



5 crore trees, 32 varieties of birds: Telangana man creates his own forest magic

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SURYAPET: In a first of its kind initiative by an individual, a nature lover in Telangana's Suryapet district has developed a forest in his 70-acre ancestral land, all by himself. Bird watchers confirmed the presence of 32 varieties of birds. The Deccan Birders are planning more trips to record the presence of more varieties. There are an estimated five crore trees in the forest whose fruit serves as food to birds, monkeys and other animals throughout the year.

Interestingly, there is neither a gate nor a fencing for the forest. There are seven ponds and small lakes that have been created, with the major attraction being the lotus pond.

Land owner wants to create 10 more ponds, says interest in nature began in childhood

The land owner, Dusharla Satyanarayana, who intends to create at least another 10 ponds, says the interest in nature began since his childhood.

Satyanarayana practically devoted his entire life to raising, protecting and preserving his 'beloved baby' at Raghavapuram village in Suryapet district.

"I have told my two children that they will not get any share in this property. The forest always belongs to trees, birds and animals," the 68-year-old environmentalist told TOI. The vast tract of land that got bequeathed from one generation to another has been protected since decades. "There are offers to buy the land with an attractive price. But money cannot buy a forest," Satyanarayana said dismissing even the thought of selling even a parcel of it.

Satyanarayana, who raised and preserved the forest for six decades now, recalled that when he was only seven years old, a man who brought his cattle to graze on the land broke a branch and lowered it for the cattle to eat the leaves. The little Satyanarayana, who was agonised seeing a tree branch being cut off, rushed to the man and hit him. The matter went to his parents. "Do not meddle with nature. My son's nature is to protect nature," his father told those who came to complain to him.

Having graduated in B.Sc agriculture from the agricultural university in Hyderabad, Satyanarayana took up a bank officer's job and later quit to devote himself to raising water issues that plagued Nalgonda district for long.

The forest that he has developed has a natural eco system. Trees are not cut down. They are not removed even if the branches fall. The regeneration of the forest takes places, thanks to the birds and animals which have made it their home. Several borewells provide water to every inch of the forest area.

"Visitors are not welcome," Satyanarayana said. He means casual visitors who come and disturb the place. "Only those who are genuinely interested in seeing the forest and learning from it can come. Sustainability and preservation of bio-diversity is what the forest is all about," he said.

Environmentalists, officials and nature activists are amazed at the way the forest has been developed and preserved.

In the initial years, Satyanarayana took up cultivation of various crops in 20 acres. The workers complained of birds destroying the crops. He was told to purchase some tools that would help drive away the birds.

“When I saw the large number of birds hovering over our land, I left the field for them to feed on the produce. There is no greater joy than seeing nature in all its glory,” he quipped.

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