



help Foundation

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Newsletter
newsletter

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DHWANI– FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK

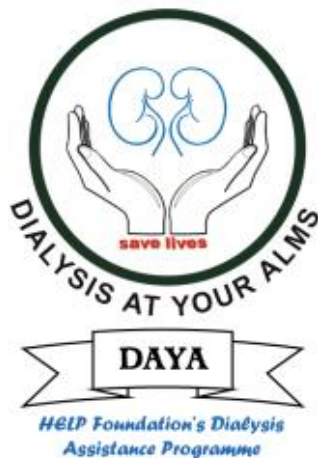
**Destructive fishing threatens the Biodiversity of Paravur
Lake-Ithikkara River Ecosystem**

NATURE PHOTO DIVISION– WILD LIFE

Nature Photo Feature



Project DAYA– Dialysis Assistance Programme - Seminar



HELP Foundation conducted a one day seminar on Homeopathic Management in Kidney Disease together with YMCA Kollam. The session was conducted by Dr. K.P Nandakumar. Col. Dr. Mohan,



Chairman of Janasakthi provided the introductory talk. Dr. S.P. Suresh Babu, Dr. Krishnakumar, Members of IHK(Institution of Homoeopaths Kerala), Patrons & Invitees of

cal practices that has been gaining ground with kidney failure patients. This we believe will further augment our intervention in the Dialysis arena and the solace we provide to renal patients.



In short the outcome of the seminar is if a patient has been diagnosed with renal failure, there exists proven alternative systems of medicine so that their kidney can be resalvaged provided they don't get into a dialysis regimen. Once you are into a dialysis regimen then the success rate with this form of treatment becomes less. This is the message we conveyed across Kollam with this Seminar and it was well

received by patients and their bystanders. For more information or guidance on this please get in touch with HELP Foundation through our Call Center number (9656334444).

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Mangrove Nursery



WWF State Director Renjan Mathew visiting our mangrove nursery

HELP Foundation's Mangrove Nursery is progressing along well as this should be ready for planting soon. HELP Foundation's Mangrove Afforestation Program will be fanning out towards more stretches of Paravur Lake as part of our ongoing Ecosystem Restoration efforts. The proven model which we have adopted with local administration, local community and school ecoclubs would be scaled further so as to have more MGNREGA workers and schools participate in the program. The most salient aspect of setting up the nursery is that we have been able to train local

resources in raising the nursery from scratch. This should enable us in future to continue producing saplings of the local species so as to continue ecosystem restoration activities in and around Paravur Lake.



Children Home for Girl Child

Through the ICPS Committee constituted in Mayyand Panchayat as per the Juvenile Justice Act HELP Foundation has been guiding the committee towards realizing some of the schemes as listed in the JJ Act. Social Welfare Dept through its Kollam Office has sanctioned and allocated funds for Mayyanad Grampanchayat to set up a Children Home for Girl Child, which is a positive culmination of the initiative HELP Foundation kick started. This decision on the sanction of funds was conveyed by (Probationary Officer) on behalf of the district administration to the Panchayat on the 29th May-2014.

Mayyanad Gramapanchayat has initiated the paper work through the ICPS Committee towards realizing the same and this is progressing at a sure and steady pace towards fructification. We believe we can take this model across more Panchayats in Kollam District so that we can facilities as mandated in the ICPS act for the care of children in need.

Child Rights Survey-Preparatory Workshop

HELP Foundation hosted a Preparatory Workshop/Seminar together with Mayyanad Panchayat as a prelude to conducting a Survey in all Schools of Mayyanad Panchayat. This survey (The Rights of the Child) is to be conducted for the very first time among adolescents in Mayyanad Panchayat, to determine how much young people know about the Rights of the Child, the extent to which these rights are protected, and which actions should be taken as a priority to improve them. -07th June-2014.

All schools of Mayyanad Panchayat, Anganwadi

Workers and Asha workers participated in the seminar. It was inaugurated by Juvenile Justice Chairman, Kollam Shri C.J.Antony The survey is expected to roll out in the immediate future and the results of this would serve as the core of making Mayyanad Panchayat a child friendly Panchayat. Based on the workshop and the feedback garnered through group activities among the participants we have further augmented the survey form and released a newer version of the Child Rights Survey form.



Child Rights Survey Workshop in progress

HELP Foundations River Watch Program

CONSERVE | NATURE

It will be implemented with financial assistance from WWF-India

'River watch' aims at restoring eco-system

SHAM MOHAMMED | DC
KOLLAM, JUNE 27

HELP Foundation, an environmental organisation, is planning to implement its eco-system restoration project 'River Watch', on both the banks of the Ithikkara river here. It will be implemented through the 'Paravoor Lake-Ithikkara River Protection Council with financial assistance from the World Wide Fund for Nature - India (WWF).

