

■ 56-km ITHIKKARA RIVER has lost over 20 km upstream in over three decades. The catchment area has turned a barren slope, populated mostly by oil palm plantations.



Pictures arranged by Help Foundation

THE STORY OF A DYING RIVER

SHAM MOHAMMED | DC
KOLLAM, APRIL 23

The Ithikkara river, which was once the lifeline of the district, is dying due to the cruelties inflicted on nature by man. The river with a total length of 56 km has lost some 20 km upstream over a span of three decades. Its catchment area has been turned into a barren hill mostly by the oil palm plantations on the Western Ghats.

The river originates from the low hills situated near Madathara Kunnu, about 240 metres above mean sea level, and from the hills along the south-west of Kulathupuzha on the Western Ghats. It flows mostly through Kollam district across Anchal, Ittiva, Edamulackal, Chadayamangalam, Elamuda, Velinallor, Pallickal, Kalluvathukal, Pooyapally, Adichanalloor and Chattanoor and finally empties into Paravur kayal.

A recent study done by HELP Foundation, an NGO led by Mr Peter Pradeep, social scientist and environmentalist, revealed that the river has become non-perennial and dried up upstream due to illegal quarries, mining and large-scale deforestation in the catchment areas.

"There is no drinking water

RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE STUDY REPORT

- ▶ The state government should take over the area of 3646 hectares spread over Yeroor, Chithara and Kulathupuzha estates leased out to Plantation Corporation and not allow re-plantation of oil palms.
- ▶ Forest department together with the grama panchayats of Yeroor, Chithara and Kulathupuzha should do afforestation to develop it as a contiguous stretch of forest as part of Western Ghats.
- ▶ Afforestation should be carried out together with participation of the BMCs of the panchayats and local NGOs.
- ▶ Identify and phase out pollution sources along the river stretch.
- ▶ Take action to revive and sustain the local wildlife habitat.
- ▶ Entrust the upkeep and conservation of the forest to the local population and the tribes who live within the upper catchment area.
- ▶ The environment department should protect the river through the local bodies.
- ▶ Minor irrigation department and panchayats should protect the rivulets which feed the river from encroachment through biological methods and not through construction.
- ▶ Extension of Paravur lake and Ithikkara river protection societies' activities with adequate representation for local bodies and indigenous people.
- ▶ The survey department should survey the river and demarcate the river banks and end the encroachments.

in any of the panchayats, which has been caused by the apathy of the authorities. We visited all the panchayats through which Ithikkara river flows and we realised that the river dries up upstream and remains so during most part of the year. The borewells dug along the banks of the river in several panchayats have resulted in the non-function-

ing of hyperic zone or even the river bed," Mr Peter Pradeep said.

The upper catchment area has undergone massive deforestation over the past three decades in the name of plantations and the river has shrunk to tiny streams from the hills. These rivulets merge at various places and converge at Moonattummukku. This is the

spot from where the Ithikkara river originates. The rivulet from Edappana merges into Vengoodu thodu and travels towards Moonattummukku. The rivulet originating from Annapallayam accepts various other tiny streams from O n t h u p a c h a , Thakaramannu, Cheenikkala, and Vattavanpanna and proceeds towards

Moonattummukku. Just a few metres from Moonattummukku, Darppanna thodu merges and thus it starts the long journey of 56 km through 12 local bodies and merges into Paravur lake. "The river bank atlas prepared by CESS has none of these details," Mr. Pradeep said.

The catchment area is where water collects when it rains and eventually feeds the river. Some quantity of water goes underground and feeds the river in times of low rainfall. The catchment of Ithikkara river is now a barren hill as part of an oil palm plantation on the Western Ghats.

"The entire 3646 hectares of Oil Palm India Limited established in 1977 are spread over three estates of Yeroor, Chithara, and Kulathupuzha. This was made possible by destroying the forest on the foothill of Western Ghats and planting palm saplings. Rubber trees are also planted along these portions of the catchment area. As many as eight local bodies are suffering from severe drinking water shortage and there is virtually nothing flowing down from the catchment area for most part of the year," Mr. Pradeep said. For grown up yielding palms of three years and above, a minimum of 150 to 200 litres of

water and even 300 litres for older plantations are required, which explains the gradual reduced summer flow of Ithikkara river, he added.

