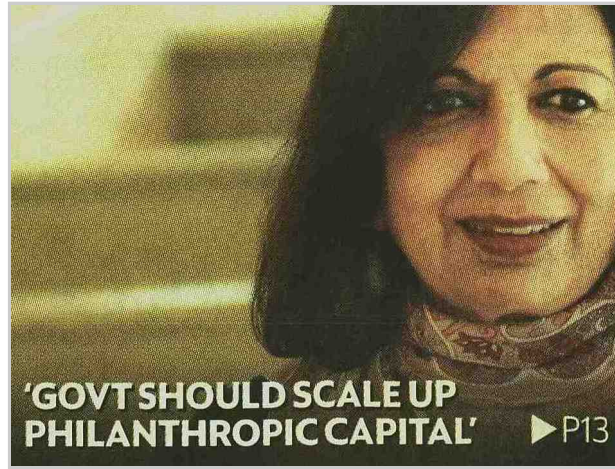


Published Date:	Monday 18th March, 2019	Publication:	Mint [Bangalore]
Journalist:	Shereen Bhan	Page No:	1, 13
MAV/CCM:	334,281/235.72	Circulation:	14,000



Published Date:	Monday 18th March, 2019	Publication:	Mint [Bangalore]
Journalist:	Shereen Bhan	Page No:	1, 13
MAV/CCM:	334,281/235.72	Circulation:	14,000

Govt should scale up philanthropic capital with welfare programmes, says Biocon CMD

Shereen Bhan
CNBC-TV18

Last week, Wipro Ltd chairman Azim Premji gave 34% of his company stake worth \$7.5 billion to philanthropy, sparking a debate on the adequacy of charity spending in India. In a panel discussion, Sudha Murthy, chairperson, Infosys Foundation; Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, chairman and managing director, Biocon Ltd; and Anant Bhagwati, director of venture philanthropy fund Dasra and author of *India Philanthropy Report 2019* dwell on various issues around scalability, capacity and future of philanthropy in India. Edited excerpts:

India has had a long culture of daan, of charity, of giving back. What is the way forward to your mind as we see the rise of ultra-high net worth individuals in India which is only expected to grow faster and bigger from here on?

Murthy: India had that tradition of giving back, but all these years it was different because it was a charity, in the sense, you will have a temple feast or you will have a particular community giving to their community, but now it has come out in a much different way after 2% of CSR. The reason is now it is much more systematic, you have a strategy, you have rule and where you can give, where you cannot give. So this is altogether different method of giving.

I am seeing that there is growth of youngsters physically volunteering and also giving individually to a cause which ever is dear to their heart.

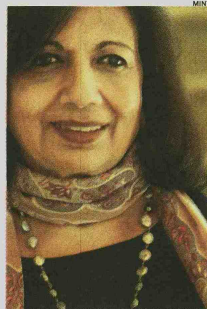
So I am sure that in coming years, people, particularly youngsters feel that they would like to give something which is nice or which they are passionate and they would like to give to the good foundations at times.

Sometimes they will give directly, but we require to run non-profit organization like a company, in the sense, same auditing, same methodology of strategy, there are certain rules with a legal opinion. So in the coming years, it is going to be very significant way of giving.

You are one of the handful of Indians who has signed up for the Giving Pledge started by Warren Buffett and Bill Gates. What made you want to do that and what is your approach as you look at philan-



(From left) Sudha Murthy, chairperson, Infosys Foundation; Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, chairman and managing director, Biocon; Anant Bhagwati, director, Dasra and author of *India Philanthropy Report 2019*.



thropy for the future of driving change in India?

Shaw: As a first generation entrepreneur and a wealth creator, I have always believed that wealth is something that has to be used to make a difference to society, to make an impact on society, societal improvement. Personally, I have always believed that wealth and knowledge are to be shared and not hoarded. So I just feel that has been my personal driving philosophy.

As far as I am concerned, I think India is a country which is creating a large number of HNIs (high net worth individuals) and wealth creators in general. I think this is a time for people to really get inspired by the whole philosophy of giving and the fact that wealth has to be invested to make a better society.

You have decided to put your money to work when it comes to healthcare. The Infosys Foundation which Sudha Murthy will speak about has done a lot

when it comes to education and also related to healthcare. How do you go about and let me pick up on the point that Sudha Murthy made about the institutionalization of spending that we have seen. How do you go about making decisions on where to spend, how to spend, how much to spend. How do you monitor and measure return on investment for instance as far as

the philanthropic aspect is concerned?

Shaw: I look at philanthropic capital as a kind of a catalytic capital or kind of an experimental or risk capital. There are many areas where I think you should use this kind of capital to experiment with bold ideas and there of course I do things like investing in think tanks, investing in different kinds of models of new ideas, and then of course in terms of really investing in very well strategized areas it is obviously about healthcare and about education as well.

For instance, I have lent support to Krea University. I have lent a lot of support to building a cancer hospital and to a number of cancer areas.