The 56-km-long Ithikkara river flows through 11 panchayats and a municipality, starting from Kulathupuzha. The council will select two schools from each panchayat to ensure



Mangroves planted on the banks of Paravoor Lake as part of eco-system restoration project by HELP Foundation.

the participation of students in conserving Nature. The HELP Foundation will provide student members of nature clubs from the selected schools to work for

the project.

The students will be assigned the task of inspecting the respective areas on the banks of the river every week to record

● The HELP Foundation will provide student members of nature clubs from the selected schools to work for the project.

the changes in environment. The respective panchayats will be instructed to find out solutions for issues likely to crop up.

The ecosystem restoration project by the HELP Foundation has been in progress at Paravoor lake for the last three years and 'River Watch' is an extension of the project. The Revenue, Environment,

Social Forestry and Major irrigation departments, block panchayat, and Mayyanad panchayat have been taking part in the project.

The Paravur Lake-Ithikkara River Protection Council said the damage done to the environment had badly affected thousands of fishermen who depended on the Paravur lake for their livelihood. The water that ought to have joined the Paravur lake is now being carried away to the sea through spillways, causing acute drinking water shortage.

Poet and environmentalist, Sugathakumari is the chief advisor of River Watch.

One of HELP Foundation mission is to promote healthy wetland ecosystems through a partnership-based, people-focused, policy-relevant and investment-oriented approach, which builds and applies knowledge, empowers communities and other stakeholders, enhances governance, secures livelihoods, and increases resilience to natural hazards and climate change. By involving the student community we have been working towards protecting, conserving and restoring the entire stretch of Paravur Lake by extending our mangrove Afforestation program throughout the lake for the past 3 years together with Mayyanad Panchayat and local schools.

Now we are planning to stretch the proven concept coined as "HELP Foundation River Watch" through the entire stretch of Ithikkara River as a wetland protection monitoring initiative. Ithikkara River is 56 km long which originates from the low hills situated near Madathuri kunnu at about +240 m above M.S.L and from the hills located south-west of Kulathupuzha in the Western Ghats, flows mostly through 11 panchayats and a Municipality in Kollam District before finally emptying into Paravur Kayal. Anchal, Ittiva, Edamulackal, Chadayamangalam, Elamadu, Velinalloor, Kalluvathukkal, Pooyappally, Adichanalloor, Chathannoor, Mayyanad.

We intend to accomplish this mission through the following goals:

- Educate citizens on watersheds and the relationship between land use and water quality.
- Train citizens on the wetland protection.
- Conduct regular monitoring trips to report pollution, encroachments, destruction of riparian vegetation etc

- Encourage Villagers, Next Generation Citizens and Local Bodies to work together to strengthen the water assets of the Village.
- Train citizens on the basic principles of water quality monitoring.
- Promote opportunities for involvement in water quality issues.
- Provide water quality information to individuals or groups working to protect water resources.
- Support volunteer efforts through technical assistance, monitoring equipment, networking Opportunities, and educational materials.

It is being implemented with support from WWF and executed through the Paravur Lake and Ithikkara River Protection Council. Poetess and Environmentalist Smt Sugathakumari, who has been at the forefront of environmental movement in Kerala, South India is the Chief Advisor of this initiative.



Press Meet announcing the launch of HELP Foundation River Watch

World Migratory Bird Day Observation 2014 in Kollam

WWF- India Kerala State Office, YMCA Kollam, Kerala Biodiversity Board & MFD Division, CMFRI Kochi, Grass Hopper Nature Club & HELP Foundation jointly organized the World Migratory Bird Day 2014 observation programme concluded on May 11 called for ensuring protection and documentation of thousands of migratory birds in the wetlands of Ashtamudi Lake, Sasthamkotta Lake and Polachira wetlands in Kollam district.

The two-day programme held at YMCA Hall here was inaugurated by writer and social activist Kesavan Nair at a function presided over by YMCA president Dr.P C Thomas. A poster series on wetlands, Ashtamudi Lake and migratory birds were also released.

Awareness boards on protecting migratory birds to be installed on the campus of Govt Boys High School and Kerala University Centre for Teacher Education here were also unveiled. A photo exhibition of around 75 migratory birds was arranged in the YMCA Hall for the public. The events were organised jointly by WWF-India and YMCA with the support of the Kerala State Biodiversity Board and Molluscan Fisheries Division of CMFRI-Cochin in association with Grasshopper



Nature Club and HELP Foundation, here. A team of 25 bird enthusiasts had a morning bird watching session at Kandachira- Pavuvayal, part of Ashtamudi wetlands.

