Shrikanth G
shrikanthg@cybermedia.co.in

Beyond **Business**

A look at tech companies and their CSR activities

Philanthropy is not about money; it's about feeling the pain of others and caring enough about their needs to help

- Timothy Pina

Giving is an art perfected by some of the world's wealthiest individuals who felt a moral responsibility to share their wealth to ease the pains rampant in society. But philanthropy works better when people and organizations come on the same page and contribute to the betterment of the society.

Back in 2010, Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett, created, "The Giving Pledge,' an effort to help address society's most pressing problems by inviting the world's wealthiest individuals and families to commit to giving more than half of their wealth to philanthropy or charitable causes either during their lifetime or in their will.

According to the giving pledge website, it says, "While originally focused on the United States, the Giving Pledge quickly saw interest from philanthropists around the world. In February 2013, the pledge went global with the addition of signatories from Australia, Germany, India, Malaysia, Russia, South Africa, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom."

"Today, the pledge includes 185 of the world's wealthiest individuals, couples, and families, ranging in age from their 30s to their 90s. Globally, they represent 22 countries: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China (mainland and Taiwan), Cyprus, Germany, India, Indonesia, Israel, Malaysia, Monaco, Norway, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Slovenia, South Africa, Tanzania, Turkey, Ukraine, UAE, the United Kingdom, and the United States."

THE GIVING TIPPING POINT

If you look at some of the leaders in philanthropy from the tech industry, we can draw inspiration from industry stalwarts like HCL Founder Shiv Nadar. He wrote in the 35th Anniversary Issue of Dataquest: "A conversation at the dinner table with my mother directed me to what was to become my calling in the years to come. I informed my

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mother about my plans of taking HCL to the next level when she interrupted me with a simple statement "Don't you think it is time to start giving back?" Till then, I hadn't really thought about how my scholarship at PSG Tech was the real reason that I was able to think of and actually set up HCL. However, this conversation helped me connect the dots. I also realized that institutions like PSG Tech and the IITs were arming a young India with the knowledge and skills required to go out and redefine its future."

In 1994, Nadar established what he believed was closest to his heart – the philanthropic Shiv Nadar Foundation and created its first initiative in Chennai, the SSN Institutions. Says Nadar, " Today the Foundation is a significant driver of social change. While the Foundation has directly touched over 22,000 students since inception, its ultimate aim is to create spirals, where every individual student is able to touch and transform the lives of a few others; thereby driving a cascading effect to a much larger base. That will be the true repayment for the gift of education that I received while growing up and while I may be known for HCL right now, I do hope that with the transformational work of the Foundation, I will be known as – Shiv Nadar, the philanthropist who also founded HCL, for posterity."

Industry stalwarts like Shiv Nadar have created a benchmark for others to follow in this noble cause. Clearly every individual or an organization has these 'giving tipping points' and they embark on well-meshed CSR programs. Other philanthropic stalwarts like Narayana Murthy, Azim Premji, Nandan Nilekani and host of others have shared a significant amount of their wealth and time for philanthropy and kick-started various CSR initiatives.

WHEN THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD

When it comes to philanthropy, and CSR the real test is when the rubber meets the road. An organization needs to take the things at ground zero and ink a beneficiary plan that makes for a real sense of fulfillment. Let's look at what some of the leading IT companies are doing in the CSR space.

Quips Ramkumar Ramamoorthy, Executive Director, Cognizant India, "India has been a key focus of Cognizant's philanthropic efforts. Through multiple platforms— Cognizant Foundation, the CSR arm of the company; Cognizant Outreach, the company's employee-led volunteering program, and Cognizant Campus Connect, a program focused on bridging the industry-academia gap—Cognizant has transformed the lives of about eight million people in India."

Launched in 2005 as an independent corporate entity, Cognizant Foundation spearheads corporate social responsibility initiatives of Cognizant in India and has touched the lives of over three million people. The primary objective of the Foundation is to improve the lives and opportunities of economically and socially disadvantaged sections of society in India through programs centered around education, healthcare, and livelihood.

