

The best reads
on **development**

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When we launched IDR a year ago, our dream had several aspects to it, one of which was to capture the diversity and plurality of the social sector in India. We wanted IDR to be a place where the various constituents of our sector—organisations big and small, be they in the metros or in rural India, philanthropists, thinkers, practitioners—would find a place to share their rich experience and knowledge so that we can all learn from each other.

www.idronline.org

Over the past year, we have made a conscious effort to remain true to that promise—as you will see in the pages that follow. Our second bi-annual issue, comprising some of the best articles published on our website between October 2017 and March 2018, brings you perspectives on a range of topics.

We look at how philanthropy is evolving, the challenges it faces in our times and the long-held notions it must confront to remain relevant. We discuss how the idea of masculinity is far more layered than we imagine and why we must work with men and boys to achieve gender equity. In a sector where creating a leadership pipeline is a concern at most organisations, we learn how to go about the task of building a second line of leaders.

We bring you strategies to help fundraise more effectively. From the villages of India, our articles delve into the alarming rise of non-communicable diseases, and how we are failing our rainfed farmers. We also have the first in our series of IDR Interviews, our attempt at documenting the wisdom of some of the pioneers in India's development story.

And because it's good to laugh at ourselves occasionally, we also bring you our favourite picks from our humour section. We hope you enjoy this collection we have put together for you.

Devanshi, Rachita, Sangeeta & Smarinita

India Development Review

For sector-level change, go beyond funding programmes

If we want to impact the lives of millions of Indians, we, as funders, will have to invest in organisational capacity and even in the larger ecosystem. Because, that's when we will see change happen at a sector level.



Photo Courtesy: Landesa



ROOPA KUDVA
Partner and Managing Director India
Omidyar Network



Over the last few years, particularly with the CSR clause in the Companies Act, there has been a great deal of money flowing into the social sector. However, a significant amount of that money has conditions attached—terms that dictate exactly where and how it must be used. While this may be appropriate in some cases, fundamentally, it points to a serious lack of trust in nonprofits and hinders their ability to operate effectively.

When funders insist that their money go exclusively to the people served, there is not enough money left for the nonprofits to focus on building their own organisations. They are, therefore, unable to invest in talent, systems, technology or reporting. It also results in founders of nonprofits spending an inordinate amount of time on fundraising, which takes away from the time they spend on their core programmes and impact.

With a shortage of resources to build systems and processes, nonprofits cannot report effectively on their work, which in turn breeds more mistrust.

Funding nonprofits—break the cycle of mistrust

1. Fund capacity-building efforts

There are many things that go into breaking this cycle, but the most important is ensuring that the nonprofits you fund have enough money to invest in building their own organisations. This is what we, at Omidyar Network, call a core grant.

A core grant increases the freedom that an entrepreneur has to invest in building her organisation; this is critical to actually creating impact. Once we have vetted and selected grantees, we convey, “We like your vision, we like your purpose, and we trust you. Tell us what you want to achieve with the money, set your goals and the metrics, and use the funds where you think they are most needed.”

We also include milestones in our grants where disbursements are linked to capacity building, for instance, hiring certain key personnel or putting technology systems in place.

2. Encourage transparency and improve quality of reporting

Over the last three decades, there was a sharp increase in transparency in corporate India as regulations made it mandatory to disclose information. So, if you were a financial institution, you had to disclose your capital adequacy ratio and your nonperforming assets. With companies listed on

the stock exchange, regulators specified the accounting standards, formats and schedules under which accounts had to be published, quarterly and annually.

That standardisation made it easier for stakeholders to understand what corporates were doing. It increased the level of transparency and, once that happened, research analysts, rating agencies, and others could evaluate and publish independent assessments of corporates. As a result of all these developments, companies were able to attract significantly larger amounts of capital.

I think it's a similar issue with our nonprofits. If, over time, we are able to bring in standardised reporting, and disclosures, it will make it easier for donors to understand nonprofits. I know all organisations believe that they are unique, but that doesn't mean we can't have standard ways of reporting, irrespective of sector.

Standardised reporting will also transform the ability of organisations to attract funding. If donors believe that there is transparency, they will become more confident about giving money without prescribing specifically what nonprofits should be doing with it.

It then becomes a virtuous cycle: If there is more transparency, organisations will attract more funding; with more money at their disposal, nonprofits will be able to invest in capacity building; this in turn helps build transparency.

Core grants are key to getting to this point.

3. Helping nonprofits become effective

The stakeholders in our sector—donors as well as nonprofits—equate money going to the people served with effectiveness, which is a false notion. What will make nonprofits truly effective is their ability to become strong organisations that are sustainable in the long run.

At Omidyar Network, the typical grant period is three years. There is an initial amount that is disbursed that is usually unconditional; subsequent tranches are based on achievement of metrics that are linked to goals that founders and social entrepreneurs have set for their organisations. Some of our metrics also relate to the grantees getting matching funds—the idea being that over time, the organisation should reduce its dependency on any one donor.

Photo Courtesy: The Education Alliance



Ecosystem building is complex since it entails many moving parts—policy, infrastructure, funding innovators, and sometimes, even seeding entrepreneurs.

“A core grant increases the freedom that an entrepreneur has to invest in building her organisation; this is critical to actually creating impact.”

Going beyond the nonprofit – Funding change at a sector level

1. Recognise your place in the journey of giving

There is a four-phase journey that many philanthropists go through:

- **Phase I:** When people start to give, they give to causes that inherently appeal to them. While this may not be a very strategic approach, it is still good because they have started on the journey of giving.
- **Phase II:** People get more strategic about their philanthropy—they think about what matters to them and the kind of change they are trying to bring about with their funding.
- **Phase III:** The next stage of evolution occurs when funders move to providing core grants.
- **Phase IV:** When funders are ready to expand beyond grants and make investments in for-profit businesses with a purpose, or impact investing. At Omidyar Network we have found this hybrid approach to be a powerful structure for supporting sector-level change.

2. Invest in building the ecosystem

To truly improve the lives of millions of Indians, we need to think about three interlinked components that drive change across the sector:

- **The organisation:** While it is where most of us start, we need to think beyond exclusively supporting implementing organisations.
- **Sector infrastructure:** We need to create infrastructure that benefits the sector at large. A good example of this is Teach for India, which is engaging talented young leaders to work in the education sector.
- **Research and policy:** We also need institutions that undertake research and/or help drive policy-level reform like the Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS), Landesa, and The Education Alliance. Research is important, both for entrepreneurs to understand new areas and gaps where they can step in to build new businesses and to inform policy decisions.

When you have these combined elements, then you can begin to drive change in a sector.

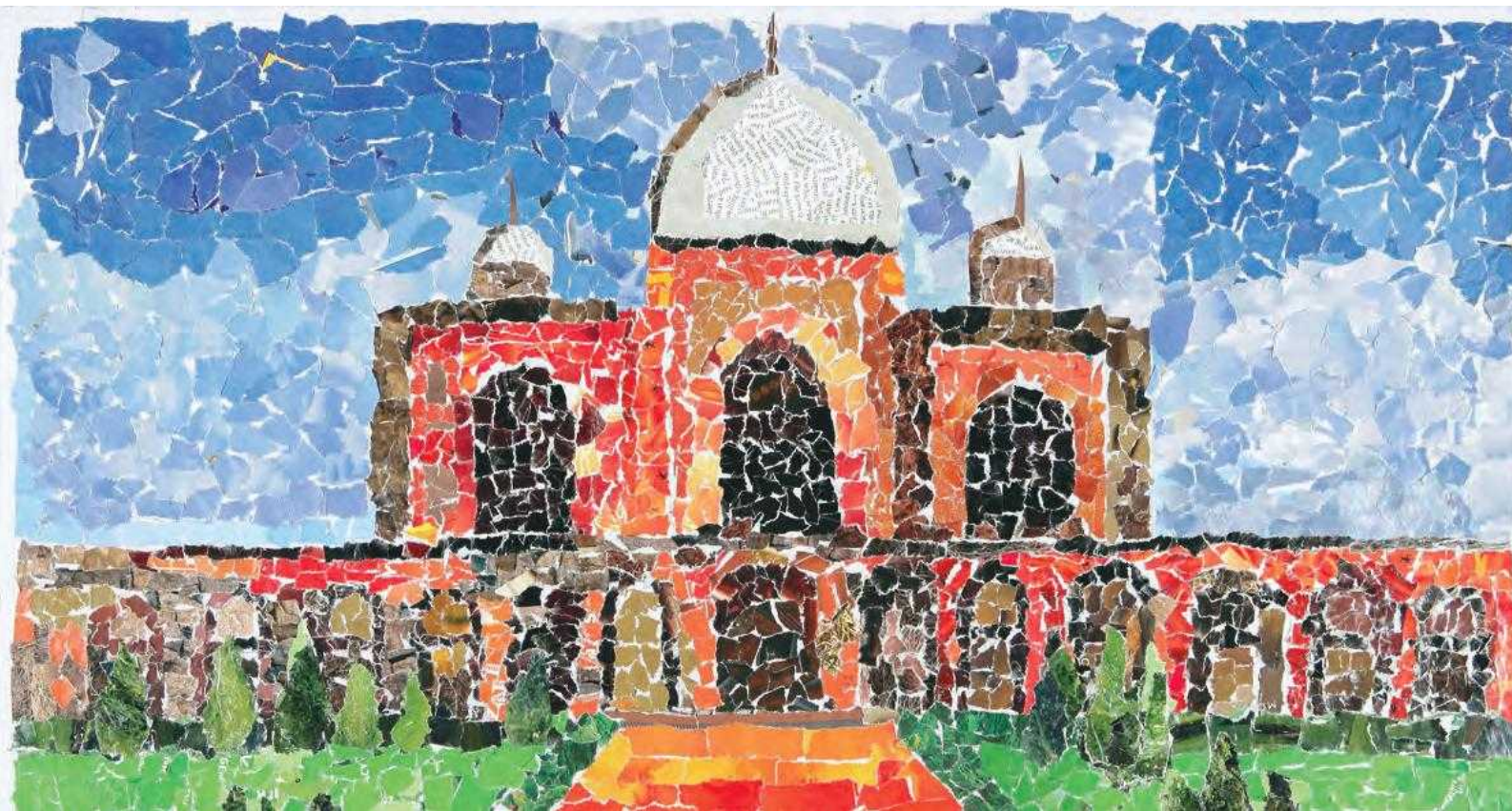
Ecosystem building is complex since it entails many moving parts—policy, infrastructure, funding innovators, and sometimes even seeding entrepreneurs. It will also require information sharing.

Philanthropists need to see others doing it, especially since they tend to be peer oriented—they learn mostly from what others are doing and that makes a big difference in terms of how they think about giving. ■

Why funders must invest in organisational capacity

Just as they do in their businesses, philanthropists must be willing to invest in people and processes to help build successful nonprofits.

Photo Courtesy: Aseema Charitable Trust



“In the social sector, the entire emphasis is on the plan and the programme as opposed to whether the organisation is geared to delivering in a high-quality and a sustainable way.”



AMIT CHANDRA
Managing Director,
Bain Capital, Mumbai



ARCHANA CHANDRA
Board member and CEO,
Jai Vakeel Foundation

In the corporate world, any talk of building a high-quality business is immediately followed by the act of building organisational capability. It is almost intuitive to think of putting the building blocks in place: organisation charts, the right people for those organisation charts, and systems and processes. In fact, boards and funders that back the business focus enormously on these aspects in the early days of the organisation's journey before they start expecting results.

