saytrees

www.saytrees.org

Annual Report 2020-2021

Note from Our Founder-Director

"Nature neither forgets, nor forgives. We invite you all to come together for rapid regenerative ecological action in this decade, that is slipping through our fingers very quickly."

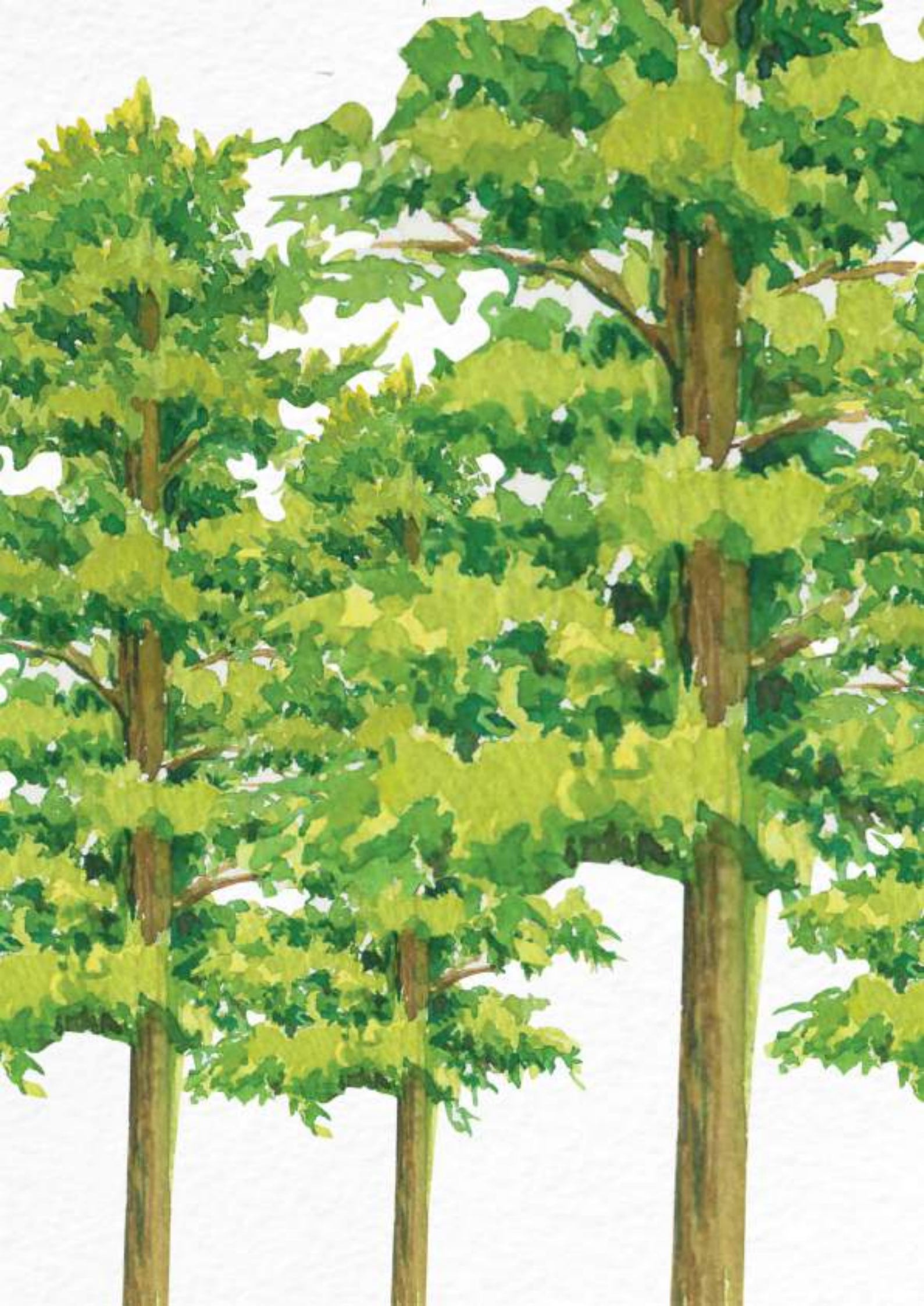
It's been 14 years since a handful of volunteers, went out and planted the first saplings, and in turn sowed the seed of SayTrees.

