Wular Lake ecosystem. This session provided a comprehensive look at the socio-economic aspects of wetland conservation and the crucial role of local communities in these efforts.

He explained that Wular Lake, located in the northwest of Srinagar, is Asia’s largest freshwater lake and a vital resource for the region. Standing at an elevation of 1,570 meters above sea level, it accounts for 60% of Jammu and Kashmir’s fish production. The lake’s area has significantly decreased over the past century, shrinking from 217.8 square kilometers in 1911 to 86.71 square kilometers by 2007. This reduction has impacted both the environment and the livelihoods of those who depend on the lake.

The fishing community around Wular Lake, comprising about 30,453 individuals as of the 2003 census, is socio-economically marginalized. Known as “Heanz” in the local dialect, this community is divided into various subgroups based on their specific livelihood activities: Gadd-Heanz (fishermen), Gair-Heanz (water chestnut gatherers), Demb-Heanz (vegetable growers), Shikara-Heanz (owners of passenger boats), and Doonga-Heanz (owners of luxury houseboats). Despite their crucial role in the local economy, these groups face numerous challenges, including limited access to resources and social marginalization.

Dr. Habib highlighted the significant environmental changes affecting Wular Lake and its surrounding villages. The lake’s decreasing size has exacerbated the vulnerability of the Heanz community, who rely heavily on fishing and related activities. He emphasized the importance of involving these local communities in conservation efforts, as their traditional knowledge and practices are invaluable for sustainable management of the lake’s resources.

One of the key villages discussed was Zurimanz, with 260 households and a population of 1,600, where 98% of the population engages in fishing. Similar communities in Laharwalpore and Lankreshipora, with populations of 3,800 and 4,000 respectively, also depend heavily on the lake for their livelihoods.

Dr. Habib’s presentation underscored the need for comprehensive conservation strategies that include the participation of local communities. By involving these stakeholders, conservation efforts can be more effective and sustainable, ensuring that both the environment and the socio-economic well-being of the Heanz community are preserved. This session provided a critical perspective on the interconnectedness of ecological health and human livelihoods, highlighting the importance of inclusive and community-based approaches in wetland conservation.



*Dr. Hashmat Habib, Assistant Professor Presenting his research on the Wular Lake*



## Field Visit : Day 2: May 08, 2024

### To Wular Vantage Park, Garoora & the Main Wular Lake for Observation and Field Immersion

Participants embarked on a field visit to Wular Vantage Park, Garoora, and the main Wular Lake for observation, gaining practical insights into wetland conservation. This visit provided participants with a first-hand opportunity to observe and experience the wetland ecosystem, its rich biodiversity, and the ongoing conservation efforts.

The visit began at Wular Vantage Park, where participants had the chance to explore the area's natural beauty and understand the ecological significance of the park as a part of the larger Wular Lake ecosystem. The park serves as a strategic point for observing the lake and its surrounding areas, offering a panoramic view that highlights the vast expanse of this important wetland.

Mr. Owais Farooq Mir, Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) Kashmir Forest Department and Project Coordinator of the Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA) provided a comprehensive briefing. Mr. Mir detailed the lake's ecological values, emphasizing its role in supporting local biodiversity, regulating water flow, and providing livelihoods for surrounding communities. He discussed the various threats facing the lake, such as pollution, encroachment, and the impacts of climate change. Mr. Mir also outlined key management interventions being implemented to address these challenges, including restoration projects, pollution control measures, and community engagement initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable practices.

During the briefing, students were able to engage directly with Mr. Mir, asking insightful questions about the lake and its conservation.

Mohammad Waseem, a student, asked, "What are the main challenges you face in implementing conservation measures for Wular Lake?" Mr. Mir responded by highlighting the difficulties in balancing conservation efforts with the needs of the local population. He explained that managing pollution and encroachment while ensuring sustainable livelihoods for the communities around the lake requires continuous effort and collaboration among various stakeholders.



*Mr Owais Farooq Mir, DCF Kashmir Forest Dept and Project Coordinator, WUCMA, briefing about Wular Lake*





*Students leaving for field visit.*



*Students going towards the catchment area of Wular Lake*

Another student, Sheezan, inquired, “How does climate change specifically affect Wular Lake and its biodiversity?” Mr. Mir explained that climate change has led to alterations in the water levels and temperature of the lake, which in turn affects the aquatic life and the overall health of the wetland ecosystem. He noted that these changes also impact the agricultural practices and water availability for the local communities, making it imperative to integrate climate adaptation strategies into conservation plans.

