



# HELP FOUNDATION



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- Nurture and Care** ▾
- Estuary Restoration
- Mangrove Afforestation
- Paddy Land Conservation
- River Conservation
- Tree Planting
- Water Conservation
- Wetland Conservation

## Brief description about the Organization

1	Name of the Organisation	HELP Foundation
2	Number, Year & Type of Registration	Reg No: 20/2011/IV, 2010-11, Trust
3	Office Address	HELP Foundation, Kayavil House, Kayavil Junction, Mayyanad P.O, Kollam 691303
4	Contact Details of the Organisation	Ph: 0474-2997034, 8891502154, helpfoundationkerala@gmail.com
5	Total Number of Years Completed	11 years
6	NITI Ayog ID	VO/NGO Unique ID: KL/2011/0040381
7	Tax Exemption Status	Registered under 12AA
8	Donor gets 50% tax rebate	Approved under 80G(5) of Income Tax Act



# Ashtamudi Lake a decade from now?

- ▶ Lake was recommended by the Ramsar Convention's partner organizations as a wetland of 61.4 sq km as site number 1,204.
- ▶ On August 19, 2022, it will be 20 years since the brackish water Ashtamudi Lake with eight creeks was declared a Ramsar site by designating it as a wetland of international importance.
- ▶ However, since then, the area of the lake has shrunk to 34 sq km and it is facing serious environmental degradation.
- ▶ Revenue authorities dispute the 61.4 sq km extent but agree that the lake may have shrunk by at least 5 sq km in the past 10 years.
- ▶ **How do you want to foresee Ashtamudi Lake in 2032?**






# Ecotourism as a means for Conserving Ashtamudi Lake Wetland

- ▶ **Eco tourism Means :**Traveling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations found this areas.
- ▶ **ഇക്കോ ടൂറിസം അർത്ഥമാക്കുന്നത്:** താരതമ്യേന തടസ്സമില്ലാത്തതോ മലിനീകരിക്കപ്പെടാത്തതോ ആയ പ്രകൃതിദത്ത പ്രദേശങ്ങളിലേക്ക് യാത്ര ചെയ്യുക, പഠിക്കുക, അഭിനന്ദിക്കുക,പ്രകൃതിദൃശ്യങ്ങളും അതിലെ കാട്ടുചെടികളും ജീവജാലങ്ങളും ആസ്വദിക്കുക, ഈ പ്രദേശങ്ങൾനിലവിലുള്ള ഏതെങ്കിലും സാംസ്കാരിക പ്രകടനങ്ങളും കണ്ടെത്തി ആസ്വദിക്കുക.
- ▶ പരിസ്ഥിതിക്ക് കേടുപാടുകൾ വരുത്താതെയും ആവാസവ്യവസ്ഥയെ ശല്യപ്പെടുത്താതെയും നടത്തുന്ന വിനോദസഞ്ചാമാണ് ഇക്കോടൂറിസം
- ▶ ഉയർന്ന പരിസ്ഥിതി മനസാക്ഷി സംരക്ഷണത്തിലേക്കും അതിനപ്പുറത്തേക്കും നയിക്കുന്നു







