

കേരള സംസ്ഥാന ജൈവവൈവിധ്യ ബോർഡ്

ആശ്രാമം പ്രദേശം ജൈവവൈവിധ്യ പൈതൃകകേന്ദ്രമാക്കുന്നത് സംബന്ധിച്ച അറിയിപ്പ്

2002ലെ ജൈവവൈവിധ്യ നിയമത്തിലെ 37-ാം വകുപ്പ് പ്രകാരം സംസ്ഥാന സർക്കാരിന് തദ്ദേശ സ്വയംഭരണ സ്ഥാപനങ്ങളുമായി കൂടിയാലോചിച്ച് സംരക്ഷിത വനമേഖലയ്ക്ക് പുറത്തുള്ള ജൈവവൈവിധ്യ പ്രാധാന്യമുള്ള പ്രദേശങ്ങളെ ജൈവവൈവിധ്യ പൈതൃകകേന്ദ്രമായി പ്രഖ്യാപിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്. ഇതിൻപ്രകാരം ദേശീയ ജൈവവൈവിധ്യ അതോറിറ്റിയുടെ മാർഗ്ഗനിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ അനുസരിച്ച് കൊല്ലം ജില്ലയിലെ ആശ്രാമം പ്രദേശത്തെ ജൈവവൈവിധ്യ പൈതൃകകേന്ദ്രമായി പ്രഖ്യാപിക്കുവാൻ കൊല്ലം മുനിസിപ്പൽ കോർപ്പറേഷൻ ഭരണസമിതി കേരള സംസ്ഥാന ജൈവവൈവിധ്യ ബോർഡിനോട് ആവശ്യപ്പെടുകയുണ്ടായി. ആശ്രാമം പ്രദേശത്തെ അഷ്ടമുടിക്കായലിന്റെ ഭാഗവും അതിനോടനുബന്ധിച്ച് വലിയ തോതിൽ നശീകരണം സംഭവിച്ച കണ്ടൽ സമൂഹവും അഡ്വഞ്ചർ പാർക്ക്, ഗവൺമെന്റ് ഗസ്റ്റ് ഹൗസ്, കുട്ടികളുടെ കളിസ്ഥലം, ആശ്രാമം മൈതാനം എന്നിവ ഉൾപ്പെടുന്ന ഏകദേശം 250 ഏക്കറോളം വരുന്ന സ്ഥലം (സർവ്വേ ബ്ലോക്ക് നമ്പർ : 67,160,161,162) ജൈവവൈവിധ്യ പൈതൃക കേന്ദ്രമായി പ്രഖ്യാപിക്കുവാൻ തീരുമാനിച്ചിരിക്കുകയാണ്. ഇതു സംബന്ധിച്ച മാർഗ്ഗനിർദ്ദേശങ്ങൾ www.keralabiodiversity.org എന്ന വെബ്സൈറ്റിൽ ലഭ്യമാണ്. പ്രസ്തുത വിഷയത്തിൽ പൊതുജനങ്ങൾക്കോ മറ്റു തൽപരകക്ഷികൾക്കോ എന്തെങ്കിലും അഭിപ്രായങ്ങളോ നിർദ്ദേശങ്ങളോ അറിയിക്കുവാനുണ്ടെങ്കിൽ കേരള സംസ്ഥാന ജൈവവൈവിധ്യ ബോർഡിന്റെ keralabiodiversity@gmail.com എന്ന ഇ-മെയിലിലോ കേരള സംസ്ഥാന ജൈവവൈവിധ്യ ബോർഡ്, L-14, ജയ് നഗർ, മെഡിക്കൽ കോളേജ് പി.ഒ., തിരുവനന്തപുരം-695 011 എന്ന വിലാസത്തിലോ അറിയിക്കാവുന്നതാണ്.

