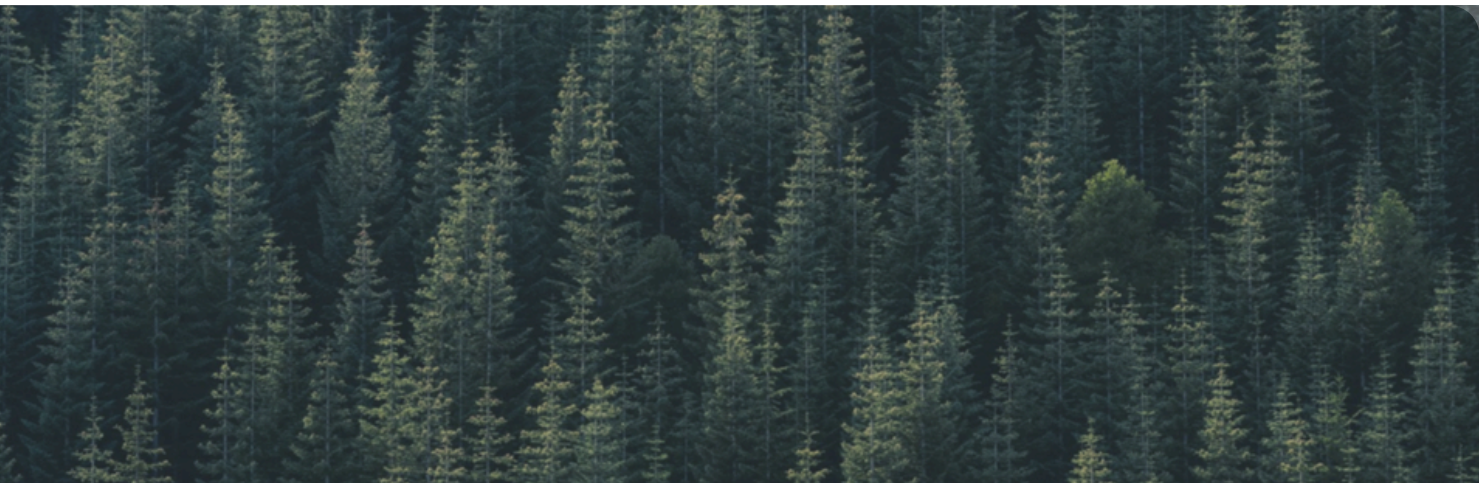
Saryan Vigyan Foundation

Annual Report ↗

2025



A YEAR OF ACTION AND IMPACT

About the Organisation | 2025 in Overview

Our work integrates ecological research, learning, and local knowledge systems, with the aim of supporting long-term conservation and stewardship of mountain landscapes while creating access to hands-on scientific learning for students and community members.

2025 marked a foundational year for the organisation, during which we focused on establishing field-based research practices, piloting structured education and training programmes, and strengthening community engagement in the Western Himalayas, particularly in Kinnaur district.

At a Glance: Focus Areas

During 2025, our work centred around the following key thematic areas:

Youth Learning & Capacity Building
Launch of a structured, field-based internship programme for college/university students

Ecological Research & Monitoring
Population assessment of Taxus contorta and biodiversity documentation

Scientific Collaboration & Knowledge Exchange
Hosting researchers and collaborating across disciplines including botany, grassland ecology, hydrogeology, and taxonomy

Community Ecoliteracy & Outreach
School programmes, public talks, citizen-facing biodiversity communication

Environmental Stewardship & Action
Community-led waste removal and environmental responsibility initiatives

Organisational Strengthening
Grants, compliance processes, and infrastructure development

Youth Capacity Building

Inaugural Internship Programme 2025

In 2025, the organisation launched its first structured internship programme, a field-immersive initiative that prioritises equitable access and scientific rigour in the western Himalayas. The programme embedded interns in active ecological research and conservation initiatives aligned to their interests, linking academic learning to field practise.

Interns Selected
Poonam Chauhan (Second year, BSc Botany, Degree College Solan)
Shashwat Sood (MSc Entemology, CSKV college,)
Anjali Negi (MSc Botany, Delhi University)
Shivam Sharma (BSc Forestry, Dr YS Parmar University of Hort. and Fty.)

Training & Skill Development:

The internship programme introduces students to the foundations of scientific research, including **how research questions are developed, experiments are designed, and hypotheses are tested** through systematic inquiry. These foundations are built through hands-on engagement in small, practical research steps, through which interns gained skills in field ecology and biodiversity documentation, ecological observation and data management, literature review, and scientific reporting.