In the social sector, however, the conversation almost always starts with the results—the entire emphasis is on the plan and the programme as opposed to whether the organisation is geared to delivering in a high-quality and a sustainable way. Thus, the model is, in a sense, inverted in the nonprofit space.

And we find this extremely unusual because, very often, philanthropists (who are business people themselves) are unable to translate this corporate sector thinking to the nonprofit space.

Why organisational capacity is not a priority for nonprofits

Financial sustainability is not something that a nonprofit can usually think of from day one. Most nonprofits are set up by passionate leaders who start a programme and focus all their energies on building it, mainly because resources are usually scarce early on.

What they need are donors who are willing to support them for at least three years. Else, the focus shifts to assessing the programme's achievements every year, after which the donor may or may not decide to renew the relationship. This puts unnecessary pressure on the programme, with the result that organisation building is always relegated to the sidelines.

It also doesn't help that donors typically tell nonprofits: "I want to fund only programme costs; every rupee I give must go towards feeding or educating or clothing somebody." And their next question usually tends to be: "What is your administrative cost?" "If it's high, then you are not seen as 'efficient'.

Given that they are invariably answering such questions, nonprofits don't really want to think about investing in building an organisation. The inflection point happens when the founder or CEO feels confident of the impact they are making and starts saying: "Let me build infrastructure around my programme, whether it is to raise funds, talk about my programme or for financial stability."

BENEFITS OF FUNDING ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY:

- 1 Allows nonprofits to create the talent and processes required to build sustainable organisations.
- 2 Enables consolidation between the start-up and stage scale-up stages.
- 3 Allows nonprofits to invest in nonprogrammatic aspects such as technology, processes, governance, etc.
- 4 Helps nonprofits unlock their full potential.

Scale cannot be achieved overnight

Most funders would like their nonprofits to scale as fast as possible and most donor conversations invariably land at this point.

We've had these conversations at Jai Vakeel as well. "It's great that you have 700 students in one campus; but given the population of India, what are your plans for scale? We would like to support your growth if we can see that pathway to scale." And our honest response was to tell them that we weren't ready.

We understand this is a country with so many people and we need to address the problem for them, but Jai Vakeel is not able to do it today because we don't have the kind of infrastructure, people and skills required to do it on a larger scale.

Besides, one can't go from a start-up stage to scale-up stage; there has to be consolidation in the

middle. And capacity building is what ensures that that happens.

Funders like to say: “This is a great pilot; you have proved it for a thousand people, now let’s take it to hundreds of thousands.” As business people they would never go to even the thousand-and-first person without building their own in-house capability to make it happen. For some reason, though, they can’t or won’t apply that same logic to nonprofits.

We have raised the bar and our expectations from the social sector: we expect miraculous results without equipping the sector and putting in adequate inputs. And that’s really unfair. Which is why this investment in leaders and capacity building is very important.

Most leaders are passionate and driven people but may not necessarily have the entire gamut of business skills. What are we as funders doing to equip these leaders to deal with the whole scaling model that we are so aggressively pushing on them?

For nonprofits, too, it can be tempting to jump to scale without stopping to build internal capabilities and processes. It’s easy to get lured by this kind of money and play the numbers game, but that can be counter-productive in the long term.

Making the case for investing

Given this state of affairs, our sector as a whole must talk more about success stories:

- Organisations that have broken out because they have made an extraordinary investment in capacity building should be talked about and celebrated by stakeholders and the development community.
- Donors who have invested in capacity building and have seen great results in the organisations they have backed should talk about their experiences for the benefit of their peers, who can then consider making similar investments.

Nonprofits should be bolder when they approach donors and make the case for achieving results via investments in organisational capabilities.

Akshaya Patra is a good example of this. We read Rashmi Bansal’s *God’s Own Kitchen*, which narrates the story of the organisation, and the biggest lesson for us in that was about investing in organisational capacity early on.

“One can’t go from a start-up stage to scale-up stage; there has to be consolidation in the middle. And capacity building is what ensures that that happens.”

When you read the book, you realise that its early supporters—people like Mohandas Pai, who had experience building world-class organisations in their corporate avatars—saw the opportunity to take Akshaya Patra to the next level by investing in what really mattered: technology, systems, processes, governance, etc. It probably explains why Akshaya Patra operates at the scale at which it does today.

We’ve had the same experience in a much smaller way across the 25 organisations that we support in our capacity building portfolio. Our learning: it is very important to make targeted investments in organisations in different functional areas to unlock their full potential.

Just as successful businesses are the product of extensive nurturing and investment in people, processes and the like, we in the social sector must also start asking ourselves if we are doing enough in our various roles—as funders, philanthropists, nonprofit founders, and so on—to take cognisance of the fact that there are no shortcuts on this journey. ■



The predicament of strategic philanthropy

We need to question the role of strategic philanthropy as it is practised today. To create lasting change, philanthropy must move beyond business-like transactions and instead incorporate wisdom and practice from many players and approaches.



KATHERINE FULTON
Independent advisor

Strategic philanthropy was born a generation ago to challenge the prevailing orthodoxies of philanthropy over the past century. Moving beyond traditional notions of giving back and charity, strategic philanthropy believes the way to create change is to decide on a goal that matters and then figure out what it will take to achieve it.

And strategic philanthropy's norms are still gathering force—still promising to inspire and improve the good that philanthropy can do.

However, what is also clear is that strategic philanthropy is in danger of becoming its own orthodoxy—a set of conventions that deserve to be questioned and are now

being questioned by a next generation of innovators around the globe.

Many roads to a larger good

Let us first understand the journey of philanthropy itself, before we discuss the dilemma faced by strategic philanthropy. Some of us are no doubt just starting out; others are already quite experienced, and have much learning to share; some have built a great fortune and feel a responsibility to give back; and some are already part of a family tradition of giving.

Despite these differences, we also share many important things, not least the great privilege we enjoy in a world sorely in need of change and transformation. We are also united in our understanding of some of the great truths about philanthropy. While it can be a source of great joy, doing it well—let alone excellently—is quite hard.

Philanthropy is about making choices, and there are many right answers. It's easy to be overwhelmed. And it's easy to feel that no matter what you do, no matter how thoughtful you are, your efforts are small compared to the size of the problems in the world, for philanthropy can be a confounding mixture of power and powerlessness.

Nevertheless, in philanthropy's long history, leaders regularly come along and ask: Can't we do better? That's what has been happening in recent years, as our generation asks the following kinds of questions: Can't philanthropy be about making measurable progress toward clear definitions of success? Can more rigour and discipline be brought to decision-making, basing strategies on evidence, not just wishful thinking? Can philanthropy, in other words, be more like business and insist on a social return on investment?

These questions have famously unleashed a great deal of energy and innovation—and no small amount of hype. I have had a front row seat at this 'strategic philanthropy' drama, working with many of this generation's best leaders in major foundations, and in the newer domains that go by names like venture philanthropy, social entrepreneurship and impact investing.

While the pace of experimentation and the scale of the changes taking place have been impressive, it's fair to ask: How is it going? Is it working?

On one level, it will be a long time before we fully know the results. There is some good news already: improving maternal and child health trend lines in many parts of the world, for instance. In other domains, such as climate change, the problems are getting worse much faster than our attempts to solve them.

“The brutal truth about philanthropy is that those with the power to make decisions are often those who have the least direct knowledge about the problems or opportunities being addressed.”

I don't think we have to wait, however, to ask how it's going when it comes to the practice of philanthropy itself.

The limitations of strategic philanthropy

While the increase in rigour is commendable, the mindset of strategic philanthropy has significant limitations. The disciplines and cultures of business and management are much better at creating wealth than at creating the large transformative changes that philanthropy seeks to catalyse.

Let us look at two aspects of strategy that I believe are getting in the way of greater success: decision making and strategy making.

Decision making: Who decides, and based on what knowledge?

At the heart of strategic philanthropy is an assumption that making a strategy is a rational process, controlled inside an organisation or by a donor, to craft a unique philanthropic contribution.

This approach directly challenges older, more relational styles of giving, when funders 'respond' to those who ask, and attempt to fund great strategies rather than assuming they should figure them out on their own.

Let's look at the difference between fashioning a strategic solution and funding strategies.

Fashioning a strategy: In 2010, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg announced that he was donating \$100 million to the Newark New Jersey public schools, working in partnership with the Republican N. J. Governor and the Democratic Newark Mayor. The plan was audacious: turn around a school district where nearly half of the public-school students dropped out of high school, and turn it into a symbol of excellence for the nation.



Photo Courtesy: Charlotte Anderson.

Strategic philanthropy must question who decides, based on what knowledge and what relationships.

This gift seemed to epitomise strategic philanthropy: bold, big, with a clear ‘theory of change’ involving making a bet on expanding the charter schools that operated outside the usual education bureaucracy.

Over five years, however, the reformers ran into obstacle after obstacle. Though a few things changed, and continue to, the experiment’s results were deeply disappointing.

We know a lot more about what happened in Newark because a reporter named Dale Russakoff was there, day after day. Her book, *The Prize*, tells a story of reformers who knew what the answer was, and therefore saw no need to really listen to anyone else—to the teachers on the front lines, or to the Newark citizens who had been run over time and again by outsiders intent on ‘helping’ them. The reformers, in other words, had their own strategy. The story is quite instructive about the limits of changes pushed from the top down.

Funding a strategy. Let’s contrast the Facebook initiative to MacArthur Foundation’s new competition called ‘100 and Change,’ whereby the foundation announced it would make a USD 100 million grant every three years.

Instead of doing a lot of research on where to make that grant, the foundation invited ideas from anyone, anywhere, in any domain. You just had to propose a big solution for a meaningful problem—feasible to do, an

idea that has already been verified, a solution that will be durable.

MacArthur, in short, seeks to fund someone else’s strategy. The quality of the proposals the foundation received was stunning, said MacArthur president Julia Stasch.

Admittedly, this comparison between Newark and MacArthur is not a fair one. We don’t know the results of the winner MacArthur recently chose—a new evidence-based effort to educate young children displaced by conflict and persecution in the Middle East. And not all strategies driven by funders play out as the one in Newark did.

These two stories illustrate a troubling pattern I have observed over the past 20 years. At its worst, strategic philanthropy can be a toxic mix of arrogance and ignorance, lacking critical understanding of the context, treating grantees not as partners but as mere instruments of a funder trying to meet a goal. In this kind of environment, it is never safe enough to give real input or feedback to those in power.

This is a problem, because the brutal truth about philanthropy is that those with the power to make decisions are often those who have the least direct knowledge about the problems or opportunities being addressed.

“Philanthropists too often tighten the reins to try to control the uncertainties, rather than empowering a capable leader to exercise judgment in navigating the uncertainties as they arise.”

The good news is that many people are working to shift this imbalance of power, from using data directly from beneficiaries, to employing design thinking techniques, to dreaming up big new approaches such as MacArthur’s.

Still, strategic philanthropy clearly must question some of today’s entrenched rituals of decision making—questioning who decides, based on what knowledge and what relationships—if we are to accelerate progress in the next generation.

Making strategy is not the same as making change

Despite what I’ve just argued until now, philanthropy is actually much better at deciding what to do than at confronting the inevitably messy reality of human beings trying to make the changes the strategy calls for. Making change is an art and it requires working with others. Simply put, philanthropists often have a difficult time taking the risk of letting go of control.

