



help Foundation

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Newsletter
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Cover Story

Birds of Kerala

Page: 9





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Contents



SOCIAL INTERVENTION

Children's Home for the Girl Child

Guild Of Old (GOLD)

**Social Audit of Coconut Development Board Scheme
(CDB Scheme)**

**Sand deposits pilling up in Paravur Lake due to the
closure of the estuary**

MISSION GREEN

Permanent Mangrove/Wetland Nursery

Tree Planting Drive

Series on Paravur Lake-Ithikkara River Ecosystem

MISSION HEALTH

Project DAYA– Dialysis Assistance Programme

DHWANI– FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Man made water woes in wet Kerala

NATURE PHOTO DIVISION– WILD LIFE

Birds of Kerala, Nature Photo Feature

Children's Home for the Girl Child

Three and a half months have passed since the home has started to function. We have 22 children and 13 staff. Not a single pie from the government released yet. Day to day existence of the home has been a struggle. Food, Schooling, Cloths and other needs are increasing day by day. Tracking everyday with the government officials concerned has made the tortoise move but the finish line to ultimately release the funds is still some way off. It has been quite an experience for us to go door to door among Mayyanadians asking for contributions. The irony is that not much of the general public is aware of such an institution that was inaugurated by none other than the Chief Minister of Kerala. HELP Foundation hereby appeals for contribution from the civil society so that the day to day running of the home can proceed without any blemish. Panchayat or the District Child Protection Office is of little help here as they cannot sanction anything off the fly. Another important input is the uneasiness of the local party's faithful who just don't want such an attempt to succeed as it's something which highlights just how degraded and hollow the political apparatus is.



A caring and cooperative workplace is needed for such an institution to succeed. Human dignity has to be respected, professional satisfaction should be promoted, and positive relationships are to be developed and sustained. We find the primary challenge for the staff of the home is to establish and maintain relationships and work ethics that support productive work and meet professional needs. The same ideals that apply to children also apply as we interact with adults in the workplace. The higher the qualification the more unfit the staff is and we are trying hard to overcome this with in-house trainings.

Guild Of Old (GOLD)



Surely and firmly we are moving towards setting up the Day Care centre for Senior Citizens in association with other likeminded NGOs of Mayyanad. We have signed the MOU for the building with Elders Forum. The building has been handed over to us and we are moving towards equipping the home infrastructure. HELP Foundation has also designed the logo for the new domain.

Permanent Mangrove/Wetland Nursery

Progress has been slow and things have gained some traction. 80 Mangrove saplings collected from Ashtamudi islands of the same species particularly suited to Paravur Lake is doing well. HELP Foundation has tied up with JNTGBRI for various bamboo saplings suited for riparian vegetation as well. JNTGBRI has also imparted the technique and trained us on the method to raise more saplings.

We have 5 different types of bamboo species based on the recommendation of JNTGBRI bamboo division. Further to it we also have collected a few seeds of other riparian vegetation found on the banks of Ithikkara River with great difficulty.



Social Audit of Coconut Development Board Scheme (CDB Scheme)

HELP Foundation in association with 'Social Audit Network' (SAN – India) has completed its first ever 'Social Accounting and Audit' 'stakeholder consultation work by assessing the impact of Coconut Development Boards (CDB) 'Friends of Coconut Tree' (FoCT) project. Stakeholder consultations and

evaluations were done in four major districts in Kerala by HELP Foundation social accountants.

HELP Foundation is committed to do more similar assignments and impact assessment studies of development projects both for the Not for Profits and Corporate CSR projects.

Sand deposits piling up in Paravur Lake due to the closure of the estuary

Degradation of Paravur Lake and the Ithikkara river ecosystem is a very important issue which HELP Foundation has been taking up for the past several years. The lake is virtually dead with huge sand deposits (both from Ithikkara River and Arabian Sea) piling up due to closure of the natural estuary and it's entirely a handiwork of Major Irrigation Department. How the closure of the estuary is killing the lake is clearly documented



through Research Papers, Studies, and Representation etc. The issue has been taken up multiple times with all concerned, Kollam Collector, the fisheries department, Major Irrigation Department, Local MLAs and MP, all have been made aware of the issue but none moves.

Unless the below mentioned steps are carried out immediately, Kollam will lose one of its important lakes and such an environmental disaster would be fatal in these times of climate change and water scarcity.