**മെമ്പർ സെക്രട്ടറി
കേരള സംസ്ഥാന ജൈവവൈവിധ്യ ബോർഡ്**

PROPOSAL ON DECLARING ASRAMAM MANGROVES AND ASSOCIATED BIODIVERSITY AREAS AS BIODIVERSITY HERITAGE SITE

Introduction

Asramam mangroves forest is one of the most famous mangrove sites in Kollam district which lies along the banks of the extreme southern end of Ashtamudi Lake (Asramam arm) opposite to Kollam KSRTC Bus Depot (Figure 1). In the recent decades the area is undergoing severe environmental destruction and associated land reclamation. Reports say that, earlier this is an undisturbed land having rich biodiversity of mangrove species and also having rare/endemic/endangered plant species like *Syzygium travancoricum*, *Rotang calamus*, *Dalbergia candanatis* and *Drosera burmanni* etc. A spectrum of animals inhabit the area includes the rare Otter, Monitor lizards and many birds including migratory birds etc. As per a study conducted by Kerala Sasthra Sahithya Parishad (KSSP), the Asramam mangroves and associated wetland comprises 15 species of true mangroves, 22 species of mangrove associates, 122 plant species, 34 edible fish species and about 62 species of birds etc. In the late 1985 the District Tourism Promotion Council instituted a park in the area named "Adventure Park" by destroying a large area of mangroves and other natural vegetations and accordingly Kerala Tourism Department built a resort close to the park. Till date a lot of reclamation, encroachments were undergoing in these areas and hence 90% of the mangroves were cut down or destroyed.

In concerned with the grievances of environmentalist, nature lovers, the Biodiversity Management Committee of Kollam Corporation and Kerala State Biodiversity Board has decided to protect and rejuvenate the remaining biodiversity of the area by declaring the Asramam mangroves and associated land and wetlands to a Biodiversity Heritage Site.

History

Asramam mangrove area is considered as one of the most important biodiversity areas of the State. It is a part of Kureepuzha Kayal (One among the eight arms of Ashtamudi Lake) part of the Ashtamudi Lake. Ashtamudi Lake is the second largest and deepest lake of the State and was declared as a Ramsar site in 2002. Even this lake has the designation of a Ramsar listed wetland of international importance, it is under immense pressure due to population and socio-economic

development. As an important arm of Ashtamudi lake, Asramam lake is also experiencing a total destruction in the recent decades by completely neglecting/violating the existing rules and CRZ regulations.

Asramam Kayal

Asramam kayal is known to be a sub arm of one of the main creek of Ashtamudi Lake - the Kureepuzha Kayal. This lake part is extended from Thevally Bridge to Kollam Town. The feeding channels of Ashtamudi Lakelike *Asramam Thodu*, *Puthanthodu*, *Manichi Thodu*, *Cottonmill Thodu*, *Kacheri Thodu* and *Kollam Thodu* were merges in the Asramam Kayal part. Once these channels are regularly used for commercial trading of goods and people's recreation and daily needs. At present these channels were severely polluted due to urbanisation and some are reclaimed and filled for various purposes. Even the implementation of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) notification (1991, 2011) and Wetlands Rules (2010) in the State, the destruction of the lake is common and it is a continuous process till date. Illicit encroachment in the name of urban development plan of the District by the Kollam Corporation Authority in Asramam area is severe. The construction of Adventure Park, Link road, Playground, Boat jetty, KTDC Restaurant, Slaughter houses, Private invasions etc. have encroached a lion portion of the lake and its fringe area.

Asramam- a unique Bio habitat

Earlier Asramam area including the lake and the adjoining land known for its rich biodiversity and scenic beauty. The area hold a variety of floral and faunal composition with rare, endemic and endangered species. From time known, Asramam area is a luxuriously grown mangrove forest extending up to 2 km from TS canal to Asramam Sri Krishna temple. It is considered to be the second oldest mangroves forest of the State. The land which host a diverse varieties of mangroves and rare plant species and these unique ecosystem facilitates a variety habitat and become highly productive. At present it is only a 300 m sparse vegetation.

The 100 plus year old Asramam Residency Bungalow (Now Government Guest House) is situating close to the Lake. Once these area was a small hill with thick vegetation of plants like *Corynocarpus laevigatus*, *Anacardium occidentale*, *Syzygium cumini*, *Terminalia catappa*, *Calophyllum inophyllum*, *Holigarna arnottiana* and *Calamus rotang*, etc. As part of the Bungalow and golf course constructions these area were levelled and cleared. Later regularly these area were altered for various anthropogenic activities like the construction of Asramam Boat Jetty, Railway, Parvathi Mill, Burma Shell Company, Service station, Port godown, Bus stand, Adventure Park, KTDC Yathri Nivas, Slaughter House Link roads etc. Till date the area were undergoing severe environmental degradation without considering its ecological values by violating all the rules and regulations.