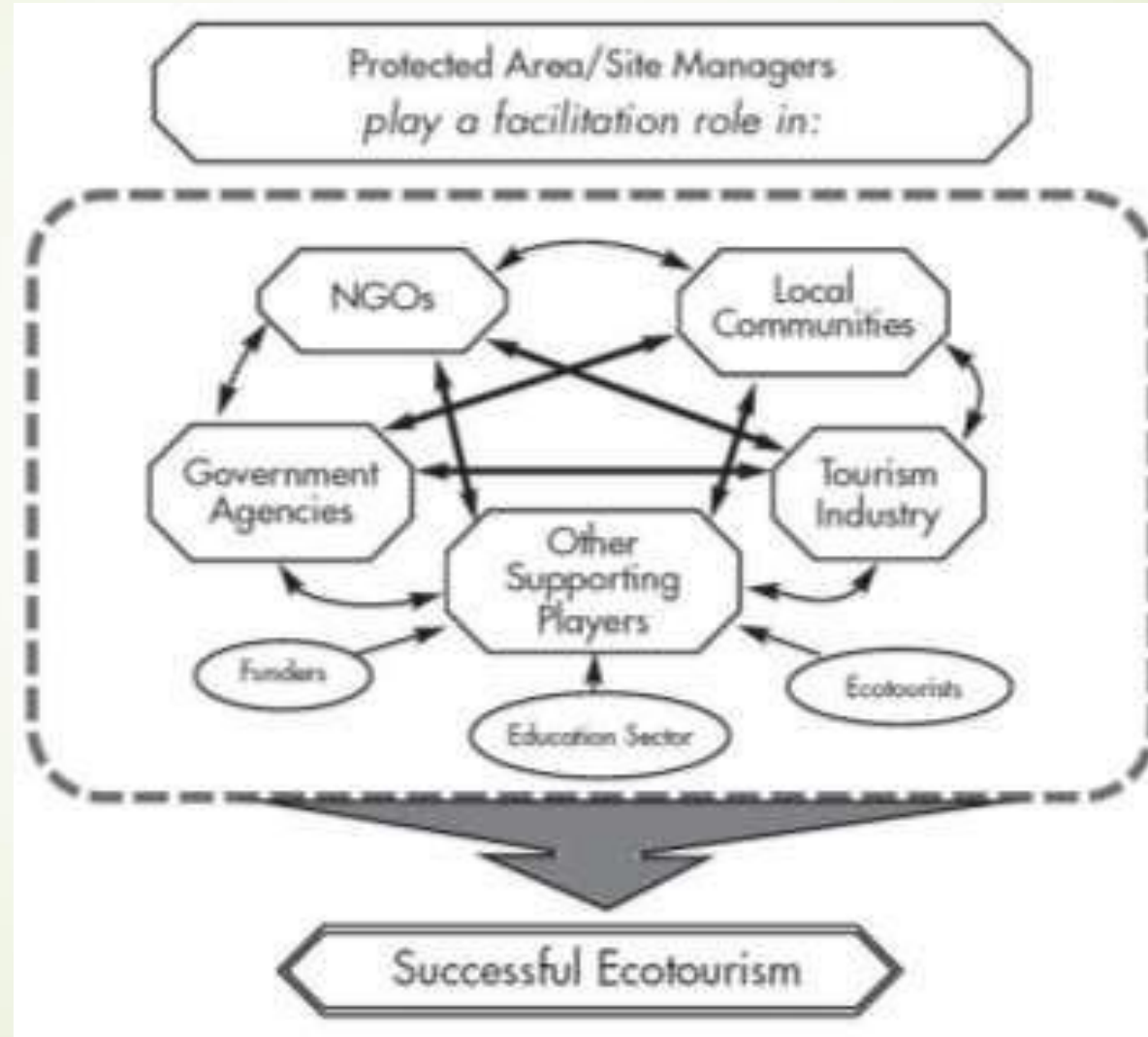
# Proposed eco-tourism Model

- ▶ Wetland Ecotourism in partnership with Wetland Conservation
- ▶ Tourism and Environment turning friends
  - ▶ Government focuses on the tourism and revenue
  - ▶ NGO (Help Foundation) becomes the auditor and endorser of the environmental compliance of the eco tourism spots
  - ▶ Government focuses on the commercial possibilities
  - ▶ NGO (Help Foundation) figures out how to blend that with environment friendly models
    - ▶ Waste Management
    - ▶ Each of the 12 villages as a unique ecosystem with its own culture, traditions, cuisines, environment spots, birds, fishes, crafts, traditional job sectors – which become a tourist attraction with international audience





