

Man on afforestation drive in Belagavi

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Belagavi: In Mudalagi taluk in Belagavi district, a 35-year-old man has planted 6,000 trees at various public spaces, including graveyards, to pay homage to green crusader, Saalumara Thimmakka. Irappa Davaleshwar, a BA graduate residing in Ganga Nagar, has been involved in planting saplings across Mudaligi for the past eight years, and many of these have now grown into full-fledged trees, sentinels against the threat of climate change.

Davaleshwar was inspired to do something for nature after listening to a sermon delivered by the pontiff of the local mutt. On completing his graduation, Davaleshwar started planting saplings in various public places such as schools, colleges, government offices, and graveyards.

Among the many trees that Davaleshwar has planted are rose, marigold, mango and banyan. Schoolteachers and other like-minded citizens, impressed with Davaleswar's efforts, started helping him find suitable spots to nurture and nourish.

Although he funds his venture mostly by himself, a few citizens have been making donations. The transformation from a previously arid landscape into a verdant haven is most marked in graveyards, which no longer appear as desolate places. In acknowledgement of his efforts, Davaleshwar is now being assisted in his venture by the forest department, the local municipality and the education department. While he surveys both the urban and rural areas of the taluk to find spots suitable for planting saplings during the weekdays – bus stops, anganwadis and educational institutions – he returns to these places, and sets about turning them green. He ensures that the saplings are nurtured with water while still in their nascency. In this, the use of drip pipes, which he bought using funds collected through donations, has helped him save on cost.

Davaleshwar, who has been encouraging his friends and acquaintances to plant a sapling to mark important days in their life, said, “The earth sustains us by providing oxygen. I thought I must do something to express our gratitude to the planet, which is why I started growing plants. I try to get as many people as I can to plant saplings around their homes so we can help conserve nature.”