

Preliminary Launch Report: Rabies Ambassador 2025

Dr. Lalit Sharma

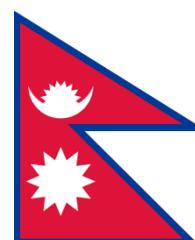
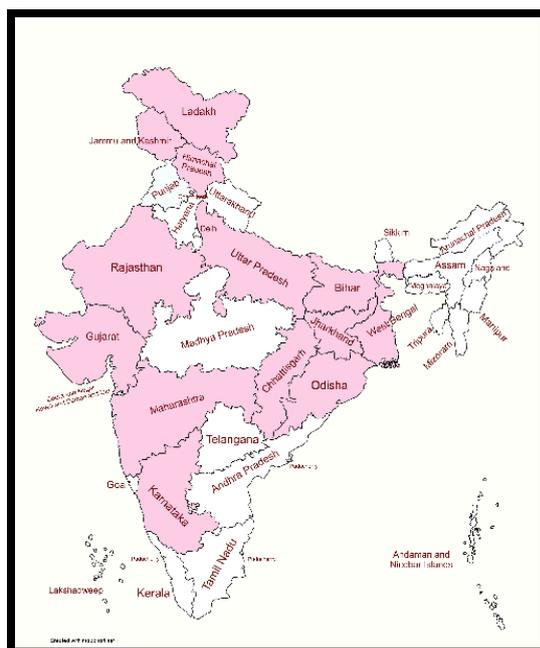
Rabies Ambassador 2025 (RA25) programme

One of the core objectives of the **Vigyan Setu Foundation** is to raise awareness and sensitize society about critical animal and public health issues. After the success of three previous initiatives—Zoonoses Ambassador 2022, Zoonoses Ambassador 2024, and Rabies Ambassador 2023—the **Vigyan Setu Foundation** proudly launched the Rabies Ambassador 2025 (RA25) programme on World Animal Day, October 4, 2024.

Rabies, a neglected tropical disease, disproportionately affects marginalized populations, making awareness and prevention efforts among these communities a top priority. The RA25 programme aims to extend its reach as broadly as possible, focusing on raising awareness and promoting rabies prevention through the efforts of prospective Rabies Ambassadors. These Ambassadors will conduct presentations, deliver talks, and hold interactive sessions in schools, colleges, public meetings, and social gatherings. The goal is for the direct beneficiaries to carry the message to their families, friends, and acquaintances, expanding the RA25 programme's impact through indirect education.

Key components of the RA25 programme:

Registration: A total of 217 participants from India and Nepal registered for the RA25 programme. Participants from India represent 14 different states and union territories.



Presentation: The registered participants are organized into six groups, each guided by a dedicated Team Lead. These Team Leads will coordinate activities and ensure that the programme's objectives are met effectively.

Distinguished Team Leads:



Dr Lankesh Yashwant Bhaisare

Dr Lankesh Yashwant Bhaisare did his graduation from Govt. Institute of Science, Nagpur, Maharashtra, Post Graduation in Zoology with specialization in 'Animal Physiology' from Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, Nagpur, Maharashtra, and completed his Doctoral degree in the subject of Zoology from Indira Gandhi National Tribal University, Amarkantak, Madhya Pradesh.

Currently, he is working as Assistant Professor (Guest) in the Department of Zoology, Govt. Swami Atmanand Post Graduate College, Narayanpur, Chhattisgarh. His area of research is Behavioural and Molecular Science.



Dr Rajesh C Senma

Dr Rajesh C. Senma, working as Assistant Professor in Zoology, Biology Department, M. N. College, Visnagar, Dist. Mehsana, Gujarat. He has 12 years of UG and PG teaching experience. He is a Ph.D. Supervisor and published 11 research papers and 10 books. He is a Director in the AOA Association of Zoologists and Life member in WCB Research Foundation, Vigyan Gurjari, Bird Conservation Society of Gujarat (BCSG) and Ethological Society of India.

He has actively participated and was honoured as Zoonoses Ambassador 22, Rabies Ambassador 23 and Zoonoses Ambassador 24 launched by Vigyan Setu Foundation.



Dr Deepak Sharma

Dr Deepak Sharma, Assistant Professor of Public Administration, Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla is a distinguished academician and dedicated social worker who has been working for the past 15 years to mitigate animal-human conflict.

His dedicated commitment and wholehearted activities with various NGOs have resulted in the education of animal human conflict and pain of mute creatures. He has played an instrumental role in community outreach, sterilization, and vaccination of community dogs.