Clearly, an organization's growth has to be in sync with social growth. And it should be committed to promoting a culture of care, trust, and continuous learning while meeting the expectations of the world at large. Reflecting on this thought, Dr Keshab Panda, CEO & Managing Director, L&T Technology Services says, " Our CSR initiatives leverage our core capabilities and strengths to build a social infrastructure based on the twin pillars of innovation and technology to foster long-term sustainable community development, and drive growth initiatives that aim to make a meaningful impact in people's lives. We assist communities by creating sustainable livelihoods, opportunities and empowerment initiatives. We focus on water conservation, education, health, skill development, and technological innovation as core areas for our CSR initiatives".

"Under our Samaritans program, we visit orphanages, spend time at old age homes, and volunteer time with municipal school children and participate in games

and awareness sessions. We organize and participate in cleanliness drives and spread awareness on waste management and motivate disabled students, and help community members understand the need for skill building. 924 LTTS employees have turned Samaritans dedicating over 3,400 hours, impacting over 7,483 beneficiaries," adds Dr.Panda.

According to Pravin Agarwal, Vice Chairman and Whole-Time Director, Sterlite Tech, " We believe our growth is linked to the development of the communities around us. This belief translates into our purpose of transforming everyday living by delivering smarter networks. Sterlite Tech has touched over 6,11,000 lives through its CSR and sustainability initiatives till 2018, and 1,79,026 individuals in FY2017-18 alone. We ensure broadband innovation and technology form an integral part of how we deliver our programs in order for them to create maximum impact. Sterlite Tech is committed to creating shared value by using its core strength of broadband technology to drive progress and inclusive growth. In 2018 and beyond, we

will continue to build on innovative, data-driven, last-mile access initiatives in line with our vision."

"Our CSR efforts are designed to ensure holistic development of communities while ensuring that our core capabilities in broadband technologies are leveraged to enable holistic community development process. This approach encourages employee and community participation and promotes strategic partnerships in various social endeavors", adds Agarwal.

Gunjan Patel, Head CSR, APJ & India, SAP says, " At SAP, our enduring purpose is to leverage technology that helps improve the economy, the environment, and society as a whole — to ultimately help the world run better and improve people's lives. As technology becomes all-pervasive, our collective commitment is to help realize the Digital India vision by powering opportunities through digital inclusion. Through initiatives such as Code Unnati, our efforts to bridge the digital skills gap has been successful and has enhanced the lives of the nation's citizens."
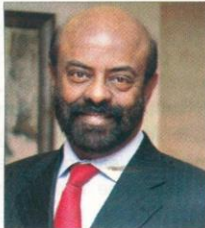
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> – SHIV NADAR, FOUNDER HCL

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> - DR KESHAB PANDA, CEO & MANAGING DIRECTOR, L&T TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

According to company sources, SAP's CSR initiatives are mainly focused on three pillars:

1) Accelerating Best Run Social Enterprises & NGO - Social Enterprise Accelerator | Social Sabbatical
2) Powering Digital Inclusion - Digital Literacy & Education and STEM Education for Children, Adolescents, Youth and Citizens to share the Indian Government's vision on Digital India | Code Unnati: Digital Literacy with Customers | Tinkering Labs with NITI Aayog
3) Driving purpose through employee-led volunteering - India Code Week | Startup Bootcamp | Month of Service

These initiatives create impact in the following way:

- Economy by accelerating Social Enterprises & youth IT skilling & jobs
- Community through digital literacy & STEM Education
- Environment through tree plantation & lake cleaning as well as public place/railway cleaning

Through its 'Digital Inclusion' initiatives, approximately 700,000 youth and citizens were trained under digital skills and STEM Education say sources at SAP India.

Anurag Pratap, CSR Leader – India, Capgemini says, "The driving force of Capgemini's CSR initiatives is a partnership and active engagement with the community. Capgemini believes that together, we can create and deliver sustainable solutions that would also support the community's needs as well as help its members towards greater inclusion and strengthen their capacities to articulate their aspirations.

"Our efforts are to rejuvenate 137 government schools with the facilities to enable children to enjoy learning in smart classrooms that is Wi-Fi enabled. We have set-up virtual classrooms for students preparing for engineering entrance, a virtual resource center on sustainable education and 28-skilling center on digital and future skills as part of our CSR interventions. With these initiatives we are reaching out to more than 8.5 lakhs community members," adds Pratap.