There is no drinking water in any of the panchayats, which has been caused by the apathy of the authorities. We visited all the panchayats through which Ithikkara river flows and we realised that the river dries up upstream and remains so during most part of the year. The borewells dug along the banks of the river in several panchayats have resulted in the non-functioning of hyperic zone or even the river bed

— PETER PRADEEP,
social scientist and environmentalist



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Project DAYA– Dialysis Assistance Programme-

DHWANI– FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

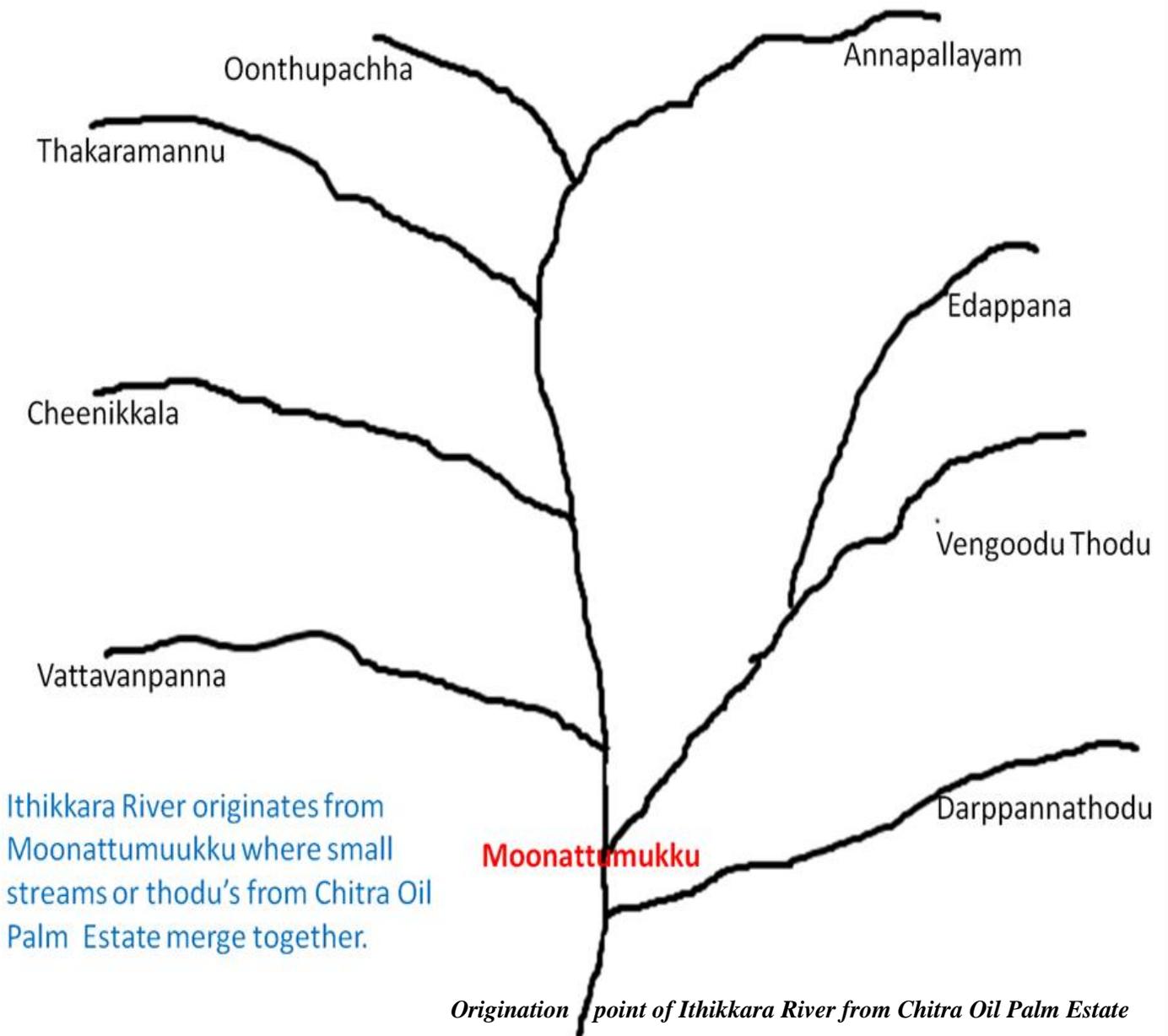
80% of India’s surface water may be polluted

