

## In 10 Yrs, This Organisation Has Planted 3.9 Million Trees & Lets You Plant A Tree To Honour Your Dear One

Specialist Note

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What would be the perfect gift for a friend who has always been by your side, or a loved one you never can do without? Well, expensive gift options are aplenty. But, what would be that one gift that truly conveys your feelings, without a glittery and proud price tag, one might wonder.

"We offer people to plant a tree in the name of their dear ones, at a nominal expense of just Rs 85. A consequent eTreeCertificate would be delivered digitally to the recipient," shares Bikrant Tiwary, the CEO of Grow-Trees.com.

The decade-old organisation has helped plant more than 3.9 million trees in hinterlands of India, often inhabited by tribal communities, thereby reducing carbon emissions each year by a massive 78,252,500 kg. Alongside, the plantations have been saving endangered wildlife by restoring their habitats as well as providing forest-based resources to the tribal and local residents.



Trees For Rural Communities – Amravati, Maharashtra

### Why Grow-Trees stands out

In a conversation with **The Logical Indian**, Bikrant shares the principles, policies and achievements that set Grow-Trees a step ahead in the environmental non-profits sector. "Quite a lot of NGOs all over the work are doing tree plantation programmes. But in most cases, the expected change is not visible due to lack of consistency and determination. They plant trees after financial contribution from well-wishers. But Grow-Trees will plant around a million trees this monsoon, irrespective of whether people donate or not," Bikrant asserts.



Grow-trees team with the local community

This is where Grow-Trees stand out since their initiative is driven by the goodwill and personal feelings of individuals. "We always plant trees in public lands. The work of the plantation programmes is spearheaded by tribal and local communities – people, mostly women, whose lives are intertwined with forests. At the same time, in a particular plantation zone, we grow only local species of trees," he informs.



Women participate in tree planting

### How Grow-Trees started

The organization which now has its presence in 14 Indian states was started in 2010 by Karan Shah and his father Pradip Shah, the founder of the first credit-rating agency CRISIL. The idea sprouted in his mind thanks to a gesture of gratitude by Israel. In 1992, Shah had provided his insights and guidance in establishing a credit rating agency in Israel, who honoured him by planting 100 trees in his name. "We want to inculcate the habit amongst individuals and companies to greet with Trees – plant a real tree in public lands and dedicate it to greet employees/customers/friends with an attractive eTree Certificate. We have different thematic projects – Trees for Tribals, Trees for Elephants. These trees not only enable one to distinctively greet a friend but also help create incomes for rural residents, improve wildlife habitats, enhance water catchment, and fight climate change," says Shah.



Saplings

The project was officially launched on June 5, 2010, on the occasion of World Environment Day.

### Empowering the tribals

Bikrant explains, "The saplings are developed from seeds and the months preceding the plantation season are spent on nurturing them in nurseries. The local communities participate in the work since they know they will benefit in terms of food, timber and other resources. Over 3,22,770 workdays of employment have been created for these local people in places where jobs are scarce"

As for the planters, aside from individuals, more than 500 corporate firms are our regular clients, who honour their employees or customers by planting trees in their names.

"Before the start of any of our projects, we identify the regions needing afforestation and pre-evaluate the socio-environmental impact of the same. So far, all of our projects have yielded positive results in preserving the environment as well as uplifting the marginalized communities," informs Bikrant.



Women Empowerment

### Trees for wildlife

"We have started the project Trees For Tigers at Sariska Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan and Sunderbans in West Bengal. Over the last six years, we have planted almost 3,00,000 trees at Sariska, where officials now confirm two new tigers being spotted in that area. Earlier deforestation robbed them of their habitats, but our programme is restoring the home of the tigers," Bikrant narrates about one of their many projects dedicated to wildlife rehabilitation.

Their wildlife-centric projects also comprise Trees For Sloth Bears and Trees For Indian Giant Flying Squirrels in Rajasthan, both of which are enlisted as endangered species.



Women participate in tree planting at Sariska Tiger Reserve

Grow-Trees have recently started the Trees For Elephants project to rejuvenate elephant corridors in Jharkhand. Aside from this, their to-do list include Trees For Gibbons in Assam and Trees For Hornbills in Arunachal Pradesh.

"We plant trees surrounding the buffer zones of forests so that the forest-dependent communities do not need to venture deep into the jungle, causing human-animal conflict," clarifies Bikrant.

### Conserving water and purifying the air

The environmental impact of Grow-Trees plantation projects is not restricted to reducing the carbon footprint or preserving wildlife habitats. "In Sariska, we have seen a rise in the groundwater table. Similar results have been observed in other plantation zones as well. In Madhya Pradesh, we have planted forests on the banks of the tributaries of the Narmada river, aiming to increase water percolation, reduce flooding by decreasing soil erosion and enhancing the soil retention capacity," he shares.

To address the notorious air pollution issues in the capital city of Delhi, Grow-Trees is preparing for their Trees For Life project.



### The Logical Indian take

Afforestation initiatives are reported across the country every now and then. However, a large percentage of those fail in the end, due to the absence of proper maintenance and nonchalance of the involved entities. In this context, Grow-Trees is perhaps the oldest and most committed plantation programme in India, not to mention the least expensive. With the engagement of stakeholders at all levels, Grow-Trees continue to ensure that the positive socio-environmental impact stays the utmost.

On the occasion of Earth Day on April 22, Grow-Trees is urging everyone to plant a tree for their dear ones, helping to save our mother planet in turn. You can also participate in the campaign by simply clicking on this link: <https://www.grow-trees.com/earthday/>