



## **Konni forests to get a plan to fight disasters**

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### **Achencoil river basin will be managed with community participation**

Caught in a relentless grind of disasters over the years, the upstream riparian area of the Achencoil river that extends across the woodlands of Konni and Achencoil will soon get a plan for disaster response and capacity building.

As the region came under devastating floods and landslips in the just-concluded monsoon, the Forest department has now embarked on a plan to scientifically manage the Achencoil river basin. The plan, slated to be implemented from January, is being prepared and executed along with the School of Environmental Sciences under Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam.

### **Extensive survey soon**

Researchers from the varsity have already carried out a preliminary survey of the affected locations and the watershed areas. They will return for an extensive survey of the region later this month. A mapping of the forest resources too will be done as part of the study.

According to K.N. Shyam Mohanlal, Divisional Forest Officer, Konni, the project is being implemented primarily in view of the recurring floods in the Achencoil river, caused by landslips in the upstream area. Much damage, including loss of wildlife, forest cover as well as its resources, was reported during the intense, unseasonal showers in October and November.

“At least two dead elephants were found adrift in the floodwaters this time. The forest appears unable to provide that moderating service of controlling water flow as the riparian vegetation of Achencoil is fast disappearing due to the instability of its banks,” the DFO said.

### **Predicting rise in level**

The communities that live inside the forest or on its fringes have been badly affected by these recurring calamities, which prompted the authorities to implement the plan through community participation. “This plan will help us predict the rise in in water level in the event of a landslide on the upstream and prepare accordingly,” he added.

Of the total river basin area of 1,340 sq km, the plan will cover about 50 waterbodies that extends across 654 sq km between Konni and the Western Ghats. Among the tributaries, the Kallar watershed area, located at a height of 1,923 metres from the sea level, feeds the Achencoil with the highest amount of water.

Source:<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/konni-forests-to-get-a-plan-to-fight-disasters/article37839807.ece>