

Erstwhile wasteland now a green patch, courtesy NEERI

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■ Koradi Thermal Plant's fly ash dumping ground now converted into dense bamboo vegetation

■ By Kaushik Bhattacharya

'WHERE there is a will there is a way'. This proverb has been proved right by Dr Lal Singh who rejuvenated a wasteland filled with fly ash into a dense bamboo vegetation in just one-and-a-half



Dr Lal Singh

year. Dr Lal Singh, Senior Scientist, Environmental Biotechnology and Genomics Division in CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI) and his team, developed a technology that will



The land near Koradi Thermal Power Plant filled with fly ash two years ago.

transform wasteland into productive land. They used the technology in more than 26 sites situated at Koradi and Khaparkheda Thermal Power Plants where previously MAHAGENCO dumped their fly ash which is the main reason behind air pollution in the

locality.

The eco-rejuvenation technology (ERT) has transformed all the sites into productive land and with the help of local self-help groups they have planted various bamboo saplings which is now about 7-feet tall in just



Now, the wasteland is transformed into thick bamboo plantation done by SHGs trained by NEERI.

one-and-a-half year duration.

"Any wasteland which has little amount of nutrients for growth of plants can be converted into a productive land with the help of this eco-rejuvenation technology," Dr Rakesh Kumar, Director, NEERI told *The*

Hitavada during a visit to the site of Koradi Thermal Plant on Tuesday.

"This technology is first of its kind in the world and we are currently promoting this technology at different places like Bhandara, Hinganghat,

Gadchiroli, Chhindwara and Nagpur to re-use the wasteland for wealth generation," said Dr Rakesh Kumar.

The idea behind the technology developed in the lab to actual regions for specific method of rejuvenation. The science is based on use of specific in-house developed media for root growth and selection of right species suited for the site.

The last 2-3 years of work with MAHAGENCO has made 200 acres of wasteland with fly ash dump into a lush green ecosystem with improving soil characteristics, better air quality, improved moisture retention and home to some birds species. This transformation is not only bringing back land into useful processes but also providing jobs to nearby women who have been trained to work for these projects.

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