Now these are measurable areas, these are areas where you can actually assess the impact you are making because you are doing it at scale. However, there are a number of other areas that need to be scaled up and you need to make those early investments to see how they will pan out. So, mine is a kind of a mixed bag of how I choose areas that I want to be involved with.

For instance, I have also invested and supported a museum because I feel that museums need to be built up in this country and we need to basically showcase a lot of our traditions.

So, I have done a lot of those kind of things, but I think when it comes to big ticket investments, it is always been in something that is tangible, something that can really be measurable in terms of impact which is setting up large universi-

ties, large hospitals and things like that.

It's a very interesting report that you have authored. You are actually saying that contributions from ultra-high net worth individuals have decreased 4 percent since 2014. What will it take to catalyze this ecosystem even further and what do you believe are the impediments for seeing this big move towards the kind of risk capital that Kiran Mazumdar Shaw was talking about and that Mrs. Murthy was talking about because even if we have to achieve some of these sustainable development goals as a country, there is a lot more that we need to do in terms of investing behind those goals?

Bhagwati: I think the interesting thing is it is a bit of a glass half full-half empty situation which is while there are exceptional examples like Premji, Sudha, Kiran etc., I think what is happening is very large number of people with money are taking a very fragmented and non-strategic look at philanthropy. So to give an example for-profit the very common term is what percentage of the addressable market am I catering, right? Why are the same people not looking at what percent of the addressable problem in India; problem could be underprivileged adolescence, am I actually doing and if you take that one metric, so the whole theme of the report is put outcome at the centre and look at what percentage of the addressable problem, of India's problem and if it is less than 1% or 5% then what are we doing.

So one part of the problem is not having the outcome at the centre and the second part is not having vehicles which are more collaborative and more accountable which can absorb capital of that magnitude. The largest NGOs will be very small in India compared to other places. So I would say it's both sides.

One of the problems and we discussed in the past as well is how you do actually build scale. Whether you talk about the healthcare problem which Kiran is trying to address or we talk about the education problem. For the size of the problem that India needs to address, you need a lot more collaboration and you need a lot more money. What is going to take for us to get more collaboration across this ecosystem of philanthropy which currently is very fragmented and as Anant pointed out perhaps even non-strategic?

Murthy: That is the reason this year we started a new initiative called Aarohan Avishkaar, Dil Se. The main aim of that competition was—we will encourage people who have project which is going to be useful to the society and they can scale up. So we will give them initial money, holding their hand, then 8 weeks training at IIT Hyderabad so that they can scale up because there may be many people who have the idea but they do not have the contact or who have the idea they do not have money.

Socially this should affect a bigger section of the society. So we conducted an experiment and it worked out quite well and so we have the first batch of people; there is platinum, gold, silver, bronze kind of category we have made.

Scaling up requires a mentorship because a single idea limited to your family, limited to neighbourhood will not help in a large way. Like we are experimenting with drinking water. Is there any way of cheaper technology, more efficient way of getting good water, for example we have done, with Avishkaar, Dil Se, an experiment—somebody did in Mumbai, PhD students that with small changes in the hand pump they can get clean water which can be scaled up properly. So we require a good mentorship to scale up because these people may or may not be aware of it.

On the point that Anant was making and I am just looking at the

funding requirements, an additional funding of ₹4.2 lakh crore annually will be required to achieve even 5 of the 17 sustainable development goals that is what the Bain India philanthropy report throws up. The point that I am trying to make is that you are individually doing something to address the healthcare issues. You have created a 1,400 bed cancer centre, for instance, in partnership with Dr Devi Shetty. Sudha Murthy is doing something, Shri Natar is doing something. What can be done to create that collaborative vehicle which addresses India's large problems?

Shaw: I think a lot can be done but as Anant said that it is about absorptive capacity of where you invest. One of the things that I have been investing in is the whole arena of science and society, science and technology and I want to see how we can support good science in the country. So I have been giving a lot of grants and research grants and scholarships and even building science labs in schools and things. So again I am hoping that this absorptive capacity, we will be able to translate into a larger number of people pursuing science and then giving back to society through their own pursuit of science and technology. I think each one has to choose your calling. I think it is very difficult to just focus on the sustainable development goals that you are talking about and when it comes to corporate social responsibility yes, you should look at the SDGs and see where you can play,

but Anant made an important point that how do we create large NGOs like the Gates Foundation and others to start doing things at a much bigger scale and that is where the government also should be working with us to scale up.

For instance, we have started digital primary health clinics but it is more to catalyse the concept of digital primary health clinics with a hope that the governments will run with it and expand it and scale it up. So there is an urgent need for the government to collaborate with philanthropy and with philanthropic capital to see how they can use this risk capital or catalytic capital to experiment with new ideas and then scale them up through the government kind of programmes.

The problem is absence of vehicles which can absorb large capital. The biggest NGOs in India are small compared to other places, says Bhagwati

primary health clinics with a hope that the governments will run with it and expand it and scale it up. So there is an urgent need for the government to collaborate with philanthropy and with philanthropic capital to see how they can use this risk capital or catalytic capital to experiment with new ideas and then scale them up through the government kind of programmes.

feedback@livemint.com