It’s easy to understand why. There is so much pressure on philanthropists today. Everyone wants a ‘clear return on investment,’ after all. The press is often watching. No one wants to waste money or look foolish.

Unfortunately, in response to these pressures, philanthropists too often tighten the reins to try to control the uncertainties, rather than empowering a capable leader to exercise judgment in navigating the uncertainties as they arise.

As one nonprofit leader I know recently said, “We are trying to do something that has never been done before. We need to get out and fail and learn. And yet our funders say: Show me great numbers the first time.”

What this nonprofit leader needs instead is the longer-term, flexible, general support that will allow him to learn his way to success. Philanthropy’s unique role is to provide the social risk capital that more traditional givers and governments and businesses will not.

But today’s strategic philanthropy practices, when implemented too rigidly, can have a profound unintended consequence—actually reducing risk-taking and creativity. A funder who insists on short-term accountability above all, asking for a series of detailed one-year plans and metrics, will get a different result than someone who gets behind a five-year goal or a 20-year vision, and partners closely to achieve it.

In other words, to make change, trust and relationships are as important as the strategy itself. I am not kidding when I say that some of the best leaders on the planet spend 50, 60, 70 percent of their time just begging for essential operating funding. Businesses usually don’t torture people this way. Philanthropy too often does.

These dysfunctions must be addressed over the next generation, or we will remain stuck with today’s fragmented, individualised funding system that lacks the capacity and patience to inspire the changes that are needed in the world.

Philanthropy beyond business-like transactions

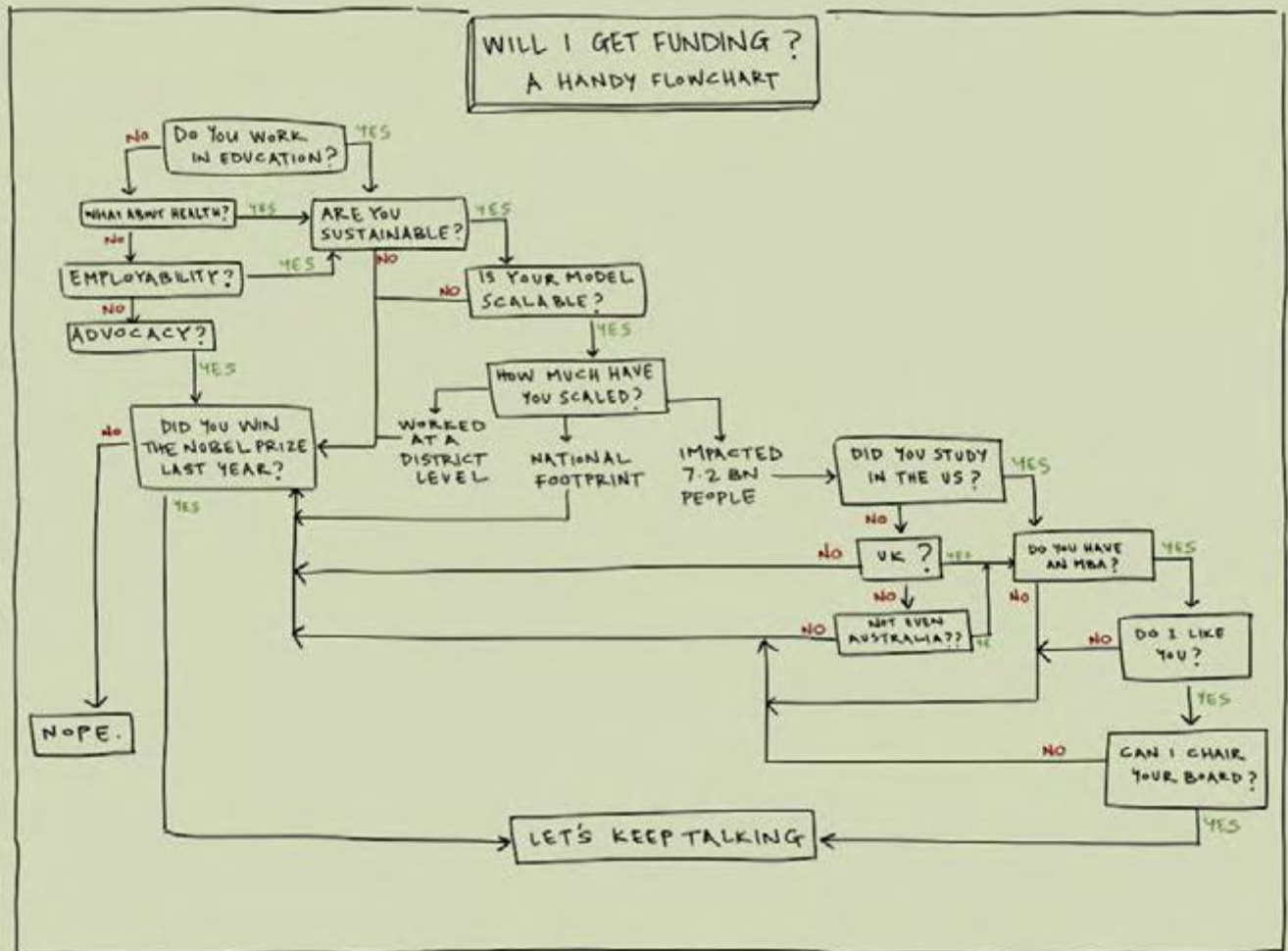
So that’s a brief look at two aspects of strategy I believe are holding us back. I am not suggesting that we should reject strategic philanthropy. Passion alone is rarely enough to create impact. I am just saying that the past 20 years’ attempts to improve have over-corrected.

What we need now is an integration, a new whole, that incorporates wisdom and practice from many approaches, choosing what is best for the situation at hand. We must accept the need to let go of control in the face of all we do not know and cannot know. And we must get better at building the necessary, trusting relationships that will bring out the best in people and enable us to co-create a better future.

This is no small task. Strategic philanthropy, in the wrong hands, can suck the soul out of giving, choosing instead to make investments in technical fixes that can never catalyse true, lasting transformation. Great philanthropy transcends business-like transactions and instead requires wisdom, imagination and courage. That is its challenge, and its promise. ■

Will I get funding?

There are many tools to help us improve our decisions: flow charts, 2X2 matrices, decision trees, and so on. Here's one to help you decide whether or not to pursue a funder. Caution: Use at your own risk.



Want empowered women? Start helping young men

We need to turn to the 200 million young men of India with as much urgency and focus as we spend on the millions of young women in the country.

Photo Courtesy: Charlotte Anderson.



Every day, we hear of horrible atrocities that have taken place against girls and women in India. This is despite the fact that as a country, we can boast of having some of the most progressive policies and civic movements. It is despite the fact that we have the world's largest pool of elected women representatives – adding up to more than one million across all tiers of government.

It is despite the fact that tens of millions of women belong to self help groups that are working to empower them. And, it is despite the fact that as



ROHINI NILEKANI
Founder-Chairperson,
Arghyam



Photo Courtesy: Charlotte Anderson.

Being emotional, sensitive or compassionate are often seen as signs of being not 'man enough'.

a society, we are becoming more and more aware of our inherent gender bias and gender-based problems.

So what's going on?

I wonder whether, in our work to empower young girls and women, we are ignoring one half of the problem, and therefore underestimating one half of the potential solution.

If there is a morally undeniable societal goal of *sarve bhavantu sukhinah*—"May all be happy"—then we need to think about the situation of the 200 million young men in this country. And we need to turn to them with as much urgency and focus as we spend on the millions of young women, and their multiple needs.

Think about it

Globally, India has one of the largest cohorts of young men between the ages of 13 to 26 years. Their situation within the country however, needs to be addressed. Far too many of them are under-educated, under-employed and stuck in a low equilibrium. Far too few of them have positive role models and secure family lives.

In addition, most of them wrestle with the perception of masculinity, which, in a feudal society like ours, is very conditional. It is commonly believed that you are not masculine enough if you are emotional, sensitive or compassionate; that you are not 'man enough' if you are not strong, if you are not the breadwinner in your family.

It is hard to escape these social beliefs, as they remain entrenched within communities and societies, even though the global idea of what it is to be a man is being redefined in the 21st century.

And so, we need to put on an empathetic lens, because if we don't, these issues will present a huge challenge to the country as a whole.

Changing the way we look at the problem

Even empowered women face violence. This is because empowerment of women alone is not enough. For change to occur, the ecosystem of power around women must be different.

We often talk of men as people who need to alter themselves so that women can be better off. However, we rarely offer concrete, innovative strategies for young men to face the issues of patriarchy and masculinity

“We need to create safe platforms for young men to share their fears, their doubts, and their insecurities about sexuality, patriarchy, masculinity, and the burden of expectations they bear.”

head on and become their best selves. And the fact is, if we want that ecosystem of power around women to change, we need to help men be healthy, happy and supportive partners to women who are healthy, educated and earning.

This is not a zero sum game

We can continue all that is being done for women, and do much more for them, while also working with men. As a country looking to better engage our young boys and men, we can start with:

1. Creating safe spaces

We need to create safe platforms for young men to share their fears, their doubts and their insecurities about sexuality, patriarchy, masculinity, and the burden of expectations they bear.

We need structured activities that are not only political or religious, but that get young men together to unlearn gender norms and learn equitable behaviour. It does not matter what the activity is—be it sports, music, theatre or even bird watching—so long as it allows young men to be free from narrow, negative, and gendered identities.

Many countries have examples of successful programmes that use sports, music, mentoring and more to deliver success in helping young men (especially teenagers) direct their energies positively, and build leadership potential. Programmes like El

Sistema in Venezuela have successfully used classical music to help young boys find meaning in their lives. Similarly, the Big Brother programme in the United States allows young boys to be mentored by adults to help put them on the path to success.

In India, while there are some initiatives working with and for adolescent girls, there are too few state sponsored programmes for adolescent boys, be it rural or urban. We need more imagination, more innovation and more public financing for projects and programmes that harness the positive energy of young men.

2. Re-defining the legal framework

Our legal frameworks need to step up to the challenge of a truly gender equitable society. Often, our laws and policies reflect patriarchal biases that can trap men in stereotypes—for example, the idea of guarding the modesty of a woman serves neither men nor women nor any other gender—instead, it comes from the same strong patriarchal framework that we need to confront and reject.

3. Sensitising skilling programmes

The government and private sector are already running skilling programmes across the country. Integrating a gender lens into these initiatives to make them address questions of gender-based power structures in the work place, and sensitising both men and women to them, would be both cost-effective and societally useful.

4. Tapping into organisations that work with girls

Civil society organisations that work with girls and women could be engaged with to share learnings, provide support and even aid in designing programmes for men and boys. For this to happen, philanthropy must come forward to actively support such organisations and innovation.

Taking hold of a missed opportunity

And so, while we have rightly worked on women's empowerment, perhaps we have missed an opportunity to include a key group whose fates are intertwined with women.

We need to support the few organisations working in this space. The young men of India need us to do more for them. We need to do it for men in their own right, and we need to do it even more urgently if we really want women to be empowered too. ■

We need to talk about MEN

While men have more privileges than women, evidence shows that the costs of masculine norms may be steep not only on girls and women, but also on young boys and men.