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Catchment area of Ithikkara River

Cover Story

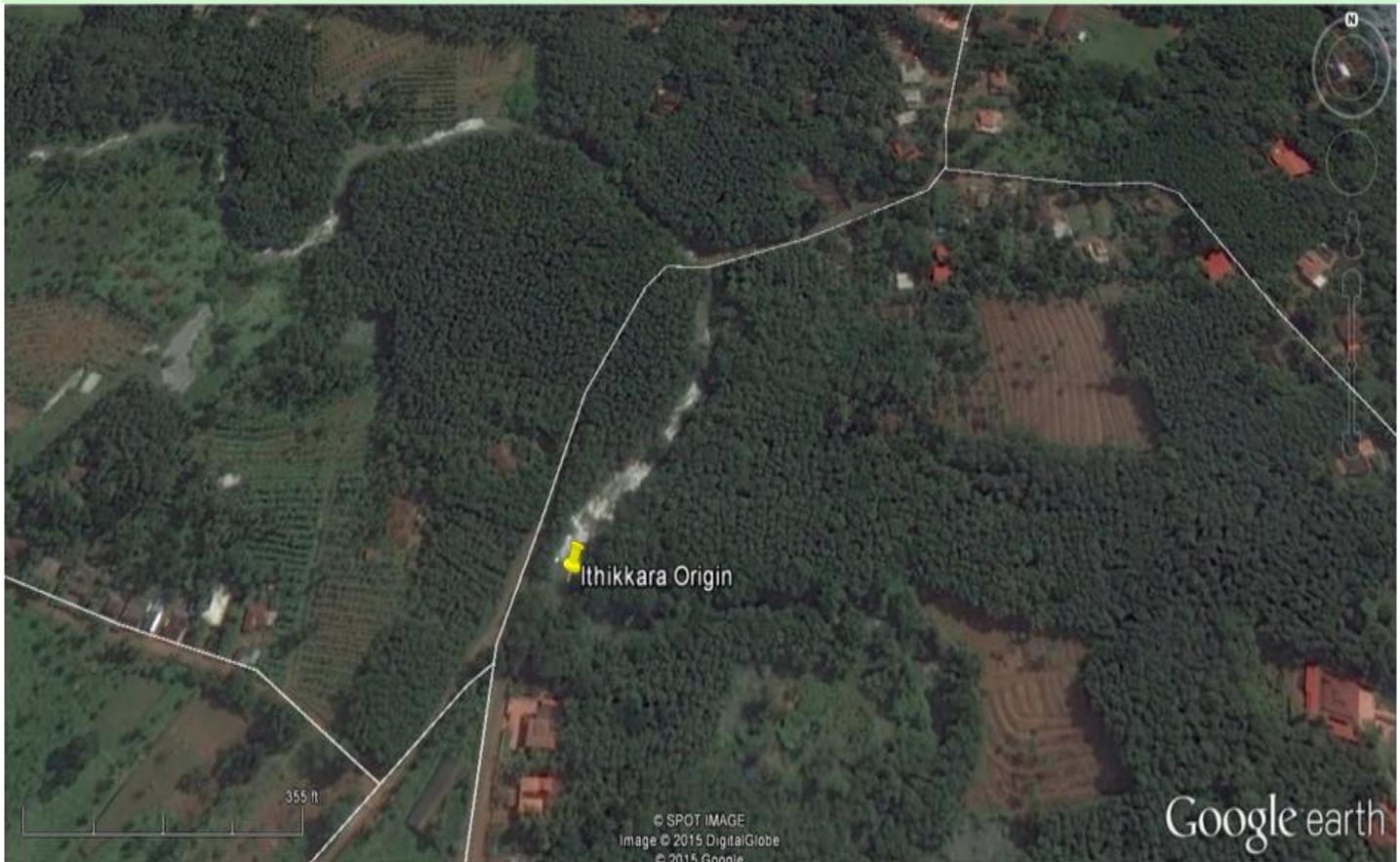


HELP Foundation has been carrying out ecosystem restoration activities in Ithikkara River-Paravur Lake-Arabian Sea interface for the past 3 years. Ithikkara River empties itself into Paravur Lake thus terminating its 56 Km run. People who live near the river and its tributaries indeed are deeply concerned about the decline of the river's water retention capacity due to loss of riparian vegetation, tree cover, top soil loss, illegal sand mining and also the serious water pollution issues due to garbage and waste disposal into the river all

along the stretch of it. There is now acute shortage of water in summer. The once healthy river is in peril of disappearing in the immediate future. This led us to travel to all the Panchayats where Ithikkara River flows and what we realized was contrary to popular perception the river is non perennial. It dries up in very long stretches upstream and it remains like that most part of the year.

Further our discussions with the Panchayats through the River Watch Committees

Ariel View of the Catchment Area during monsoon where the origination point is seen amidst Oil Palms



constituted by HELP Foundation gave us more insights into the dilapidation that has happened over the last 3 decades. This prompted us to visit the catchment area and study the catchment area itself as to why is the river non perennial or rather how can we arrest the slide of the river and look for ways to protect the river.

Hence such a report is being put out by HELP Foundation for bringing this matter urgently to the authorities so that not only Ithikkara River but also the Catchment area of Kallada River which feeds Ashtamudi Lake can also be strengthened. Already Ashtamudi Lake is reeling under sever water shortage due to the Kallada Irrigation Diversion and the catchment

area is occupied by plantations. The report can be accessed from the below link at:

