

## Why Vrikshamaal ?

Contrary to seemingly obvious assumptions, the Ganga Basin is reeling under severe environmental stress due to severely depleted Green Cover!

In spite of having the advantage of including the densely forested expanses of Uttarakhand, Jharkhand & Sundarbans, only 16% area of Ganga Basin is blessed with forest/tree cover against the national average of roughly 24%.

More importantly - and, pretty alarmingly - in the strip directly along the course of the river, the green-cover situation turns into a disaster, at barely 1-2% of total area. It shouldn't, then, come as a surprise that, globally, the cities with worst air quality, belong to our very own Ganga Basin!

This needs urgent attention... and, an immediate intervention!

## Vrikshamaal Initiative

Atulya Ganga and Green India came together to add another meaningful dimension to the the Mundmaal Parikrama with Ganga Vrikshamaal Abhiyaan.

The idea was to run an extensively engaging plantation drive along the route of the Parikrama, with a dream of creating a necklace of trees (Vrikshmaal) around mother Ganga.

## Vrikshamaal Features

At the very core of this initiative, lied our focus on ensuring environmental suitability, survivability and longevity.

We selected endemic and long lasting species, including some keystone species for the plantation drive, such as -

Neem,  
Peepul,  
Banyan,  
Arjun,  
Gular,  
Shisham  
Sagwan, etc.

Additionally, we planted significant numbers of fruit trees, such as -

Mango,  
Guava,

Amla,  
Jamun  
Mahua  
Imli

Whereas, in the hilly terrain of Uttarakhand, the main tree species planted were -

Cheer,  
Deodar,  
Oak,  
Saal

Each sapling was planted at suitable locations along the parikrama route. The preferred spots were -

Schools,  
colleges,  
places of worship,  
community complexes  
Appropriate locations on river bank, etc.

A dedicated volunteer-guardian was appointed for each sapling. A tech-enabled mechanism is used for engaging such volunteers and to capture the progress of each plant.

Each plantation was photo documented along with geotagging and guardian details.

An awareness and engagement program targeted at public, in general and, youth & students, in particular was run throughout the abhiyaan.

The promise and the enthusiasm witnessed at schools, colleges and NCC/NSS gatherings affirms our hope in future generation and encourages us to dream of a greener, cleaner, and sustainable tomorrow.