Since 2008 we have grown from a team of 1 to a team of 36. The journey has been daunting and enjoyable all at once. Today we are proud to say that we have a national footprint. Our journey has taken us well beyond trees and now we have a presence in lake rejuvenation, community activation, waste management and renewable energy. Over the past three years we have given out grants to scientific research and start-ups focused on the climate and biodiversity space. This year we took it a step further and launched a nation-wide event called India Earth Summit, featuring some of the top names in CSR and on-ground action.

We look forward to a year ahead of us where we grow our communities of volunteers, funders and teammates.

Kapil Sharma

Founder -Director,
SayTrees



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VISION 2035

Scaled-up climate change solutions on ten million hectares of landscapes and water bodies directly/indirectly across the globe, impacting ten million livelihoods, and sequestering a billion metric tonne carbon.

PURPOSE

To discover and scale solutions to combat climate change to enhance the well-being of humans and the planet

OUR CORE VALUES

Integrity, Justice, Respect and Sustainability

OUR FOCUS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SayTrees is a community of ardent environment enthusiasts who believe in protecting and maintaining our planet for future generations. It is critical to put the dangers caused by human action on our planet into perspective. Only then will we be able to understand our motivations and actions.

Through various partnerships and collaborations, we intend to increase our impact to ten million hectares of land and water bodies, touch ten million livelihoods, and sequester a billion metric tonne carbon by 2035.

We are concentrating on finding ways to combat climate change and tailoring those solutions to meet local needs. With the aid of individuals and businesses who wish to make a difference in the world, we will be able to do the same.

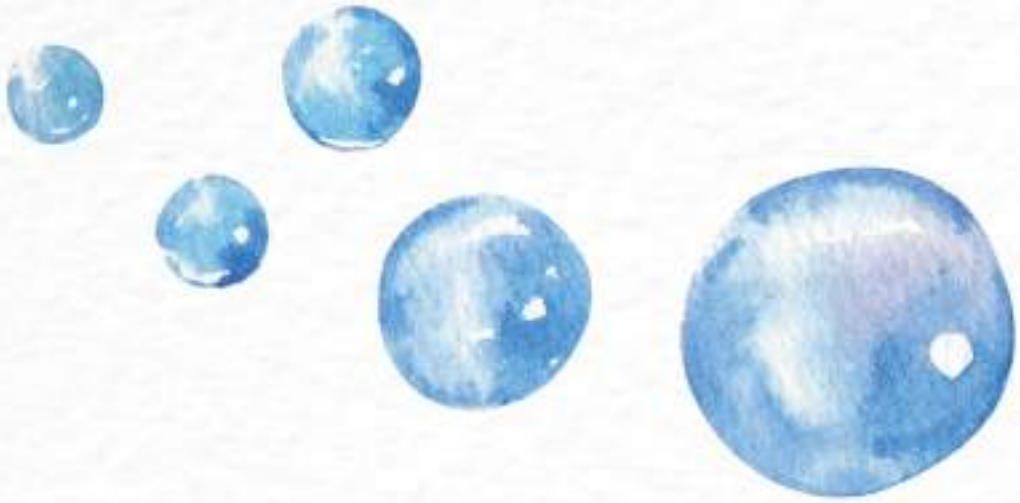
Saplings Planted from 2014-2021

2014	2015	2016	2017
10,304	21,443	43,293	98,819

2018	2019	2020
79,876	**2,28,847**	**2,30,694**

WATER CONSERVATION

Lakes and wells give a variety of environmental benefits, as well as influence our quality of life and strengthen our economy.



