

# The Good Sight

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GREEN SHIFT

## TURNING GREEN THE GIFTING SCENE

Grow-Trees is redefining the card-giving culture into a green practice that makes the environment happy

**Nayantara Gautam**

What would be a better gift to cherish and rejoice a life-long friendship than to gift something which is itself lifelong like a tree! Grow-Trees is one such social enterprise that enables individuals and corporates to greet their loved ones with trees in the form of eTreeCertificates at a nominal rate of 85 INR i.e., less than almost a dollar! Grow-Trees believes in breaking the cliches and reconstructing the whole card-gifting culture into a green practice which serves the biodiversity, water resources, pollution levels, and tribal communities.

Grow-Trees was started in 2010

on the World Environment Day by Pradip Shah, the founder of India's first credit-rating agency, CRISIL. This was the point when climate change and concepts of sustainable development had started to gain popularity globally. In 1992, Shah, an MBA from Harvard Business School, discovered this "Greet with Trees" tradition in Israel where he had gone to provide his insights on establishing a credit rating agency. "India being such a huge economy should inculcate this tradition 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

eTreeCertificate. 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," shares Pradip.

This decade-old organisation has planted close to 3.9 million trees across 16 states of India, thereby reducing carbon emissions each year by a massive 78,252,500 kg. Alongside reducing the carbon emission, it is working towards maintenance and restoration of wildlife species by planting native trees surrounding the buffer zones



▲ All set for plantation

### Trees for empowering communities

Since its inception, Grow-Trees believes that maintenance and restoration of natural ecosystems and their services are essential to sustained community well-being, economic prosperity, and efficiency. Grow-Trees has repeatedly demonstrated this through their tree projects with different social impact based projects, such as - Trees for Tribal, Trees for Elephant, Trees for Red Panda, Trees for Water, Trees for the Himalayas etc. They have been consistently operating in the tribal states of Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and rural areas of India to regenerate the depleted forest cover. The saplings are developed from seeds and the months preceding the plantation season are spent on nurturing them in nurseries. Local communities benefit exceedingly from these efforts in terms of livelihood, food, timber, and other non-timber returns. "We have been able to create approximately 323,909 days of employment in one of the most backward regions of the country where government and external interventions are lacking," emphasises Bikrant.

Aside from planters, Grow-Trees has more than 500 corporate partners who regularly honour their employees/customers/stakeholders through their customized eTreeCertificates and firmly believe in investing heavily in the realm of sustainability.

so that both tribal communities and animals can meet their food, shelter and livelihood needs. Across the globe, policymakers, individuals and enterprises are trying to rebalance, restore and preserve the ecological balance that we were once endowed with. Striking efforts are being made by them to conserve rather than maximise species.

"We are driven to plant a million trees this monsoon, irrespective of any external help as our organisation is completely based upon self-sustainable approach," says Bikrant Tiwary, CEO of Grow-Trees.com.

Grow-Trees provides timely audits through third-party organisations



### Trees for wildlife

According to WWF, 1 square kilometre of the forest may be home to more than 1,000 species. Grow-trees has been striving hard to protect the species with projects like Trees For Asian Elephants in Jharkhand, Trees For Sloth Bears, Trees For Indian Giant Flying Squirrels in Rajasthan, Trees For Tigers in Sunderbans amongst many others. Forest cover provides shelter and natural habitat for animals and therefore, it is relevant to reverse habitat fragmentation and save them by planting more trees.

### Trees for carbon offset

Have you ever felt guilty for your day-to-day carbon footprint and found no opportunity to pacify for the harm caused? Well, Grow-Trees can support you to get over this guilt. Apart from providing job opportunities to local communities and wildlife protection, trees directly act as tools to offset the carbon footprint. The upcoming project in Delhi - Trees for Air, seeks to improve the urban air quality through the plantation of 25,000 trees in the urban spaces of Delhi and NCR Region.

Forests are disappearing at an unprecedented rate and Grow-Trees would like to urge each one of you to make an impact - however small - towards a greener and sustainable future.

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on the successful completion of the project. These audits provide corporates with authentic and reliable data to report in their annual reports. And, if by any case, there are fewer saplings, Grow-Trees grows them again through its own resources.■

To plant a tree with Grow-Trees visit <https://www.grow-trees.com/index.php?scroll=TreeCard>



▲ Saplings being raised before the plantation season



### Grow-Trees Testimonials



#### Roland Folger, Managing Director & CEO, Mercedes-Benz India

"Mercedes-Benz has always been an environmental conscious automotive brand. We want our customers and citizens in general to be aware about the environmental challenges like global warming and ecological changes. We have planted 50,000 trees that will offset the carbon footprint of our production process. The plantation will bring significant changes in the lives of the villagers who will not only find a livelihood, but will also benefit from the increased vegetation in the area. This initiative will further create awareness about the ecological benefits of afforestation, thus contributing to environmental sustenance."



#### Dia Mirza (Bollywood Actress)

"Celebrating occasions has become so much more meaningful for me personally because I get to do so now with Grow-Trees! The gift of nature to loved ones is the greatest gift one can share. And I am truly grateful for this opportunity to Grow-Trees that aid in conservation, empower livelihoods and contribute to a healthy future."

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