



Chhattisgarh plans India's largest human-made forest

16 July 2021

RAIPUR: In one of the country's biggest ecological restoration, Chhattisgarh is all set to introduce country's biggest human-made forest area by converting a 2,500 acre of barren land into a natural habitat at Nandini mines located in Durg district.

The project has been devised taking a cue from the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration that aims to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems and to combat climate change and prevent a mass extinction.

The twin city of Bilai-Durg hardly has a dense patch of greenery as steel and cement industries dominate the region. Hence, to give a green touch and strike a balance with the environment, the concept will not only curb pollution but also revive the ecosystem of the area.

Under the five-year plan, this project has taken off with initial plantation work to be done on a stretch of 885 acre of Nandini mines as part of the first phase.

Dense trees like mahua, peepal, banyan and others that have longer life span will be preferred. Nandini is located 25 kilometers from Durg town.

Speaking to TOI, Dhamshil Ganvir divisional forest officer, Durg range said, "It's like a contribution for 'UN decade on ecosystem'. With a scientific approach, we are planning to revive the ecosystem and taking reference from tropical dry deciduous forests sub-type, it will be replicated with similar species of plants. Following the Japanese botanist Miyawaki's forest technique, Nandini will be converted into a multi-layered forest with herbs, shrubs, middle and high canopy trees. Around 3,000 seed balls will also be used for the spot where proper planting isn't possible."

The Miyawaki forest method involves planting two to four trees per square metre and the plants grow in two to three years, ready to self-sustain. They help lower temperatures, reduce air and noise pollution, attract local birds and insects, and create carbon sinks.

Subsequently, revival of the three cycles of ecosystem of water, energy and nutrients will be implemented through the grasslands, taking care of water harvesting soil fertility and cleaning the air, Ganvir said, stating that in the following phases, wildlife will be introduced.

It can also become a perfect spot for breeding of birds as the place has a wetland which already has whistling ducks, open bill storks and other breeds.

"The place will be converted into an open jungle safari, the kind which Africa has . The initial budget covers about Rs 3.37 crore and this is going to be India's largest human-made forest. As per the record Assam had 1300 acres of largest forest presently," Ganvir added.

Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/raipur/cg-plans-indias-largest-human-made-forest/articleshow/84480511.cms>