# Stakeholders involved in the process (Source: Moef Concept Note)



# PROJECT PROPOSAL: Ashtamudi as a Eco tourism spot?

HELP Foundations Project proposal aims at stringing together a coalition **Of** Community Groups, Government Institutions, Local Administration, NGO,s, tourists, suppliers, local governments, home stays, tourism agencies, house boat operators, rural house holds, ecological groups and College/School Level Eco Clubs along the entire stretch of Ashtamudi Lake leading

**Towards** Development of an Ecosystem approach for integrated management of land, water, and living resources in and around Ashtamudi Lake such that it can be developed into a world Class Ecotourism Destination with DTPC as the fulcrum.





# Activities of Ecotourism

- ▶ Activities dependent on nature (Bird watching, Nature enthusiasts)
- ▶ Activities enhanced by nature (Camping, House boats)
- ▶ Activities where the natural setting is incidental (Swimming)
- ▶ Kinetic experiences were non-mechanically powered activities (Hiking, Diving, Canoeing, Kayaking, Cycling and other Water sports).
- ▶ Situation-based experience entail a strong association with the destination as a unique characteristic (Fishing, Clam harvesting, Coir making, Fish seed ranching )
- ▶ Conservation Activities (Mangrove afforestation ,Conserve pearl spot ,Yellow clam and other freshwater fish species)
- ▶ A substitution or aesthetic experience includes observation of natural phenomena or the surrounding ecosystem (paddy fields, mangroves, rivulets, swamps, spongy marshes )
- ▶ GENERALIZED TYPES OF RECREATION & SPORTING ACTIVITY can be planned without disturbing the ecology in a non mechanized manner.







