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## Sadhus, scientist develop eco centre in Ramnagar

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VARANASI: In one of its kind initiative, the Aghor (sadhu) of Varanasi and a BHU scientist have come together to prepare a model centre for sustainable development through integrated production system. Based on the 'waste not want not' principal, the project aims at complete utilisation of nature's products and by-products. What's more, it will also be used as a model to teach students all about integrated approach to save environment.

This eco centre, based on the nature's sustainable system, is in the making across the Ganga in Ramnagar with an objective to promote integrated system of agricultural production. The integration of three components - agriculture, animal husbandry, and fish farming- will be the strength of this system where nothing will be wasted.

Prof Saket Kushwaha, an expert of agricultural economics, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (BHU), has volunteered to create a multi-phased masterplan that draws on his experience with similar projects in Africa and South America. The eco centre is being developed by the Aghor Foundation from donations it receives from both domestic and foreign patrons.

In fact there is no such integrated Eco centre in the country that looks after all the dimensions for sustainable development at a time. "The works in this field are mostly being done in a fragmented manner," Kushwaha told TOI on Sunday. He voluntarily devotes his spare time or holidays for working in the fields to develop this eco centre with zero emission. "Predominantly, the word sustainable clicks the thought of environment-friendly system but if deeply analyzed defines it as a holistic system which is socially acceptable, culturally rich, economically viable, environmentally sound, just and humane system," he said.

"We call it Amrit Sagar Eco Centre, which is all about creating a model for the best environmental practices, as well as sustainable farming. Although we have acquired only a small portion of the total land area, we are moving ahead with a multi-phased masterplan," said Baba Harihar Ramji, the founder of Aghor Foundation.

"We aim to develop and practice an agricultural production system that is feasible and inexpensive and based on agro-biology. It integrates agriculture animal husbandry and fish farming in addition to pre and post-production activities such as mechanical processing and marketing," said Kushwaha. The prominence of the use of agricultural plant and animal by-products will constitute a response to the management of numerous problems that harm the environment. As the real dynamic base of eco centre, production will constitute the training framework for young agricultural entrepreneurs. The Economic Times will be carried out on the principles of synergy; the system of production allows the recycling and reusing of lost energy.

Along with Kushwaha, a number of volunteers and followers were busy on Sunday in developing a centre that will showcase traditional and innovative sustainable technologies. It will be open to all especially school children to get first-hand experience of the environment and methods of the working model.

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