

Dharmapuri youths attempt to create Miyawaki forest near Thoppaiyar dam

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DHARMAPURI: Amid the dwindling green cover, a Miyawaki forest is going to take roots in the city as the youth of Sekkarapatti village come together to create a much-needed lung space -- a large dense Miyawaki forest -- near the Thoppaiyar dam. Inspired by Miyawaki model pioneered by Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki, the youth in the village are all set to create an impact by growing the green cover in the district.

Two years ago, a group of Central government employees undertook a renovation work for a lake near Sekkarapatti village. During this, the officials gathered youth who are interested in environmental conservation and taught them the basic steps of cultivating trees and the methods to protect the environment.

Taking insight from the officials, the youth have started working on the process of setting up a flower garden, herb garden, and a forest consisting of rare varieties of trees from across the State.

One of the organisers of forest plantation S Ramesh told The New Indian Express that youth from the village has set up two organisation dedicated to the conservation of the environment. One is named -- Namadhu Gramam -- and another -- Nizhal. He added that both these non-profit organisations were involved with tree plantation drives for the past two years.

"Though both the teams had great ideas, we were stuck because we lacked money and manpower. However, during the lockdown, we gathered some youth and were working for the past two months. Over 130 youth from the village, consisting of school and college students gathered and started collecting funds. While some contributed Rs 100, others donated Rs 1,000 and helped us with providing equipment. Many helped us with getting permission from the PWD and panchayat offices to undertake our works," he added.

Talking about how they set up the Miyawaki forest, Ramesh said that after they were done with organising things, they took shifts to plant trees on a local hill and used plains to plant saplings of rare herbs and flowers. They are planning to increase the green cover by setting up a Miyawaki forest.

Another organiser Vadivelan said that they want a forest that will help birds, animals and insects in increasing their counts. "We hope that one day this forest will grow with the village and prosper," he added.

Saying that the support they are getting from the government and the people is crucial, Vadivelan said that the forest department has been helping them with offering tips on how to grow plants. He also mentioned that the panchayat officials were helping them in receiving the water connection to the gardens.

Commenting on the rare trees planted here, Ramesh said, "Various trees that are native to the Tamil Nadu are planted in the areas. The trees include neer apple, vanni, kadamban, kaunkali, ram seetha. Apart from this, fruit trees like guava, pomegranate, amla trees, jack fruits and other fruit trees were grown. These trees are exclusively for the animals and the youths will not allow other residents to squander their work."