



Vikas Pandey, an alumnus of IIT Bombay and former UCLA researcher, always wanted to give back to society. Coming from an economically marginalized family, he benefited from various scholarships throughout his education. Inspired to help others like him, he co-founded the Plebeians Research and Academic Network (PRAN) Foundation with his friends. The name was suggested by another IITB alumnus, Amarendra Singh. Jitendra Singh, an IITB alumnus and long-term friend of Vikas, has always supported him in his ideas about the PRAN Foundation.

Initially, Vikas, along with Prof. Swadesh Singh, Abhinay Sharma, Manas K. Paul, Swarup Pandey, Akshay Modi, and Naveen Tripathi, ran an internship program under a different banner. This internship now runs as the ASPIRE internship under the PRAN Foundation, helping university students gain research exposure.

Vikas called around 100+ friends and pitched the idea for the SAARTHI Scholarship. These researchers aimed to support class 9th students financially through class 12th and guide them toward becoming researchers and technocrats. In 2023, the PRAN Foundation received around 500 applications and launched the SAARTHI Scholarship based on income certificates and class 8th marksheets. By 2024, they distributed about 2000 application forms in rural Ayodhya for 50 scholarships.