RAVI VERMA
Regional Director
International Centre for
Research on Women's (ICRW)



SAPNA KEDIA
Technical Specialist
International Centre for
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Photo Courtesy: Charlotte Anderson.



“It is true that men and boys, on average, have more privileges and benefits than women and girls; however, it is possible that the costs of masculinity exceed its benefits and privileges.”

Much of the current discourse on achieving gender equality revolves around the need to address the specific vulnerabilities of girls and women. This is for good reason, as there continues to be persistent discrimination against and violence towards women and girls.

Adolescent girls and women are more at risk of HIV infection; more susceptible to harmful practices such as child marriage, early/forced marriage and female genital mutilation; more likely to be excluded from education, subjected to intimate partner and gender-based violence, and prone to bear the greater consequences of an unintended pregnancy.

It is true that men and boys, on average, have more privileges and benefits than women and girls; however, in many cases, it is possible that the costs of masculinity exceed its benefits and privileges.

All men are not equal

Male privilege is not equally distributed to the advantage of each man. Low-income men, men outside the traditional power structure, men who hold alternative views, homosexual and bisexual men, and other specific groups of men are at times subject to discrimination.

Recent research also demonstrates that while men and boys may have greater privileges over women and girls, masculine norms come with a mix of privilege as well as personal costs that are reflected in the mental and other health needs of men. It is important to examine these costs of masculine norms, not only on girls and women, but also on young boys and men.

Men see it as a zero-sum game

Evidence suggests that more men who commit violence against women feel that rights for women means the loss of rights for men.

The data also show that men with economic stress—those who don't have much income or work—are less likely to be equitable, as are men who have experienced or witnessed discrimination during childhood. On the other hand, men who have witnessed joint decision making or men's participation in households are more likely to be equitable.

The relationship between masculinity and gender-based inequality is complicated by men's own vulnerability and inability to exert 'male dominance and power'; their feeling of incompetence manifests in the form of violence, son preference, discrimination and control.

Photo Courtesy: Charlotte Anderson.



There are far more incentives for women to act masculine than there are for men to act feminine. The masculine mystique has receded far less than the feminine mystique.

This, in turn, has real and long-lasting impact on their lives as well as on the lives of women and girls; it inhibits the creation of respectful and equal relationships.

Gender socialisation has an impact on men's health as well

Literature suggests that differences in gender socialisation—more than biological differences—impact the health and development of boys and girls.

Far too many boys approach adolescence with body image anxiety, having experienced and/or witnessed violence, dropped out of school, adopted sexually risky behaviour or practised other risky behaviours because they believe that they must do so to be seen by their peers and their communities as 'real men'.

According to international health data, the major difference between adolescent boys and girls is that

boys generally show higher rates of mortality, while girls in most regions show higher rates of morbidity.

Furthermore, there are significant differences in the causes of mortality and morbidity that boys and girls face. Boys worldwide show higher rates of mortality and morbidity from violence, accidents and suicide, whereas adolescent girls generally have higher rates of morbidity and mortality related to reproductive tract and pregnancy-related causes.

The evidence for men's disproportionate burden of ill-health has been clear since the first Burden of Disease calculations. Recent Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALY) figures on men's health find that much of this disease burden is due to health problems associated with gender socialisation.

Traffic accidents (where bravado and alcohol use come into play), injuries (associated with the workplace and with intra-gender violence), homicides (the

“It is also important to be cognisant of the contradictions being caused by changing gender norms. Parents encourage their girls to play sport and build things, but many find it unsettling when their young boys want to trade a football for a doll.”

vast majority because of intra-gender violence) and cardiovascular diseases (associated in part with stress and lifestyles) account for the top 10 DALYs globally.

As per the DALY data, the greatest gender-driven risks are seen in four areas: tobacco, alcohol, road traffic injuries and violence. Risk-taking in these areas tends to be associated with aspects of masculinity.

The pressure to be tough also creates taboos around health-seeking behaviour by men. In most countries, girls are more likely to be attuned to health problems, whereas boys may be more likely to ignore or not report them, diminish their importance and not seek health services when they need them.

Gender norms aren't changing for boys

It is also important to be cognisant of the contradictions being caused by changing gender norms. Parents encourage their girls to play sport and build things, but many find it unsettling when their young boys want to trade a football for a doll.

The masculine mystique has receded less than the feminine mystique. Men are still dealing with

tremendous pressure to be 'men'. There are far more incentives for women to act masculine than there are for men to act feminine. DALY figures from some countries suggest that risk profiles change as women become more empowered.

In recent years, the trend in industrialised countries has been toward nearly equal rates of substance use by adolescent boys and girls. We see a growing trend of women adopting risky behaviours traditionally associated with men. Thus, greater gender equality in many industrialised countries may imply that substance use is equally a problem for men and women.

Focus on the boys as well

Increasingly, many proponents of gender equality are emphasising the need to constructively engage men and boys. It is important to work with men and boys (alongside women and girls) for two reasons:

- For the purpose of gender equality, young boys and men must be a part of that process.
- To address the context specific needs and vulnerabilities of boys and men themselves.

It's not an either-or solution

Looking at what is unique about boys often requires comparing them with girls and highlighting areas where boys have higher rates of morbidities or mortality than young women.

However, these comparisons can be problematic, leading to a polarising and simplistic debate about who suffers more or which gender faces greater health risks and so on.

Such comparisons may also downplay some crucial similarities between adolescent girls and boys. Calling attention to the needs and realities of adolescent boys and men should not imply that the goal of empowering girls and women has been achieved.

Men, for their part, should come into the gender equality movement knowing that they are privileged and not from the perspective of being a victim. They should know how to handle their privileges without infringing on the rights of women, girls and other men.

It's important for everyone to realise that this is not a zero-sum game. ■



IDR INTERVIEWS Dr Rani Bang

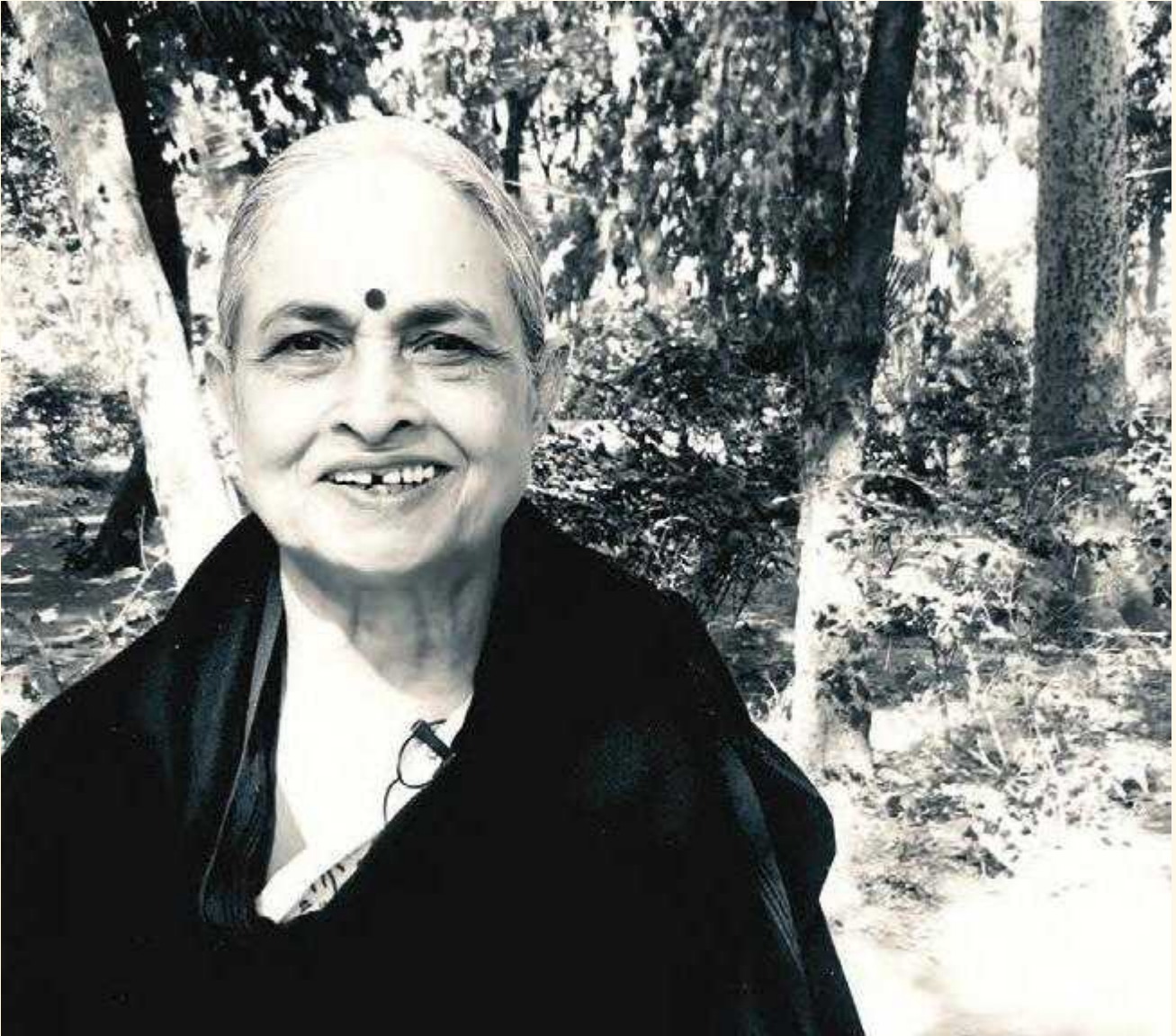


Photo Courtesy: Rachita Vora



SANGEETA MENON
Co-founder and Director,
IDR

A fractured view of their health undermines any attempts to achieve true well-being for the women of India, says the Padma Shri awardee and co-founder of SEARCH.”

Dr Rani Bang, who along with her husband, Dr Abhay Bang, was recently awarded the Padma Shri for their immense contribution to medicine, is known for her stellar work in the rural and tribal belt of Gadchiroli, one of the most impoverished districts of India. As co-founders of Society for Education, Action and Research in Community Health (SEARCH), the doctor couple have changed the face of healthcare in this part of Maharashtra. In this interview with IDR, Dr Rani Bang speaks about the state of women's health and how women continue to suffer under poorly-informed policies.

□ You started working with the tribal and rural women of Gadchiroli over three decades ago. What was your experience back then of the main health concerns faced by women in these areas?

When I started working in Gadchiroli, I was the only gynaecologist in the district. I did the first caesarean in the area. I found that very little was known about the issues faced by women here. I did a computerised literature search at the National Library of Medicine (in the US) and, to my surprise, there was not a single community-based study to show the prevalence of gynaecological morbidity; all existing studies were clinic- and hospital-based. I thought it was important to get a deeper understanding of what was happening to the health of women in these communities. So, I decided to do the first-ever research on this.

But I wanted to first understand what the women themselves felt. I talked to several women from different villages in the district. When I asked them what their common health problems were, they listed many; so, I asked them to list these problems in the order of seriousness. To my surprise, all of them put obstructed labour and infertility in the most serious category.

I was surprised, because I always believed that only a life-threatening condition could be seen as a serious disease. Thus, while listing obstructed labour as a serious issue was understandable, I was taken aback to see infertility as a top concern because nobody dies of infertility.

