

PROJECT PROTECT HIMALAYAS

PROJECT
UPDATE
REPORT
2023

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Image © Mohan Dobal
Gram Panchayat, Tehri Garhwal





INTRODUCTION

Uttarakhand, located at the foothills of the snow-clad Himalayas, is lush with green vegetation. A diverse range of flora and fauna with microbial wealth is found here.

The state grows a variety of fruits and fodder-bearing trees. However, unsustainable tourism, excessive infrastructure development and intensifying climate crisis have been exacerbating the situation.

Perturbed by the huge damage to save the critical biodiversity in Uttarakhand Himalayas, the SankalpTaru Foundation, along with its passionate donors, launched a Community / Rural Land Plantation Program called Project Protect Himalayas, where we embarked on a mission to make the region green.

And with your(donors) support, the community has been planting Bargad, Guava, Peepal, Amla, Mango, Apple, Plum, Pomegranate, Neem, Gulmohar and much more.

Image © Mohan Dobal
Gram Panchayat, Tehri Garhwal

THE BEGINNING

Recurrent forest fires damage the habitat of the Himalayan regions every year, becoming a significant cause of concern and requiring mitigation actions. 2016 forest fires in Uttarakhand Himalayas destroyed more than 4,900 acres of green forest area spread from Uttarakhand to Himachal Pradesh. Around 1,857 incidents of forest fires were noted.

SankalpTaru Foundation launched Project Protect Himalayas in 2012 in Uttarakhand's Tehri and Chamoli districts to protect the Himalayan ecosystem and the community. Dr APJ Abdul Kalam planted our first sapling in a government school in Chamoli. It has grown to become a big tree now.

Image © Apurva Bhandari
Village Kyari, Tehri Garhwal



CHALLENGES

Uncountable incidents have been surfacing over news about environmental hazards across the globe, and hilly regions like Uttarakhand often appear in such reports with roads closing over flash floods, landslides, and poaching, amongst others. One major challenge is understanding the impact of climate change on the environment, agriculture, weather patterns, wildlife and agricultural practices in the Himalayan state. **Loss of life and infrastructure has been the significant consequence** of these events. The proximity of human populations with forests and their wildlife in the state has also created its own set of problems like the **destruction of wildlife habitat, encroachments, increase in poaching activities, electrocution of wild animals, increase in man-animal conflicts** in various parts of the hilly states, etc.

“And changes in climate are leading to **increased**

melting of glaciers, phenological changes like early flowering of Rhododendron, increase in vector-borne disease, erratic weather patterns resulting in flash floods, long periods of droughts, and glacial lake outbursts like the 2016 Uttarakhand Forest Fires (Kedarnath), decrease in the water flow of the Himalayan rivers and so on”, said a deputy executive director at Centre for Ecology Development and Research (CEDAR) Dehradun studying climate adaptive water management practices.

If springs are not saved, it will significantly impact the Himalayas' water security scenario and water availability to locals for drinking and small-scale farming on the hills. **Non-degradable wastes** such as plastics end up causing land and water pollution. **The release of effluents by industries into river bodies has polluted the main rivers in the state, especially Ganga.**



Operations halt in South-Eastern Uttarakhand,
July 2023 ©Hindustan Times



Flash floods, 2013



Excessive rains, July 2023



Heavy mining causes landslides & floods.
March 2017 ©Wion News

FOREST FIRE PREVENTION

Since recurring forest fires in the villages of the Himalayas are undeniably a major challenge, **we initiated a new program for preventing forest fires by launching the SankalpTaru Forest Force**, which remains active in summers in the Himalayas. The team fights these forest fires and educates the villagers about the same.

Thus, with your support, we plant trees in several districts of Uttarakhand and replace pine trees (which were burnt in forest fires) with native species of Oak, Cedar and Kachnaar. Planting native fruit and fodder-bearing trees has also resulted in **preventing soil erosion and landslides** in the region. Through Project Protect Himalayas, we are also addressing the social issue of women's empowerment. Therefore, **the major on-ground team in the plantation activity in this region has been taken up by women.**

Furthermore, we protect the trees with our **forest-fire patrolling team** comprising school students and villagers. The team is always on the alert to tackle forest fire incidents, and it continuously educates the rural natives about the measures they can take to avoid such mishaps and protect the greenery of the Himalayas.