Organisational Outcomes

- Enhanced field research and data workflows through intern-led surveys, documentation, literature synthesis, and reporting
- Developed a pipeline of early-career talent by providing hands-on exposure to applied research, interdisciplinary collaboration, and professional scientific practices
- Tested and refined a scalable, field-based training model, creating a structured framework for future programmes that can be adapted to different sites, disciplines, and student cohorts
- Strengthened the organisation's ability to apply research in conservation while fostering mentorship, collaboration, and scientific communication

Impact

The internship programme strengthened early-career scientific capacity by translating academic learning into applied field experience. It expanded access to hands-on research opportunities, for students from mountain regions and public institutions.

Research & Knowledge Generation

Taxus contorta Population Assessment (Prakriti Research Fellowship)

- Fieldwork conducted under the Prakriti Research Fellowship awarded to Dr. Preeti
- Surveys carried out in Pangi village and Bari village
- Line transect methods used to assess population structure and regeneration of *Taxus contorta*, a rare and threatened Himalayan tree species

Impact

The study contributes to baseline ecological data necessary for long-term monitoring, conservation planning, and future community-linked conservation efforts for the species.

What Next?

The study on *Taxus contorta* will continue in 2026, building on existing fieldwork and documentation. Planned activities include assessing population structure across additional regions of Kinnaur and supporting regeneration efforts. The programme will actively engage local communities as conservation partners, strengthening stewardship of this rare and endangered species while generating evidence to inform sustainable management strategies

Research Collaboration & Scientific Exchange

During 2025, SVF hosted and collaborated with researchers across disciplines, turning the region into an active site of learning and exchange. These collaborations strengthened interdisciplinary research and improved scientific capacity at the local level.

Vikram Iyyer (March 2025)
At the time of the visit, a BS–MS student at ISSER Pune and now pursuing PhD att IISER Mohali. He is aindependently engaged in the photographic documentation of the flora of India

- Conducted a three-day field visit
- Surveyed oak forests in Ralli, and visited Babhanagar, Sungra, and Baro villages
- Identified approximately 40 plant species during joint field excursions

Áine Nicholsan (May 2025)
PhD student, Charles Darwin University, Australia (co-supervisor at NCBS)

- Studied high-altitude grasslands using the MIRAN protocol
- Focused on woody encroachment, invasive species, and post-fire vegetation recovery
- Conducted GPS tagging of a 2024 alpine grassland fire near Mebar
- Field visits included different locations along the treeline across Mebar (such as Harang)
- Observed significant tree sapling expansion into grasslands, highlighting a global grassland conservation concern
- Fieldwork accompanied by Ms. Tanisha Negi, nature enthusiast and artist

Research Collaboration & Scientific Exchange

Dr. Kumar Gaurav (June 2025)

Associate Professor, Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences, IISER Bhopal

- Conducted a hydrogeological study of freshwater springs in Asrang village
- Used Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT) to map subsurface aquifers
- Fieldwork carried out with three postgraduate students over five days
- Parallel biodiversity assessment of spring orifices conducted by Preeti and Shashwat, focusing on wetland-associated plant species

Ashutosh Sharma (July 2025)

PhD scholar, The University of Transdisciplinary Health Sciences and Technology (TDU), Bengaluru

- Alpha taxonomist working in the Western Himalayas for over 7–8 years
- Conducted training sessions for interns on taxonomy and herbarium preparation
- The interaction enabled continued academic linkage, with Poonam Chauhan planning a visit to TDU during her winter break

Learning and Public Engagement Initiatives

Together, these efforts made ecological and scientific knowledge more accessible, sparked curiosity, increased public awareness, and strengthened local engagement with SVF's work.

लघु नाटिका से दिया भाषा, संस्कृति संजोने का संदेश

सरवान विज्ञान फाउंडेशन ने जागरूकता कार्यक्रम का किया आयोजन

नेरवा स्कूल को सीबीएसई से

01. School-based ecoliteracy:

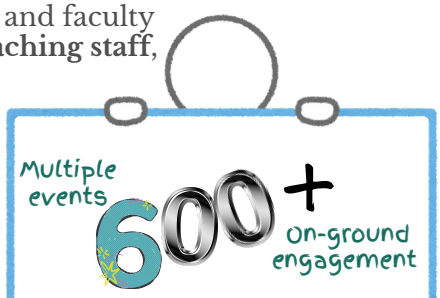
- Celebrated World Environment Day at Government Primary School, Ralli
- Initiated collaboration with SeasonWatch by **tagging native trees on school premises** for phenology monitoring
- Conducted a painting competition and community interaction

