



## Greening the earth Daripalli Ramaiah

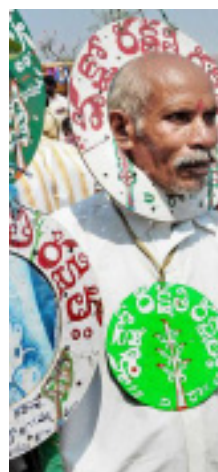


Daripalli Ramaiah, a native of Khammam district of Telangana is well-known as the person who carries plants on his cycle and seeds in his pocket and pedals miles and miles, planting trees and strewing seeds with a hope that the entire area will be green. He has been doing this or over last forty years. No one knows how it all started but people in Khammam know Ramaiah as “*Chettla Ramaiah*” where *Chettla* means trees in Telugu. People feel he is responsible for crores of trees in the area.

Ramaiah recollects learning his first lesson from his mother whom he observed saving the seeds of ribbed gourd for the next planting season. He says seed is the secret of evolution.

For his cause, Ramaiah has collected various native seeds such as *Bael* (Bilva), *Peepal* (*Bauhinia racemosa*), *Kadamba* (*Nanleacadamba*), *Nidra Ganneru* (*Albezia soman*), *Kanuga* (*Pongamia*), *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*), *Erra Chandanam* (Red Sanders) and many more. Not only that, he knows the history of almost every tree. He chose canal banks from Khammam, Palleguda Bridge and started greening the four kilometre stretch on both sides of the path. Gradually he hasturned the barren land into a green cover of huge trees.

Ramaiah has read every available book on trees in Telugu and of course planted many trees in the local library premises too apart from the local temple. He recollects how he requested the then local MLA to plant a sapling and



Address

Contact number

Age

Education

Profession/job

urges any dignitary visiting his area to plant a sapling.

Furthering his green cause, Ramaiah also paints on all the walls, slogans and sayings relating to his cause in Telugu. He collects all waste material such as used clutch plates, tin pieces; etc, to use when painting slogans.

He collects the seeds of red sanders every season to raise a nursery of red sanders and distributes the plants. He takes whatever people give to use for raising more plants. Ramaiah has thus proved that one need not be rich for carrying out any philanthropic activity.

Once when Ramaiah was immobilised for few months due to an accident he did not waste time but learnt sculpting with the help of nails and hammers. He left no stone un-sculpted with slogans and images of leaves, plants and trees.

Ramaiah also found a unique solution for breaking shells of teak seeds which is painful and time consuming. He made it as a seat for his wife who sits near the fire place for cooking. Her constant movements and her frequent sitting made the shells easy to break.

Ramaiah has created many slogans and one of them is “Instead of giving a fruit to a child, give them a plant. Let them nurture the plant into a tree and enjoy its fruits for ever. This way, they learn to love nature.”

Ramaiah’s main slogan is “*Vriksho Rakshati Rakshitah*”, which means if you save the trees, they will save you. He proudly wears this slogan on his head as a crown when cycling to fulfil his mission.



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