



Forest dept restores grassland

29 June 2021

Idukki: The Pazathottam area in Anamudi Shola National Park in Idukki shows how an eco-restoration project helps to grow natural grasslands inside a forest area. The project was implemented through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

According to forest department officials, three years ago over 50 hectares of forest land in the national park was gutted in fire. The department then, on a trial basis, started an eco-restoration project in the Pazathottam area. Exotic species were cleared from the forest land and natural grass was planted. The grass grew to a better level and within months the area got converted into a natural grassland. The success of the project inspired the officials and decided to expand it to more areas. The project was started in 2019.

Pampadum Shola National Park assistant wildlife warden Arun B Nair said, "When the natural grasslands developed in the hills we noticed the presence of wild animals, including bison and deer, there. After the restoration of grasslands a natural stream in the area was also revived. It could also ensure water security in summer season in Chilantiyar area downstream Pazathottam region."

"The eco-restoration project is continuing and I hope it will be completed in 2023. When complete the project will bring about a significant change in the area," said Nair.

The officials said the eco-restoration project is being implemented with the full participation of residents. The department has formed an eco-development committee (EDC) named 'Haritha Vasantham' for the project. The department will pay wages to the families supporting the project. It is for the first time in the state that an eco-development committee has been formed for an eco-restoration project.

The total length of Anamudi Shola National park is 32sq km, of which 14sq km is covered with exotic species. The spread of exotic species inside the forest is causing food and water scarcity for wild animals, said officials.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kochi/forest-dept-restores-grassland/articleshow/83933725.cms>