# International Role Model

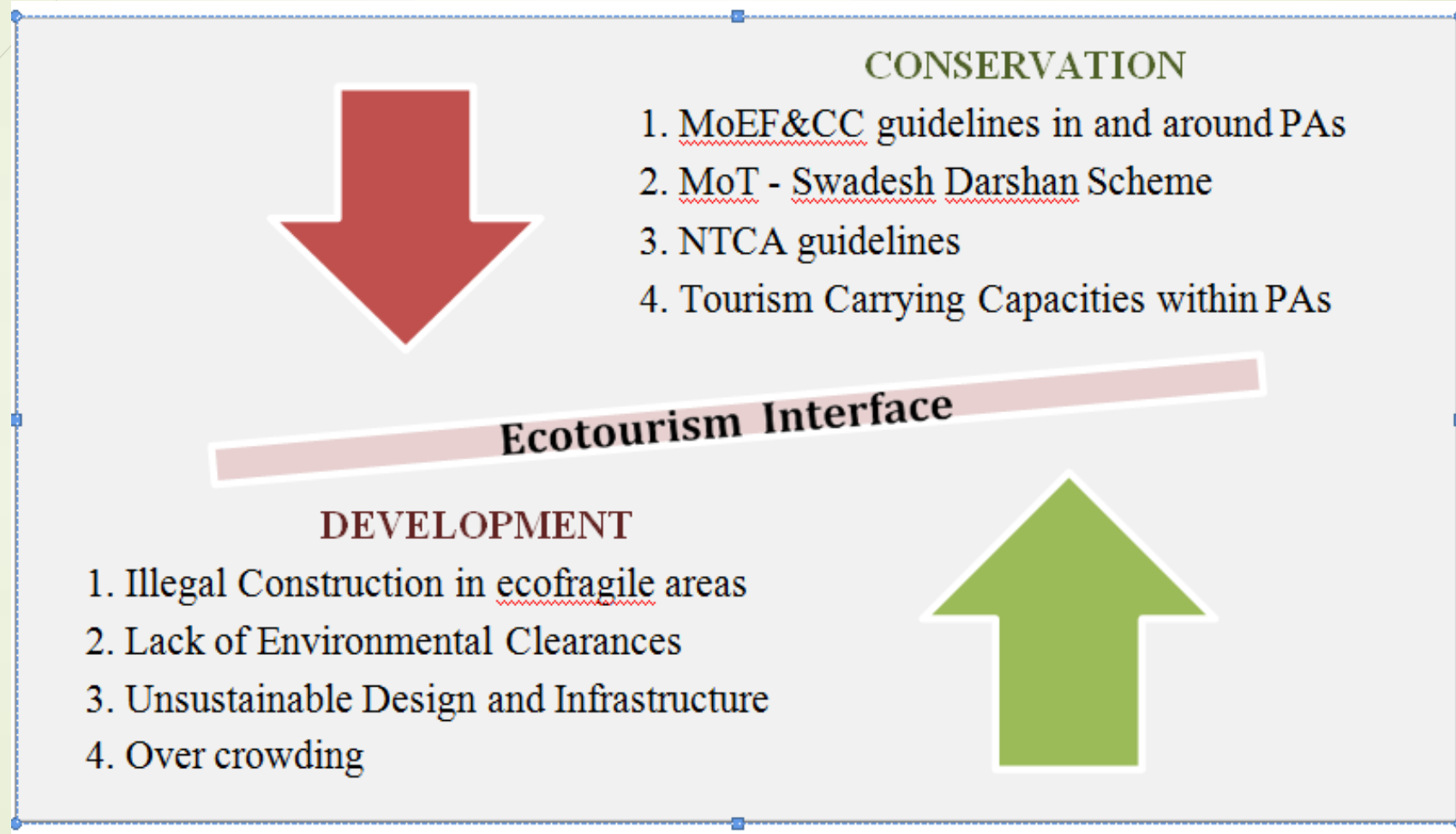
- ▶ Kerala will be in the lines of International guidelines in blending of eco tourism and environment
  - ▶ Costa Rica Model of ecotourism
  - ▶ Ramsar model in the Himalayas (Wular Lake)
  - ▶ Ecotoursim in Sunderbans
- ▶ Ramsar tag in eco tourism will make Ashtamudi a global attraction
- ▶ Target for audit and certification by Ramsar itself in the long run
- ▶ Ashtamudi can be demonstrated as the classic confluence of the beautiful ecosystem of Kerala where the Western Ghats, the rivers, the estuaries and the lake all blend into one, where mangroves and clams and shrimps and swamps meet
- ▶ This can be developed as the reference model for eco tourism for other spots of Kerala too
- ▶ Overall, Kerala can be on the international map as a serious and practical player that blended the practicality of tourism with the ideology of conservation, in Kerala's wetlands





# Ministry of tourism (MoT), simultaneously stressing on maintenance of environmental integrity process

(Source: Moef Concept Note)





# Principles of Ecotourism

- Minimizes negative impacts to the environment and local people

(പരിസ്ഥിതിക്കും പ്രദേശവാസികൾക്കും ഉണ്ടാകുന്ന പ്രതികൂല ഫലങ്ങൾ കുറയ്ക്കുന്നു)

- Increases awareness and understanding of an areas natural and cultural systems and their subsequent involvement in conservation issues.

(പ്രകൃതി, സാംസ്കാരിക വ്യവസ്ഥകളെക്കുറിച്ചുള്ള അവബോധവും ധാരണയും സംരക്ഷണ പ്രശ്നങ്ങളിൽ അവരുടെ തുടർന്നുള്ള ഇടപെടലും വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നു)

- Contributes to conservation and management of protected and other natural areas

(സംരക്ഷിതവും മറ്റ് പ്രകൃതിദത്തവുമായ പ്രദേശങ്ങളുടെ സംരക്ഷണത്തിനും പരിപാലനത്തിനും സംഭാവന ചെയ്യുന്നു )

- Maximizes local participation in decision making concerning intensity of tourism

(ടൂറിസത്തിന്റെ തീവ്രത സംബന്ധിച്ച തീരുമാനമെടുക്കുന്നതിൽ പ്രാദേശിക പങ്കാളിത്തം വർദ്ധിപ്പിക്കുന്നു )