They listed out 31 species of birds, including six migratory birds, such as Red Shank, Black-winged Stilt, Green Shank, Wood Sandpiper and local migrants such as Grey Heron and Cattle Egret. “This observation shows some birds are over wintering here even after most of the migratory birds left to their breeding grounds by the end of March,” A K Sivakumar, senior education officer,

WWF-India, said. The bird-watching session was followed by a discussion based on the team’s observations. An interactive quiz, exclusively on birds, was held and a movie ‘Birds of Kerala’ made by Suresh Elamon was screened. A participatory follow-up programme is planned to document the bird population in and around Ashtamudi Lake from June to Nov and to come out with its result on the occasion of Dr Salim Ali Day on November 12.



Participants taking notes

Destructive fishing threatens the Biodiversity of Paravur Lake-Ithikkara River Ecosystem

Combined with increasing human intervention and pollution, destructive fishing methods are taking a heavy toll on fisheries resources or rather the biodiversity in the Paravur Lake, which continues to support about 600 active fishermen in Kollam District. HELP Foundation recently met with the inland fishermen community at the merger point of Ithikkara River and Paravur Lake as part of its River Watch Program.

Certain groups of fishermen using small mesh nets were destroying juveniles in sizeable quantities that the futures of varieties such as pearlspots (karimeen) are seriously threatened. HELP Foundations studies conducted earlier has documented that close to 80 percent of the fresh water biodiversity is in peril as some of the common varieties which used to be abundant is far and few and can only be spotted in the upper stretches of Ithikkara River.

Given the indiscriminate mechanized sand mining that had happened there is virtually no place for the fishes to lay eggs as the vegetation on the banks of the water bodies has disappeared, large stretches of the river banks have caved in. Further fish varieties such as pearl spots lay eggs at the bottom of the lake, making them particularly vulnerable to use of nets that sweep the bottom.

Reports on the Paravur-Ithikkara ecosystem had pointed out that electrocution; poisoning and use of explosives were common in the Paravur Lake, which is home to over 100 species of fishes and other diverse organisms. The loss of biodiversity has been reported in other forms as the crab's not attaining size as earlier crab's species which used to weigh around a kilo is now able to attain only half the size. Even mangroves are showing signs of decay due to the poisons used. Poisoned fish which is put in ice immediately so as the bloating stops in no time, fetches huge price in the morning market for its freshness. Public health is put at risk as there is no way to figure out that indeed its poisoned fish. Police interference or rather biased approach at the behest of local level politicians to this illegal activity has further muddled the whole issue. This poisoned fish is a very popular delicacy with the local police, according to the fishermen who engage in such practice. This fondness for such produce emboldens them to continue with the illegality.

Though these practices appeared confined to the lower stretches of Ithikkara River-Paravur Lake combine around the Kakkakadavu area, more

destructive practices have crept in with people near Thani and Mukkum resorting to practices such as laying of Toopum Padallum or secured artificial shelters that trap both adults and juveniles. In certain scientific circles it's called Bush park (Toopum Padallum) fishing. This acts as a sort of traditional Fish Aggregating Device (FAD), thus virtually creating private islands in this water body as well as affecting seamless navigation and fishing.

Kuttivalla or Stake net also known as Errakkamketu or trapping of fish in the mouth of the spillway as Paravur Lake opens up into the Arabian Sea during low tides has been another reason for the huge loss of fish wealth. As it's mostly the juveniles who gets caught in this process thus affecting the reproductive cycle or sustainability of the fish wealth. Further the said use of small mesh nets and sweeping of the bottom adds to the turbidity, affecting the already perilously declined fish population. One wonders where the government mechanism is in all of this is and or rather have they ceased to exist.

Based on the feedback received from fishermen groups in Kurummandel and Kakkakadavu areas on the above issue during HELP Foundations visit to the area as part of its River Watch Program we have taken up the issue with State Biodiversity Board and the Deputy Director of Fisheries Kollam. The blame game has gone too far and it's about time that all departments of government are brought on the same page otherwise the biodiversity of the water body and thus the entire ecosystem including human habitat would be affected irreversibly. Further we have noticed new generation service based offices which have cropped up recently, callously route their entire liquid waste into the water bodies. One wonders how licenses and building permits are given to these mushrooming entities.

HELP Foundation hereby proposes the immediate need for a regulatory regime so as to be able to recover or restore the biodiversity of the Paravur Lake-Ithikkara River ecosystem. This calls for all concerned especially the Police, the Local Grama-panchayat, Fisheries Department, State Biodiversity Board and Revenue to work together rather than as isolated islands or individual departments. This also alludes to the shortfall of government departments in working across domains and areas. One wonders where is the Environment and Climate Change department in all of this as they are nowhere in the picture.

HELP Foundation's Wild Life Journal

Photo Journalist:

Mahesh Ambelil









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