Clearly, it's a multipronged approach the companies are taking and they are taking education and entrepreneurship as a CSR focus area in a big way. " Anticipating and

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- RAMKUMAR RAMAMOORTHY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COGNIZANT INDIA

WE BELIEVE OUR GROWTH IS LINKED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COMMUNITIES AROUND US. THIS BELIEF TRANSLATES INTO OUR PURPOSE OF TRANSFORMING EVERYDAY LIVING BY DELIVERING SMARTER NETWORKS. STERLITE TECH HAS TOUCHED OVER 6,11,000 LIVES THROUGH ITS CSR AND SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES TILL 2018, AND 1,79,026 INDIVIDUALS IN FY2017-18 ALONE

- PRAVIN AGARWAL, VICE CHAIRMAN AND WHOLE-TIME DIRECTOR, STERLITE TECH

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preparing for the impact of digital technologies on the workforce is an urgent issue. Our corporate citizenship initiative, Skills to Succeed, advances employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for individuals around the globe. We are leveraging digital innovation to drive impact at scale and help close skills and employment gaps for vulnerable and marginalized people around the world," says Kshitija Krishnaswamy, Associate Director & Lead, CSR, at Accenture India.

"In India, we are focused on providing skills to help disadvantaged people get jobs and start businesses, and under 'Skills to Succeed' we've collaborated with strategic non-profit organizations and used digital technologies to deliver impact at scale. So far, we've enabled more than 380,000 people including women and people with

disabilities, to earn livelihoods for themselves, and create employment for others," says Krishnaswamy.

Loveleen Kacker, Director & CEO, Tech Mahindra Foundation says, " Educated, skilled and able women and men are a country's true strength. Tech Mahindra Foundation, the corporate social responsibility arm of Tech Mahindra, is committed to making the vision of Skill India a reality. We aspire to see children who are purposefully engaged, youth that is constructively employed and a society that provides equal opportunities to people with different abilities. We are proud to say that the Tech Mahindra Foundation skills 20,000 young women and men every year in different job roles across India. Tech Mahindra Foundation is the corporate social responsibility arm of Tech Mahindra Limited, a

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Mahindra Group Company. Over the last eleven years, the Foundation has been working tirelessly in the areas of education, employability, and disability, with a keen focus on corporate volunteering."

Rumi Mallick, Leader, Corporate Citizenship, IBM India says, "In India since 2009, IBM India has been engaged with Corporate Social Responsibility programs to transform education, healthcare and provide environmental sustainability to improve the quality of life for people in India. Keeping the focus on education, public health, and resilience, IBM has worked with over 250 social organisations, across 20 states in India, who in turn impacts millions of underserved school children, teachers, youth, and NGOs working with women, farmers and livelihood seekers, and under-served communities, while supporting Government initiatives such as Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, Digital India and Skilling India".

In education, IBM CSR's overarching core areas are systemic reforms in school education especially STEM education and teacher professional development, and 'New-Collar' jobs. Driven by national priorities, IBM CSR has focused on improving STEM Learning in schools, working closely with the Ministry of Human Resource development and state government through its partner NGOs.

Meanwhile companies like Lenovo say that its CSR Mission is to enable "Technology based Quality Education and Employability through Skill Development". The focus is on supporting basic education, providing access to communication technology by sharing financial resources and products, mobilizing youth through skill development, women empowerment and providing relief for victims in disaster areas".

UP AHEAD

As we look at the road ahead for CSR, one can see the escalation of the CSR activities in this part of the world. The CSR landscape received a fillip, when the Indian government made an amendment to Company Act 2013 and made CSR mandatory and a portion of profits must be invested in CSR areas like Education, Poverty alleviation et al. The IT companies in their fray are also doing their bit and indulging in a range of CSR initiatives and has ushered in definite societal change. It would be apt to sum what Warren Buffet said, " If you're in the luckiest 1% of humanity, you owe it to the rest of humanity to think about the other 99%."