The field immersion was led by Dr. Mehreen Khaleel of the Wildlife Research and Conservation Foundation. Dr. Khaleel split participants into groups of six members and guided them through various hands-on activities, allowing them to engage directly with the local environment. She provided insights into the flora and fauna of the region and explained the importance of each species in maintaining the ecological balance. Through this immersive experience, participants gained a deeper understanding of the practical aspects of wetland conservation and the crucial role of community involvement in preserving these vital ecosystems.

Overall, the field visit to Wular Vantage Park and Wular Lake was an enriching experience, providing participants with valuable knowledge and first-hand experience in wetland conservation. This initiative emphasized the importance of protecting natural resources and fostered a greater appreciation for the intricate connections between ecosystems and human communities.



*Wetland area of Wular Lake*



## Technical Session 6

### Understanding Solutions Journalism, Resources & Approach

Post field visit Mr. Nishant Saxena conducted the session focusing on solutions journalism, available resources, and role of AI in writing stories. “Solutions journalism is a form of reporting that concentrates on potential solutions to environmental challenges rather than solely highlighting problems,” he explained.

The session highlighted the key aspects of solutions journalism like it is action-oriented storytelling that focuses on responses to social and environmental challenges, it is evidence-based, utilizing rigorous research and verification to ensure credibility, it is human-centered, showcasing real people implementing solutions, and it is inspiring, empowering audiences to believe in change and take action.

He emphasized that solutions journalism is valuable because it combats despair and apathy, empowers individuals and communities, promotes innovation and collaboration, and informs policy and decision-making. It offers alternatives to the “doom and gloom” narrative, shows real people making a difference, highlights successful solutions and inspires wider adoption, and provides evidence-based strategies for change.

Participants learned about various digital tools and resources that can aid in practicing solutions journalism, including newsletters, Google, and artificial intelligence tools like Honestymeter.com and fullfact.org. These tools can help identify potential biases, fact-check claims, and provide precisely researched answers.

The session also covered useful resources such as a climate change glossary, an experts’ directory, and real-time updates, all of which can support effective environmental storytelling, particularly in the context of wetland conservation.

Participants gained insights into the principles and benefits of solutions journalism, as well as practical tools and resources, enabling them to approach environmental storytelling with a solutions-oriented mindset and effectively communicate potential solutions to wetland conservation challenges.



*Students interaction during the session*

## Wetland Mitras Orientation

Led by Ms. Annu Anand, an orientation session was conducted for the “Wetland Mitra” initiative, which aimed to engage participants as ambassadors for wetland conservation from Jammu & Kashmir. The session highlighted the concept and importance of Wetland Mitras and process of becoming friends of natural resources like lakes.

Ms. Annu Anand explained that Wetland Mitras are individuals who possess knowledge about local wetlands and their catchment areas. They are self-motivated and willing to dedicate their time to protect these vital ecosystems. Wetland Mitras act as influencers, supporting and understanding the issues and values associated with wetlands.

The role of Wetland Mitras is to create awareness about wetland protection and amplify voices advocating for conservation efforts. They can contribute at individual, civil society, and institutional levels by conserving water, participating in biodiversity protection, and organizing cleanliness and plantation drives.

She also mentioned, the purpose of the Wetland Mitra initiative is to secure ecosystem services by conserving biodiversity, improving water quality, providing recreational and socio-cultural opportunities, generating livelihoods, ensuring food security, and protecting against floods. It also aims to strengthen the wetland management process by increasing capacity for conservation, promoting micro-level participation, strengthening governance and sustainability, and establishing feedback mechanisms on management effectiveness.

During the orientation session, a pledge-taking ceremony was held, where 37 new Wetland Mitras from Srinagar committed to actively promoting and supporting wetland conservation efforts through their future endeavors. The participants pledged to raise awareness, advocate for wetland protection, and contribute to the overall goal of preserving these vital ecosystems for present and future generations.



*Students interaction during the session*





*Ms. Annu Anand conducted an orientation session on Wetland Mitras*

## Technical Session 7

### Producing Communication Material

Ms. Annu Anand conducted a brief session on producing communication materials, emphasizing the importance of effective communication in environmental advocacy. This session provided participants with valuable insights and practical guidelines on creating impactful content related to wetland conservation.

During the session, Ms. Anand highlighted the crucial role that effective communication plays in raising awareness and inspiring action for environmental causes. She explained that well-crafted communication materials can bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and public understanding, making complex environmental issues more accessible and engaging for a broad audience.