02. Community outreach events

- Launched #SpeciesSunday to raise local biodiversity awareness by sharing posts and reels on social media on local flora and fauna each Sunday.
- July: Co-organised a day-long Kacha Launch Event with intern-led taxonomy demonstrations and a public talk by Dr Preeti with an audience of **100+**.
- In December, co-organised a **four-day eco-cultural festival** across three villages to celebrate Kinnaur's ecological and cultural diversity. The event's main highlight was the launch and training of a user-generated digital dictionary of various Kinnauri languages developed with ZedTells. Additional activities included quizzes, environmental film screenings (such as Sincerity of Saryan, a film by independent filmmaker Varun Chauva for the Nature Conservation Foundation that highlights our work), and a stage play. The event saw **over 400 participants.**

03. Youth and skill building

- Poruri Sai Rahul, CEO of FOSS United, delivered an engaging session introducing Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) to students and faculty at TS Negi Degree College. **Over 70 students, along with the teaching staff**, participated in and benefitted from the session.

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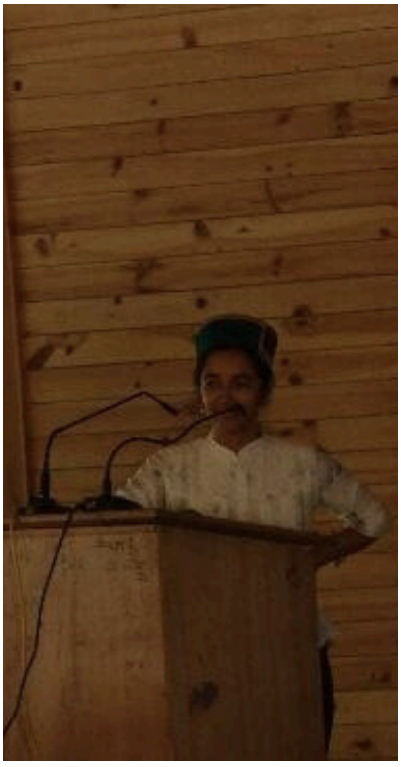


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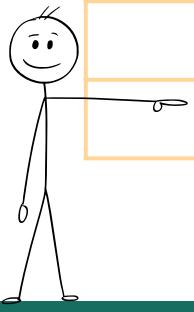
Environmental Stewardship & Action

Village Cleaning Drive (15 August 2025)

Initiated a community-led cleaning drive in forested areas surrounding Ralli village.
Removed **365.90 kg** of plastic and non-biodegradable waste from one of five major dumping sites
Waste was processed through the Healing Himalaya facility.

Waste collected	Weight in Kilograms
Mixed waste	179.85
Clothes	73.40
Shoes	46.05
Glass	31.50
Metal	13.75
Pet	9.65
Cardboard	3.45
Katta	4.35
LDPE	1.55
E-waste	1.20
HDPE	1.15
Total	365.90



Impact

The activity demonstrated local environmental responsibility while underscoring the urgent need for regular waste management systems in rural mountain regions.

Institutional Capacity & Resources

Compliance & Governance

Applied for permanent 80G and 12A certification to enable tax exemption and long-term institutional sustainability.
Filed the organisation's annual Income Tax Return (ITR) for the reporting period.
Permissions from the Forest Department for certain research activities remain pending, highlighting procedural challenges often faced in field-based ecological work.
The organisation continues to prioritise transparency, regulatory compliance, and ethical research practices.

Shifts in core contributors

Ms Animakshi Bhushan (January 2024 – May 2025)
Supported the organisation's early phase through field research, documentation, and exploratory activities, and has since moved on to other professional engagements.

Ms Pramiti Negi (July 2025 – Present)
Leads the design and implementation of the ecoliteracy programme and oversees programme documentation, including the internship programme.

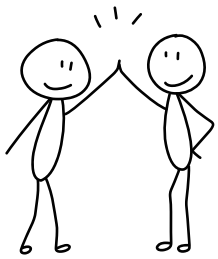
Infrastructure Development

In 2025, the organisation invested in essential infrastructure to support regular field activities and host interns, students, and researchers on-sitefield research, training programmes, and visiting collaborators.

Office and Workspace:
Large work table
Five chairs

Field Equipment:
Three tents
Three sleeping bags
Three headlamps

Internship and Residential Support:
Gas stove
Bedsheets
Mop



Grants & Financial Support

These grants supported core programmes, student learning, and systematic ecological research

Institutional Grants:
Received grant support from the Samagatha Foundation for the internship programme.

