

Help Foundation is undertaking another battle with regards to the illegal construction at Kappil Estuary only to find as usual, that our government officials and leaders from the bottom to the top are lame and hypocritical.

# Panchayats trade charges over lake encroachment

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Under the ongoing blame game between two panchayats - Kottappuram and Edava - over the possession of Kappil Lake in Kollam, illegal construction on the Lake in the name of a boat jetty is continuing. The encroachment is a blatant violation of Coastal Regulation Zone norms, but the panchayat authorities have given tacit permission for the construction even as a ban order prevails. They blame each other for not preventing the construction or even taking action against the illegal construction.

The construction of a concrete structure about 30 meters out into the Paravur Lake at the Kappil estuary has been resumed despite directions by the Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority (KCZMA) that 'the construction is permitted only for the purpose of a boat jetty'.

Based on inspections conducted at the controversial site, the Kerala Coastal Zone Management Authority had in March 2016 granted CRZ clearance for the development of Kappil beach as a tourist destination by issuing an order stating the 'construction will be permitted only for the purpose of boat jetty'.

Further, the Authority



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had also issued a warning that all non-permissible activities in the project would be removed and that the debris, if any, should not be put into the water body, thereby contaminating the water and damaging the environment.

Incidentally, a boat jetty is already operational at

the spot.

"As we have a ban order from CRZ, revisiting and trying to continue the construction of the structure is nothing but challenging the law of the land. At least, the authorities should step in and dismantle the structure in order to preserve the environment. The two village officers should interfere in the issue for a settlement without fighting things out politically," Peter Pradeep, director of HELP foundation, who was in the forefront of protest against the encroachment of the lake told DC.

The construction will pose a serious threat to the Paravoor Lake and the estuary which is already in an ecologically and environmentally fragile state.

An illegal construction, which was stopped in 2015 at the mouth of Kappil estuary, has now resumed clandestinely. The stop order was issued during the tenure of Shri Ramachandran Kizhur as member secretary (KCZMA) and Shri Harinarayanan associated with Sasthra Bhavan was involved in stopping this work in Kappil Lake.



We noticed that the construction started again clandestinely while the stop orders are in place. Is there no rule of law in our land? The work is being done illegally by the DTPC/Tourism Department and should be stopped right away. Let the offenders be booked under the law of the land irrespective of whether government or private party.

The village officer at Edavai, seemed to passing the buck on being asked about it and cited a strange dispute created by two bordering village offices Edavai (Thiruvananthapuram district) and Kottapuram (Kollam district) as to who has the jurisdiction of this lake.

HELP Foundation has been dealing for a while with the Edavai Village Office and the Thiruvananthapuram collector to get this work stopped on numerous occasions, and now all of sudden, the farce about this dispute over jurisdiction has been manufactured by Edavai village officer, enabling the construction to continue.

We ran into another complexity with the KCZMA (Costal Management) function moving out of Sasthra Bhavan to Environmental Department and having to deal with a whole new set of officials. The issue has been raised once again with the Thiruvananthapuram collector.

When Finance Minister Dr T M [Thomas Isaac](#) was in the Opposition, he stood with HELP Foundation on this case. Now, the current LDF MLA Shri Joy is spear heading it with Dr Isaac's department providing funds. Not sure why do we flout all laws at the behest of MLAs irrespective of party affiliations? This hypocrisy has to stop.



Human Empowerment & Livelihood Promotion Foundation