



HELP Foundation

Quarterly Journal

Newsletter
newsletter

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From the Editors Desk

Environmental degradation is often linked with poverty and has not been highlighted. As with economic growth oriented policies development comes to the fore. Most often projects are cleared without proper study of environmental impact. Seldom has obtainment of Environmental Clearance been a hurdle to business as for the administrative class its just cause for a few illegal bucks. Livelihoods of people who have depended on these resources as their source of income are almost always the casualties. Sustainable development that embraces human rights in particular and incorporating the apt developmental solution in consultation with the Indigenous people and approval of the same in the Gramsabhas is the way forward so that the region and its people wont end up being the casualty.

key areas of intervention

1. Capacity Building
2. Health Assurance
3. Food Security
4. Environment
5. Social Entrepreneurship
6. Legal Aid

LAUNCH OF MUKKAM CHAPTER OF HELP FOUNDATION

HELP Foundation has launched its next chapter in Mayyanad Mukkam to carry out its social entrepreneurship based activities. This was launched with the involvement of the elected representative to the Grama Panchayat ward and the entire community. Our activity was started at a time when the entire community is facing eviction. Land grab by real estate developers, resort owners and tourism lobbies lack any process of ethics and flout all norms & regulations. Acquiring sea land or coastal land purely for commercial tourist activities by driving out the indigenous people are wrecking havoc on livelihood and environment. Inhumane displacement violating fundamental human rights in collusion with local administration have to be halted completely. Various acts like Coastal Zonal Regulation Act and funds like Tsunami related ones are cleverly manipulated and made use of for the above purpose.

Not being in power and not being connected means these poor fisher folks get unwittingly entangled and displaced in an increasingly decrepit system, thereby forfeiting their all to the tourism lobbies who have worked hard to earn their spoils. The psyche of the powerful is to bend rules for oneself and others for a consideration. Wonder what cost to environment & livelihood and at whose expense are these being carried out. Its our Endeavour to strengthen the community & its enterprising activities so that individuals cant be weaned away by the powerful so as to slowly get a acquire the land where they have lived for centuries.

ENVIRONMENT

Sustainable use of water over generations has been ensured through cultural adaptation to water and living in harmony with nature's ways. However in the last three to four decades at least in an Indian context the consequences of urbanization and adaptation to the consumer culture have taken its toll on water bodies. Ill conceived developmental policies to suit the needs of business or commercial interests have had detrimental effect on our water bodies and the ecosystem surrounding it. Water Resource Management or maintenance of our water bodies has been shoddy at best. The changes in water use patterns for industry & cultivation, and attempts to tamper with the natural water bodies and its flow patterns have caused enormous loss to the state of Kerala in terms of agricultural land & livelihood of the indigenous communities. In the Eighties there have been attempts to assist the farming community by means of water diversification and other irrigation techniques so as to increase food production. Appropriate water management techniques have to be adopted to ensure food security and to stop driving indigenous communities to desperation. But there is tremendous deficit in understanding of natural issues with in the perspective of development. Scientific communities are more confined to creating substandard research papers which are more of documentation in nature than any cutting edge research or findings to state, nor have we seen any worthwhile applications of such research. This too has been acquired by talking to local, indigenous people for the purpose of mandatory publications.

Policy Decision Makers in the various governmental departments have little first hand knowledge of the situation on ground and they are not in any way connected to the Scientific Community. NGOs or local level researchers are often ignored as mere activists and they get to interfere on developmental issues once the implementation process hits the ground. Political interference on behalf of the business interests they serve further drive the actual solution from the issue at hand. This complicates implementation further as environmental norms & natures principles would have already been tampered with. Vested approaches to development as mentioned above leads to social upheaval, conflicts and injustice. Communities who have been the guardian of the precious resources are submerged to be silent suffers, due to loss of livelihood and breakage of natures chain system where one leads to the existence of other.

Most always the end result of such development is irreversible environmental destruction, loss of biodiversity & economic hardships to the indigenous population. Local Population under the garb of government orders generated by political parties whose source of funds are never made available is

HELP Foundation

(*Human Empowerment & Livelihood Promotion Foundation*) is an independent, voluntary, non-profit, non-governmental organization (NGO), registered as a public charitable trust, based out of KOLLAM. It involved in socio-economic activities as well as is a rights based organization catering to all sections of the Society. HELP Foundations primary focus and key interventions are in the above mentioned arenas..