900+ work hours

8 team members

Open wells, some more than a century old, are often ill-treated, and filled with debris and trash. Many such wells are found overflowing with material that come from various sources. To begin working on restoration of these wells, the first step is to ensure that the debris is cleared out and the wells are protected from future misuse, with mesh and grills. The wells are then safely disinfected. Over months they are treated using alum, potassium, and lime. Once cleaned up and allowed to rejuvenate, the cleaned up wells start filling up with fresh potable drinking water gradually. In addition to the work on the structure and content of these wells, there have also been measures to sensitize the communities about the legacy of open wells. Equipped with the right information, these communities now manage the maintenance and upkeep of the restored wells.

2.5 lakh liters water holding capacity

One such heritage well, once considered unusable, has been restored after months of community efforts. Fresh drinking water is now available in it—for the first time in over 30 years. Kids can now learn what an open well is, how it looks and works.

Once the necessary approvals for the restoration of the well were taken from the Department of Horticulture, the process of debris removal and cleaning up took 15 days. After this the structural restoration work began.

Multiple improvements like a raised parapet wall around the well, a silt trap for rainwater inflow, grills to prevent garbage disposal, and painting, were completed over the next 10 days.

With this, in less than a month, the well was rejuvenated and communities could fetch water for consumption.

No of wells completed : 2
Total number of work-hours: 200+
Locations: Bangalore & Hyderabad
Increased water holding capacity: approx 2.5 lakh liters

Nallurahalli Lake

Nallurahalli Lake is located in the Eastern part of Bengaluru. It is situated within the BBMP limit and is behind ITPL. The lake falls at the end of Koramangala- Challaghatta valley. The lake area is 47 Acres 39 guntas or 19.414 hectare as per RTC.
The MoU was signed between the BBMP and SayTrees in February 2020. However, the work was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The work began in June 2020 and was completed during the year 2020-21.

Baseline Study of the Lake and its Catchment:

The scientific study of the catchment included detailed hydrological, geomorphological, and ecological assessments. To prepare the project report the standard benchmark for restoration included checking on the permissible levels of dissolved particulate matter in the water, the source water and its levels of contaminants, the impact of water in its current level on the life forms dependent on the water body. It also included an analysis of the source, depth, soil type & water-holding capacity.

Lake Clean Up stage 1

This stage included the clearance of unwanted weeds growing on the land surrounding the water body and in the lake.

De-watering the lake

This stage is the beginning of any lake rejuvenation process. The lake will be emptied of all water in the catchment area and the lake bed will be exposed. This step is important as the lake bed would have collected silt over the years and groundwater percolation would have considerably reduced. De-watering took about a month (June) for all the water to drain.

Lake De-silting

Post-de-watering, the lake bed was exposed for drying and then the process of silt removal and disposal began. Approximately 700 - 1000 loads of silt was removed from the Nallurahalli lake bed between August 2020 and March 2021.

Challenges faced

- The COVID-19 pandemic caused a delay of 6 to 8 months.
- The monsoon and cyclone season was extended until February 2021, further delaying the work.
- The lake revitalization project took longer than anticipated and was completed later in the following year.

URBAN PLANTATION

The practise of cultivating trees in urban spaces such as homes and office cabins, where concrete walls and electronic devices emit hazardous gases, is known as urban plantation. Local trees contribute to the reduction of impure particles and gases in the atmosphere.

2019-2020
accomplishment

1,03,043 saplings

Project Overview

Last year, we planted more than 1,03,043 saplings and covered an area of more than 10 acres. This year, we are expecting to plant more than 1.5 lakh saplings covering more than 15 acres.

Challenges include the lack of water, cattle grazing, a high tension wire overhead, the work behind the verification of green belt areas. Additional challenges were vandalism, theft of fruit saplings and approval processes.