I asked the women why they put infertility as a serious disease, and they said, "A woman can die of obstructed labour only once, but if she has infertility, she dies every day because everybody blames her." This set me thinking and I realised how deep the problem ran: come to think of it, Marathi has a word for an infertile woman, but no equivalent for an infertile man!

My study in the region revealed that nearly 92 percent of the women had gynaecological problems—and these were not just related to pregnancy and childbirth; there were menstrual problems, reproductive tract infections, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and so on. Criminal abortions by quacks were rampant, despite India having some of the most progressive laws for medical termination of pregnancy.

A deeper investigation helped me identify the missing links as far as healthcare services for women were concerned: the absence of care for gynaecological problems, reproductive tract infections and STDs; absence of adolescent sex-education; lack of access to safe, low-cost and easily available abortion services; lack of access to contraception products.

I took the results of the study to global platforms, including the UN, and argued that we should not be limiting our view of women's health to just maternal and child health (MCH) as was the case then. From the age of menarche up to death, women have so many other problems that need to be considered. Even the ante-natal care, post-natal care and intra-natal care were so poor. I said that we should be concerned with women and child health (WCH) rather than MCH.

□ How was the study received globally? Did it have an impact on the contemporary discussion on women's health?

After the study was published by *The Lancet* in 1989, it was taken up by many women's groups around the world. I was invited to conferences and meetings to present the findings.

In 1992, I was invited to the World Health Assembly, which was attended by ministers from various

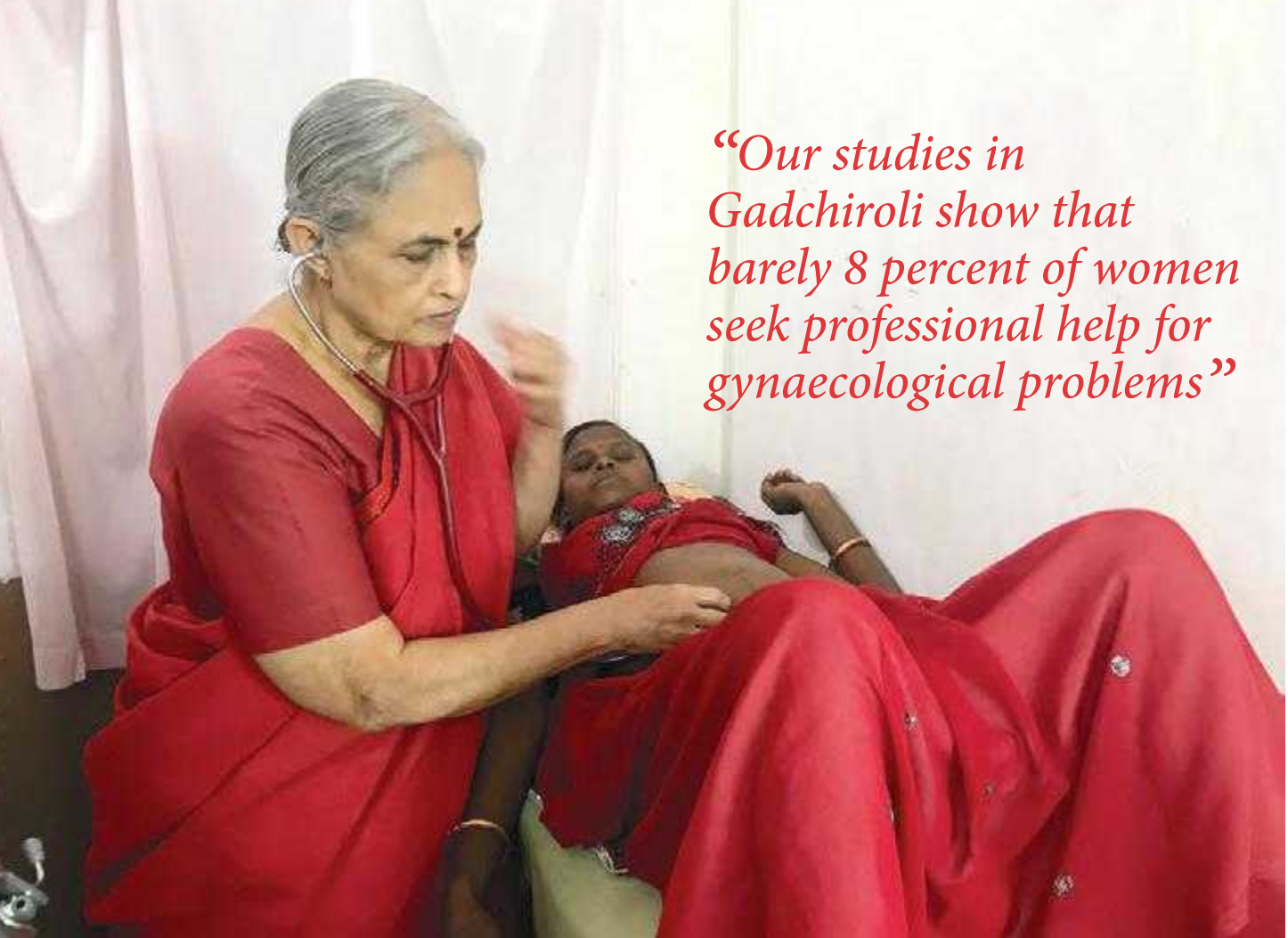


Photo Courtesy: Rachita Vora

“Our studies in Gadchiroli show that barely 8 percent of women seek professional help for gynaecological problems”

The missing linkages in our healthcare policies, programmes and implementation are still a cause for concern, says Dr Rani Bang.

countries and governmental health staff. I was the only non-government worker there. I presented my study and received the appreciation of representatives from all over the world. I also spoke at the UN Assembly in Nairobi, where I said that family planning should be a way to improve the health of women and children, rather than just being linked to population control targets. And the speakers agreed with me.

In 1994, at a UN meeting in Cairo, there was a consensus on adopting WCH in place of MCH. Thus, a study conducted in two small villages in a remote district of India changed the level of discussion internationally and that gave me a great sense of satisfaction.

□ Do you think that the public healthcare system continues to have a fractured view of women’s healthcare needs?

Women’s reproductive health is the most neglected thing in our society. When I started working with the communities, women’s health was equated with only childbirth and family planning, which was an important agenda of the national health programme at that time. The situation is not very different even today.

Gynaecological problems constitute 92 percent of the unmet needs of rural Indian women, accounting for nine out of every 10 medical cases. Our studies in Gadchiroli show that barely 8 percent of women seek professional help for these problems.

In recent times, we have seen the birth rate come down and immunisation coverage improve. However, we have had very limited success with the maternal health component of the reproductive and child health (RCH) programme. The programme remains oriented towards target-driven family planning and does not offer the total gamut of reproductive healthcare.

Moreover, we do not address the key aspect of prevention, which is to improve the health of a woman before she conceives. Women who need help must be identified during pregnancy by way of proper antenatal care. We must realise that treating babies after they are born is far more difficult and expensive.

The lack of trained staff at our primary health centres (PHCs) means that the woman receives no maternal care during and after delivery. Our understanding of maternal care must include issues such as post-natal depression, which is very common but rarely discussed. Our health institutions also need to support women affected by infertility.

□ What do you see as the more recent and emerging health concerns for women in rural India?

The missing linkages in our healthcare policies, programmes and implementation are still a cause for concern. While we have had some success at making basic primary healthcare services available to the rural areas through the National Rural Health Mission, the absence of affordable, good quality secondary and tertiary care undermines our ability to meet emerging health challenges.

For instance, given the rising number of breast cancers and uterine cancers across India, there is an urgent need for awareness and mass screening programmes for early detection; while such services may be available in the urban areas, rural women simply don't have access to these facilities. There is an urgent need to place these services in rural India through the public health system.

We are also seeing an increase in chronic diseases such as obesity, hypothyroidism, hypertension, diabetes and stroke amongst the rural poor and tribals, both women and men, even as we are still grappling with older diseases caused by malnutrition and infections.

Alcohol and tobacco consumption is on the rise in rural India, with men, women and even children becoming addicted. This has negative impacts on their health, social relationships and financial status. While tobacco is responsible for 60 percent of the cancers, it also exacerbates the problem of low birth weight, an issue that rural areas are already struggling to address. It can also cause stillbirths and miscarriages.

Environmental pollution and the increasing quantities of chemicals in our food chain will not only have an adverse effect on reproductive health but will also endanger our future generations. There is an urgent need to look at all these trends and find ways to address them. We must broaden our interventions, stepping beyond the realm of doctors, health clinics and medical technology to look at issues such as nutrition and preventive care.

There are issues at the level of policy and regulation, too. For example, even as the government is supporting research trials to counter the rise of chronic diseases like cancer, we are also seeing the consequences of uncontrolled commercialisation and exploitation by the pharmaceutical industry. Other issues of concern are the diminishing role of the public sector in comprehensive healthcare, the

growing influence of the private sector and the impact of commercialisation.

□ You've been working with women, young girls and boys in the rural areas for more than three decades. Has the nature of problems faced by these groups changed over the years?

Back in the '90s when I did this study, despite all the community participation and cooperation I received, women were still reluctant to get their pelvic examination done; they had many misconceptions about it. I had to go to each village and explain why I had to do this examination. Nowadays, there is a lot more openness and women are far less inhibited. While some perceptions have certainly changed, there are still some traditions and beliefs that are hard to challenge.

As far as adolescents are concerned, they have definitely become more open to discussing their problems and asking questions related to their bodies: girls want to know about menstruation, while boys are mostly obsessed with masturbation, sex and homosexuality, among others.

A worrying trend, however, is the increase in pre-marital sex. This is worrying not only because of the lack of sex education, but also because of poor awareness of and access to contraception. There is a recent trend of medical abortion using the morning-after emergency contraceptive pill. Many young girls go to the pharmacy to buy these pills over the counter and consume them without professional medical advice. This has serious repercussions, including incomplete abortion, following which these girls often turn to quacks to undergo criminal abortions.

Because these pills are marketed very well through misleading advertisements that make it all seem so easy, girls do not realise that these pills are to be prescribed by and consumed under the guidance of a doctor. The result is incomplete abortion and serious medical issues. Therefore, while criminal abortion by quacks has gone down, unsafe abortion rate of this kind is definitely increasing.

Our social outlook towards premarital sex and pregnancy has not changed at all. There is still a lot of stigma attached to both. There is also an unwillingness, even in government programmes, to talk about contraception to unmarried girls and boys. ■

HUMOUR EXISTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

MOTIVATION

(C) EXISTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



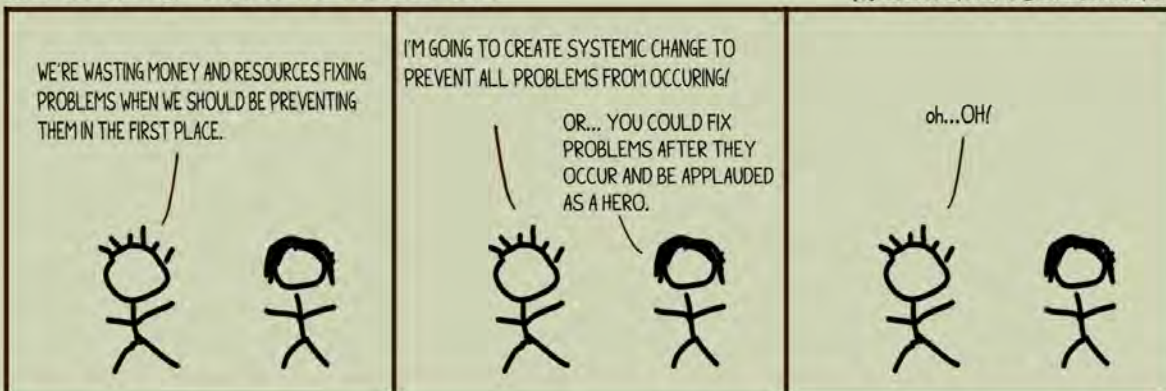
INTERSECTIONALITY

(C) EXISTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



DELAYED GRATIFICATION

(C) EXISTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT



CHANDRIMA DAS
Associate Director,
FSG

Building internal leadership is the founder's job

Photo Courtesy: Charlotte Anderson



Nonprofits need to develop multiple layers of leaders to manage their scaling effort. And the onus lies on founders and CEOs to identify and groom this talent.



