

# Flow of clear thoughts sweeps away a

## Ideas Pour In At TOI-IIT-Gn-Asia Pacific Network Round Table

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Ahmedabad: Gujarat's rivers may be choking with society's apathy for now, but clear thoughts have begun to flow. At the first ever round table organised by TOI along with IIT-Gn-Asia Pacific Network to address the burning problem of polluted rivers, experts gave a clarion call for participative governance, where each stakeholder works in cohesive unity to save our river ecosystems from dying.

Among the 22 participants was Umesh Desai from Agha Khan Rural Support Programme who showed how community involvement of Malviya village in Saurashtra helped revive Meghal river, which also led to 50% recharge of underground aquifers.

IIT-Gn professor Manish Kumar emphasised how emerging threats like microplastics, antibiotic-resistant bacteria in river waters, escape sewage treat-

wari said activists oppose setting up of landfill sites or treatment facilities. "They declare 'Not in My Backyard' even without understanding the technology. If industries continue to shut down because of pollution, there will be massive unemployment. How do you draw a balance?" Assistant professor IIT-Gn Amit Prashant added, "People will have to be made stakeholders for improving transparency, accountability." He added, "Why can't cities install sensors at various points in a river and declare river health on LED

boards everyday like they do for air pollution or heat."



Public health expert IIPH director Dileep Mavlankar and urban management

centre director Manvita Baradi emphasised on more empirical studies that link environment and public health. Baradi added that overdrawal of ground water for domestic use aggravated sewage problem. "There is impetus on building toilets but no matching sewage treatment infra-



**NOTABLES AT TOI TABLE:** Those who participated included Dr Shyam Pingle, Dr Veena Iyer, Nisarg Panchal, Omi Kumari, Dr Saumya Haldar, Dr Anil Kumar, Prof Absar Kazmi, Prof Prasun Bhattacharya, and G B Vasavada

### STEPS TO BE TAKEN SUGGESTIONS



**STRENGTHEN MONITORING SYSTEM FOR WATER QUALITY CHECK:** Only hard, empirical data can reveal the current situation based on which the future course can be charted. Data is also required to monitor periodical changes in water volume and quality in rivers

**SEGREGATION AT SOURCE IS BEST BET:** Industry and households must address the problem of water contamination at their doorstep so that the burden can be reduced on the centralized system



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Voices from other countries

**RIVER SUTRA**  
SAVE OUR RIVERS  
A TIMES OF INDIA ENDEAVOUR

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**IMPROVE ENFORCEMENT:**

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