

# Green lessons held out in the open for Puneites

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**T**he first step towards conservation is awareness. Pune is blessed with natural resources — and preserving them is the responsibility of every citizen. However, do you really know Punyanagari? Would you be able to wax eloquent about the Mula and

## GREEN WARRIOR

Mutha rivers or the history of Vetal Tekdi? Maybe not.

In order to counter the ignorance, organisations like Jeevitnadi and community groups like Youth Cosmo are aiding Pune's conservation with information at its core. A group of scientists, environmentalists, teachers, parents and other citizens have come together to initiate a unique



Pic courtesy: Jeevitnadi Living River Foundation

**IN THE MIDST OF NATURE:** Jeevitnadi's ongoing awareness sessions are conducted at the confluence of the Ram and Mula rivers on Sunday

informal open forum called the Earth Katta — which is meant for children.

Hrishikesh Bichu, one of the core members of the group, told **TOI** that the initiative, while directed at children, welcomes people of all ages. "We want children to explore nature and fall in love with it. The goal is to intro-

duce complex concepts through activities, creating an interesting experience. The hope is that going forward, they will give it equal importance in the lifestyle choice that they make," Bichu said.

"We encourage parents to come along, so the conversation doesn't end after the kids leave. We want them to take it



Dissemination of information is for anyone who wants to know more about the rivers. There is a need for people to know that their opinion matters, as only then will they fight back. Understanding the basic information allows for preservation in its natural form and the opportunity to take further action

— **Divyanshu Pawar** |

ONE OF THE CURATORS OF THE  
JEEVITNADI PROGRAMME

home and work towards creating an impact," he added.

In the city, the current opposition to the Bal Bharti-Paud Phata link road or the ongoing riverfront development project has made it pertinent that discussions and initiatives such as these be treated with urgency.

Jeevitnadi – the Living

River foundation, actively working to protect the riverfront against concreting of its banks, has also been holding sessions for volunteers and those interested.

Curated like a course, it teaches you everything you need to know to become an informed river warrior. The topics covered include hydrology, science communication, geology, biodiversity, ecology and even administrative aspects of fighting the fight. These sessions are held at the Ram Mula confluence, in the open forest environment.

Ten-year-old Aakash Athaide is the youngest attendee of these sessions. "There's so much to learn about the rivers. I want to work in the field of conservation when I grow up. It feels nice to sit in the forest and learn about nature," Aakash told **TOI**.