ADITYA NATRAJ
Founder and Director,
Kaivalya Education Foundation
(KEF)

As far as leadership at nonprofits goes, 7X7 seems to be the magic formula. A typical nonprofit has a founder with seven people reporting to her, each of whom then has seven people reporting to them. It is therefore usually a 50-person organisation with an INR 1.5-2 crore budget managing around six to seven projects.

While the seven people do some level of strategic thinking, the remaining 42 people are essentially field staff. Which means there is no one to think of product design, donor development or ecosystem building.

This INR 2-crore-50-person point is where most nonprofits get stuck. Both from a money as well as a people point of view. When the organisation is at 50 people, the founder's intelligence can keep everything going, because she knows all the 49 people in her team,



The skills required to manage empathy-related work are harder to teach and learn.

interacts extensively with the community, has a relationship with every donor and has the charisma to convince different stakeholders. Between these factors, the founder can solve for most of the problems that surface at an organisation level.

The problem starts with growth

The problem starts when the nonprofit wants to expand to the next level. I call it the 7x7x7 level because it is not just about adding projects and a corresponding number of people: it is about adding a whole new layer to manage this new set of people.

For simplicity let's call these different levels 'bands':

- **Band 1** comprises the field staff—people working directly with the communities.
- **Band 2** comprises the project managers—managing the field staff and the projects.
- **Band 3** is the new group added to manage growth. These are the people who think strategy, develop products, build people and manage new partnerships/business development.

At Kaivalya Education Foundation, we made the transition to a 7x7x7 organisation over a period of four years, as we grew to eight Band 3, 50 Band 2, and 200 Band 1 staff. This has been a painful transition but holds dear lessons for us and the sector.

The skills for this leadership level are not easily available to 'buy'

Unlike the corporate sector, which has a fully developed ecosystem of managers and leaders, Band 3 doesn't exist in the social sector. There are a few highly skilled people at some of the larger nonprofits, but even these are usually high-level project managers rather than people who can drive organisational growth.

A nonprofit's ability to scale and remain sustainable depends largely on the quantity and quality of Band 3 people. And since this band is not readily available in the market, there is no choice but to build it.

To build leadership internally, create ecosystems to support individual growth

Define expectations

The first step to building leadership to scale is to define the job at that level. The roles and responsibilities for the other levels are clear: managing projects and working with communities at the levels below and functional leadership at the level above. What, however, is the role of this Band 3 cohort? They have neither the depth of domain knowledge that their juniors have nor the breadth of experience that their leaders do. What then, is their role?

Evolved industries like manufacturing have defined and refined these expectations over decades. As large

“There is no knowledge or expertise in the sector that one can call upon to learn talent development.”

nonprofits emerge in India, we are still evolving on this front.

My experience is that the key role of people in leadership roles is to develop products, build people and manage key stakeholders. Not having articulated this, I struggled to communicate my unrealistic and unclear expectations with my senior team. I wish I had been able to clarify them much earlier than I finally did.

Identify the team members who have the potential to succeed

Today, there is a simplistic solution to solving the problem of leadership scarcity: ‘Send them to a five-day workshop on management skills.’ While this is useful, in my experience it is not sufficient.

Having defined the role of Band 3 leaders, the next step is to identify the most talented Band 2 personnel—typically only 40 percent will have the potential for the next level.

This will require the founder to know each one in this Band 2 inside out: their strengths, where they need support, their family situations, whether they can afford such a salary over the longer term, and so on. A deep personal insight into each potential candidate is the key to success.

Provide ‘active coaching’

It is important to give very specific input on what is

preventing the individual’s development. It is not enough to give feedback saying, ‘Become more strategic in your thinking.’ One must explain what strategic thinking means in the specific work context, projects, etc.

The challenge is that the skills required to manage empathy-related work are harder to teach and learn. In organisations that involve brain work (research, consulting, etc.), academia and even the corporate sector, traditional hierarchy works with the supervisor at each level adding value through more strategic and analytical thinking, and improving the ‘product’.

However, it’s different in the social sector. How does one keep a colleague motivated when they are working in a remote district, with no colleagues to interact with and no people to learn from? What skills does one need to function effectively as their manager?

Motivation, then, is very much about helping team members find meaning in their role, joy and pride in their work and opportunities for continuous learning. And these are the skills that need to be taught.

Assign live projects to help them acquire new capabilities

We call the process of providing opportunities ‘staging’. Potential Band 3 people are put into projects that test their ability to do that kind of work. While they do not lead the project, they are expected to contribute in a significant manner—for instance, thinking of new curriculum. The potentials get to watch and learn from the person leading it.

Since these are usually cross-functional teams, they are required to interact with people with completely different skillsets and approaches. This is different from their experience thus far, where they were only interacting with field staff and communities.

We use this method to see how well they get things done, add value in increasingly complex groups, and manage change between project and government teams.

Manage performance to build skills consciously

For us, performance management is as much an opportunity to drive individual growth as it is about meeting the organisation’s goals. We action this through careful goal-setting at the beginning of the year and periodic, rigorous discussions and realignment between the individual and her manager on progress and way ahead.

The goals for each individual get customised to balance the strengths that they bring and their learning areas in developing products, building people and managing key stakeholders. The goals agreed are then discussed and realigned at regular intervals throughout the year in performance conversations and reviews.

These performance discussions use data to help individuals and managers objectively identify their strengths and development areas. These insights, in turn, result in active coaching and strategic live projects designed to complement the individual's learning goals and strength areas.

This combination of coaching, live projects and performance management creates a comprehensive ecosystem that is invested in helping the individual succeed.

The responsibility of developing this leadership talent lies with the founder

I spend 50 percent of my time focusing on people development. Of the 50 percent, half the time is on 1-on-1 performance management and mentoring conversations with the 12 people who report directly to me. Another 25 percent is with the 17 people who report to them and the last 25 percent is focused on setting up HR processes.

I have learnt that, as founder, my key role is to put the right people in place; the money will follow. There is a lot of money in the sector today. What funders want to see is an organisation with skilled and capable people to run operations at scale.

This does not come easily to a founder

First change how you think

At some point, I had to shift my thinking. I had to tell myself, "I enjoyed working with 100 headmasters and convincing them to change, but my new group now is the managers and leaders in my organisation—Band 2 and 3". I now get my energy from them (just as I earlier got it from the headmasters) and I know that the impact will be significantly greater.

It's not easy, though. To get to that space, I had to first stop focusing on the headmasters and the programme to free up space for thinking about this. It requires a great deal of cognitive behaviour change.

Get help

Most founders won't know how to go about doing this. I still don't know entirely. We therefore have a professional organisational development person who helps us with this. One also needs to set up a structure where everyone in the organisation can learn how to do this.

Institutionalise the thinking

It's not enough for the founder to think and act like this. It must percolate down to the leadership team and then the team below. How else will the middle levels develop their people-skills and move up?

From taking up 10 percent of a manager's time at the beginning, people development must slowly move to 20 percent, then 30 percent and finally 50 percent. Once it hits 20 percent, though, the manager will not know how to take it to the next level. That's why it is important to have a performance management system that defines roles and capabilities that need to be developed.

Start early

One of my big mistakes is that I started investing in internal leadership too late. I did not know how to do it and I enjoyed working on the programme far more. So, I kept using the excuse of programme expansion to not build the capabilities of the team.

This is the challenge most founders and leaders face. We don't know how to do this; we don't have backgrounds and expertise in leadership and people development, and there is almost no knowledge or expertise in the sector that one can call upon to learn it.

As leaders who set up organisations for the sake of the programme, learning and refining on that front comes easily to us. Organisation and leadership development on the other hand, is usually unknown territory and requires us to work harder on things we don't particularly like in the first place. It's not a place of passion for most of us.

We expect people who join us to be as driven and crazy as us founders. But that's not always the case. And it's an unreasonable expectation.

As we scale further—we are on the path to create the 7x7x7x7 stage, a 2,000-person organisation—we are trying to figure out what skills are required three levels away from the community. And three years from now, we will know if it was a grand success or a monumental failure and what we learnt from this journey. ■

Fundraising 101: Four steps you can take today

Everyone knows just how hard it is to raise money. There are, however, a few key essentials that one must learn and master in order to become successful at fundraising.



Photo Courtesy: PT Money



POOJA TAPARIA
Founder and Chief Executive,
Arpan

“Having a basket of funders is important because it mitigates the risk to your organisation should a funder drop out.”

Effective fundraising is what keeps the lights on and the programme running. As social entrepreneurs, we must master this skill so we can continue our work without being distracted by a constant shortage of funds.

While my experience has taught me that there is no formula, I've also learnt that there are steps one can take to increase the probability of success. These apply regardless of your organisation's size.

1. Start small and build from there

As nonprofits, we persevere against all odds when it comes to our programme. Why shouldn't we apply the same approach to fundraising?

Fundraising is relationship building

Fundraising is really about how well you're keeping your funders engaged—before and after they have given you money. Don't ask for funds as soon as you meet someone. Instead, ask people to help you for instance with marketing, MIS or technology. Later, when they've been part of your journey and are willing to associate their name with yours, you can ask: "Do you know people who can offer financial help?" By this point they will be happy to make those introductions.

Once they support you, you need to treat them as co-travellers, not outsiders. Ideally, you want to be able to establish the kind of rapport with them where you can speak openly about a strategic or operational challenge, and seek their guidance.

Be patient and persistent

In September 2015, I was trying to get a meeting with a corporate, whose CSR strategy aligned with Arpan's work. I met with a mid-level person who connected me to her peer in CSR. I tried setting up an in-person

meeting, but she kept saying: 'No, we don't have enough money,' and 'Let me get back to you.' I would listen and then follow up in four weeks. Then in two months, and then again. I spent all of 2015 and most of 2016 following up.

In 2016, I happened to meet one of my mentors. I mentioned that I had been trying to get a meeting but hadn't succeeded. He made one call and within a month the meeting happened—finally, in December 2016. We got funding in March 2017.

So it took two years and a lot of patience—from reaching out in 2015, to getting a meeting in December 2016, and finally getting some money in March 2017.

Be diligent about building the funnel

Success is as much about the numbers as it is about the relationships. You have to look at your sales process and conversion ratios, how many people you need to meet, and how many submitted proposals will get converted.

For instance, we started 2016-17 with 88 conversations. Thirty-six of those didn't work out. We have 34 live conversations in the 'funnel', another 13 are at the proposal stage and five are closer to conversion.