<http://helpfoundation.in/publications/Ithikkara%20Rivers%20Upper%20Catchment%20-%20Myths%20and%20Reality-final.pdf>



Darppannathodu merger into Ithikkara River



Vengoodu Thodu - Origination Point

Short Stay Home for the Girl Child through ICPS

Rental agreement in place between the land lord and the panchayat secretary. This has been acquired at PWD rates by the panchayat for setting up the home. Also first meeting at the home was held. The proposal for the home was based on the outcome of the Child Rights survey conducted in the Panchayat and on the advice of both Child Welfare Committee and District Child Protection Officer of Kollam. This building was made possible through the good offices of Janasakthi another NGO based out of Kollam. This is a first for Kerala where a Panchayat is joining



ICPS Meeting in full swing at Mayyanad Gramapanchayat

hands with an NGO towards running a home for kids. We need models for people to emulate and more importantly assists Local Bodies to do

step up to the challenges with governance. We are expecting registration for the home anytime soon from Social Justice Department.

Mangrove Nursery Preparation

In December-2014, we had planted 2000 additional saplings raised from a make-shift nursery along the banks of Paravur Lake in association with Mayyanad Panchayat. The mission of HELP Foundation is to promote healthy coastal ecosystems through a partnership-based, people-focused, policy relevant and investment-orientated approach, which builds and applies knowledge, empowers communities and other stakeholders, enhances governance, secures livelihoods, and increases resilience to natural hazards and climate change. This quarter we have focused our resources towards setting up a Permanent Wetland Nursery/Mangrove Nursery at a new location along the banks of Paravur Lake. Looking forward to see how we can take our conservation activities one step further by raising more wetland saplings suitable for planting along the river beds too.



