



LAKSHYA SINGH | FEBRUARY 06, 2020

# DR. MALINI SABA

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### Tell us a bit about yourself.

I was born in Southeast Asia to a family of modest means, which instilled in me a very strong work ethic that helped me to succeed in business. My Father is a Sri Lankan Tamil and Mother is an Indian who emphasized compassion for those less fortunate, and as a child, I would bring clothes and books to shelters and spend time with the people who lived there.

I come from a middle class home. Never set out to do what I am doing. I wanted to be a doctor. Never made the cut. Thus did Psychology and realized it was never going to pay much. I wanted to make sure I had enough money to be comfortable and decided to start my own business as an investor 26 years ago. I started with my own money cashing shares I had and slowly built it up.

As it grew I realized I wanted to diversify and go into Commodities and aggressively pushed into the space. It was not at all easy because it is a different ball game. But with constant perseverance and dedication I built what I call 'Saba Group Holdings' today. This did not come without failure. I have lost badly thrice in the course of the build out. I had no rich father to go too; I had to find a way to make it. I did.

I work a lot but I love what I do. I do make time to stay still and relax. I swim daily, it allows me to stop and just listen to my breathing. It's very relaxing. I enjoy driving long distances a lot, yes as crazy as it seems I enjoy it because it relaxes me. I get to stop thinking work and enjoy the scenery.

I have a lovely family. It took a long time coming but in the end I was blessed with a family.

Business to me is not a chore. It's what I live and breathe every day. I enjoy the challenges it puts in front of me. I believe it makes me a better mother because I see things differently because I work. That does not mean staying home is bad. I wish I could stay home. But I think it will drive everyone insane.

My love for business is the same as my love for philanthropy. Giving back to me is what everything is all about. We are all here to help one another and make sure we leave a better place for the children who are our future.

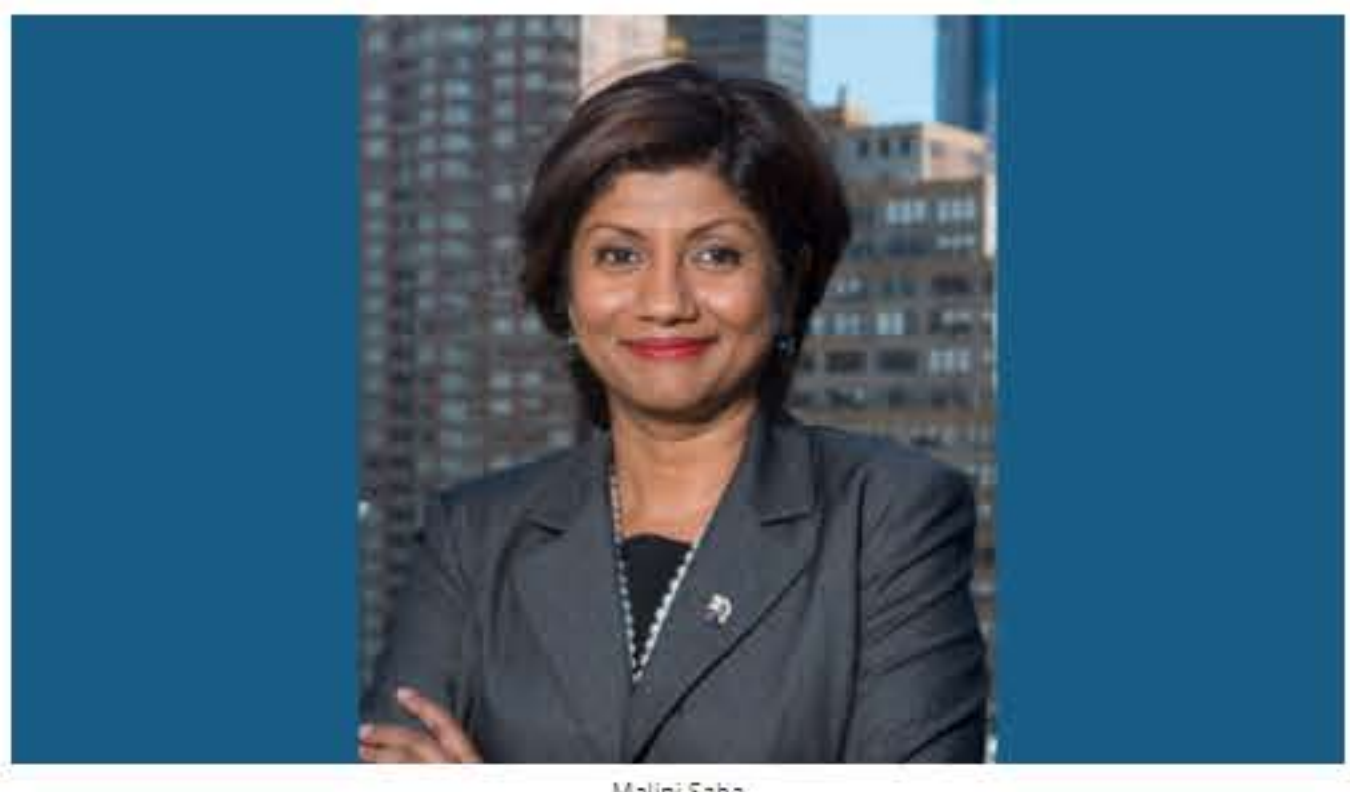
### Please tell us about Saba Group Holdings and Saba Family Foundations?