1. Removal of clogged sand at the mouth of the spillway
2. Partial or complete closure of the spillway

3. Dredging of vast stretches of sand islands in the middle of the lake formed due to the Ithikkara River not being able to open up through the natural estuary

And more importantly the blame will lie purely with the district administration as we took up the issue again with the 5th collector. Can anybody fathom as to how accountability is subverted and its dependent purely on individual officers interest in the government system. Livelihoods are getting affected as well as its Freshwater biodiversity is already destroyed by around 80%. Several rounds of discussions to this effect were held with the Deputy Director of Fisheries as well. We are concerned that the lake has reached a point of no return like the Sasthamcotta Lake.

DAYA- HELP Foundation's Dialysis assistance programme

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 do 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

Man made water woes in wet Kerala

More than 2,000 mm of rain, but crops destroyed and farmers committing suicide; crores spent on irrigation projects but villages going thirsty; 44 rivers but groundwater is sinking. Inefficient water and land management practices are the principal causes for this crisis. Soil in Kerala can retain water only for a maximum of three months. Unless, it is replenished periodically through precipitation many parts of the state will face acute water shortage. Thanks to Major Irrigation department and its infatuation with rocks and constructions all the fresh water rivers are constantly emptying itself into the sea throughout the year, thus depriving the recharging of ground water all along its path as the runoff rate is very high. We look at some of the major causes of this man made woe and have serious reservations about the willingness of the state in halting this continuous slide, as we have reached a stage of no return.

Deforestation - Land use changes:

Conversion of watershed area has altered the hydrological regime while enhancing the silt movement – lowering water yield in the catchment affecting the groundwater recharge. Forests played a key role in holding soil together and retaining rainwater, but large-scale deforestation has been occurring in the state since the seventies. Large-scale deforestation in the Western Ghats and introduction of plantation crops in highlands replacing the natural vegetation reduced the storage capacity of soil and resulted in surface soil erosion in watersheds and sedimentation in rivers. This has affected summer flow in rivers and some perennial rivers and rivulets have become seasonal in the last few decades due to large scale land cover changes.

Sand Quarrying and River Bank Agriculture

Sand quarrying in rivers and watersheds are killing the rivers at an alarming rate. Such activities lead to bank erosion, lowering of water table and create several environmental problems. Ground water level in some of the watersheds has gone down by nearly one meter in the last two decades. Agricultural practices in the riverbanks (and also inside the dry riverbeds) during non-rainy months have further compounded the bank erosion and sedimentation in rivers.

Degradation of Water Resources

All 44 rivers in Kerala are highly polluted due to inflow of untreated domestic, industrial wastes and agriculture runoff. Most of the industries are near the thickly populated riversides, often near cities and towns. There

is no efficient water treatment system in industries and city municipalities. Pollution level in some of the rivers is far above permissible limits. This has been the state with Lakes as well as all major wetlands of the state are polluted and in need of urgent protection.

Land Reclamation and Construction:

For decade's marshy lands and wetlands, which recharge groundwater and help in retaining soil moisture, have been reclaimed for constructing houses and setting up coconut and other plantations. Sand filling of ponds, farmlands, wetlands and other water bodies affects natural water flow and groundwater recharge. Construction of new roads and buildings has blocked many canals, which were important for navigation and freshwater. Vast areas of wetlands and paddy fields have been converted into settlement and industrial areas in the recent times.

Bacteriological Contamination in Drinking Water Source

Wide spread bacteriological contamination of fecal origin in sources of public drinking water supplies, viz. traditional open dug wells, bore wells and surface sources has been reported. These concerns for ground and surface water contamination relate to close proximity of increasing numbers of leach pit latrines under varying soil conditions, laterite (midland) and sandy soils (coastal area). Moreover this has its origin in the 3 cents housing policy of the state government where both the drinking water well and the toilet being close neighbors in every 3 cents.

Ground Water Protection

Contamination of Groundwater is more complex than surface water pollution mainly because of difficulty in its timely detection and slow movement. In addition the complex geo-chemical reactions taking place in the subsurface between myriad contaminants and earth materials are not always well-understood and detected. Ideally speaking contamination should be prevented from occurring. We have noticed severe contamination around hospitals which has been constructed flouting all PCB norms and that too in reclaimed wetlands. Medicity and NS Hospital complex in Kollam is a prime case to prove the point. Once contaminant or several contaminants are found in groundwater, a decision must be made on whether to rehabilitate the aquifer or find alternative groundwater resources.