Nursery preparation in progress



Tree Planting Drive

Tree Planting Drive led by HELP Foundation in associations with Local Bodies, and the follow up of the same with a good monitoring mechanism which involves schools and local libraries. This was made possible through the PEC scheme of Dept of Environment and Climate Change. The emphasis is not on planting but on preserving and protecting the saplings throughout the initial three years by emphasis on good quality tree guard and monitoring throughout the year. This is the DNA of the project and not the tree plantation drive. Trust with cooperation from all concerned we can bring down the mortality rate of the saplings.



HELP Foundation's Green pledge being administered

Series on Paravur Lake-Ithikkara River Ecosystem

HELP Foundation campaign protection, conservation and ecosystem restoration of the Ithikkara River- Paravur Lake-Arabian Sea interface has now caught the attention of the media and major dailies have carried the stories of the past year. Recently Kerala kumuidi Senior Editor Rajan Babu ran a series on the same highlighting the importance of what HELP Foundation has been working with the district and state administration. This series can be viewed from the link below:

http://helpfoundation.in/media.html.

Very sad to report that there is no accountability with the government and with every transfer of the person occupying the post the issues takes a back seat. Wonder how can we work with Government employees as its turning out to be a nightmare.

ഇത്തിക്കര ആറിന് ഇനി ദയാവധം വിധി

ഇത്തിക്കരയാറ് ഒഴുകിയെത്തിയില്ലെങ്കിൽ പരവൂർ കായൽ മരിക്കും. ഹെൽപ്പ് ഫൗണ്ടേഷൻ നടത്തിയ പഠനത്തിന്റെ കണ്ടെത്തലാണ്. ഇതിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ പ്രത്യേക ലേഖകൻ കെ. രാജൻബാവു തയ്യാറാക്കിയ പരമ്പരയുടെ ഒന്നാം ഭാഗം



ഇളമ്പ്രയാർതടവുകൾക്കു മരണവാറണ്ട്



കായലിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ പ്രത്യേക ലേഖകൻ കെ. രാജൻബാവു തയ്യാറാക്കിയ പരമ്പരയുടെ ഒന്നാം ഭാഗം



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ഉറവിടം ഉണക്കിയത് പ്ലാങ്ക്ടൺ

പ്ലാങ്ക്ടൺ ഉറവിടം ഉണക്കിയത് പ്ലാങ്ക്ടൺ. ഇത്തിക്കരയാറിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ പ്രത്യേക ലേഖകൻ കെ. രാജൻബാവു തയ്യാറാക്കിയ പരമ്പരയുടെ ഒന്നാം ഭാഗം

പരവൂർ കായൽ മൈതാനമായി മാറാനു ഇനി എത്രനാൾ!



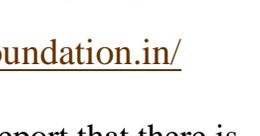
ഇളമ്പ്രയാർതടവുകൾക്കു മരണവാറണ്ട് 2



പരവൂർ കായൽ മൈതാനമായി മാറാനു ഇനി എത്രനാൾ! ഇത്തിക്കരയാറിന്റെ അടിസ്ഥാനത്തിൽ പ്രത്യേക ലേഖകൻ കെ. രാജൻബാവു തയ്യാറാക്കിയ പരമ്പരയുടെ ഒന്നാം ഭാഗം

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ഇളമ്പ്രയാർതടവുകൾക്കു മരണവാറണ്ട് 3



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- പരവൂർ കായൽ സംരക്ഷണ പദ്ധതി
പാലൂർ കായലിന് പരവൂർ കായലിനോടു തുല്യമായി സംരക്ഷിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്.
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DAYA- HELP Foundation's Dialysis assistance programme



Dr. Jacob Vadakkancheri addressing students of Auxilium School, Kottiyam

As part of HELP Foundation's DAYA Programme we have started to conduct awareness programmes regularly to alert the common man especially the next generation about prevention of renal diseases and renal failure through leading a healthy lifestyle. Prevention is key to controlling expensive diseases like kidney ailments.

