



IN THE LAP OF NATURE: Ramesh Adige at his favourite haunt of 17 years, the Deer Park at Hauz Khas.

He is one with nature but lets it chart its own course

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WITH RAMESH Adige, you are sure to unwind yourself by knowing the amazing number of trees at Deer Park, Hauz Khas. He has a tale for each tree, and a name for almost each bird that flaps past you. For 17 years, the resident of Hauz Khas has been closely seeing this park bloom.

This is Adige's wonderland: neem, amaltas, arjun, papri, sirrhus, imli, bombax (semal), sheesham, kachnar, babul, gulmohar, pilkhan, jacaranda are parts of a treasure that stands almost unguarded. Many of these he has planted or seen coming up.

"I knew nothing about these things but my years

spent in the park taught me all this." The park also has a variety of rare birds that are spotted here during monsoon.

He knows all the 30 DDA employees of the 60-acre park by name. He can be spotted watering plants, instructing the gardeners or making plans with the park supervisor.

Inspired by him, a few regular walkers have also started contributing their bit. Once in a while he invites DDA Vice Chairman P.K Hota for a walk in the park.

"Earlier we used to get only small saplings. But now the state administration has allowed me access to their nurseries. Now we get bigger plants from

Anand Vihar," he says.

It is due to Adige's concerted and untiring efforts that the park is today designated as a protected forest area. It has more than 25,000 trees compared to 10,000 in the '80s, when Adige came to live here.

Adige believes in letting nature do its job. "Watering the plants is enough. Nature will look after the rest," he says.

The latest on his agenda is park security. "I have been following the issue with the DDA and they have promised to do something," he says.

Park Supervisor T.S Tomar says, "We do our best to protect the trees and saplings but still without guards, it is a difficult task."