Biodiversity

The Asramam area is very rich in biodiversity with diverse flora and fauna. The area is reported to be having more than 160 species of very rare and endangered plants. About 100 to 200 years old trees are seen in the area (*Syzygium lancealotum*, *Vateria indica*, *Syzygium travancoricum*, *Syzygium cumini*, *Calophyllum inophyllum*, *Hopea wightiana*, *Drypetus sepiaria*) along with other rare plants like *Pamburus missionis*, *Calamus rotang*, *Drosera burmanni* etc. Once the area is rich in Rattan and Sandal wood trees, but most of them are cut down or stolen by people. The 50-60 year old mangroves species like *Sonneratia caseolaris* (Chakkara kandal), *Rhizophora mucronata* (Prandan kandal), *Bruguiera gymnorhiza* (Kara kandal), *Caesalpinia crista* (Kazhandi) are grown in the northern part of Adventure Park.

As per the report of Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishit, initially, there are seven true mangrove species are recorded from Asramam area and later 8 more species are added by the activities of Parishit (Table 1). Moreover, about 22 mangrove associates and 122 other plants were also recorded from area. Adding to these 9 environment threatened invasive alien plants were also reported.

Table 1 The true mangroves species growing in Asramam Area

Sl. No.	Species	Family	Local Name	Status
1	<i>Avicennia officinalis</i>	Verbenaceae	ഉപ്പട്ടി	Common
2	<i>Avicennia marina</i>	Verbenaceae	ചെറു ഉപ്പട്ടി	Common
3	<i>Bruguiera gymnorhiza</i>	Rhizophoraceae	കരക്കണ്ടൽ	Rare
4	<i>Excoecaria agallocha</i>	Euphorbiaceae	കമ്പട്ടി	Common
5	<i>Rhizophora mucronata</i>	Rhizophoraceae	ഭ്രാന്തൻ കണ്ടൽ	Rare
6	<i>Sonneratia caseolaris</i>	Sonneratiaceae	ചക്കരക്കണ്ടൽ	Common
7	<i>Bruguiera cylindrica</i>	Rhizophoraceae	ചെറുകണ്ടൽ	Rare
Sastra Sahitya Parishit Introduced				
8	<i>Aegiceras corniculatum</i>	Myrsinaceae	പുകണ്ടൽ	
9	<i>Ceriops tagal</i>	Rhizophoraceae	മഞ്ഞകണ്ടൽ	
10	<i>Excoecaria indica</i>	Euphorbiaceae	ചില്ലുകമ്പട്ടി	
11	<i>Kandelia candal</i>	Rhizophoraceae	വള്ളികണ്ടൽ	
12	<i>Lumnitzera racemosa</i>	Combretaceae	കടകണ്ടൽ	
13	<i>Bruguiera sexangula</i>	Rhizophoraceae	സ്വർണ്ണകണ്ടൽ	
14	<i>Rhizophora apiculata</i>	Rhizophoraceae	പീകണ്ടൽ	
15	<i>Sonneratia alba</i>	Sonneratiaceae	നക്ഷത്ര കണ്ടൽ	

Environmental issues

In addition to developmental activities the discharge of untreated urban solid and liquid wastes including slaughter, septic, poultry, hotel, fish processing units, house boats, workshops, vehicle and Hospital wastes etc. have created severe environmental problems in the area.

Demarcation of Asramam Biodiversity Heritage Site (BHS)

The proposed Asramam BHS is coming under the jurisdiction of Kollam east Village and the area demarcated are falls within the survey Block No. 67, 160, 161 and 162 (Ashtamudi Lake) (Figure 2). This Area falls within the geographical coordinates $76^{\circ} 34'46''$ - $76^{\circ} 35'50''$ E Longitude and $8^{\circ} 53' 27''$ - $8^{\circ}53'58''$ N Latitude. With the help of Field Measurement Book (FMB) details of Block No. 67, 160, 161 and 162 and GPS (Global Positioning System) we made a draft delineation of the proposed BHS and the details are as follows. Table 2 and 3 gives the details survey and GPS points, respectively.

