

## HELP Foundation's Low Cost Dialysis Centre- Project DAYA

## Activity Report

Dialysis is an extremely expensive affair. Many people cannot afford the continuous, sometimes life-long expense of dialysis. Some people simply give up and die. Given the high cost of renal transplantation, only a minority of those suffering from kidney failure in India can afford it. Dialysis is also beyond the means of many. Under the circumstances, though the Foundation we try to reach out to as many renal failure patients as possible. We realize that prevention of renal disease assumes overriding importance. In many cases, the simple checking of the urine for albumin and blood for urea and creatinine estimations can alert to the possibility of a kidney failure.

HELP Foundation initiative into this arena is to ensure that no kidney patient will perish because of the lack of funds for dialysis and to prevent kidney failure due to diabetes and other complications. More importantly bring down the current high cost of a single dialysis, due to the unethical practices of a few nephrologists and hospital administrators. What is more distressing is the amount of requests that come to us as part of our micro medical insurance program and the sorry state of affairs of youngsters who want to continue to live on earth, but unable to foot the cost of dialysis. What we see often is these people putting up with the pain and perform dialysis only once in a fortnight.

India gets 1.5 lakh (150,000) patients with kidney failures every year and a majority of them die within five years due to the acute shortage of dialysis units in the country. There are roughly 1,500 dialysis units in the whole country, whereas 40,000 of them are immediately required, says Indian Society of Hemodialysis. Unfortunately, not a single dialysis unit is made in India and they have to be imported from Sweden and Germany. About 90 percent of these facilities are in the private sector for which patients, whether rich or poor, have to pay. Dialysis treatment is very expensive given that a patient normally receives dialysis at least thrice a week and monthly expenses amount to Rs.25,000. The medicines are also equally costly and a majority of the patients are not able to afford this treatment. Another problem is the acute shortage of the trained medical professionals in India.

At present, there are only 1,000 nephrologists while 20,000 are required. There is also crippling shortage of dialysis technologists and nurses. The situation is expected to deteriorate further in the immediate term. The International Diabetes Foundation has reported approximately 54 million diabetic patients in India in 2010, and the number is likely to touch 70 million by the year 2025.



**Dr. Jacob John, Chairman, Ashtamudi Hospital & Trauma Care Centre receives the first cheque from Mrs. Merlin Kramer, Programme Director & Head Project Daya – HELP Foundation**

HELP Foundation intends to run the project in such a way that based on the tie-up with Ashtamudi Hospital we have set up our subsidized dialysis centre. Needy patients identified by HELP Foundation would be provided dialysis at bare minimum rates or even fully free of cost. Further to the arrangement with Ashtamudi Hospital HELP Foundations intend to bring down the cost even more to the patients by supplying the materials needed inclusive of blood tubing and dialyzer to the neediest. HELP Foundation launched DAYA (Dialysis Assistance) as a pilot program on March 8th which is observed as World Kidney Day. Merlin Kramer -HELP Foundations Program Director launched it together with Dr Jacob John, Chairman Ashtamudi Hospital.

## Follow up

## Food Security Related training programme for evolving better models at the Panchayat Level

Through our Research & local interactions we have been concentrating on the issues with respect to Food Security & Water Scarcity. These two issues are going to be the common theme in the immediate future with policy planners and administrations. Today's Policy Formulations tend to be biased against rural populations and it's dictated by business houses and corporations. This necessitates the need for broad based and equitable access to ICT in rural areas factoring in policy changes and Good Governance. We have a chapter of ours in Thrikkaruva where we encourage 30 odd family enterprises to work with us in addressing the issues mentioned as well as come up with alternative models and pilots which can contribute towards Food Security at a Panchayat Level.

Thrikkaruva village being on the banks of Ashtamudi we have the potential to be able to produce eggs in a large scale more on the lines of Kuttanad. Based on feedback from our Thrikkaruva chapter we approached the Livestock Development Board to assist us in this innovative approach. Dr Geetha & Dr Sabu Xavier joined us in providing this training as a first step on the 17th of March. Much more needs to be done along with the government officials towards achieving our goal of food security at the Panchayat level. The program is on and let's see how the results emerge signed of Jesmis J, Managing Director, HELP Foundation.