- Directs economic and other benefits to local people

(പ്രാദേശിക ജനങ്ങൾക്ക് സാമ്പത്തികവും മറ്റ് ആനുകൂല്യങ്ങൾ യിലേക്കും നയിക്കുന്നു)

- Provides special opportunities for local people and nature tourism employees to utilize and visit natural areas

(പ്രകൃതിദത്ത പ്രദേശങ്ങൾ ഉപയോഗപ്പെടുത്താനും സന്ദർശിക്കാനും പ്രാദേശിക ആളുകൾക്കും പ്രകൃതി ടൂറിസം ജീവനക്കാർക്കും പ്രത്യേക അവസരങ്ങൾ നൽകുന്നു )



# Relationship between wetland and tourism

Wetland is highly related to tourism and the two supplement each other. (തണ്ണീർത്തടം ടൂറിസവുമായി വളരെയധികം ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടിരിക്കുന്നു, ഇവ രണ്ടും പരസ്പരം അനുബന്ധമാണ്)

Wetland possesses conditions and sites for tourists to have activities such as swimming, sunbath, boating, fishing and watching water creatures. (വിനോദസഞ്ചാരികൾക്ക് നീന്തൽ, സൺബത്ത്, ബോട്ടിംഗ്, മീൻപിടുത്തം, ജലജീവികളെ കാണൽ തുടങ്ങിയ പ്രവർത്തനങ്ങൾ നടത്താനുള്ള സാഹചര്യങ്ങളും സൈറ്റുകളും വെറ്റ് ലാൻഡിലുണ്ട്)

Income gained from tourism can provide financial support to wetland protection and realize a sustainable development of wetland environment. (ടൂറിസത്തിൽ നിന്ന് ലഭിക്കുന്ന വരുമാനം തണ്ണീർത്തട സംരക്ഷണത്തിന് സാമ്പത്തിക സഹായം നൽകാനും തണ്ണീർത്തട പരിസ്ഥിതിയുടെ സുസ്ഥിര വികസനം സാക്ഷാത്കരിക്കാനും കഴിയും)

People's expectation and environmental problems resulted from tourism will make government to attach importance to the protection and management of wetland. (വിനോദസഞ്ചാരത്തിന്റെ ഫലമായുണ്ടാകുന്ന ജനങ്ങളുടെ പ്രതീക്ഷയും പാരിസ്ഥിതിക പ്രശ്നങ്ങളും തണ്ണീർത്തടത്തിന്റെ സംരക്ഷണത്തിനും പരിപാലനത്തിനും പ്രാധാന്യം നൽകാൻ സർക്കാരിനെ പ്രേരിപ്പിക്കും)


Carrying out wetland ecotourism can not only promote sustainable development of the regional economy BUT also protect ecological environment of the wetland (തണ്ണീർത്തട ഇക്കോടൂറിസം നടത്തുന്നത് പ്രാദേശിക സമ്പദ്വ്യവസ്ഥയുടെ സുസ്ഥിര വികസനം പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുക മാത്രമല്ല, തണ്ണീർത്തടത്തിന്റെ പരിസ്ഥിതിയെ സംരക്ഷിക്കുകയും ചെയ്യുന്നു)

Also promote ecological civilization construction through practical environmental education to tourists. (വിനോദ സഞ്ചാരികൾക്ക് പ്രായോഗിക പാരിസ്ഥിതിക വിദ്യാഭ്യാസത്തിലൂടെ പാരിസ്ഥിതിക നാഗരിക നിർമ്മാണത്തെ പ്രോത്സാഹിപ്പിക്കുക)










# Wetland Ecotourism Development Process


- ▶ Understanding how the tourism sector works helps when planning for a development of tourism that is both commercially viable and compatible with wetland conservation.
- ▶ Effective interaction between tourism and wetland conservation occurs where the overlap between the mutual interest of each sector is identified through dialogue.
- ▶ About a creative product to enhance the tourist experience and conservation
- ▶ Communication and education about wetlands help to raise awareness about wetland values and wetland biodiversity, and win support from tourists and others for wetland conservation.
- ▶ Essential to the success of the programme is the development of partnerships among tourism organizations and operators, protected area agencies, NGOs, local Panchayats, conservation groups, government agencies, and Indigenous communities.