Individual Research Grants:
Dr. Preeti was awarded the Prakriti Research Fellowship to conduct field-based population assessment of Taxus contorta.

WHY THIS MATTERS?

Mountain ecosystems are among the most ecologically sensitive and rapidly changing landscapes in the world. In regions like Kinnaur, ecological shifts are already visible in the form of altered vegetation patterns, declining species populations, changing fire regimes, and pressures on water systems. At the same time, opportunities for field-based ecological training and locally grounded research remain limited.

The organisation's work responds directly to this gap. By combining rigorous field research, hands-on education, and community engagement, we are building a model where ecological knowledge is generated, shared, and rooted in place. Our approach prioritises long-term learning, local participation, and scientific credibility, ensuring that conservation efforts are informed both by data and by lived relationships with the landscape.

2025 demonstrated that even with modest resources, it is possible to create meaningful impact: students gained valuable field exposure, baseline ecological data was generated for threatened species, communities engaged with biodiversity in accessible ways, and research collaborations brought diverse expertise to a remote mountain region.

WAY FORWARD

In the coming years, the organisation will focus on deepening its foundational work by strengthening the internship programme through expanded mentorship and thematic training in field ecology; advancing long-term ecological monitoring to generate robust longitudinal data; and scaling community-rooted ecoliteracy initiatives in schools and local settings. Priority will also be given to strengthening knowledge sharing through accessible documentation and completing compliance processes to ensure institutional stability.

As ecological challenges intensify across the Himalayas, the organisation remains committed to locally rooted, scientifically rigorous, and socially engaged conservation approaches that nurture people, knowledge, and practices in support of mountain landscapes over the long term

Acknowledgement

This work has been made possible through the generosity, care, and support of many individuals and communities, and we extend our sincere gratitude to all who contributed

For **the Aquifer Project**, we are deeply thankful to Gram Panchayat Asarang for their support in conducting the experiments, especially **Mr Jaswant**, Up-Pradhan of Asarang, who helped plan the fieldwork days and arranged for a cook to stay with us during our time in the field. We are grateful to **Mr Arun** and **Mr Rocky**, who stayed with us, cooked for us, and lit a small fire each evening to keep us warm before we retired to our tents. This work would have been far more challenging without the insights and guidance of **Mr Amarchand**, who helped us locate spring orifices throughout the village in both 2024 and 2025, and who even accompanied us to Listi Kande to show us the spring there. We also thank **Mr Gopal** and **Mr Prem** for their immense help in carrying our instruments, tents, groceries, and other field supplies.
We extend our heartfelt gratitude to **Dr Kumar Gaurav** for his constant support and assistance in designing the study and in bringing it to Asarang. We are also thankful to **Shashwat, Khalique, Masud**, and **Dr Akarsh** for conducting the experiments with dedication and care under demanding high-altitude conditions. Last but not least, we acknowledge the living landscape itself, the plants, insects, refreshing water, and natural beauty, which made the journey and stay deeply meaningful.

For the **cleanliness drive** in Ralli Mebar, we thank Gram Panchayat Mebar (Ralli), Mebar Yuva Mandal, and all the villagers whose participation made the effort possible.
For the **school outreach**, we are grateful to the **teachers at Ralli Primary School** for their support and willingness to engage in environmental and educational activities.
For **fieldwork support**, we thank Mr Visheshar and other associates in Bari village for their help, and **Mr Yogesh Negi** for assisting us in Pangi village.

For the **internship programme**, we are grateful to our collaborating lab at **TDU Bangalore** for their partnership and guidance to our interns. We also sincerely acknowledge the **Samagatha Foundation** for funding the internship programme and for enabling the learning, growth, and active participation of the young researchers who contributed to this work.

For our **outreach and community engagement**, we are also deeply grateful to our collaborators, **FOSS United and ZedTells**, for walking alongside SVF in this journey. We also extend our appreciation to **Mr Kavil Kirti** and Mr **Jiya Lal** for their continued support. We offer special thanks to **Mrs Babita**, **Mrs Bagwan Devi, and Mrs Raj Devi, and to many other women** who generously shared their traditional wisdom through songs, lived stories, and experiences. We are equally grateful to all those who guided us toward valuable information, encouraged our efforts, or offered thoughtful and critical feedback. Finally, 2025 would have been nothing without the dedication, enthusiasm, and hard work of all our team members, interns, and volunteers, who made every field visit, outreach, and event meaningful and successful. To everyone who made this possible, Thank you!