Each area is led by a young professional who has proven himself in the respective fields and we view ourselves as a Next Generation NGO. We also work with and develop the capacity of Panchayat Presidents & ward members who are endowed with most of the powers within Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI). By support PRI's in planning & implementation we empower PRI's to discharge their duties efficiently

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forced into forfeiting their lands to give way to huge industries, energy plants and other enterprises. All over the world it's the native people that continue to suffer from high rates of poverty, health problems, crime and human rights abuses. While they live in their habitats fully enshrining the principles of Gross National Happiness (GNH), we want to bring them under growth measured by GDP. The native community is among the first to feel the impacts of climate change even though their lifestyles are practically carbon neutral.

In the above context HELP Foundation has launched a detailed study to understand the "Analysis of the Wrong Developmental Policy pursued at the behest of traditional industries in collusion with indifferent administration together with detached consumerists quick buck attitude of newer generation and its impact on the pristine Environment, Aquatic habitat, Loss of biodiversity & Livelihood in Paravoor Lake".

TRADITIONAL TOURISM BASED MICRO ENTERPRISES

Over the last two decades scholars all over the country have highlighted the unique socio-economic and cultural life of the indigenous fishermen along the Kerala coast with special focus on the self-sufficient and interdependent economy of this coastal people and their peaceful coexistence. However these indigenous fishermen along the Paravoor Lake coast at Mayyanad have ended as development refugees thanks to the ill-advised process of development of the coast for ulterior motives.

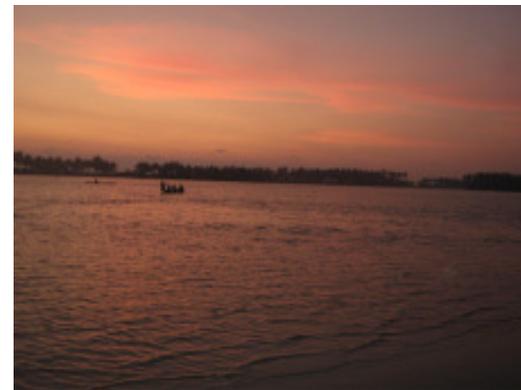
Development without understanding and factoring the needs of the indigenous people has predominantly been an urban concept. No doubt mankind has benefited from quick developmental problem solutions and speed of markets. But the relentless pursuit of development without factoring the indigenous people and their way of life have also been responsible for environmental & economic degradations like poverty, pollution, lack of habitat, water shortage, loss of biodiversity & also invited the wrath of nature's fury. Ultimately we will have to look for solutions in our own value systems and also fully in line with nature's principles. HELP Foundation has intervened to protect & preserve the indigenous people's livelihood as well as protect nature and restore its natural ways.

Apart from a moral duty to care for the welfare of these ancient communities, where else can we look for sustainable values but to the same indigenous people itself who have had a life of sustainable values from time immemorial. It's indeed remarkable that despite the vast changes around them they continue with their traditional way of life. But for any indigenous people to survive their livelihood should be protected and they should be free to pursue their traditional social & cultural life.

HELP Foundation is working with the Panchayat and District Tourism Promotion Council (DTPC) Kollam so that the Entire Fishing Community or the traditional inhabitants are being part of the hosting community by contributing their function as being part of a micro enterprise or SHG. Traditional Activity of the Fishing Community are recreated or done leisurely together with the tourists as they want, like fishing or an adventure trip in a Catamaran, Preparation of Local Cuisine & other traditional Fishing Village chores. The villagers are responsible for the well being of the visitors in terms of protecting them as well as guiding them in all aspects in their hamlet. Once they get accustomed with the visitors they can maintain the place lively and attractive.



The sand deposit in Paravoor Lake is widening day by day. Though it is a threat to the lake it has an unexplored tourism potential and the local people can find it as an alternate livelihood



The rising sun appears from the Western Ghat is a unique vision of dawn from Hill, vale, lake and sea



View from the island of sand deposit near the natural estuary