His advocacy, campaigning and work has been lauded and felicitated by Municipal Corporation Chandigarh, Panjab University Alumni Association-Chandigarh Commission for Protection of Child Rights-National Service Scheme, People for Animals, Animal Lovers Association and Centre for Social Work-PU.

He was the sole person from India who was selected and invited by Dogs Trust, United Kingdom for International Training Programme. His contribution during Covid-19 towards voiceless animals and community was appreciated by Department of Alumni Relations-Panjab University and Tera he Tera (NGO).



**Dr Wahied Khawar
Balwan**

Dr Wahied Khawar Balwan is presently working as Associate Professor in Zoology at Department of Zoology, Govt. Degree College Doda, Jammu and Kashmir, India. He has published 90 research articles in national and international journals of repute, authored 78 books, published about 69 popular articles in different newspapers of the state and national magazines.

He is a recipient of about 65 awards at national and international platform from different educational institutes, academic and research societies. He has attended more than 100 conferences, workshops, different academic courses, and seminars and delivered many lectures as resource person beside chairing the scientific sessions.

He is life member of about 39 academic and research societies.



**Dr Smruti Smita
Mohapatra**

Dr Smruti Smita Mohapatra is a veterinarian with Ph.D. in Veterinary Physiology. She holds a PG Certificate in Agriculture Policy from IGNOU and PG Diploma in Animal Protection Laws from NALSAR. She has worked as a veterinarian in different capacities as – a practitioner, an educator, a consultant, and a researcher. Post-Doctoral studies, she worked as a Research Fellow, at Verghese Kurien Centre of Excellence, IRMA, Gujarat. She deals with research projects on dairy, animal health, cooperatives, indigenous people, pastoralism, and rural development.

She was the Principal Researcher for the research project in IRMA on *Maldhari* pastoralists in Kutch, Gujarat. A passionate science writer, she has many awards and laurels to her credit along with popular, technical research articles and scientific abstracts in various animal husbandry magazines, websites, and national /international conferences. She has been included in the Editorial Board of various magazines. She is a member of international consortiums on pastoralism.

She is a peer reviewer for many scientific journals. She is a resource person for national dairy and poultry farmers' training programmes. IIT, Kharagpur, and IGNOU-NCIDE have adjudged her as a potential innovator. She is a strong advocate of gender-integrated livelihood, animal welfare issues, agriculture policies, UN Sustainable Development Goals, and global climate change.

She is the UT Representative of Pastoral Livestock Census 2024 in Jammu & Kashmir. She is the Team Leader (Documentation) of Regional IYRP Support Group of South Asia, Jammu & Kashmir. She was the Rabies Ambassador 2023 & Zoonoses Ambassador 2024 by Vigyan Setu Foundation in Jammu & Kashmir.



Dr Vikas Mishra

Dr Vikas Mishra is Assistant Professor in the Department of Teacher Education at Akbarpur Degree College Akbarpur, Kanpur Dehat. He is working for science popularisation since last 25 years. His area of science popularisation is social welfare being carried out through lectures, demonstrations, puppetry, and other innovative, and traditional media. He has conducted more than 25 workshops in Uttar Pradesh. He is a team leader, and his team is working in the field of science popularisation through Folk Media. Separate sessions were allotted for his presentation in India International Science Festival (IISF) at Chennai, Lucknow, Kolkata, Goa, Bhopal and Haryana. Authorities of NIScPR New Delhi invited his team for presentation in One Week, One Lab program (OWOL). He also played effective role in NCSC 2023 & 2024.

Dr Vikas Mishra was honoured with the prestigious National Award for Science Communication in the year 2021 by the National Council for Science and Technology Communication, Department of Science and Technology, Government of India (NCSTC-DST-GOI).

Associated Institutions:

Following prestigious institutions have partnered with the RA25 Programme:

- Govt. Swami Atmanand Post Graduate College, Narayanpur (Chhattisgarh)
- Department of Zoology, Govt. Degree College, Doda (Jammu and Kashmir)
- M. N. College, Visnagar (Gujarat)
- Akbarpur Mahavidyalaya, Akbarpur, Kanpur – Dehat (Uttar Pradesh)



Through collaborative efforts and active participation, the RA25 programme aims to create a ripple effect, amplifying awareness about rabies prevention in the communities, both directly and indirectly. This initiative is another step forward in **Vigyan Setu Foundation's** commitment to improving public health and addressing zoonotic diseases.

Dr. Lalit Kumar Sharma is a family veterinarian, science communicator and the Secretary and Managing Trustee of Vigyan Setu Foundation.