Consumption of medicine over the counter is one among the major causes of kidney failure.

Generosity, ethics, tolerance, perseverance, concentration and intelligence are the most important qualities that every healthcare professional should adopt. But many of them forget the ethical practice and use their profession to make money through pre-prescribing excess medicines, unwanted tests and even use their patients for testing medicines for commercial companies. The money they earn at the cost of the life of their patients and most often it is not even questioned.

Every patient have a right to know what treatment they are undergoing and what are the effects of the medicine they consume but many a time it is denied. This is another cause of renal failure.

Awareness is the only solution. HELP Foundation gives utmost importance to create a knowledge society with health and environment conscious people. For this we follow the principle "Catch them young". That is why most of our awareness programmes are conducted in school campuses.

Eminent personalities from the field of health care and medical practitioners of different disciplines conduct these awareness programmes.

Dr. Jacob Vadakkancherry, Founder and director of seven non-profit Nature Life Hospitals in Kerala, conducted a session recently in Auxilium English Medium School, Kottiyam. Dr. Jacob Vadakkancherry is recognized internationally for his naturopathic, health-restoring philosophy, and Nature Cure.

DAYA- HELP Foundation's Dialysis assistance programme

Contd.,,

Our commitment to the society, to the neediest and of those whose days are numbered, HELP Foundation channelizes the support of the kind hearted through DAYA Schemes.

It is not the contribution of HELP Foundation but the contribution of the people who support this program that gets to the most deserving. We just provide a platform and act as the catalyst to make it a reality.

How we d it?

Never underestimate the difference one can make in the lives of others. Step forward, reach out and HELP. Even the smallest act of caring for another person is like a drop of water- it will make ripples throughout the entire pond...

Initially this programme was supported by the fund generated from among the HELP Foundation members & well wishers. Our Drop Boxes placed in and around Kollam is another source we depended on but now we have to go beyond the routine and scale it as we are inundated with requests for support.

Our Schemes:

Little Drops: An amount of **Rs.100/-** as a one time or as a monthly contribution from many can support patients coming to us for the first time and can continue till finding a sponsor.

One Dialysis: An amount of **Rs.800/-** is sufficient to support one dialysis.

Sponsor a patient: This is the most popular scheme of DAYA Programme. Under this scheme one patient is given **Rs. 2,000/-** per month. Once a sponsor come forward to sponsor one patient for at least **four months** both Donor and patient will be informed and start supporting from the very next month onwards.

Adopt a patient: It is a painful scene when some people come to seek support for the bread winner of their family or for their young children. When Dialysis is the only option and with an abrupt stoppage of income, the future is a big question mark. This scheme is a long term scheme which goes beyond 6 months at a very minimum.

Support Medicine: An average cost of Dialysis patient is approximately Rs.8,000/- for a month while the cost of medicine and other supplies for a month will be roughly the same. Many people discontinue medicines due to the paucity of funds. This affects the entire health of that person and leads to other complications. There are several organizations and Government itself

provide support for Dialysis but the medicine part is not catered to or supported as the patients are left to fend for themselves.

Awareness Programmes: It is practically difficult to screen potential renal failure cases. In most cases renal failures identifies itself only at the end stages. So prevention is the best option. It can be done through wide awareness programmes. Eminent personalities from medical field support us to conduct such programmes. Awareness and education is always effective to a student's group. So we give special focus on student and parents groups at school level.

Little Drops	Rs. 100/- (every month)
One Single Dialysis	Rs. 800/-
One Month Support	Rs.2000/-
Sponsor one patient for 4 months or more	Rs. 2000/- X 4 =8000/- (or more)
Adopt one patient	Rs. 8000/- X 12 (or more)
Support medicine	Rs. 1000/- (or more)

Following is the Bank A/c details of HELP Foundation's DAYA Programme:

Name of Bank : **State Bank of Travancore**

Account Name: **HUMAN EMPOWERMENT AND LIVELYHOOD PROMOTION FOUNDATION**

SB A/c No : 00000067199614110

IFSC Code : SBTR0000057

MICR Code : 691009016

Branch : Mayyanad

District : Kollam

State : Kerala

Address : P.B.No.1, Kunnumpadam
Buildings, Mayyanad P.O.,
Kollam, Kerala, Pin-691303

80% of India's surface water may be polluted

NEW DELHI: Even as India is making headlines with its rising air pollution levels, the water in the country may not be any better. An alarming 80% of India's surface water is polluted, a latest assessment by Water Aid, an international organization working for water sanitation and hygiene, shows.

