

His Vision: Create a Forest

In 1979, an Indian teenager named Jadav (Molai) Payeng began planting trees on a small island in Assam, India. Jadav saw how deforestation had killed off so much animal life on the island. He had a vision of a lush, green ecosystem where animals could thrive again.



At the age of 16, he planted his first trees along the edge of the island, a sandbar of the river Brahmaputra. But Jadav couldn't get his local government or the other citizens of his town interested in his project. They didn't see his vision, and they didn't care about the condition of the island. So for the next 30 years, Jadav continued his work alone.

Today, the area Jadav tended is called the Molai Forest, named after him. It is full of trees and plants and flowers, and is home to tigers, elephants, rhinos, monkeys, deer and rabbits. It encompasses an area of about 1,360 acres. He lives in a small hut in the forest, along with Binita, his wife, and three children. He has cattle and buffalo on his farm, and he sells the milk for his livelihood, which is his only source of income.

Jadav Payeng looked at a barren, sandy stretch of island and saw a lush, green forest full of life. No one else saw his vision. No one else encouraged him. But he persisted until his vision became reality. Today he is popularly known as the *Forest Man of India*. In 2015, he was honored with Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India. He received an honorary doctorate degree from Assam Agricultural University and Kaziranga University for his contributions.



Jadav is ready to go to other places of the state to start a similar venture.

Jesus spent most of His ministry creating a vision of the kingdom of God. More than anything, He wanted people to understand who God is and what God's original plan for creation was.

And He wanted people to understand that no matter how corrupt and unjust this world can be, He would come back as Messiah someday and establish the kingdom of God, which was God's vision for this world.

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17 ESV).