

TECHNICAL ACTIVITY CARRIED OUT BY CENTRES / OVERSEAS CHAPTERS

Name of Centre / Overseas Chapter:		Meerut Local Centre	
Title of Activity:		World Water Day	
Activity under Divisional Board (delete which are not applicable):		Statutory Day	
Date:	22-03-2026	Venue:	IEI Office A-12 Surya Nagar, Saket, Meerut

(Insert photo)	(Insert photo)
	
Title of photo: Some of the attendees in the seminar	Title of photo: Dignitaries on Dais

Brief Report

The Meerut Local Centre conducted a seminar to celebrate World Water Day 2026 on 22 March 2026. The Meerut Local Centre office hosted this meeting. Er. S.C. Mittal, Chairman, IE(I) LCC Meerut, chaired the meeting, and Honorary Secretary Er. Nikhil Kishore conducted the proceedings. Two keynote speakers, Honorary Secretary Er. Nikhil Kishore and Er. B.D. Sharma, Convener, IWRS Meerut and Member, LCC IE(I) Meerut, presented their views and deliberated on the subject theme.

After the welcome address by the Chairman, Hon. Secretary Er. Nikhil Kishore stated that World Water Day is a UN observance day celebrated on March 22 every year to raise awareness about freshwater issues and support SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) for universal water and sanitation access and SDG 5 (Gender Equality).

Er. Kishore spoke about the theme of this year's event. He said that the official theme for 2026 is "Water and Gender." It highlights how the global water crisis disproportionately affects women and girls, who often bear the primary responsibility for water collection, sanitation, and family care.

The Honorary Secretary, Er. Nikhil Kishore, started his deliberations and presentation by highlighting the subject theme. He made three key observations:

1. Women and girls disproportionately shoulder the responsibility for collecting water for their households, often travelling long distances daily. This reduces their time for education, work, rest, and participation in community life.
2. Access to safe sanitation and hygiene services is also a gender issue—the lack of private, secure facilities increases the risk of harassment and

negatively affects women's dignity, health, and ability to manage menstruation and pregnancy with privacy and safety.

3. Despite performing much of the world's water-related labour, women are frequently underrepresented in leadership roles and decision-making related to water policies, governance, and infrastructure.

Er. Kishore described the key focus areas, stating that this theme emphasises empowering women in water management decisions, leadership, and policies to promote gender equality and sustainable solutions.

It addresses inequalities where women and girls lack rights to safe water, advocating for their inclusion to make water systems more resilient against climate change.

Er. Kishore explained how the water crisis affects women and girls. He stated that women and girls bear the brunt of the crisis due to entrenched gender roles, social norms, and systemic inequalities that assign them primary responsibility for water collection and household hygiene. Globally, 1.8 billion people lack water on their premises, and in 70% of these households, women and girls aged 15+ handle water collection, often making long and dangerous trips that expose them to physical strain, assault, and harassment.

He further explained the time and opportunity losses affecting women. This daily burden, estimated at 250 million hours worldwide, steals time from education, work, and leisure, perpetuating cycles of poverty and limiting economic independence, especially for girls who miss school. Girls under 15 are nearly twice as likely as boys to fetch water, starting unpaid labour early and widening gender gaps in opportunities.

Er. Kishore also highlighted the health and safety risks faced by women and girls. Carrying heavy loads causes pain and injury, and long journeys expose them to risks of violence and disease due to poor sanitation.

He also explained broader inequalities, stating that climate change worsens these impacts, reducing income in female-headed households.

Er. Kishore suggested solutions, emphasizing that addressing gender disparities in water access requires infrastructure improvements, empowerment, and policy reforms that centre women and girls in decision-making. Infrastructure upgrades should provide safe water and sanitation services near homes and schools, supported by effective water policies.

He further suggested measures for empowerment and inclusion, stating that women and girls should be involved in the planning, governance, and leadership of water projects.

On policy and advocacy, he emphasized the need for legal reforms ensuring equal resource rights, education to challenge social norms, and increased financing for female-headed households.

Photographs on Gender inequality presented by Hony. Secretary Er. Nikhil Kishore during his presentation.



After his address, the Hon. Secretary invited Er. B.D. Sharma, Convener IWRS Meerut and Member LCC, to speak on the subject theme.

Er. Sharma began his address by sharing a few key points:

On the occasion of World Water Day, he highlighted that only 2.5% of the planet's water is freshwater, with 68.7% trapped in glaciers and ice caps. India faces significant water challenges, having 4% of global freshwater resources but 18% of the world's population. This year's UN World Water Day theme, "Water and Gender," emphasizes the disproportionate impact on women.

He presented alarming statistics: 1 in 5 women lack access to safe drinking water, and women spend 250 million hours daily on water collection, far exceeding men's contributions. He stressed the need for inclusive water management, highlighting women's underrepresentation in decision-making roles despite comprising 20% of the water sector workforce. He also emphasized India's urgent need for effective water strategies given its population and limited resources.

He discussed future water challenges, including increasing droughts and floods, changing drought characteristics (now lasting 1–3 years), and the risk of "Day Zero" water crises, as seen in Chennai (2017). He highlighted the importance of water conservation, citing UN SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation for All).

Key global statistics include:

- 2.2 billion people lack safe drinking water
- 3.4 billion lack safe sanitation
- 1.7 billion lack basic hygiene services
- One-fourth of the global population faces high water stress

He emphasized that sustainable water management is essential to mitigate these risks.

Regarding India's efforts to address future water stress, he noted that the Ministry of

Water Resources is implementing key initiatives such as:

- Providing tap water connections to 15.8 crore rural households
- The 'Catch the Rain' campaign, creating 45 lakh water conservation structures (including 27.6 lakh groundwater recharge structures)
- Approval of 3,568 water supply projects worth ₹1.14 lakh crore and 1.81 lakh new tap connections
- National Water Awards to promote water conservation

Under Viksit Bharat 2047, India aims for integrated water governance focusing on conservation, groundwater recharge, efficient water use, community participation, corporate partnerships, and CSR initiatives for industries.

He also highlighted innovative approaches such as Sumul Dairy's water conservation model using recharge wells to conserve monsoon water and reduce water consumption costs.

Key focus areas under Viksit Bharat 2047 include:

- Water metering for integrated management
- Innovative irrigation techniques
- Groundwater recharge
- Restoration of water bodies

Queries raised by the audience were replied suitably by the speaker Er. B.D. Sharma.

Finally, Er. Nikhil Kishore, Honorary Secretary, Meerut Local Centre, The Institution of Engineers (India), delivered the vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to all participants for their valuable contributions.