## Mangrove Cultivation

To restore the fish breeding grounds of Paravur Lake, HELP Foundation in partnership with the local Indigenous people at Lakshmipuram Thoppu and with assistance from the MGNREGS scheme have planted 800 plus mangrove saplings. More importantly this became the first asset creation project of Mayyanad Panchayat under the MGNREGS scheme.

The saplings continued to be monitored by Mayyanad High schools environmental club, but the rate of attrition with respect to the

saplings is high as fishermen from other areas under the cover of darkness lay their nets very close to the saplings and in effect hurt them causing their demise.



***Mangroves planted in Mayyanad Lakshmipuram Thope after three months***

Local fisher folks are unable to prevent this as fishing happens throughout the night.

To be able to continue our plan of planting mangroves all along the Paravur Lake and possibly along the banks of Ithikkara River, HELP Foundation is planning to



***Mayyanad Lakshmipuram Thope***

seek assistance from Biodiversity Cell, Forest headquarters, Thiruvananthapuram. Based on the expertise we have garnered with our current mangrove plantation activities we need to be able to extend this program for a longer to medium term on a sustainable basis.



## Special Report

Prof. Peter Pradeep

## Safeguarding and Preservation of Umayanallor Ela (paddy field) in Kollam



Exhibit No.1

Umayanallor Ela is one of the largest wetland (apart from being paddy field) in Mayyanad Gramapanchayat of Kollam District. Wetlands in their natural state bring substantial benefits to the society. A significant section of Mayyanad Panchayat households get their well water (more than 5000 wells) recharged from the Umayanallor Ela Paddy Field. The conversion of wetlands involves not only irreversibility in the environmental or ecological processes but also uncertainty. Availability of good quality freshwater is going to be one of the most important resource limitations of the Mayyanad Gramapanchayat and already this is being faced during the summer months. HELP Foundation is already in the process of studying this water scarcity. Large scale degradation of land consequent to urbanization, and aquatic pollution due to waste dumping has currently resulted in the scarcity of drinking water. The problem will be more acute in the near future, if proper and timely precautionary steps are not taken. Bulk density and water holding capacity of soil are more in paddy fields and less in bare lands. The major functions of wetlands and paddy fields are maintenance of fertility, productivity, recharge of ground water, and purification.

A group of youngsters including a handful of farmers approached HELP Foundation under the banner of Umayanallor Ella Samrakshana Samithi to see if we could assist them in cancelling the license Mayyanad Gramapanchayat has given to an established Water Bottling Plant Businessman to start a Plastic Caps and Jar

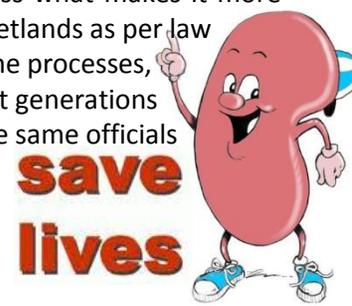
Manufacturing plant (*while it still remains a water bottling plant in disguise as per the earlier application, intention and construction*) on edge of the paddy field aka wetland. HELP Foundation, Umayanallor Ella Samrakshana

Samithi & Janasakthi another NGO joined hands to appeal to the Panchayat President highlighting the ill-effects of the said plastic manufacturing plant. What was strange is the local ward member too joined in the process. President would keep mum and not reply to any petitions or appeals. Apparently the local administration (a bunch of ruling party members)

bulldozed its way pushing aside all democratic process to issue the license to the said businessmen. HELP Foundation on researching the process adopted to issue the license and the violations committed, were astounded to see how much a local Panchayat secretary could accomplish under a first time novice Panchayat President whose job is nothing much signing on the dotted line (We have a long way to go towards women empowerment in the real sense and it has to start in our Panchayats as there is 50% reservation). The violations committed were too obvious and brazen.

