

This Eco-NGO Plants Trees On Your Behalf, Gives Jobs To Villagers And Saves Our Environment

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730 SHARES



Global warming along with pollution, deforestation, poor waste management and the continued use of fossil fuel is on the rise. All these factors not only pose a threat to our planet's ecological balance, but also threaten our very existence in the long term. We should all be very concerned.



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While going green is the need of the hour, we all know it can be tough or time consuming even if we want to make this world a better place. This is where initiatives like Grow Trees comes in.

Grow Trees is a social enterprise that plants trees for you. Yes, you read that right. Founded by Mr Pradip Shah, a Harvard Alumni, Grow Trees plant trees on your behalf to mark an occasion in your life -- someone's birthday, anniversary, etc. All you need to do is log on to the website, pay for the tree that you'd like to get planted and people at Grow Trees will take care of the rest. You even get a cool certificate for planting a tree with Grow Trees.

Grow Trees will give you an option to pick a place to plant the tree. This won't be any random locations but rural places where people need plants to earn a living. We got an opportunity to speak with Supriya Patil, one of the environmentalists at Grow Trees to know more about this eco-enterprise.

What is Grow-Trees trying to solve?

"Our vision is to impact on carbon reduction, restoring forests, improving wildlife habitats and benefiting the communities dependent on the forests," said Supriya Patil. "The unique takeaway here is that the user can dedicate the tree(s) planted by him through a system-generated and digitally delivered eTreeCard to greet or wish a friend/family member and in case of a corporate - to commemorate employee milestones or honouring customers on birthdays, festivals, on purchasing products, etc."

The many benefits of planting trees

While we know that there are many benefits for the environment for planting trees, Supriya gave us more insight into how tree plantation not only brings the conspicuous environmental benefits like reduction in soil erosion, enhancement of groundwater table, conservation of the habitat of the endemic wildlife but also creates employment opportunities for the villagers and are also expected to benefit the communities in the long term in the form of Non-Timber Forest Produce.

"Our tree plantation initiatives will not only play an important role in conserving the environment but will also help in uplifting the lifestyle of rural communities," she said. Plus every tree will offset 20 kg of carbon in the atmosphere upon maturity, which is a great return on the investment.



GROW TREES

How Grow-Trees is making a difference?

We asked her to share some instances of how this eco-enterprise is making a difference. She said, "It is heartening to listen to the thoughts of the villages (project beneficiaries) about our initiatives." The senior beneficiary in Jharkhand once said, "I don't know if my children will take care of me in future but this Mahua plant will definitely give me three thousand rupees a year (through fruit sales)."



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She shared another story of tribal lady Mrs Devi from Irula tribal community of Villupuram, Tamil Nadu, "who feels dignified to work in an organizational atmosphere, and is now also able to contribute to her children's education, health and is living a better life with her family, all because of the daily wages that she earns during the plantation process. Her work is also looked-up by many others in her community."

Future projects and expansion

Supriya Patil also shared the road ahead to take Grow Trees to new heights. "We wish to expand our projects internationally. Recently, we have initiated a project in Kenya, Trees for Water at Cherangani Water Towers. The project aims to augment water catchment, reduce soil erosion, improve groundwater recharge and reduce flooding and to address the goal of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 of having tree cover over 10% of the land area of Kenya and to support Kenya Vision 2030, the development blueprint for Kenya, under which protection of water towers is a flagship project," she said.



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She further added, "With a larger vision, we can restore the much needed ecological balance. We have partnered with international organizations like The Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation: Monaco, TreeNation: Spain who are spreading awareness about our projects to the global audience."

According to Supriya Patil, Grow-Trees is dedicated to Prime Minister's commitment at COP21 of increasing the tree cover in India by 2030. "So far we have planted more than 4.4 million trees in 17 states of India for various social impact themes, Trees for Tigers, Trees for Rivers, Trees for Tribals, Trees for Elephants, Trees for City Delhi and so on. 4.4 million trees planted so far have created more than 367,000 workdays of jobs to the villagers and are expected to offset 80 million kg of carbon/year upon maturity," she summed up.