The washed-out roads, uncertain weather patterns, and steep and rugged surface of hilly terrain give The SankalpTaru Foundation and the community members a very challenging time in plantations. The team must analyze a monthly or even quarterly weather forecast to plan pre- and post-plantation activities. Community members are mobilized from several villages of Tehri and Chamoli districts to make them aware of the importance of trees for sustaining the Himalayan ecosystem.

A close-up photograph of an elderly woman with a weathered face, wearing a red patterned headscarf and a dark blue long-sleeved shirt. She is holding a wooden handle, possibly a tool, and looking down with a focused expression. The background is a soft-focus green field.

THE STEPS TO CHANGE

We have an active community engagement that keeps growing every year. This community partly forms our Forest Force which combats challenges as well as spread awareness. Your planted trees have been helping prevent soil erosion, recharge the groundwater table, provide Oxygen, increase greenery and simultaneously improve the biodiversity of the region.

Image © Apurva Bhandari
Tehri Garhwal

SEED BOMBING/ MISSION BEEJYAAN

Landslides become very active in the hills during the monsoon season, especially in the Himalayan region of India. Due to these landslides, roads get blocked/destroyed, village communities suffer, and loss of land and livelihood become frequent.



Devising a sustainable solution to a catastrophic consequence of climate change, we launched Mission BeejYaan with Flipkart in Uttarakhand to drone drop 1.1 MILLION SEED BALLS in inaccessible regions to hold the soil together.

Seed bombing is planting seeds by encapsulating them in soil, compost, and clay. These seed bombs can then be thrown or dropped onto land that needs **reforestation** or where there is a **need to restore biodiversity**.

This initiative was supported by **2000+ students** of **9 government schools** across the state and received immense support from the local community members, especially women farmers. [Watch here](#)
The media also covered the event. [Watch here](#)

Image: Chamoli, Uttarakhand
July 2022



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हरियाली लौटाने को ड्रोन से बीजों का छिड़काव

■ गोपेश्वर/एसएनवी।

ममोली जिले में बीज बम कार्यक्रम के जरिए बंजर तथा भूस्खलन वाले क्षेत्रों में हरियाली लौटाने की कवायद शुरू हो गई है। बीज बम कार्यक्रम के तहत स्कूली छात्रछात्राओं तथा ग्रामीण महिलाओं के मध्य संकल्पित फाउंडेशन के तत्वावधान में बम का छिड़काव किया जा रहा है। इससे भूस्खलन तथा बंजर भूमि में हरियाली और खुशहाली लौटिगी। राजकीय इंटर कालेज मोदली से कार्यक्रम का शुभारंभ हुआ। राजकीय इंटर कालेज गवाड़ देवलपुर में भी इस कार्यक्रम का आयोजन किया गया। केदारनाथ वन्य जीव प्रभाग के उप वन संरक्षक इंद्र सिंह नेगी तथा मुख्य शिक्षा अधिकारी कुलदीप गैरोला की मौजूदगी में तकनीकी विधि ड्रोन के द्वारा पौधरोपण तथा बीज छिड़काव किया जा रहा है। इससे आने वाले दिनों धरती में पौधों की बढ़ावा दिया जाएगा। मुख्य शिक्षा अधिकारी कुलदीप गैरोला ने कहा कि दूरस्थ विद्यालयों तक अभियान को सफल बनाने के प्रयत्न किए जाएंगे। कार्यक्रम के जिला संयोजक पेड़ वाले गुरुजी धन सिंह परिवार के नेतृत्व में जनसह के विभिन्न विद्यालयों में यह कार्यक्रम आयोजित किया जा रहा है ताकि बीज बम मिशन को जन जन तक पहुंचाया जा सके। राईका गवाड़ देवलपुर की प्रधानाचार्य सुमन रायत ने कार्यक्रम की सफलता का संकल्प जताया। इस दौरान वन क्षेत्राधिकारी अश्वरी मैटानी, वन दारोगा डीएस खत्री, अश्वरी मनमोहन, संकल्पतरु के निरांतर अभियंता, दिनेश, आशीष आदि मौजूद रहे।

बीज बम कार्यक्रम

होम देश एकसत्त्विव खास खबर खेल धर्म बॉलीवुड मनोरंजन राज्य लाइफस्टाइल वायरल मूज़ विदेश



Images: Chamoli, Uttarakhand
July 2022



Rosemary plantation was done in the Himalayas along with tree plantation to provide sustainable livelihood options to the farmers. This holds the soil, thereby preventing soil erosion and is an attempt to provide additional livelihood support.