For the said business man to start extracting water the administration colluded and planned a dummy plastic bottle manufacturing plant on the wetland when there is an industrial estate 2 kms away, and the government subsidizes for such activities. As per the statement of facts given to the High Court Kerala and information obtained from all the concerned authorities via RTI, we see the aberrations as committed by the Panchayat Secretaries Office as in [Fact Sheet \(See next page\)](#)

The job is not over yet, but the point is HELP Foundation was able to assist because of a group of young citizens joined hands to object this daylight robbery under the Samithi. It's another matter the Business man is going about lamenting the lakhs of rupees he paid as bribe to the officials concerned. The point to note here is that Food Security & Water Scarcity should be a prime consideration in any developmental decisions taken at the Panchayat level. If only the Panchayats took decisions upholding the "THE KERALA CONSERVATION OF PADDY LAND AND WETLAND ACT, 2008" which is to conserve the paddy land and wetland and to restrict the conversion or reclamation thereof, in order to promote growth in the agricultural sector and to sustain the ecological system, in the State of Kerala. Another interesting facet unearthed in this intervention is that as per RDO records Umayanallor Ela is notified as 'wet land' in government records, while the data bank prepared by the Local Level Monitoring Committee calls it paddy field, guess what makes it more easier to fill up paddy fields than Wetlands as per law Prime example of how we undermine processes, acts, rules and the assets of the next generations to make a few illegal bucks all by the same officials who are supposed to guard it.



## Special Report

Prof. Peter Pradeep

## Umayanallor Ela (paddy field) in Kollam Fact File

1. Panchayat Secretary deliberately included Jars in the license issues, when PCB (Pollution Control Board) had only sanctioned small Bottles & Caps manufacturing & not Jar manufacturing (RTI from PCB).
2. Per rules for all units above 5HP, different norms apply; Secretary gave permission for a 25.5 HP motor when he is not authorized to as per rules. (Information from LSG Tribunal Court Trivandrum)
3. Secretary has not followed the guidelines as mentioned in Panchayati Raj Act 232,233,234 & 254, whereas it's using these same rules the license has been issues (Licenses copy submitted in High Court).
4. Pollution Control Board had clearly stated that there is bound to be air pollution as well as noise pollution. PCB has stated that studies should be conducted for ascertaining the health hazards before issuing the license. Panchayat Secretary has ignored this deliberately. (RTI from PCB).
5. Secretary issued the license based on a DMO report with Signature on both papers of the District Medical Officer (DMO) s order signed by different people and there was no Office seal on it. It's strange that an order is not sealed, let alone the signature.
6. benchmark data on the ambient air quality, groundwater status and quality needs to be obtained at the cost of the owner, whereas PCB has called for such studies.(RTI information from PCB)
7. Secretary had not made sure Physical, Chemical & Biological Parameters of Soil should also be provided at the cost of the owner to set the benchmark before issuing the license when PCB has mentioned the same.
8. Secretary had not made sure that Report on Water Analysis should be obtained for benchmarking dissolved salts and other metals in the ground water.
9. Secretary had decided to ignore the fact that the unit stands on Wetland (survey numbers 93/6-1 & 93/7-1) and Conversion of Wetland for other purposes reduces the recharge area.
10. Secretary has deliberately ignored the fact that being wetland pollution gets directly in the groundwater and it's irreversible and is a violation of the Paddy & Wetland Conservation Act 2008.
11. Secretary deliberately overlooked the part which calls for facility to dispose wastes as called for in the DMO report and irrational disposal of plastic will cause animal death.
12. Secretary had deliberately ignored the fact that Gradual but continued exposure of pollutants in ground water is irreversible.
13. Secretary and the Panchayat Standing Committee decided to overrule the ward member's objection and hence the Ward member had to join the mass movement.
14. Secretary had overlooked the fact that this proposal was not kept in Gramasabha for approval.
15. Secretary had decided to overlook the fact that there is no project report yet submitted (RTI)