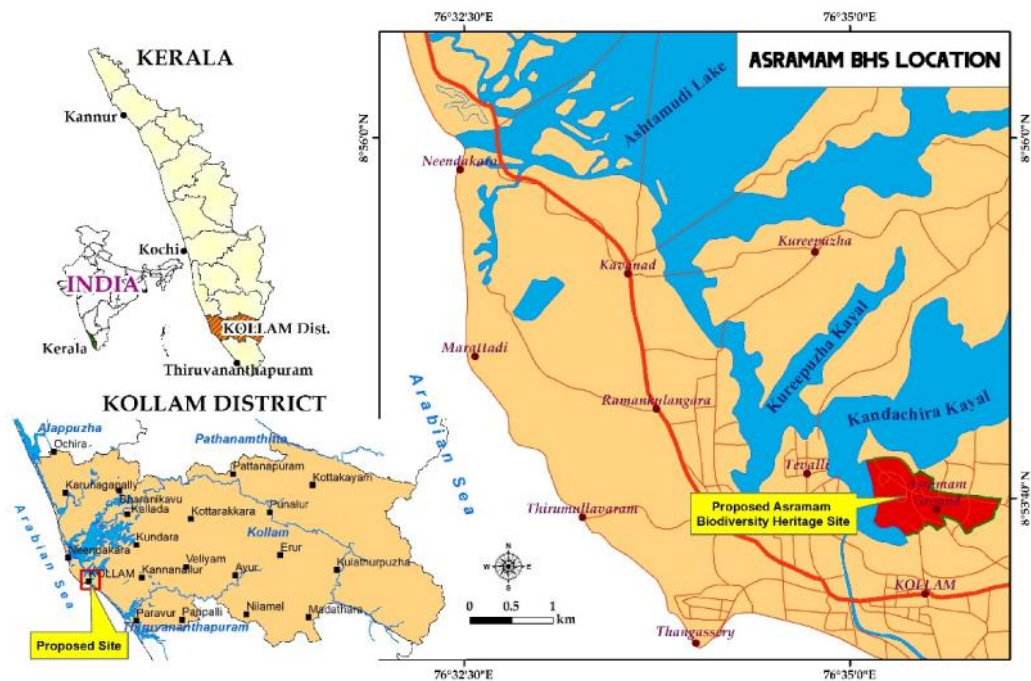


Figure 1 Map showing the location of Asramam Biodiversity Heritage Site

Table 2 Survey details of Asramam BHS

Sl. No	Block No.	Survey No.	Area (Hectors)	Description
1	67	1	23.99	Asramam Maidanam. Government of Kerala
2	160	1	13.81 Ha.	Port Department, Govt. of India
		2		Govt. of Kerala
		3		Police Department, Govt. of Kerala
		4		Irrigation Department. Govt. of Kerala
		5		Govt. of Kerala
		6		Road, Govt. of Kerala
		7		State Government land (Unclaimed)-Yathri Nivas
		8		Central Government (Unclaimed) - Port Department
		9		State Government land (Unclaimed land)-Part abandoned and part for Harbour Development Authority
3	161	1	16.92 Ha.	State Government land (Unclaimed)-Guest House Quarters
		2		1. Government land (Unclaimed) - Adventure Park. 2. Guest House 3. Guest House Annex 4. Children's Park 5. Coffee Shop
4	162	1	50.3	Asramam Kayal
Total area			105.02 Ha. (259.5 Acres)	

Table 3 GPS point around the proposed Asramam BHS.

Sl. No	GPS Point Index	Longitude	Latitude
1	P1	76.58865	76.58865
2	P2	76.59057	76.59057
3	P3	76.59203	76.59203
4	P4	76.59292	76.59292
5	P5	76.59337	76.59337
6	P6	76.59385	76.59385
7	P7	76.59494	76.59494
8	P8	76.59617	76.59617
9	P9	76.59643	76.59643
10	P10	76.59704	76.59704
11	P11	76.59367	76.59367
12	P12	76.59117	76.59117
13	P13	76.58981	76.58981
14	P14	76.5893	76.5893
15	P15	76.58978	76.58978
16	P16	76.58866	76.58866
17	P17	76.58759	76.58759
18	P18	76.58606	76.58606
19	P19	76.58456	76.58456
20	P20	76.58021	76.58021
21	P21	76.58275	76.58275
22	P22	76.58345	76.58345
23	P23	76.58324	76.58324
24	P24	76.58506	76.58506
25	P25	76.58694	76.58694

Asramam BHS area Details

1	Location Details	Kollam East Village, Kollam District, Kerala			
2	Geographical Coordinates	76° 34'46" - 76° 35'50" E Longitude and 8° 53' 27"- 8°53'58"N Latitude.			
3	Land details	Within the Survey Block Number 67, 160, 161 and 162			
4	Area	Approx.82.97Hectare (205.1 Acres)			
4	Boundaries	North	Block No. 61,62,63, 64, 65, 66, 43		
		South	Block No. 69, 159, 170, 162, 167		
		East	Block No. 68,42		
		West	Block No. 216, 215, 163		
5	Structures within the BHS boundary	Sl. No.	Block No.	Survey No.	Details
		1	160	1	Port Department, Govt. of India
		2		2	Govt. of Kerala
		3		3	Police Department, Govt. of Kerala
		4		4	Irrigation Department, Govt. of Kerala
		5		5	Govt. of Kerala (Hockey Stadium)
		6		6	Road
		7		7	KTDC Hotel
		8		8	Port Department (Godown)
		9		9	Harbour Development (Engineering Division)
		10		161	1
11	2	Government Guest House Guest House Annexe Adventure Park Children's Park Coffee Shop			