Our solutions included barbed wire fencing; engaging local people for planting and awareness drives, channeling STP water from nearby apartments.

Going forward we aim to create more local employment to make projects sustainable; to create more focus green patches in wastelands across the city; to focus on native saplings; curating new spaces for planting, like, lakes, avenue plantation, open lands, among others.

Our Objectives

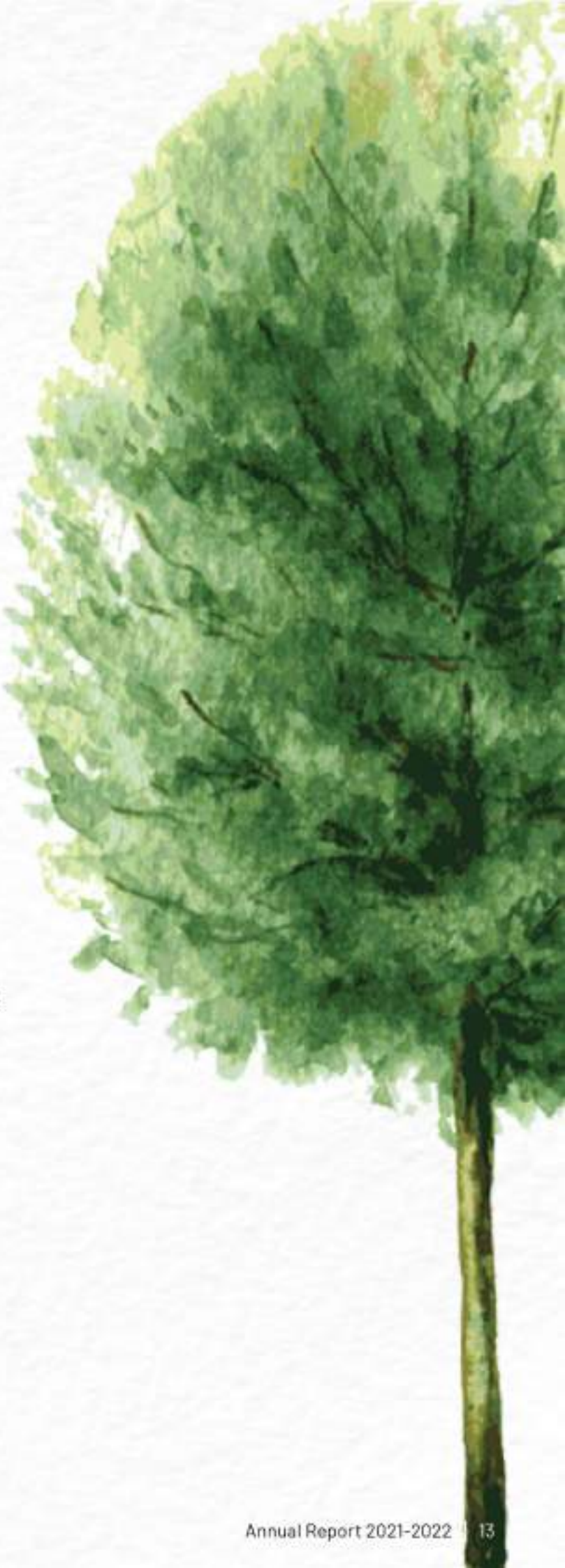
Change in organic carbon of the soil over the years

Increase in ground water table over the years.

Evironmental and aesthetic benefits, such as energy savings, stormwater runoff reduction and cleaner air.

SayTrees runs 44 Urban Plantation projects across the country

4,000+ volunteers engaged in plantation and
2,000+ labour days of opportunity created



Creating livelihood opportunities has led to a sense of responsibility towards the environment. Passionate volunteers reach out to SayTrees to plant saplings in their neighbourhood to help increase urban green cover.

AGROFORESTRY

Agroforestry is a method of land management in which trees or shrubs are cultivated on agricultural or pasture land.