The broader the funnel, the higher the chances of something working out. Many will drop out and it's important to realise that the average conversion timeframe is around nine months to a year. There are no shortcuts.

In the beginning, focus on wholesale grants

I have found that it's easier to raise wholesale grants (over Rs 5 lakh) than retail (Rs. 1,000 from multiple donors). While retail can be tempting, focus on it at a later stage as it requires time and effort, which you may not have in the initial years. Also, having a basket of funders is important because it mitigates the risk to your organisation should a funder drop out.

2. Cultivate new relationships

Build your network, and find someone to recommend you

Fundraising takes hard work to constantly put yourself out there, and try to get as many meetings as possible. In my experience, if you spend your time fretting about the money and don't go and do the work that's required for it, it's not going to happen.

Having an influential individual recommending you is half the battle won. When Arpan goes into a meeting with a recommendation from, say, the chairperson of Goldman Sachs, we're taken seriously. Get people you know to open

doors for you. I haven't raised a single grant above INR 1 lakh without somebody introducing and recommending us.

Work around corporate cycles

A sales cycle typically takes 6-9 months from the first meeting to getting funded. What speeds up the process is timing. All CSR approvals happen at the board meeting of the Working Committee therefore knowing the timelines and systems for different corporates is key. Companies also meet quarterly or half-yearly to discuss CSR. If they've just finished their six-monthly meeting, it's unlikely you will get presented for another six months.

Focus on what they're asking for, not what you want to tell them

Your donors are usually entrepreneurs or corporate sector professionals. They thrive on numbers and percentages and you must be able to talk their language.

Whether you're writing a proposal or going into a meeting, you need to know what they're really asking. Too often we're focused on what we want to say, rather than what they want to know.

Make your cause their agenda

In many cases, your cause may not be 'important' to funders. When we started, Arpan's work on addressing the issue of child sexual abuse was on nobody's agenda. I needed to change that, and make the issue occupy their mind space.

For this, I had to articulate its importance, and the solutions Arpan had developed to deal with the issue. You have to educate your donors and get your issue on their agenda. Articulating how your work overlaps with their priorities also helps.

With a new donor, start small; with old donors, ask big

Rather than seeking large grants upfront, start small. It's easy to get donors to commit to a small grant at first. Once a corporate becomes a partner, it is rare that they will drop out. In the first year, take the time to also learn what their attitudes and value systems are and if there can be continued alignment.

Learn to say NO when it doesn't align with your strategic focus

For resource-constrained nonprofits, it can be tempting

“It can be tempting to follow the money and, for instance, go to different geographies. But it's important to stay true to your core.”

to follow the money and, for instance, go to different geographies. But it's important to stay true to your core. Plus, defining strategic direction is a role that is better played by board members and advisers.

If one must acquiesce to a donor, as can be the case at times, it's best to ensure that there's a strong strategic reason in doing so.

3. Nurture existing relationships

Build credibility

During Arpan's initial years, I applied for the India NGO award that was being run by a global foundation. Though I hadn't heard of them, I figured an international entity would bring us some credibility. We applied in the sub-INR 1 crore category, and won. I then used this win to go to existing and new donors, knowing that both typically tend to feel assured of work that has received external validation.

External validation matters

Similarly, strong M&E—both internal as well as through an external agency—assures funders that your organisation is open to learning, credible and externally validated. This is important because all funders want to know the outcomes from their investments. M&E also helps guide your organisation's strategic direction and bring your donors along as you grow.

4. Build a team

Cultivating and nurturing funder relationships is time consuming and takes effort; often, there's over-dependency on the founder/CEO. Start building a team to support fundraising efforts. If funding is limited, hire interns to scout leads. Mid-to-senior programme staff can help with writing proposals. As budgets increase, hire a senior person and slowly build a team just for fundraising. Look at it as an investment rather than an expense. ■

HUMOUR THIS NONPROFIT LIFE

*"I have three Masters degrees and am fluent in six languages.
I have climbed Mt Kilimanjaro and sailed to the Antarctic.
Yet, I feel dissatisfied; I **need** a greater challenge."
"Have you tried working in nonprofit?"*



RACHITA VORA
Co-founder and Director,
IDR

Rural India faces epidemic of non-communicable diseases

Non-communicable diseases are increasing at an alarming rate in rural India, with long-term consequences on people's health and finances. The worrying part is that our healthcare system is ill-equipped to tackle this crisis.



DR YOGESH KALKONDE
Public health researcher
and neurologist,
SEARCH

A 46-year-old male labourer with high blood pressure and diabetes, a 55-year-old male farmer who has recently suffered a heart attack, a 52-year-old woman with anxiety and depression, a 56-year-old woman with chronic back pain... A day at my clinic is full of cases that one would be surprised to find in a rural and tribal region of Gadchiroli, one of India's most backward districts.

My friends—doctors and non-doctors alike—are puzzled when I talk about the increasing incidence of chronic non-communicable diseases (or NCDs, for lack of a better word) in rural and tribal regions of India. "But these are the diseases of people who live in cities!" they argue. This dangerous myth needs to be countered.

India's disease pattern is shifting

Unbeknown to most of us, the disease pattern in India in general and particularly in rural India has undergone a significant shift over the last 15 years. An early inkling of this change was evident in a 2001-2003 Government of India report on the causes of death in the country. The report revealed that the deaths in rural India due to communicable diseases (41 percent) were almost matched by those due to NCDs (40 percent).

A follow-up study on the causes of death in rural India for the years 2010-13 showed that NCDs accounted for 47 percent of all deaths while communicable, maternal, peri-natal and nutritional conditions together accounted for 30 percent, indicating that NCDs have unquestionably become a healthcare priority.

The pattern of NCDs in rural India looks largely similar to that in urban India. High blood pressure, the biggest risk factor for death worldwide, now affects one in five adults in rural India, while diabetes affects about one in 20 adults. We are already in the midst of an NCD epidemic in rural India!

The growing burden of disease

Certain chronic diseases such as coronary artery disease, strokes, lung diseases and cancers lead to deaths as well as disability; however, there are several NCDs—such as chronic low back pain, mental health and neurological disorders, anaemia, cataracts and hearing loss—that do not cause death but lead to significant disability.

A key metric to measure the burden of a disease on a community is disability adjusted life years (DALYs) lost. It is the sum of years of life lost due

“NCDs in rural India are affecting a relatively younger population—about a decade younger—compared to that in the developed countries.”

to premature deaths and years lived with disability. A recent report released by the India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative shows that three of the top five leading causes of DALYs lost in India were NCDs: coronary artery disease, chronic lung diseases and stroke.

The burden of disease is immense. Due to their chronic nature, the significant disability and premature death, NCDs lead to chronic expenditure on health and, thereby, worsen poverty. Loss of productivity and purchasing capacity could lead to slowing of economic growth and development. It is estimated that India is likely to lose USD 4.58 trillion before 2030 due to NCDs.

It's time to take rural NCDs seriously

Given the havoc they threaten to wreak on rural lives, it is time that NCDs are addressed on priority. All the stakeholders, including civil society, businesses, academia and policymakers, need to take a serious note of this new health challenge in rural India where a majority of India's population lives.

But why are NCDs becoming a problem in rural area? The prime reason is epidemiological transition, which is a shift towards chronic non-communicable diseases along with socio-economic development. Increasing life expectancy and urbanisation of lifestyle in rural India have led to this transition.



Low awareness about NCDs in rural India poses challenges to inculcating lifestyle changes and prevention.

Since Independence, the life expectancy at birth has increased substantially in India; from 32 years in 1947, it had more than doubled to around 68 years in 2017. The life expectancy in rural India is not very different from that in urban India. This means that more people in rural India are surviving to an age where diseases related to ageing—such as high blood pressure, diabetes and cancers—catch up.

The challenges of tackling rural NCDs

There are multiple challenges to managing NCDs in rural India:

- 1) NCDs in rural India are affecting a relatively younger population—about a decade younger—compared to that in developed countries. This is likely to be due to malnutrition early in life, which paradoxically increases the risk of NCDs and an unhealthy lifestyle in early adulthood. This means that the younger population in rural India needs to be screened for chronic diseases.
- 2) There is very low awareness about these diseases in rural India, leading to further challenges to inculcating lifestyle changes and prevention methods.
- 3) Facilities for diagnosing and treating these disorders are often not available in rural areas, resulting in late diagnosis and treatment.
- 4) NCDs lead to chronic expenditures on healthcare and, many times, catastrophic expenditures, that push the families into poverty. There is no financial safety net to help people absorb the negative economic consequences of NCDs.
- 5) Lack of systematic mechanisms to collect data on NCDs from rural India hamper efforts at measuring the problem, guiding interventions and monitoring them effectively.
- 6) NCDs are typically treated by physicians with advanced levels of training; since such physicians are not accessible to villagers, the best way to treat NCDs at the village level needs to be understood.

NCDs, thus, create a big challenge for healthcare systems—public as well as private—in rural India. The government-run healthcare system in rural India largely focuses on maternal and child health and infection. For instance, of the total health budget of INR 47,343 crore in 2017-18, only INR 955 crore was allotted to the NCD programme. The system now faces the dual burden of tackling not just infections but NCDs as well.

This would require healthcare policymakers to focus on developing new human resources, technology, healthcare delivery mechanisms and financial resources to tackle NCDs in rural areas. Needless to say, prevention needs to be a priority. ■

A one-size-fits-all approach is harming our rainfed farmers

Government policies today ignore a majority of our country's farmers. Focussing on rainfed farmers can actually change the poverty map of India

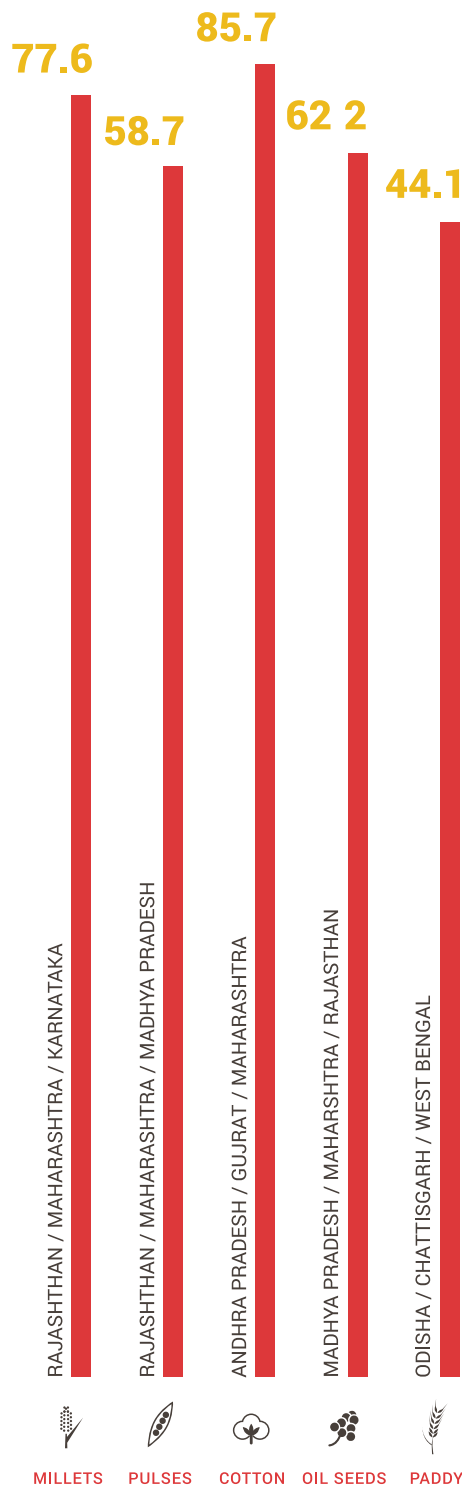


Photo Courtesy: Pragati Abhiyan



ASHWINI KULKARNI
Founder-trustee,
Pragati Abhiyan

RAINFED AREA UNDER THE 5 MAJOR CROPS FOR THE TOP 3 PRODUCER STATES [IN%]



Source: Agriculture Census of India 2010-11

Popular narratives paint the Indian farmer with a broad brush. The dominant image is that of a farmer—male, of course—gazing benevolently at his vast fields laden with lush crops: the image created by Bollywood.

