

VASANT VIHAR WELFARE ASSOCIATION

NEW DELHI

TREES/GREEN COVER IN VASANT VIHAR – A PERSPECTIVE

There has been a lot of talk in Vasant Vihar that a certain group of individuals have approached the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi against the orders of the National Green Tribunal, and have projected themselves as custodians of the Vasant Vihar green cover and have also sought to project that VVWA is out to destroy the same. This is furthest from the truth. It is, therefore, important to put matters in their proper perspective.

A tree census was conducted in 2015 by the then VVWA committee of that day. This was a very laudable act, given the fact that

Vasant Vihar was probably the only colony which carried out such a census of trees. According to this census, Vasant Vihar had 4,993 trees. Today, the figure is over 7,000. It would not be out of place to mention that the incremental 2000 trees have been planted during the tenure of the current committee. This reflects the commitment of your present committee in increasing the green cover.

While talking of green cover, it would be necessary for us to talk of the development that is taking place in our Munirka Park. VVWA has undertaken to develop this park as a model plantation. Already approximately 300 trees have

been planted, the variety of which are trees native to Delhi and Herbal trees.

“THE JAPANESE HAVE DEVELOPED A TECHNIQUE, WHICH IS KNOWN AS A MIYAWAKI FOREST” These are well and truly Micro-Urban Forests. The Miyawaki forests have all the features which are an improvement upon conventional forests.

To give you, some idea. In conventional plantations, you normally plant one tree over an area of 150 sq. ft. whereas in a Miyawaki Forest, we plant 45 trees. A conventional tree takes 10-12 years to mature, whereas in a Miyawaki forest, a tree takes 4-5 years to mature. VVWA is very pleased to inform everyone that in 2021, a 955 tree Miyawaki forest was

planted in our Munirka park. The trees are growing very healthily. In the same park, a sewage treatment plant has been set up to provide necessary water. Taking advantage of topography, a Rain Water Harvesting system with a capacity of 50,000 ltrs (one of the largest private systems in Delhi) has been commissioned. This reflects the commitment of VVWA in improving the green cover and our environment. Nothing more needs to be said.

One of the charges that has been levelled against us, is that in the name of pruning, we are destroying the trees. In a series of interviews, to news channels and print

media, Dr.Sanjeev Bagai, in late January, had repeatedly said that VVWA was responsible for destroying 2,000 trees. Very recently they have filed a writ petition in the High Court stating that a total of approximately 800 trees had been pruned. It defies comprehension as to how we could have destroyed 2,000 trees, when only 800 have been pruned.

It should be obvious from the above that VVWA is doing everything to enhance of the green cover rather than destroying it. In conclusion, we cannot help but quote the NGT order dated 19.1.2023 when it stated However, even Applicant No.1 – Prof. Dr. Sanjeev Bagai has not disputed

the requirement of pruning of the trees but has reiterated that pruning of the trees has to be done scientifically. On being asked whether the applicants will assist in such scientific pruning or which could be engaged by the MCD/PWD/DDA to carry out such scientific pruning applicant No.1.

– Prof. Dr. Sanjeev Bagai and learned Counsel for the applicants expressed inability which prima facie makes us to also consider, in the course of these proceedings, the bonafides of the applicants and their objectives in pursuing this environmental litigation for dispelling that the same is not one of the many facets of power contest/tussle between rival groups of the members of

respondent No.18 Association or residents of the locality”.

There are a few other issues related to green cover and pruning of trees. We shall highlight these in our next few posts.