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Alternate methodology for eco-restoration of limestone quarries - giving back to nature and community

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Today almost all our development needs centre around cement and concrete - whether buildings, bridges or roads. This large quantity of cement requires equally large raw material in the form of limestone. The limestone when extracted in the form of open cast mining creates large quarries which are stripped of all their living material. What remains after the extraction is a large sterile landmass not supporting any life. The loss of agricultural and grazing lands to mining, have always given rise to local antagonism towards the cement companies.

The mining norms of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, require the mining company's quarried areas to be restored to a form that may resemble its original ecosystem. However, because of the sterile soil strata, flora and fauna taking over this area naturally is almost impossible.

This had called for "an alternative approach" towards restoration which would be based on the principle of restoring the excavation completed mines for return to nature - Lands that could not only resemble local ecosystems but also be useful to the community. This resulted in:

- Sustainable Ecosystems and Habitats that replicate the local environment in the floral content.
- Fodder Plots for the local cattle, where the fodder cropping, irrigation, protection, harvesting and distribution is all taken up by the neighbouring community.
- Agriculture and Horticulture plots of Fruiting trees that provide regular income for many years.

Water from Living Water Bodies has been utilised extensively by the neighbouring villagers - who have almost tripled their farm productivity.

Biography

Anirudh Chaoji runs Ecologix, an organization that creates opportunities for youngsters to gain fruitful experience - in the field of ecology, restoration and conservation in India. His 20 years of experience in this field has produced a number of excellent students in conservation field.

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