SPECIES

Image © Ravi Bhan Singh
Tehri Garhwal

Apricot

Jack fruit

Lemon

Pomegranate

Baanj

Mango

Padam

Sweet Lime

Guava

Bhimal

Mulberry

Reetha

Cinnamon

Kachnaar

Walnut

Peach

Behda

Rosemary

OUR GREEN WORKFORCE

Image © Ravi Bhan Singh
Tehri Garhwal

"These fruits are reaping us benefits and helping us to graft on our plants; this creates a sustainable planting cycle, helping other farmers too", - one of our farmer-beneficiaries



Farmers of Village Kiranu, Makudi and Duchanu





Farmers of Village Dagoli and Gokul





Farmers of Village Duchanu and Dagoli





Farmers of Village Dagoli and Makudi





Farmers of Village Dagoli and Gokul





Farmers of Village Dúchanu, Makudi, and Gokul





Village Kiranu, Uttarkashi

IMPACT

Number of trees planted since 2016
8 lakh +

Between 2021-2022
2 lakh +



**Economic value for farmers
after 1st harvest cycle**
INR 10+ crore per season



Fruit production per season
7000 Tons



**O2 produced in a tree's
lifespan**
1030+ Kilo Tons



**No. of beneficiaries
impacted**
2000



**CO2 sequestered in a
tree's lifespan**
530+ Kilo Tons



Survival rate
80-90 %

The project has come a long way since its launch because of the trees you donated. **More than 8 Lakh trees** have been planted and have positively impacted the area and its inhabitants. The green patches have increased.

The Foundation's vision of afforestation is helping the community protect the Himalayan ecosystem and shielding the community from the risks around forest fires and weather uncertainty.

Image: Village Kyari,
Tehri Garhwal



Image © Mohan Dobal
(Gram Panchayat Tehri Garhwal)

A photograph of three women standing in a lush green forest. The woman on the left is wearing a bright pink shirt and a blue headscarf. The woman on the right is wearing a pink shirt and a red headscarf. A third woman, wearing a white headscarf and a pink shirt, is standing in the background between the other two. The forest is dense with green foliage.

TESTIMONIALS FROM THE GROUND

Mohan Singh from Jaunpur, Tehri Garhwal, delightedly says that the program serves nature and his livelihood; 80% of his trees are surviving well. He hopes such programs keep going though he raises a vital concern about fencing. He shares that few farmlands are in dire need than others as it soars their mortality rate to 50% and if a provision can be put in place. This will deter the animal from over-grazing. He adds that he hopes to see continued participation from SankalpTaru for years to come as there are more lands which are barren. And above all, he is grateful for the support donors have extended towards him and other farmers in his community.

Kamla Devi from Kiranu village shared that SankalpTaru planted apple saplings here last year. She added that seeing a survival rate of 70%, the village extends its thanks to the donors and the forest force. This plantation has helped them and nature. She hopes that the organisation keeps up the same work.

Image © Ravi Bhan Singh
Tehri Garhwal



IN CONVERSATION WITH

Abhishek Kumar Yadav & Dinesh Gaur, Uttarakhand coordinators

Dinesh reports to us that meeting the farmer-beneficiaries, he has come face to face with the important role that these plantations play in the lives of the beneficiaries. He says that these saplings have provided them with **additional assistance to generate income and sustain a decent livelihood**. The major issue that farmers face is the destruction from environmental hazards that are frequenting lately. He finally says that it is only because of the **donors' contribution that SankalpTaru has been able to create this difference**.

Image © Ravi Bhan Singh
Tehri Garhwal

When asked about the difference Abhishek witnesses between the rural and urban areas, he shared that the **villagers lead a life closely linked to the natural world**. Their day-to-day activities require their involvement and interaction with nature, like working on farms, growing food or the way their settlements are. Whereas, with the urban population, it is more hand-to-mouth where their lives are filled with tasks waiting to be fulfilled to get through the day, which brings minimum interaction with nature.



THE WAY FORWARD

With your continued support and trust, the rural livelihood program only gets bigger and reaches further. These plantations have been a source of inspiration for farmers in nearby villages too. We plan to continue engaging and helping the rural population and lead these people to a sustainable and stable life while attempting to curb the **climate crisis**.


Image © Ravi Bhan Singh
Tehri Garhwal


STAY CONNECTED

Image © Apurva Bhandari
Tehri Garhwal

*The natural world is beautiful
and we should strive to keep it like that.*

f in   

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 **SankalpTaru.org®**
We don't just plant!