The truth though, is that farmers in India are as diverse as the country itself. So are the challenges they face, depending on where they are located, what they grow, the kind of farming they do, and so on. Which, obviously, means that there can be no one-size-fits-all approach to address these challenges. And that's where we are failing our farmers, especially rainfed farmers.

Understanding the rainfed farmer

Of the five major crops grown in India—paddy, wheat, pulses, cotton and oilseeds—only wheat is almost entirely irrigated; the other four crops are unirrigated, or fall under the rainfed farming category. At approximately 55 percent of India's gross crop area, rainfed farming constitutes a major chunk of the country's farm sector.

Rainfed farmers are typically small and marginal farmers who own small plots of land (less than five acres) and engage in monsoon-dependent farming. The primary income of the rainfed farmer is cultivation and serving as labour to other larger farmers. According to the Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011, manual casual labour is the main source of income for 51.18 percent of rural households, followed by cultivation (30.10 percent of households).

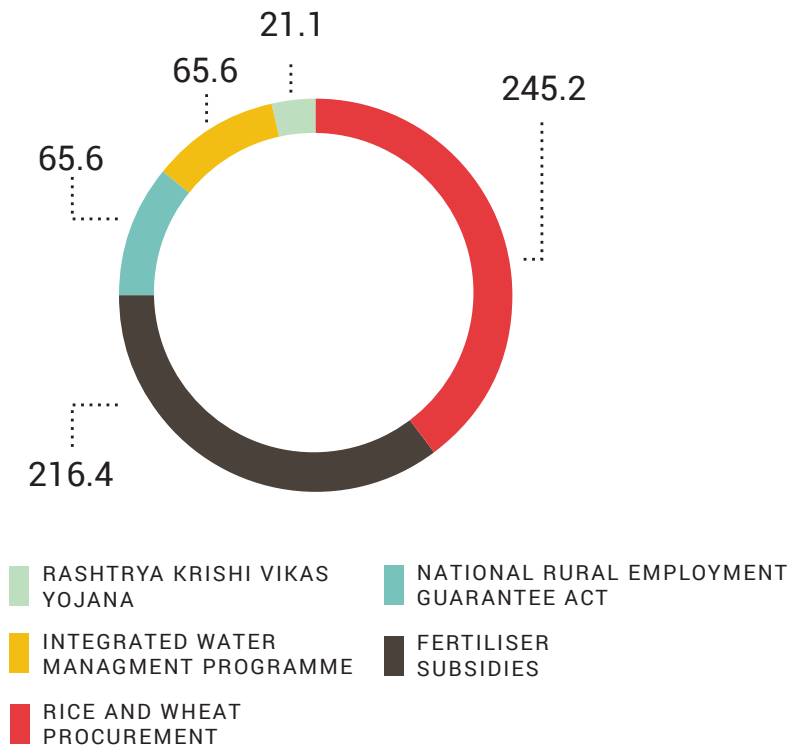
Being single-season and rain-dependent, rainfed farmers diversify their livelihood opportunities by engaging in activities such as poultry, fishery and so on, which play an important role in their income portfolio. They also maintain livestock, mainly small ruminants, like goats and sheep, that are not used for the purpose of dairy unlike irrigated farmers.

Rainfed and deprived

Rainfed areas have high levels of poverty. Out of the bottom 10 poorest districts, seven are rainfed districts. According to the Rainfed Atlas of Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture Network (RRAN), about 66 out of the 100 poorest districts in the country are rainfed.

There are several reasons for this. Rainfed farmers lack the resources to enhance their livelihood occupation choices. Their dependence on the monsoon not only means that they have just one season of farming, but also that any change in the distribution of rainfall affects their production.

PUBLIC INVESTMENTS AT NATIONAL LEVEL, FROM 2010-11 TO 2013-14 [IN INR CRORES]



“Rainfed areas have high levels of poverty. Out of the bottom 10 poorest districts, seven are rainfed districts.”

Single-season, rain-dependent farming is of low productivity and offers farmers few options to diversify their crops. Moreover, the produce of single-season, rainfed farms is generally coarse cereals, which fetch a low value at the marketplace.

All this ensures that the rainfed farmer stays at a lower equilibrium of farming production systems. It is not a coincidence then, that the poverty map of India and the rainfed area map almost completely overlap.

Ironically, these are the areas that get the least government attention or support; it is, in fact, irrigated farming that gets the lion's share of both.

Here are a few examples of how public investments in the agricultural sector are heavily skewed against rainfed farming:

Water: In order to make water available for irrigation, huge investments are made towards building dams and canals. Moreover, to increase area under irrigation, successive governments have allowed unregulated exploitation of groundwater, which is a matter of concern.

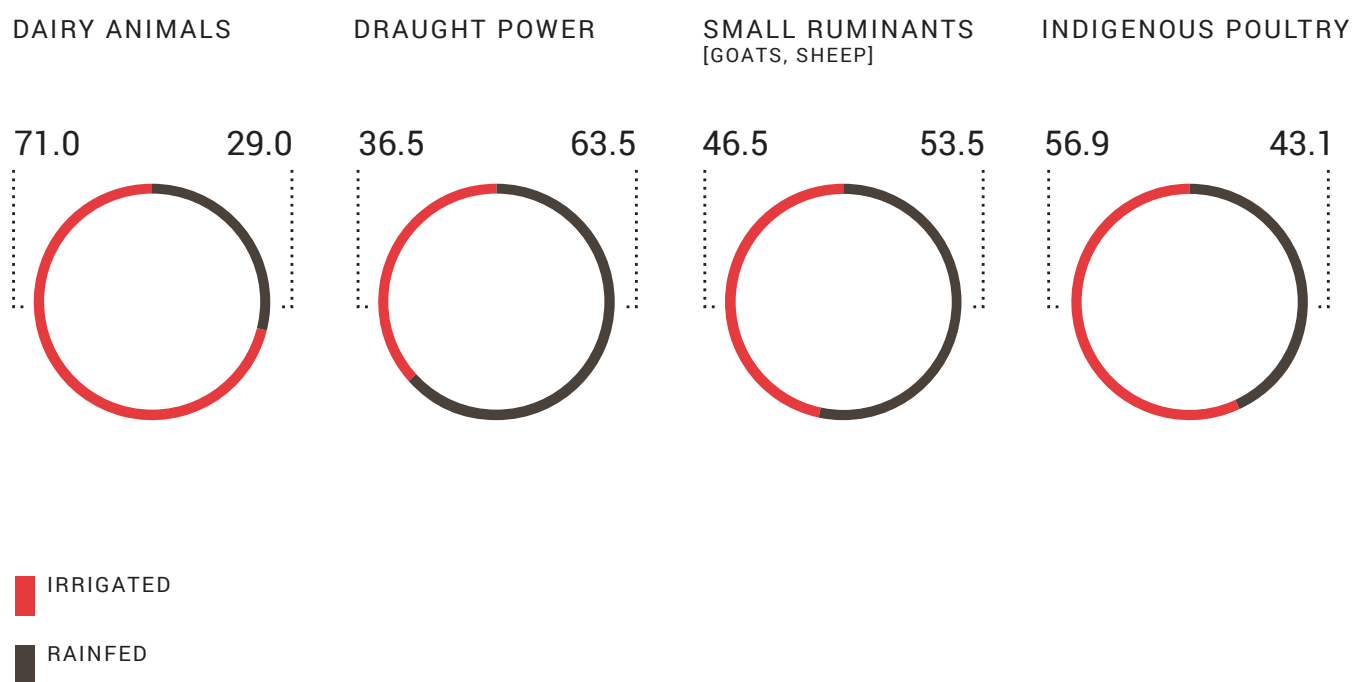
According to *Tryst with the Dams* (SANDRP, December 2007), 'Out of India's net cultivated area of about 142 million hectare (mha), the net irrigated area is 57 mha as per the working report (agriculture) of 11th Plan and has remained around that figure for more than seven years now. Out of the net irrigated area, the area irrigated from large dams is about 17 mha; the rest is either irrigated by groundwater or small systems. What this means is that after spending over INR 200,000 crores on large dams and allocating 75-80% of available resources for large dams, the projects have benefited just 12% of net cultivated area.'

Subsidies: Seeds and fertilisers, inherently linked with irrigation and used significantly more in irrigated areas, are heavily subsidised by the government. According to the *Rainfed Atlas* of RRAN, fertiliser usage (kg/ha) is three times more in irrigated areas as compared to rainfed areas: 81.3 percent of irrigated area farmers use high-yielding variety (HYV) seeds and fertilisers as opposed to 44.9 percent of rainfed farmers. Thus, the bulk of subsidies finds its way into the irrigated areas.

Market: The minimum support price mechanism, which ensures a floor price for agriculture produce, remains an important instrument adopted by the government

DISTRIBUTION OF LIVESTOCK AMONG FARMERS

[IN %]



Source: Rainfed Atlas, Revitalising Rainfed Agriculture Network

to support farmers. The rainfed category gets a raw deal here too as the chart (page 40) shows.

Clearly, then, public investments are not geared towards rainfed farming. The general pattern is to get water, get farms irrigated and then provide high-yielding seed varieties, chemical fertilisers and, finally, market access, too. Even R&D efforts follow this direction. All of which helps only a small section of the farming community.

Nurturing the rain-dependent

Given this situation, it is obvious that rainfed farming is in need of urgent attention and support. And there are a few steps that can be taken to change the current narrative:

Local solutions to address the water problem: Small and marginal rainfed farmers need protective irrigation, which can come in the form of small water storage structures made by locals with local material. There is a strong case for a watershed development programme for every village and every farm in the country.

Alternative sources of income: Indigenous poultry, fisheries and livestock such as goats and sheep help the rainfed farmer's family in multiple ways. They provide

nutritious food, additional income, and double up assets that can be sold during times of stress such as droughts or other calamities. Therefore, a special programme to support these activities is more a matter of design than budgets.

Alternative crops: Food crops such as millets are sturdy, grow with little inputs and are nutritionally very important.

RRAN has attempted to put some of these ideas—such as strengthening of backyard poultry, comprehensive revival of millets in rainfed farming systems, collectivisation of groundwater, and so on—in communities in Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh, and has experienced their potential in enhancing livelihood options and incomes of rural households.

It's only when we recognise the unique nature of rainfed farming and the specific challenges associated with it that we will be able to find the resources and the solutions to nurture it. Until then, we risk continuing to look at the agriculture sector as a homogenous entity that can be addressed with a single set of solutions. ■

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