

All Women Young Or Old Have A Human Right - To Be Heard: Dr Malini Saba

In an exclusive chat with BW Education, Dr Malini Saba, Founder & Chairman, Saba Group Holdings & Saba Family Foundations spoke about the 'Saba Family Foundations' and more.



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Tell us in detail about the 'Saba Family Foundations'?

'Saba Family Foundations' is a non-profit organization focused on providing healthcare, education and human rights to underserved women and children worldwide.

It has made a number of investments into organizations involved in the healthcare industry, particularly groups that seek to provide affordable and effective healthcare to populations that would otherwise not have access to the care they require. Secondly, the foundation works in various areas of education. Specifically, the foundation partners with organizations and programs that build schools and overhaul outdated or ineffective educational practices. Finally, the foundation supports a number of human rights agencies all around the world that provides protection and outreach opportunities to individuals who have had their issues and basic human rights overlooked.

It has worked with well-known partners like CARE, NETAID, VITAL VOICES and UNICEF. We also fund the build-out of Schools in different countries Mexico, Ghana, and India, to name a few. We helped YUVA in the early part of the millennium to build their sight in Mumbai too.

The Foundations exist to fund scholarships, legal battles for women, engage in campaigns for women issues and help young girls.

From where did you derive the motivation to start such an initiative?

I have been always passionate about women's rights from a very young age. I felt that women were always left behind or they were never looked upon as people with any value but to be a wife (cleaning the house and cooking) or breeding. Thus I wanted to be a voice for women out there who could not speak for themselves.

All women young or old have a human right-to be heard. They are the mothers and daughters that have been given the blessings to bring up the future. If they are the sole caretakers why is it we as society feels we should keep them down and never let them have the same options as a male. Equality is a human right, not anything negative. It is a right we all should be born with as a given. Instead even today we have societies who favour a boy over a girl and treat a female as a second class citizen.

Do you have some statistics regarding the number of women and children been benefitted by your efforts?

We have over the 18 years enabled and supported millions of women young and old in different countries and schools and healthcare facilities.

How did you help them in becoming socio-economically independent (having access to medical facilities, educational services and economic stability)?

We at Saba Family Foundations are a catalyst for a change. We believe that we have to teach women how to fend for themselves. Thus we enable them with initial skill sets that will help them achieve what they want to achieve. In some cases its scholarship for higher studies or/and school, some cases we pay for medical services, we help them with microfinance to start small businesses and also help them with the sales of their products across the shores.

We also hold campaigns like the anti-bullying campaign through Schools, work environment, and other adult housing. We feel domestic violence is a form of bullying too.

Throw some light on 'Samskara' – the education arm of Saba Family Foundation?

Samkara is a platform set up for teachers and children to engage and help one another.

You have an aim and vision to help one billion people around the world. How far do you think, you have come and how many miles to go in this regard?

Helping 1 billion people is a task but not something we cannot achieve. This has to be done through partnerships and working together with groups. We have some ways to go but I don't think it's not achievable. In this day with social media and technology as a world, we can enable each other and eradicate hunger and help many get an education and maintain their human right.

How much aware do you find Indians are about the human rights' issues? How have you been educating them regarding the same?

Indian's are very aware of human rights, whether they practice it is another thing altogether. This is not a governmental problem but a social issue. If people start practising it and treating each other well and holding others accountable for their crimes on human rights we will be able to move forward.

People have the power to make a break the political set up. People are the ones who vote and place their politicians. If we want change and good change for our future than it's important we make the right choices for the future betterment of societies as a whole.

We must remember with change comes change of behaviour. We cannot want change and expect nothing to be different. Change is hard and sometimes it is painful. Because we have to alter set values and structures.

Please explain in brief the 'UpCara' – the non-profit organization within the Saba Family Foundation?

'Upcara' focuses on elder care. We are supportive of organizations that educate families on how to deal with Dementia and Alzheimer's. It is very important to nurture our elder population. Upcara works in this manner with nursing homes and families.

What is your future planning towards the social service that you have been doing for so long?

I plan to retire from my business life soon and thereafter purely focus on Philanthropy. This is my passion and why I worked for years. It is very important to give back. Giving back is not always about money. Volunteering one's time is giving back and helping a neighbour in need. Working to the betterment of the world as a whole is giving back. My next journey is doing just that, helping organizations and people in need.

Any remark for mankind.

Mankind is an interesting species. We are greedy, selfish and violent. We are worse than the animal kingdom. Animals only kill when they want to eat or are in danger. I feel the last weeks have been an indicator that Mother Nature had enough and like the great flood in the Bible, she has now on a cleansing path with this virus. I don't believe to eradicate us but to make us all look at ourselves and what is important to us. To understand what we are doing to the planet and how we have been destroying it. She has made us all stay indoors and work it out with our families and learn to love again. She has made sure we now have clean rivers and air because we are not using our cars and boats and polluting the rivers and air.

She has most importantly wanted us to all work together for the larger good. Mankind, unfortunately, has to be stopped to think otherwise we would continue with our greedy and violence.

I can only hope that we become better people.

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