Ms. Anand began by discussing the fundamentals of content creation. She emphasized the importance of clarity and accuracy in conveying information about wetland conservation. Participants were encouraged to use simple and concise language to ensure their messages are easily understood by diverse audiences. Ms. Anand also stressed the need for thorough research and fact-checking to maintain credibility and reliability in their communication materials.

She provided tips on selecting appropriate images, graphics, and videos that effectively illustrate the key messages of wetland conservation. Participants learned about the power of infographics and how they can be used to present data in a visually appealing and easily digestible format.

In addition to content creation and visual storytelling, Ms. Anand highlighted the importance of leveraging different media platforms to maximize the reach and impact of communication efforts. She discussed the advantages and challenges of various platforms, including social media, websites, blogs, and traditional print media. Participants were encouraged to tailor their communication strategies to the specific characteristics and audience of each platform.

Ms. Anand provided practical examples and case studies to illustrate successful communication campaigns related to environmental advocacy. This session on producing communication materials was highly informative and practical. It equipped participants with the knowledge and skills needed to create impactful content that can raise awareness about wetland conservation and inspire positive change. By emphasizing the importance of clear messaging, visual storytelling, and strategic use of media platforms, the session underscored the vital role of effective communication in environmental advocacy.



*Participants receiving the certificate*



*Dr. Afsana Rashid, Faculty Member receiving Certificate from Ms Annu Anand*

## Certificate Distribution Ceremony

The two-day “Framing Wetlands: Media Student Capacity Building Programme” workshop concluded with a certificate distribution ceremony, recognizing the participants’ & partners engagement and commitment to wetland conservation and environmental journalism. This ceremony acknowledged their dedication and commitment to learning about wetland conservation and environmental journalism.

Throughout the workshop, participants engaged in various sessions and activities designed to enhance their understanding of wetland ecosystems and improve their skills in environmental reporting. Experts from different fields shared their knowledge on topics such as the importance of wetlands in the local community, the challenges they face, and effective communication strategies for advocacy. The interactive sessions provided students with practical insights into crafting compelling stories and using multimedia elements to raise awareness about environmental issues.

One of the key outcomes of the workshop was the increased awareness and understanding of wetland conservation among the participants. They learned about the ecological significance of wetlands, the threats they face from human activities and climate change, and the importance of community involvement in conservation efforts. The field visit to Wular Lake offered a hands-on experience, allowing students to observe the ecosystem and understand the real-world implications of wetland degradation and conservation.

The workshop also focused on building the participants’ capacity in environmental journalism. Through sessions on content creation, visual storytelling, and leveraging different media platforms, students gained valuable skills that will help them effectively communicate environmental issues to diverse audiences. The insights provided by experts like Dr. Pranab Patar, Mr. Nishant Saxena, Ms. Annu Anand and others were instrumental in shaping their understanding of how to convey complex scientific information in an engaging and accessible manner.

The concluding certificate distribution ceremony was a moment of recognition for the participants’ hard work and dedication over the two days. It also served as a networking opportunity, allowing students to connect with the experts and organizers.

In addition to the certificates, a group photo was taken to commemorate the workshop, symbolizing the collective commitment of the participants to continue their efforts in raising awareness and advocating for the protection of wetlands. The connections made during the workshop are anticipated to lead to productive future outcomes, as students stay in touch with the experts and utilize the lessons learned to make a positive impact in their communities and beyond.



## Feedback by Participants

Many students expressed satisfaction with the workshop's theme. A few students expressed that the wetland session was insightful and productive. A student brought up the fact that all of the sessions were delivered appropriately and that the organisers had done a fantastic job; they included both lively and educational lectures. Most students expressed that the event's organisation was interesting overall. Participants gave the experts and organisers a lot of credit for their hard work in making the workshop informative and insightful.

As far content is concerned few participants suggested that more presentations on wetlands should be included in the workshop's curriculum. One or two participants also shared that attending a journalism-related workshop helped her learn how to use the media as a tool to address and raise awareness of important issues like climate change. Students felt that while the topic was solid, more lively and video presentations would have more engaging which wasn't done due to the technical issue like in the venue.

According to the majority of students, technical sessions were the most effective since they helped them grasp the fundamental knowledge and abilities required to work on the climate change issue. Few commented how beneficial the field trip to Wular Lake was, as the students thoroughly loved it and came away with a clearer understanding of the concept of wetlands. According to the majority of participants, Wular Lake was the most incredible experience that had ever helped them learn as much as possible.

