CSE Online Training on
Integrated Online and Residential Training "Revive Your River"
(July 9-22, 2025)

The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) successfully conducted a comprehensive two-week online training programme titled *"Integrated Online and Residential Training on Revive Your River"* **from July 9 to 22, 2025.** The training was designed to enhance the knowledge and skills of professionals and institutions in planning and implementing effective strategies for river conservation and rejuvenation. The programme received an enthusiastic response, with 104 registrations and 98 confirmed participants, reflecting a strong interest in sustainable water resource management and urban river restoration.

The participants represented a diverse geographic and professional mix, hailing from 7 Indian states. This diversity enriched the learning experience, allowing participants to engage with different perspectives and share region-specific challenges and solutions. Notably, the training had a healthy gender representation, with 38 percent female and 62 percent male participants, reflecting CSE's ongoing efforts toward gender inclusivity in capacity-building programmes. The profiles of the participants spanned a wide range of sectors, including government departments**,** urban local bodies**,** Jal Nigam, public health and engineering departments**,** state development agency**,** and national NGOs**.** This diversity ensured rich discussions and knowledge exchange during the course.

The training programme officially commenced on **July 9, 2025**, with an introductory session led by **Mr. Vivek Kumar Sah, Programme Officer, Water Programme, CSE.** The session was designed to orient participants to the structure, content, and objectives of the course. The programme followed a blended learning approach, combining live expert-led virtual sessions, interactive discussions, and self-paced online modules delivered through the Moodle learning platform. In his welcome address, Mr. Sah introduced the key themes of the training and provided a comprehensive walkthrough of the Moodle platform, guiding participants on accessing course materials, attending live sessions, engaging in discussions, and completing assessments. The session also outlined the expected level of participation and clarified the intended learning outcomes, setting the stage for an effective and engaging training experience.

The second virtual session, conducted on **July 12, 2025**, featured **Ms. Sushmita Sengupta, Senior Programme Manager** at the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE). During the session, she presented a detailed overview of the agenda for cleaning the Yamuna River. She highlighted key issues affecting the river's health, such as untreated sewage, industrial pollution, and encroachments. Ms. Sengupta also discussed proposed interventions, policy measures, and the need for better implementation and monitoring to restore the Yamuna's ecological balance.

The third virtual session of the online training, held on **July 14, 2025**, was conducted by **Mr. Shashi Shekhar, Former Secretary, Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.** His session focused on the various challenges associated with protecting rivers in urban areas, with a special emphasis on the Ganga as a case example. He spoke about key issues such as increasing pollution from domestic sewage and industrial waste, loss of natural riverbanks due to encroachments, and fragmented governance. Mr. Shekhar also stressed the need for a basin-level approach, better planning, and stronger institutional coordination to rejuvenate rivers.

The fourth virtual session of the training, held on **July 15, 2025**, was led by **Ms. Aditi Deodhar, Founder-Director of Jeevitnadi, Pune**. In her session titled *"River in Court: Case Example of Mula-Mutha,"* she discussed the legal battles and civic action surrounding the pollution and degradation of the Mula-Mutha River in Pune. She highlighted how citizens, civil society groups, and legal interventions have played a critical role in holding authorities accountable. The session emphasized the importance of public engagement, policy enforcement, and judicial activism in protecting and restoring urban rivers like Mula-Mutha.

The fifth virtual session of the training, conducted on **July 16 2025**, was delivered by **Mr. Stalin D, environmentalist, habitat conservationist, and Director of the non-profit organization Vana Shakti, Mumbai.** His session, titled *"River in Court: Case Example of Mithi River,"* focused on the legal and environmental struggles to protect and revive the Mithi River. He highlighted the impact of unchecked urbanization, pollution, and encroachments on the river and discussed how sustained legal action and community participation have been key in pushing for accountability and ecological restoration of the Mithi River in the Mumbai metropolitan region.

The sixth virtual session of the training, held on **July 17 2025,** was conducted by **Mr. Rajeev Ranjan Mishra, Former Director General of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)**. His session focused on the importance of both government and citizen initiatives in protecting and rejuvenating rivers. He provided insights into the Namami Gange programme, covering its holistic approach—ranging from infrastructure development like sewage treatment plants to afforestation and biodiversity restoration. Mr. Mishra emphasized that policy and technology must go hand in hand with community involvement. He also shared successful case studies where public awareness, grassroots movements, and institutional collaboration significantly improved river health, particularly in the Ganga basin. He concluded by stressing that long-term river conservation is only possible when government policies are supported by sustained civic participation, local leadership, and inter-agency coordination.

The seventh virtual session of the training, held on **July 18, 2025,** featured **Ms. Hiranya Tallam, Programme Manager at the Administrative Staff College of India (ASCI).** She spoke on *"Managing Faecal Sludge in Cities – Case Example: Hyderabad."* Her session highlighted how Hyderabad adopted decentralised faecal sludge treatment, strong regulatory frameworks, and stakeholder engagement to improve urban sanitation. She emphasized the importance of data-driven planning, public-private partnerships, and integrating FSSM into city systems as a practical solution in areas lacking conventional sewerage infrastructure.

The eighth virtual session of the training was led by **Ms. Umra Anees, Programme Officer at the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE),** on **July 21, 2025.** In her session titled *"Managing Water and Wastewater in Non-Sewered Areas – Case Example: Sangam Vihar,"* she discussed the unique challenges faced by unplanned and underserved urban settlements. Using Sangam Vihar in Delhi as a case study, she highlighted decentralized solutions for water supply and wastewater management. Ms. Anees emphasized the importance of community participation, local governance, and low-cost technologies in ensuring safe and sustainable services in non-sewered areas.

The ninth virtual session of the training was held on **July 22 2025,** and was delivered by **Mr. Jyoti Prasad Dadhich, Deputy Programme Manager at the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).** His session, titled *"Waste to Worth – Success Stories on Reuse of Wastewater,"* focused on innovative approaches to wastewater reuse across different sectors. He shared successful examples from various Indian cities, highlighting how treated wastewater is being effectively reused for agriculture, landscaping, and industrial purposes. Mr. Dadhich emphasized the environmental and economic benefits of reuse, along with the importance of supportive policies, decentralized systems, and public engagement.

A Q&A session was also organized by the CSE team on **July 22, 2025**, to address participant's queries and clarify concepts covered during the training. The discussion encouraged experience-sharing among participants, enabling peer learning and deeper understanding. The CSE team also provided additional resources and suggestions based on the questions raised, making the session a valuable opportunity to reinforce learning and support real-world application of the training content.

<u>Snaps of the virtual sessions</u>.