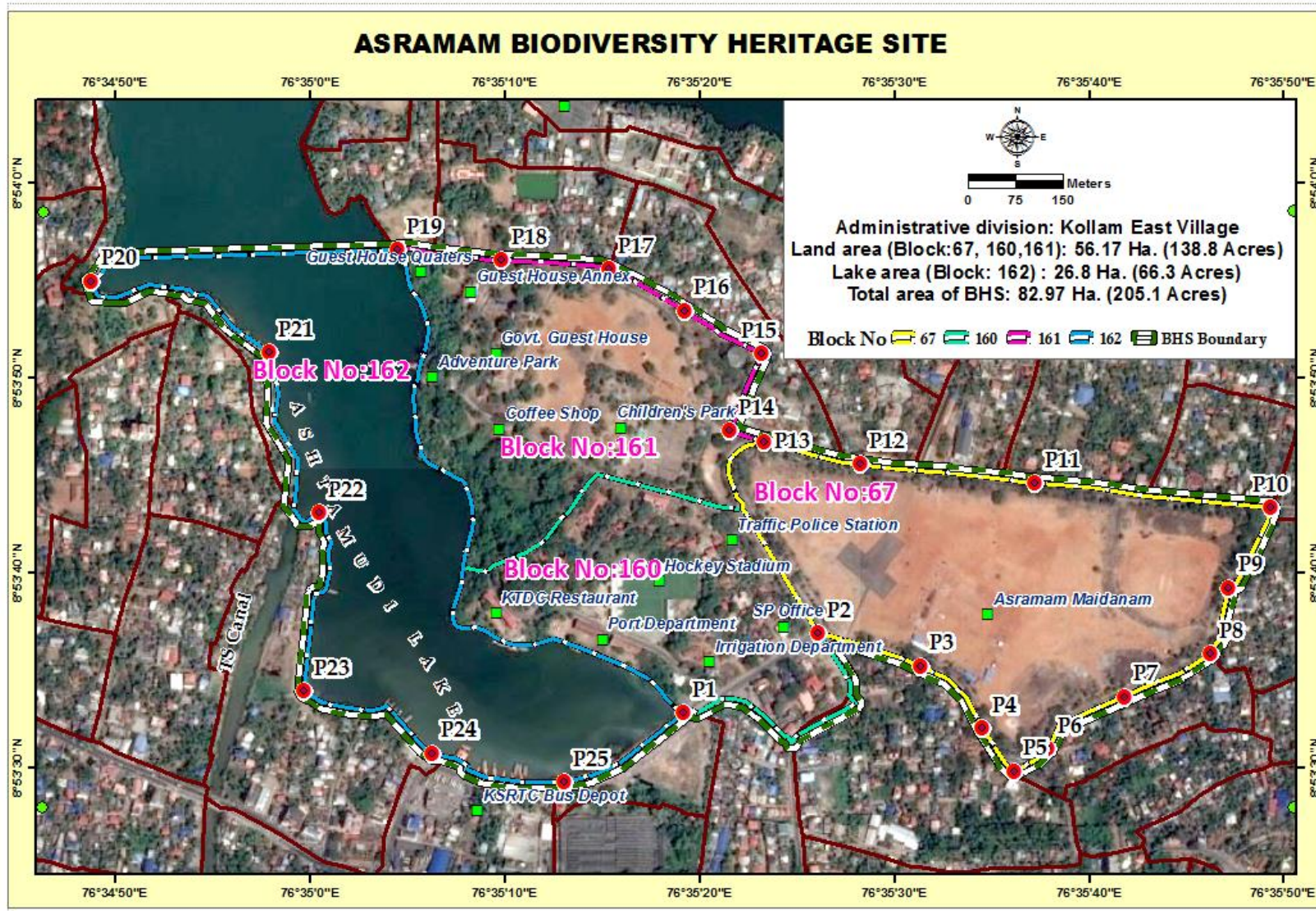


Figure 2 Boundary of proposed Asramam Biodiversity Heritage Site