The report, based on latest data from the ministry of urban development (2013), census 2011 and Central Pollution Control Board, estimates that 75-80% of water pollution by volume is from domestic sewerage, while untreated sewerage flowing into water bodies including rivers have almost doubled in recent years. This in turn is leading to increasing burden of vector borne diseases, cholera, dysentery, jaundice and diarrhea etc. Water pollution is found to be a major cause for poor nutritional standards and development in children also.

Between 1991 and 2008, the latest period for which data is available, flow of untreated sewerage has doubled from around 12,000 million litres per day to 24,000 million litres per day in Class I and II towns. The database defines Class I towns as those with a population of more than 1 lakh, whereas towns with population ranging between 50,000 to 1 lakh are classified as Class II.

The report is, titled 'Urban WASH: An Assessment on Faecal Sludge Management (FSM) Policies and Programmes at the National and State Level'. According to the report, inadequate sanitation facilities, poor septage management and a near absence of sanitation and waste water policy framework are primary reasons responsible for the groundwater and surface water pollution in the country. Experts say there are glaring gaps not just in treatment of sewerage water but also in case of water treatment itself, used in supply of drinking water as well as for kitchen use etc.

"Though there are standards, the enforcement is very low. Even the amount of water, which is treated, is also not treated completely or as per standards. And there is no civic agency accountable or punishable for that because we do not have stringent laws," says Puneet Srivastava, manager policy- Urban WASH & Climate Change at WaterAid India. Findings of the report show nearly 17 million urban households, accounting for over 20% of total 79 million urban households, lack adequate sanitation.

"Among those with access to improved sanitation facilities, a vast majority relies on on-site sanitation systems, such as septic tanks and pit latrines. Today, these septic tanks and pit latrines have become a major contributor to groundwater and surface water pollution in many cities in the country," the report said.

However, the report acknowledges that India has of late started focusing on the problem of septage management, which is one of the most immediately implementable solutions to address urban waste water. But there is an urgent need to focus on infrastructure as well as enforcement, says Srivastava. "Most of the sewerage treatment plants are performing under their capacity as these utilities do not have enough money to run full capacity," says Srivastava pointing at dearth of human resource, improper management etc. Estimates show there were 269 sewage treatment plants across the country, with 211 in Class I cities, 31 in Class II towns, and 27 in other smaller towns.

"At the policy level, sanitation was not prioritized until the early 1990s and became an important policy concern only around 2008. It was not until the inception of the National Urban Sanitation Policy (NUSP) in 2008, that urban sanitation was allotted focused attention at the national level," the report said.

Source: TNN



Photo from Shenthuruni wild life sanctuary, Kollam District, Kerala

Rhacophorus Malabaricus (Green): English Name: Malabar Gliding Frog, Malabar Flying Frog. This is the most commonly seen and widely distributed member of the *Rhacophorus* genus in Kerala.

It is a very large tree frog green coloured with red webbing. They are capable of gliding from one tree to another at a reasonable distance using their webbing and compressed body.

Prominent Colours: Green, White, yellow, Red.

Food: Termites, Flies and other insects.

Rhacophorus calcadensis: English Name: Kalakkad Tree Frog (Brown):

This species is endemic to southern the western Ghats in Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It's presence in Kerala is recently discovered.

Dorsum light reddish or yellowish brown with indistinct patterns in grey and brown with scattered tubercles on it.

Prominent Colours: Brown, yellow, white.

Food: Termites, ants and probably other insects

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