



SHRUTI SHIBULAL
CEO & Director
Tamara Leisure
Experiences



TARA SINGH VACHANI
Executive
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Antara Senior Care



PANEL DISCUSSION | Young Philanthropist Perspectives

Speakers

Aakash Chaudhry

Co-Founder, Aakash Educational Services Limited

Aradhana Rai Gupta

Co-Founder, Project Baala

Shruti Shibulal

CEO and Director, Tamara Leisure Experiences

Tara Singh Vachani

Executive Chairperson, Antara Senior Living

Moderator

Amitabh Jaipuria, CEO, Accelerate Indian Philanthropy

foundation by adding our personal family funds to the CSR kitty and consolidating it as one entity for all our giving.

Aradhana: I run a social enterprise providing menstrual health solutions to the rural parts of the country. My family runs the QRG foundation doing CSR work for the last 15 years. However, our philanthropic endeavour only started a year ago.

Shruti: I am a trustee at the Shibulal Family Philanthropic Initiatives. We run several initiatives on education and health. Our oldest program is 25 years old and it's one of the largest scholarship programs in the country. We have also recently started long-term interventions towards skilling and employment.

Aakash: My philanthropic journey started 10 years back as a personal mission because I could see the impact that education can have. We believe in associating with organisations where in

Amitabh: Tell us a little bit about your philanthropic identities

Tara: I am the Managing Trustee of Max India Foundation which operated healthcare projects for 19 years. In 2019, we exited the healthcare domain, and reinvented the

addition to allocating funds, we can also provide our time as we have found it to be a multiplier.

Amitabh: How did you become invested in philanthropy? Were there any early influences?

Tara: Growing up in a Sikh household, there was no organised philanthropy but the concept of 'sewa' was ingrained in us. My first brush with it was 13 years ago with a fundraiser for Teach For India (TFI), where we actually spent more than we raised. It was very demotivating. So, I moved away to build a career. Three years later, I was approached again to start a board for TFI in Delhi. I used my love for challenges to figure it out and the experience made me fall in love with the sector. There was no turning back.

Aradhana: The concept of 'sewa' was also deeply ingrained in me. In school, I volunteered with an orphanage in Delhi where I realised that female students were either not showing up or dropping out due to a lack of infrastructure for menstrual hygiene. Parents had to choose between investing in education or purchasing sanitary pads. When I came back after an MBA, I started my enterprise to solve for this, and fed the experience into my work with the family foundation.

Shruti: My mother grew up in a farming community, and our family was fairly middle class during my early years. As soon as that changed, the foundation was established.

The concept of 'sewa' was the motivation, and everyone was involved. Spending time with children from disadvantaged backgrounds shaped my passion for addressing poverty in the country. It became a gradual induction into the trust.

Aakash: I believe in doing good karma, knowing that someone is managing the ledger somewhere. The driving factor for us is that there needs to be an equilibrium between taking and giving. The impact we can see motivates us to do more, do better, and do it sooner.

Amitabh: What do you get back when you give?

Aradhana: For me, it's the selfish reason for fulfilling a need for purpose.

Tara: For me, firstly, it's deeply connected to my feelings about India, what it has provided for me and my family, and how to pay it forward to the next generation. Secondly, the sense of relevance it brings is very meaningful for me. Finally, it's the euphoria of realising that you have positively changed an individual's life.

Shruti: Much of our work revolves around education, which can transform individual lives and entire families across generations. It's powerful and addictive. **You are driven to do more when you believe you have made a difference.** I have a deep sense of fairness. If I can fight for someone who has been treated unfairly, I feel a sense of fulfilment in righting that wrong.