The students also made the suggestions for organising similar workshops in future like including more video related and hyper linked content. Some suggested holding at least five or six days of sessions in the future, improving the workshop atmosphere by adding more interactive activities and giving theory sessions less weight than practical ones. Many students proposed that the duration of the field trip should be extended, and the theory presentation should be condensed, since hands-on experience enhances learning. Many Majority of students demanded that there should be more technical session and be at points without going for data as data can found on online platform. Include lesson which can help students to apply those practical in real life career. Media Students also expected having an interaction with local communities around the lake to understand the root cause of pollution and other threats and impacts on their livelihood. They also suggested that either duration or frequency of the workshop needs to be increased to understand the different aspects of specialised subject like wetlands.



# Annexure-I



based on a decision of the German Bundestag



MAY 07 – 08, 2024 | 10:00 AM – 05:00 PM

Media House Auditorium, MERC, University of Kashmir, Srinagar

WORKSHOP DAY 1 (7th May) 2024, Media House Auditorium, Media Education Research Centre (MERC) University of Kashmir	
10:00-10:30	Registration of Participants in Auditorium
INAUGURAL SESSION	
10:30 – 10:35	Welcome Address by <b>Prof Sabeha Mufti</b> , HoD, Media Education Research Centre (MERC), University of Kashmir, Srinagar
10:35 – 10:50	<b>Introduction of CMS and Overview of the Program</b> Ms. Annu Anand, Director, CMS Programs
10:50– 11:10	Context setting by <b>Mr. Kunal Bharat</b> , Forestry and Biodiversity Advisor, GIZ
11:10 – 11:25	Special address by <b>Prof Nilofer Khan</b> , Vice Chancellor, University of Kashmir, Srinagar
11:25 – 11:30	Vote of Thanks: <b>Dr Afsana Rashid</b> Assistant Professor
11:30 – 11:40	Presentation of Mementoes
11:40 – 12:00	Tea & Coffee
TECHNICAL SESSIONS	
12:00 – 12:15	Introduction of the Participants
12:15 –13:00	<b>Session 1: Wetlands – Understanding the Mystery and Beauty of Wetlands</b> Presenter: <b>Dr Pranab Patar</b> , Senior Environment & Sustainability Expert
13:00 –13:45	<b>Session 2: Introduction to Environment Journalism and Communication</b> Presenter: <b>Mr. Nishant Saxena</b> , Climate Science Communication Expert
13:45 –14:00	INTERACTIVE SESSION
14:00 –14:45	Lunch Break
14:45 – 15:00	QUIZ
15:00 – 15:45	<b>Session 3: Challenges and Threats, Conservation Action, and Wetlands Restoration</b> Presenter: <b>Dr Pranab Patar</b> , Senior Environment & Sustainability Expert
15:45 – 16:30	<b>Session 4: How to tell a Compelling Story</b> Presenter <b>Ms. Annu Anand</b> , Director, CMS Programs
16:30 – 16:45	<b>Session 5: Orientation for becoming Wetland Mitras</b> Presenter: <b>Ms. Annu Anand</b> , Director, CMS Programs
16:45– 17:15	<b>Briefing about the Plan of Exposure Visit on Day 2</b> Presenter: <b>Dr Pranab Patar</b> , Senior Environment & Sustainability Expert
17:15	Tea & coffee
WORKSHOP DAY 2 (8th May), 2024 Media House Auditorium, Media Education Research Centre (MERC) University of Kashmir	
09:30-10:30	<b>Travel to Wular Vantage Park, Garoora</b> Participants Reporting and Registration at the University Campus
10:30-11:30	<b>Special brief- Knowing Wular Lake up close</b> <b>Wular Lake Wetland Values and Threats</b> <b>Key Management Interventions</b> Presenters: <b>Mr Owais Farooq Mir</b> , DCF Kashmir Forest Dept and Project Coordinator, WUCMA <b>Dr Mehreen Khaleel</b> , Founder, Wildlife Research and Conservation Foundation
11:30 – 12:00	Tea & coffee
12:00-13:00	Travel back to University of Kashmir, Srinagar
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00-14:45	<b>Session 6: Solution Journalism, Resources and Approach</b> Presenter: <b>Mr. Nishant Saxena</b> , Climate Science Communication Expert
14:45-15:00	<b>Pledge Ceremony of Wetland Mitras</b>
15:00-16:00	<b>Session 7: Discussion on Producing Communication Material</b> Presenter: <b>Ms. Annu Anand</b> , Director, CMS Programs
16:00-17:00	<b>Certificate Distribution Ceremony &amp; Group Photograph</b>



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