SayTrees works with small and marginal farmers in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka through its partners to plant fruit trees on farmlands. The project entails orientation of farmers on practices related to natural farming and agroforestry. Diverse, good-quality fruit seedlings, coupled with workshops, hands-on training and exposure visits, as well as continuous facilitation and support enable farmers to make a swift transition from monoculture cropping to more biodiverse and climate-friendly agricultural practices.

The programme aims to improve the resilience of farmers against the extreme climate events like droughts, abnormal changes in temperatures. It also focuses on eliminating the use of chemical input and hence reducing input costs, which eventually contributes to improved farm incomes supplemented by improved farm productivity due to fruit trees and better soil health.

2015

SayTrees started the agroforestry program with 11 farmers in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

2020

SayTrees has worked with over 326 farmers in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.

The programme started with the planting of one or two species of fruit trees on farms. However, the concept evolved with multilayered farming, following concepts of natural farming, which involves climate-friendly practices and supports the restoration of degraded croplands.SayTrees worked with small and marginal farmers in Karnataka in 2020 through partnerships with two grassroots NGOs namely FES and ADATS.

Total number of farmers	**326**
Total number of saplings	**42,625**

Project Overview

Restricted movement due to COVID lock-down affected procurement of quality planting materials within stipulated timeline. We also had to tackle the reluctance of farmers to make the transition from monoculture farming to biodiverse farming.

There has been no solution to the problem of movement becuase of countrywide lockdown. The reluctance of farmers to implement multicropping was mitigated through trainings and workshops.

We learnt that trainings can be incorporated in unprecedented situations like COVID Pandemic. Orienting the farmers with the use of technology platforms like mobile application may offer solutions and knowledge.

For our next steps we need partnerships with more grassroot organisations for better outreach; Creating robust frameworks for trainings and workshops; Demonstration of different models of agroforestry which may be suited for various geographies also needs to be done.

SOCIAL FORESTRY

Social forestry is the management and maintenance of forests, as well as the reforestation of arid regions, with the intention of promoting environmental, social, and rural development.

2019-2020
accomplishment

44,000 saplings

Project Overview

Challenges in this project include grazing cattle; lack of rains as the plantation is in arid region with low soil availability; logistics in hilly regions; nematodes which can infect sapling roots

Our solutions included biofencing of saplings; planting saplings during the monsoon; purchasing saplings in bigger bags so that more soil is available; treating sapling beds with organic solutions.

We aimed to identify planting sites closer to water bodies to increase survival rates and to identify more resilient plant species which can survive through droughts.

We replaced saplings that did not survive the season; we treated plants affected by insects; we took measures to stop forest fires.

Our Objectives

Community development

Less deforestation of natural forests

Generate livelihood opportunities

Improving local flora and fauna

SayTrees runs three social forestry projects across the country

2,000 work days of employment was created through 3 social forestry projects.

Saplings were planted on community land with the community's involvement in deciding the type of saplings to be planted and overall project planning so that the community can benefit economically and environmentally in the future

MIYAWAKI

Miyawaki Forests produces 10 times more seedlings and a 30x denser forest than other methods. It is one of the many solutions to combat concrete jungles.

2019-2020
accomplishment

1.5 lakh saplings

Project Overview

The major challenges we faced this year were the lack of land availability, soil integrity, land approvals for plantation, green belt area, height of the land (water logging), lack of awareness among local populations regarding safeguarding forests, and political interventions

We engaged in numerous ways to overcome these challenges. We initiated soil testing, proper agreements with the authorities, and checking elevation of land at the time of site selection. We also involved locals at the time of plantation to create awareness.

We have a lot of reflections from our projects. We have chosen to not consider lands under political intervention for afforestation as they involve a lot of challenges including approvals.

We also want to rigorously document plantations and do a comparative analysis of changes that have occurred due to the plantation. For our next steps, we want each forest to have a Biodiversity Report, Growth Report, a Geotagging and Carbon Estimation Report.