Aakash: Everyone in this room is a philanthropist – all of us are taxpayers. Philanthropy has been transformative for me because, unlike charity, it's not a momentary engagement. **It is a lifelong commitment driven by the belief that if you make a million dollars, you are just a custodian for giving it back.**

Amitabh: **Shruti, how has your philanthropy evolved over the years?**

Shruti: I am speaking on behalf of my family because my journey has been relatively short. Technology has influenced how we operate. We now prioritise collaboration and building collectives more than ever before. With experience, my ability to contribute has grown, and I'm much more confident now.

Amitabh: **Aradhana, what changes have you observed?**

Aradhana: I've noticed a shift toward more long-term investments in RPG foundation. For example, during my grandparents' time, we sponsored 50 marriages, whereas now, we invest in the education of 500 girls. We have moved towards trust-based collaboration. To build this trust, an organisation must be completely honest with its funders, sharing honest stories and on-ground realities. An organisation must also build accountability into their work.

Amitabh: **Aakash, much of your work has been in education. Has that influenced your philanthropy?**

Aakash: I have been able to drive a lot of cross-learning between the enterprise and our philanthropic work. I am fortunate to have been involved in the education sector. You can see the impact within a year, from a student enrolling in college to sharing their success story. I once spent 30 minutes convincing a child's farmer parents that his admission to IIT was an achievement! The following year, 12 kids made it to IIT from that village, and 7 years later, one of them set up a solar plant, changing the agricultural community in the village. This is an inspiring impact.

Amitabh: **Shruti, your family has created a lot of wealth and has led the philanthropic movement in the country as well. How did that shape your early thinking?**

Shruti: I was most influenced by having a front row seat to the creation of meaningful jobs uplifting the nation. Everyone was very giving of themselves and was driven by their different passions. There didn't have to be a foundation. They were committed to investing back in the communities that helped them build the capacity to give back. Ours was a one-in-a billion story. It was a gift. So it was your duty to give back.

Amitabh: **Looking at multi-generational philanthropy, what would you like your kids to learn?**

Tara: The organisation around giving has unlocked the potential of people to give in different capacities. It is

important to give deeply. With our children, the concept of privilege is becoming deeply ingrained. We have started conversations with children in our family with 1/3rd of the gifts they receive going to the Gurudwara.

Aradhana: One thing that worked for us was that my grandfather came from a humble background. He always asked us to think about those who were unable to join the table. Additionally, in my volunteering experiences, I have travelled to all parts of the country. Experience with ground realities makes you more holistic in your giving.

Shruti: I hope my kids have empathy. However, the way they want to express it would be good for me. At the end of the day, you hope your kids are good people and you raise them with good values.

Amitabh: We are now talking of not only giving more and sooner but giving better. For you, what kind of philanthropy is more preferable than others?

Aakash: Any philanthropy that meets the objective it is designed for is good philanthropy. It needs to be structured in a way to fully utilise the money for its stated objectives and close the loop with demonstrated impact.

Shruti: If the money is efficiently getting to the beneficiary, it works.

Tara: Philanthropy as grants is more efficient and works better. I am attracted to organisations that have a good process around their board.

The founder and the leadership team also make a huge difference.

Amitabh: We have a room full of nonprofit leaders. What is your advice to them for approaching philanthropists?

Aradhana: You need a strong founding story. **Advocacy for policy change begins with advocacy for yourself and your work.** Also, having a board really helps.

Aakash: Go after young people who are not fighting for survival. They are open, well-connected and collaborative in nature. Catch them young and you get many years with them. Giving is relationship-driven. The intent should be to build affinity and make them a part of your story.

Shruti: Small but impactful changes made in a frugal way are very attractive for us. If you're focused on what you can do and can show meaningful impact created in a sustainable manner, that to me is a story worth supporting.

Tara: Nonprofits have to learn management and business tools. The sector is becoming increasingly sophisticated with questions around pay parity and board governance, but there is a gap in building knowledge in our people and equipping them with the right tools. Additionally, fundraising is both an art and a science. It requires dedicated resources. For example, Labhya changed its trajectory when Vedant (Co-Founder) pivoted to dedicating all his time to fundraising.