Photo from Achankovil , Kollam District, Kerala

The black-and-orange flycatcher (Ficedula nigrorufa): Ficedula nigrorufa is an endemic resident in the Western Ghats of southern India, where it is locally common.

Distribution and habitat: The main population of this bird is found in the high elevation plateaus (above 1500m) areas of the Nilgiris, Palani Hills, Biligirirangans (Bellaji and Honnametti) and Kannan Devan Hills. They prefer areas with high leaf litter and undergrowth in open shola grassland habitats.

Normally this bird found in sholas and evergreen forest above 1000m ASL.

Prominent Colours: This distinctly coloured bird found mainly in the high-elevation areas of the Western Ghats, the Nilgiris, the Palnis and associated hill ranges. The male is distinctly black headed with black wings. The female has the black replaced by dark brown and has a light eye-ring. They are usually seen singly or in pairs.

Food: They feed on insects by fly catching low over the ground and also pick insects from the ground.

The peak feeding activity of the birds is early in the morning and towards dusk. During these period they capture as many as 100 insects an hour whereas at mid-day they are half as efficient.

Research & Photography: Mabesh S. Ambelil



On 28-01-2016. Mr. Mahesh Ambelil has seen bird in Achankovil and photographed. The area is low elevation hardly 400m ASL. This is the first record of this high-range species such a low elevated forest.

Mr. Mahesh Ambelil a wild life Photo Journalist who leads the Wild Life Division of HELP Foundation is a passionate wildlife photographer residing at Pattathanam, Kollam. He frequently disappears from his work sight into the thickets of the forest all over in India; elephants and leopards are his favorite subjects.



Crested Hawk Eagle - *Nisaetus cirrhatus*

Bandhipur



Name: **Crested Hawk Eagle - *Nisaetus cirrhatus***

Family: Accipitridae

Genus: *Nisaetus*

Species: *N. cirrhatus*

Crested Hawk Eagles are large raptors with varying color morphs and several subspecies that occur in southern and southeast Asia, throughout forested areas.

Habitat and Distribution: They live in deciduous, semi-evergreen, and logged forest, along with savannah woodland, tea plantations, cultivated regions, and even along the edges of suburban areas. They usually live from 0-1,500 meters above sea level, but are known to occupy habitat as high as 2,200 m. Pairs remain in the same territory all year, although they do not hunt together. They are irruptive or local migrants, and juveniles disperse from their parents' breeding areas.

Crested Hawk Eagles are found throughout southern and southeast Asia, in India, Sri Lanka, the Andaman Islands, Philippines, Borneo, and the Indonesian islands Sumatra, Java, and the Greater Sundas. Their range spans from 30°N to 9°S.

Diet and Hunting:

Crested Hawk Eagles take a range of prey, including birds up the size of chickens, small mammals, snakes, and lizards. They perch in an exposed location to hunt, usually high up; occasionally they choose someplace lower, such as on a fencepost or in the crown of a tree. They then swoop down to catch their prey on the ground, although birds are sometimes caught in trees.



Sri Lankafrogmouth

Thattekkad

Name: Sri Lanka frogmouth or Ceylon frogmouth (*Batrachostomus moniliger*)

The Sri Lanka frogmouth, Sri Lankan frogmouth or Ceylon frogmouth (*Batrachostomus moniliger*) is a small frogmouth found in the Western Ghats of south India and Sri Lanka. Related to the nightjars, it is nocturnal and is found in forest habitats. The plumage coloration resembles that of dried leaves and the bird roosts quietly on branches, making it difficult to see. Each has a favorite roost that it uses regularly unless disturbed. It has a distinctive call that is usually heard at dawn and dusk. The sexes differ slightly in plumage.

Habitat and distribution: This species is found in the Western Ghats of southwest India and Sri Lanka. Its habitat is tropical forest, usually with dense undergrowth. It can sometimes be found in more disturbed habitats, including plantations. Its presence may be overlooked due to its nocturnal behaviour and camouflage.

Behaviour: This frogmouth is rarely seen during the day except at roost sites or when flushed. It regularly uses the same roost spot for months. When alarmed at its perch, it slowly moves its head, pointing its bill upward, and it can easily be mistaken for a jagged, broken branch.

The breeding season in southern India is January to April, and in Sri Lanka February to March. The nest is a small pad made of moss lined with down and covered on the outside with lichens and bark. The bird incubates a single white egg, covering the nest and holding the tail flush with the tree.



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