Our Objectives

Change in organic carbon of the soil over years

Increase the groundwater table over years

Reduction in local temperature surrounding the forest region

Increase biodiversity

Prevention of topsoil erosion

Absorption and reduction of noise pollution

Our Team

4,000 people are involved in planting and maintenance up to 2 years

16 people are involved as gardeners

x 2,450

x 1,550

SayTrees runs 44 Miyawaki projects across the country

We have created six Miyawaki forests in Manyata Residency under the BDA authority. The community had reached out to SayTrees for creation of micro forests available in the designated green belt areas which were dry before starting off the project. The forests are now home to various kinds of birds, microorganisms, insects creating a sustainable macro and micro environment.

All forests of SayTrees' have been planted by citizens in Bengaluru. People from Chennai and Hyderabad have joined our events on weekends. We were able to plant all these forests with the help of our coordinators & volunteers.

WASTE MANAGEMENT

A waste management system is a strategy for trash disposal, reduction, reuse, and prevention.

Project Overview

Installation of Composting Units under Swachh Bharat Mission at Leh for ITBP.

Our main challenges were dealing with the weather in Ladakh and administrative difficulties.

In a city which is out of space to dispose of the waste produced by it citizens, this project aims at extending a helping hand to the local authorities & ITBP by installating a composting unit in Leh, on their premises to efficiently segregate waste at it's source and convert the organic waste into compost. This is turn can be utilized at plantations in Leh and help improve soil quality.

Installation was completed in November 2021 and it's progress will be monitored for one year.

Project Background

The project entails assessing the Ladakh military campuses for issues with waste management and developing interventions. After getting the necessary approvals and the data related to the waste generated, we are setting up a pilot where we are installing a composting machine capable of converting 400kg of wet waste daily to compost.

SOLAR

In an effort to reduce dependency on fossil fuels, we have worked on incorporating solar energy in different mediums.

Project Overview & Background

Installation of 30 solar lamps in Badkhera village of Madhya Pradesh.

We installed solar lights in Badkhera village, where electricity connection is inconsistent, making walking at night a challenge.

SayTrees runs 3 solar projects across the country

> A village with a population of over 1500 people and livestock have been seeing dark nights and challenges for children to study has been given a solar solution by installing street lamps in the village.

VOLUNTEER WORK

Hear from our volunteers on our collective work and effort to better the planet!

Project Overview

We have created a lot of opportunities (both online and offline) for all our stakeholders to come out and volunteer for the projects they support.

This has been a challenging year for us. Given the pandemic, we have had volunteering opportunities like plantation, maintenance drives and online sessions that shed light on the importance of taking steps individually and making informed decisions to protect our planet from climate changes.

SayTrees has 55,000- 60,000 volunteers
We have done 20-25 topics through online sessions

For me, planting a tree is a way of thanking mother Earth for everything she has blessed us with. The joy of being a part of a plant's journey from a tiny little sapling to a majestic life saving tree has always been truly magical. Saytrees has brought that joy to me with every plantation I have been a part of as a volunteer. And it also gives me an immense pride in saying that it's just not all talks about nature conservation, but instead, I have been on the field with the saplings in my hand, planted them myself and witnessed them grow into these beautifully serene forests, housing countless birds and animals as well as strengthening our future.

