

## Forest department launches 'Vanikaran' project to restore natural vegetation

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The Forest department in association with Noolpuzha grama panchayat has launched the 'Vanikaran' (afforestation) project to root out invasive plants, especially *Senna spectabilis*, and restore natural forests.

The project was being executed on 30 hectares of forestland under the Sulthan Bathery forest range of the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary, where exotic invasive plants, including *Senna spectabilis*, *Eupatorium*, *Mikania micrantha*, and *Lantana camara*, were posing a serious threat to the local species of trees, S. Ranjith Kumar, Assistant Wildlife Warden of the sanctuary, told *The Hindu*. Sanctuary.



Workers of Noolpuzha grama panchayat under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme planting bamboo saplings at Arakunji under the Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary

The Forest department in association with Noolpuzha grama panchayat has launched the 'Vanikaran' (afforestation) project to root out invasive plants, especially *Senna spectabilis*, and restore natural forests.

"We have supplied 7,000 bamboo seedlings and 12,000 saplings of fruit plants, including jamun and gooseberry, under the project," he said. The saplings were being planted in Arakunji and Pilakkavu areas under the Ottippara section of the forest under the sanctuary, and it would be expanded to other areas soon, he added.

“We have been engaged in afforestation work since the eradication of invasive plants under the supervision of Forest officials by utilising the services of tribal workers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme [MGNREGS], a first-time initiative in the State,” said Noolpuzha grama panchayat president Sheeja Satheesh.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/forest-department-launches-vanikaran-project-to-restore-natural-vegetation/article66247671.ece>