Exhibit No.2



Exhibit No.3



Exhibit No.4



## From the Editor's Desk

Suneesh Kumar

## PRI s and the way Ahead

PRI s (Panchayat Raj Institution ) in India have not yet proved much except in two or three states , because of the all imposing hegemony of socio-political compulsions The Political structure which is almost a replica of the social structure is not at all willing to loose its control over the institutions that they hold under. The current world has accepted the need for localised acting even in the 1940's itself which we can see in the slogans of UN. But in reality no part of the world has succeeded in establishing a viable grass root level socio political mechanism to carryout the governance and lessens the administrative burden on the top.

In India but there have been some remarkable positive steps even before the present Panchayat Raj Act. J&K, Karnataka, West Bengal and Kerala had made their own forms of local governments in base and intermediary levels. Though mired by the battles of insurgency J&K's Panchayat Raj Act was splendid one in content. Unfortunately it was not been implemented till now even after 25 years.

Apart from the legislation we should think beyond mere administration. The local governments should not be were administrative units with mechanical and routine bureaucratic functions rather, it should play a wide roll encompassing all aspects of rural populace viz. Rural credit, .Rural Marketing, Rural Technology Information and communication Technology (ICT) Community based Disaster management, Renewable Energy ,Solid waste management, containing Corruption, evolving Appropriate technologies and solutions etc.

Rural credit occupies an important part of recent Indian Budgets .It is playing a vital role in promoting rural livelihoods and entrepreneurs. Apart from that it has also increased the savings habit and purchasing power of the rural folks. The PRI's have to look into the possible areas of linkages to increase the monetary power of their subjects.

Rural marketing is an area still in its infancy stage If the rural industry or agriculture wants to boom then rural marketing .is the way. The rural producers are still been not able to reach out to the needy. The irony is that the rural products have a strong market in the cities; they cannot even meet the demand if it is properly marketed or even channelized. The PRI's should evolve, with the help of potential NGOs, some plan to bridge their gap.

Rural Technologies find a pivotal place in the modern world. The modern technology have worn out and devastated future of mankind. In other place Rural and Appropriate Technologies have entered the place with the basic idea of sustainable development. The wisdom and practical oriented rural technologies are the new solutions to the many a problem of environmental degradation, pollution etc. The PRI's can earn "carbon credits" (though not purely in the strict UN Terms) by placing the right sustainable technology at the right place at the right time for the right period.

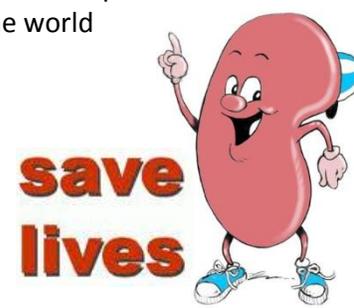
Community based disaster management can proved to be the best solutions to mitigating disasters. Here the intervention of PRIs and NGOs and the community are always prepared to meet the exigencies of the impending disasters whether it is a Tsunami or a bike accident .Time is the precious factor in any disaster or accidents only the immediate community can act by not losing the time for the best part of the survival.

21st century's greatest demands are water and energy Depleting sources of energy have threatened the very existence of modern life. The power failures have driven the mangers to think differently and properly. By turning their w look into renewable sources they cannot avoid PRIs and local participation. There is a huge potential of renewable energy options in India though the Governments are investing, both money and mind, much less in their area.

Corruption in public offices is a phenomenon threatening the fabric of nationhood. The basic reason for this is lack of transparency. In a localised Government one cannot hide the facts and figures beyond some extent. This transparency is the real key to contain corruption.

Solid waste management is another area where urbanised local communities face in the present. Before the wastes being piling up, rural homely solutions can control and administer the waste locally and also converting it to a resource using technologies.

One cannot miss the outside world by mere secluded development. The fast development in the every nook and corner of the world should be lessons and eye openers to each and every one. By developing an appropriate ICT model the PRI s can stand up to the modern world to say 'we are the world we are the future'.



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