

# Towards tribal welfare



A robust and thriving development sector is central to our country's quest for equitable, inclusive and sustainable growth. Corporates too have been the target of those perturbed by this uneven development and as a result, their contributions to society are under severe scrutiny. ZyXel, an international IT company, is working towards the welfare of tribal communities

India is a land of opportunities for the industry and the region is unbiased, under developed and neglected. It is an unexplored territory. Country's development sector has evolved substantially over the last few decades and is now witnessing unprecedented interest and investments across the value chain.

With the passage of the Companies Act, 2013 the mandate for corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been formally introduced to the dashboard of the Boards of Indian companies. The industry has responded positively to the reform measure undertaken by the government with a wide interest across the public and private sector, Indian and multinational companies.

The practice of CSR is not new to companies in India. However, what this Act does is bring more companies into the fold. Also, it is likely that the total CSR spends will increase. What is clear to many companies is that if this increased spending is to achieve

results on the ground – which is the intent of the Act – then it needs to be done strategically, systematically and thoughtfully.

## A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Building a society which provides equal access to opportunities negates disparities and, is a collective responsibility. This Act presents a unique opportunity to stand up to the challenge. It is a call for action.

The constitutional structure of the country was laid with an objective of one man equals one vote, equals one value. However the socio-economic realities of the country still have a long way to go to match this vision of independent India where today there are many first among equals. The country presently is under intense debate of developmental growth versus welfare based development. Our political realities and our economic senses are at cross-roads. How do we strike a balance between

the two? The choices we make today are going to influence our generations to come.

Every single major policy initiative in this country has been driven with a perspective that an overwhelming concern for the disadvantaged and marginalised, a multidimensional view of poverty and human deprivation, the focus on our fundamental rights and the need to expand opportunities while ensuring its equal distribution are fundamental for achieving strong human development. But disparity, inequality and the growing divide in our societies define our existence today. The inclusion of the CSR mandate under the Companies Act, 2013 is an attempt to supplement the governments efforts of equitably delivering the benefits of growth and to engage the Corporate World with the country's development agenda.

Philanthropy and CSR is not a novel concept for Indian companies, however a few organisations are likely to struggle. The role of civil society in fuelling this change is bound to be extremely important. With the new corporate resources in their tool bag much will depend on their ability to innovate and adapt.

**NEED FOR CSR**

India is a country of myriad contradictions. On the one hand, it has grown to be one of the largest economies in the world, and an increasingly important player in the emerging global order, on the other hand, it is still home to the largest number of people living in absolute poverty (even if the proportion



of poor people has decreased) and the largest number of undernourished children. What emerges is a picture of uneven distribution of the benefits of growth which many believe, is the root cause of social unrest.

Companies too have been the target of those perturbed by this uneven development and as a result, their contributions to society are under severe scrutiny. With increasing awareness of this gap between the haves and the have-nots, this scrutiny will only increase over time and societal expectations will be on the rise. Many companies

India is a country of myriad contradictions. It has grown as the largest economies in the world and increasingly important player in the emerging global order





## Governments as well as regulators have responded to this unrest and the National Voluntary Guidelines for Social, Environmental and Economic Responsibilities of Business

have been quick to sense this development, and have responded proactively while others have done so only when pushed.

Governments as well as regulators have responded to this unrest and the National Voluntary Guidelines for Social, Environmental and Economic Responsibilities of Business or the NVGs (accompanied by the Business Responsibility Reports mandated by the SEBI for the top 100 companies) and the CSR clause within the Companies Act, 2013 are two such instances of the steps taken.

### ZYXEL'S INITIATIVES

It is a land of opportunities for the industry and the region is unbiased, under developed and neglected. It is an unexplored territory.

There is no dearth of the business potential here for healthcare, hospitality, entertainment & education industry here.

At the same time there is a lot of work for NGOs and social organization as well.

Describes, Madhukar Swambhu, VP- sales, India & SAARC, "I would like to take this opportunity to invite all the industries and the social welfare organisations to come and explore the North Bengal region and contribute towards its development too. Please to re feel free to reach me on the below coordinates to help you in helping the people of the tribal land – Binnaguri."

### FOR TRIBAL CAUSE

The plan is to build up the Veer Birsa Bhawan, in

Telepara – Hatkola, Binnaguri. This Bhawan or the community center will have a temple, a library – with a vast section on tribal history and culture, an office complex, information center, kiosk to eradicate the information, knowledge poverty in the tribals of the region, a community hall for holding meetings and seminars or even other social functions, a kitchen, a washroom complex and some guest rooms on the ground floor. Some guest cottages and lecture rooms and halls on second and third floors respectively.

We've engaged a Delhi based Architect for designing the whole complex. Idea is to make a self-sustaining unit dedicated to development of tribes.

"We've taken the first steps towards bringing in the change. As the saying goes, -Don't wait for the change to happen, be the change that you want to bring".

We've arranged for a donor for the land to build a community center for the Tribals of the Land in the name of the Tribal Saint and freedom fighter – Veer Birsa Munda. The land was owned by an Army Officer. A war veteran of 1971 Bangladesh Liberation war, Late Lt. Col. Amod Kumar Sinha. In a modest ceremony attended by the who's who of the region, the land was pledged by widow of Late Col Sinha, Ranjana Sinha for building up the Birsa Munda Bhawan for the community services," informed Swayambhu.

The Nobel social cause was supported by all the local political leaders and others.