# Issues with the Development of the Lake as an Ecotourism Destination

- Unhygienic Environment
- Polluted Water Body
- Open Dumping of waste into the Wetland
- Loss of Livelihoods
- Large quantities of untreated sewage, disposal of human excreta, and the pollution from industries.
- Waste from House Boats
- Unabated flow of Household Waste from Open Drains
- No sense of ownership
- Oil spills from thousands of fishing boats and from industries in the surrounding area
- Dwindling of the fragile lake zone due to conversion/destruction of natural habitats for development purposes (reported that the lake which had an area of 54 km<sup>2</sup> [21 mi<sup>2</sup>] according to old survey reports has shrunk to 34 km<sup>2</sup> [13 mi<sup>2</sup>] due to encroachments)





# Issues with the Development of the Lake as an Ecotourism Destination (cont)

- ▶ Failure of the lake's fresh water ecosystem
- ▶ Water Quality Management & Pollution Abatement
- ▶ Rapid depletion of biodiversity, especially that of marine life and avians.
- ▶ Many fish species may have become extinct due to lack of spawning facilities on the banks of the lake due to the lake's banks by walls built of laterite and granite stones
- ▶ Insensitive Local bodies
- ▶ Lack of understanding of the need to carry out conservation measures thus ushering in the Green Economy
- ▶ No provision to carry out or supervise protection and conservation measures
- ▶ Lack of Lake Wardens or Rangers
- ▶ Coordinated Network of Certified Home stays.
- ▶ Lack of Indigenous Village based Tourism Products.



# Wetland Ecotourism Case Studies

## **India – Lake Tsomoriri**

[https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/case\\_studies\\_tourism/India/India\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/case_studies_tourism/India/India_EN.pdf)

## **Kenya -Lake Nakuru**

[https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/case\\_studies\\_tourism/Kenya/Kenya\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/case_studies_tourism/Kenya/Kenya_EN.pdf)

## **Brazil - Abrolhos Marine National Park**

[https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/case\\_studies\\_tourism/Brazil/Brazil\\_Abrolhos\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/case_studies_tourism/Brazil/Brazil_Abrolhos_EN.pdf)

## **Estonia - Soomaa National Park**

[https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/case\\_studies\\_tourism/Estonia/Estonia\\_Soomaa\\_EN-.pdf](https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/case_studies_tourism/Estonia/Estonia_Soomaa_EN-.pdf)

## **Vietnam – Ba Bể National Park**

[https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/case\\_studies\\_tourism/VietNam/Vietnam\\_BaBe\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ramsar.org/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/case_studies_tourism/VietNam/Vietnam_BaBe_EN.pdf)





# Benefits of Ecotourism

## (Key Outcomes expected of the Project Proposal)

- There will be enhancement in average # of livelihood days of fishermen, because of improved bio diversity.
- There will be increased availability of potable water in the wells in the region. This is primarily due to the desalination of water by the mangroves, and the retention of abundant water because of prevention of erosion of the shores.
- Creating Rural jobs across all fronts
- Rake in Dollars
- Sustainability:
- Conserving our Heritage
- Protecting Fresh Water Biodiversity
- Revival of Traditional Job Sector
- Revival of Traditional Food Sector
- Proof of Concept:

# References



**Eugene Pandala**  
Architect



**Vinod Menon**  
Founder Member, NDMA, Government of India



**Prasad**  
Ex DTPC Secretary, Current Secretary, District Panchayat



# Thank You

Team HELP Foundation