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Nileshwaram, Thaikadappuram, Ferocious Waves, Sea Wall Collapsed

Coastal community lives in fear as fiery waves breach sea wall



Nileshwaram councillor Beena T P in front of her house at Thaikadappuram. She abandoned the house after waves breached the sea wall and started lashing the wall of her house

GEORGE POIKAYIL @Nileshwaram

BEENA T P, the 38-year-old Nileshwaram councillor, has abandoned her house at Thaikadappuram. For fiery waves have breached the sea wall adjacent to her house and are relentlessly crashing into her small tile-roofed house, barely 10m from the beach.

"I have a choice. But around 50 families on Thaikadappuram beach have to bear the brunt of the swelling waves every monsoon," says Beena, who has moved to her mother's house at the Tsunami Colony, 2 km away. Shanta K V, 52, does not enjoy the safety of a sea wall nor does she have a second home like Beena, her neighbour. The thatched wall of her house which is made of palm leaves is entirely soaked. Five years ago, she had moved her thatch 10m away from the sea. But the gnawing waves have caught up again and this time, she cannot move away.

Rasheeda V K, 28, councillor from Thaikadappuram Sea Road, says Shanta was short-listed under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the Centre's affordable housing scheme for the urban poor. "But she cannot avail it because the Coastal Regula-

tion Zone restrictions prevent her from building a house on her property," says Rasheeda. Shanta's neighbour Praseeda, 34, is in the same boat. "If only the municipality or the Fisheries Department built the sea wall to protect our shacks, we could live here peacefully," says Praseeda.

The sea wall that starts from Thaikadappuram Store Junction ends right in front of Beena's house near VGM Lower Primary School. The 1 km-long protection wall, first built in 2006, has gone under the sand at several places. Last week, the powerful waves knocked down the wall in front of Beena's house, too.

"The coastal communities of Thaikadappuram and Azhithala are living in fear. A chunk of the sea wall protecting them from the ferocious waves during monsoon has collapsed," says Prakasan K, another councillor from Thaikadappuram South.

From Beena's house to the boat jetty at Azhithala, there is no wall, exposing 50 houses to the waves which can rise as high as 4 m, Prakasan says. Councillors from the coastal areas say they had raised the issue of the sea wall in the council six months ago. "But nothing happened," says Latha M, councillor from Thaikadappuram Store.