FINANCIALS

Expenditure	2019-20	2020-21
Professional and consultancy fees	3,60,060.00	7,30,390.00
Bank Charges	10,729.00	31,321.71
Depreciation	1,57,709.00	2,26,256.00
Office Maintenance	-	2,26,256.00
Pricing and Stationery	33,218.00	15,68,221.00
Website Maitenance	-	15,742.00
Rent	2,38,680.00	1,04,485.00
Salary and Benefits	40,56,741.00	3,36,000.00
Project Expenses	5,82,83,027.00	10,08,334.79
Communication expenses	-	350.00
Travelling & Conveyance Expenses	11,85,166.00	6,33,583.44
Staff Welfare	6,11,977.00	45,267.00
Rates & Taxes	1,06,700.00	-
Subscription Charges	21,000.00	-
Processing Fee	30,622.00	-
Advance Written off	-	63,570.00
Donations	23,20,073.00	-
Excess of (Expenditure over Income)/Income over Expenditure transferred to Capital Fund	5,05,06,019.00	1,47,33,177.91
	11,79,21,271.00	9,69,50,769.37

Income	2019-20	2020-21
By Donation Recieved	11,76,37,221.00	9,56,98,295.00
Interest Income	2,84,050.00	12,12,494.00
Other Incomes	-	39,980.00
	11,79,21,271.00	9,69,50,769.37

Research Expenses	₹ 3,00,000.00
Survey	₹ 1,15,952.00
Soil Testing	₹ 1,33,193.00
Solar Light	₹ 1,62,750.00
Video and Photo expenses	₹ 93,500.00
Plantation Expenses	₹ 3,66,25,480.8
Well Restoration	₹ 5,90,000.00
Lake Desilting	₹ 1,41,47,630.00
Labor Charges	₹ 39,36,209.00
Transportation	₹ 42,60,878.00
Professional Fee	₹ 7,30,390.00
Office Maintenance	₹ 8,49,516.01

OUR TEAM

Kapil Sharma	Founder - Director
Deokant Payasi	Trustee
Poonam Dubey	Advisor
Manu Smriti Singh	Advisor
Sarath Pendekanti	Senior Consultant, Natural Farming
N Sai Kishore	Consultant, APCNF, Govt of Andhra Pradesh
Durgesh Agrahari	Head - Programs and Partnerships
Saranya S	Senior Program Manager
Mahidhar Reddy	Senior Program Manager
Vaishnavi Suresh	Manager - Communications and Outreach
Nitin Nath	Program Manager
Shashank Sharma	Program Manager
Madhusudan Iyengar	Program Manager
Shivam Chauhan	Program Manager
Arpana Shetty	Program Manager - Outreach & Marketing
Krithika Pai	Program Manager - Communications
Vishal	Program Manager
Homendra K V	Program Manager
Mudassir Pasha	South - Operations Coordinator
Sunil Kumar V	Field Coordinator
Yashwanth Reddy K S	Field Coordinator
Chaitanya Joshi	Project Coordinator

2014
1 member

2021
36 members

PARTNERS

We partner with ADATS to implement social forestry and agroforestry projects in the Chikkaballapura District.

FES
FOUNDATION FOR ECOLOGICAL SECURITY

We partner with FES to implement an agroforestry project in the Chikkaballapura District.

Rainmatter Foundation

We partner with Rainmatter Foundation for organisational development and Bamboo Plantation in Maharashtra.

Paani FOUNDATION

Paani Foundation is helping us connect with community and government organisations for plantation and also to mobilise people for plantation drives. We built a Miyawaki forest with them in 2018, where we executed the on-ground project and they continued to maintain the space.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The past year has taught us all the importance of restoring our environment and acting quickly on climate change. Despite the fact that it was extremely difficult for us to implement any kind of plantation drives or volunteer activities due to the pandemic, it never stopped us from raising public awareness about why we need to shift our focus to climate change.

As an organisation, we are expanding in many ways and introducing new concepts such as restoration, rejuvenation, carbon sequestration, agroforestry, etc. It personally feels overwhelming to watch the growing influence that we are having year after year; this would not have been possible without the help of funders, collaborators, volunteers and well-wishers. This accomplishment is also shared by SayTrees's dedicated workforce, who have worked tirelessly to contribute to the organizations growth.

As we grow into diverse branches, we shall keep our heads held high and remain connected to the roots. We are looking forward to an incredible year.

COMMUNITY

annual report
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