'Saba Group Holdings' has an affinity towards the agriculture & employs internationally approved environmental guidelines in our ventures for a principled growth.

'Saba Group Holdings' trades in the Rice, wheat, cashew nuts, has a strong foothold in palm land, Gold mines, ship breaking, ethical iron ore, Tin and Last but not the least, with a strong base in the Hospitality sector.

'Saba Group Holdings' is a lucrative and sustaining group of companies and organizations. Moreover, the multifaceted nature of this group of companies helps their respective sectors at the ground-level by employing almost 3,750 local workers as well as acts as a funding agency for the endeavours undertaken by 'Saba Family Foundation'. The aim of the foundation is to help at least one billion people around the world to gain access to basic healthcare, provide education and opportunities that allow them to break the cycle of poverty, and eradicate illiteracy about human right issues.

### You are credited with launching 'Saba Group Holdings' and its CSR arm 'Saba Family Foundations' and making it a successful enterprise. Who is your inspiration and what are the traits/ethics you followed and are following?



Malini Saba

I never planned to build this business to where it is today, it's all organic and evolved step by step. I stay always true to my values and believes. My inspiration is sheer determination to succeed and to put food on the plate and roof over my head.

I admire Winston Churchill and his drive never to give up and Margaret Thatcher for being the first woman to achieve The Unachievable in a male world.

My goal was to create a business that had an impact on the world. Not just monetary impact but human development. This I have stayed true right through.

### Please tell us a bit about your association with Belize International Film Market? How it is going to help Indians?

Belize is an exotic and excellent place to shoot movies. Its tax breaks will be very beneficial for Indian producers and directors. The studio complex include production sets, sound stages, editing facilities and office space necessary for the production of movies, TV shows, and digital content.

The Market special focus is on content for Asia (Especially India), Caribbean, Central and Latin America, and as well as for the State of Georgia and Hollywood. They're currently focussed on content development and acquisition, networking, professional development and training workshops. It also seeks exhibitors, acquisition and development executives, agents, attorneys, directors, distributors, financiers, film commissioners, producers, writers, international press and all those who provide services to the entertainment industry from different parts of the world.

The Market will feature filming in Belize, with the opportunity to see Belize's diverse locations, rebates, and other private funding availability. The studio complex will include production sets, sound stages, editing facilities and office space necessary for the production of movies, TV shows, and digital content.

### What are the challenges you faced as a Business Women and how did you overcome those?

The challenges I face daily. It has not gone away. But I am better at handling them than I did when I was younger. I have been giving speeches about these for over 20 years and we still unfortunately still see no change. It's up to the women and men to hold each other to a higher standard. Never concede because fear sets in. You can hold your own as a woman.

### What would you like to say to our women readers who might be hesitant to take the plunge into having a career, maybe after a break?

Step into it with both feet. Never be afraid. It's like riding a bicycle it all comes back and intact it's better and stronger. Never put yourself second to someone else. Never allow your husbands fears or your fears keep you from reaching for the stars. You owe it to yourself to have something for you. You will never know till you try. If you fail do it again. As Winston Churchill said - Never! Never! Never! give up.

When we have a child. The child belongs to two people. The husband and the wife. The husband has the same responsibility to take time off and stay home to bring that child up. It is not just the woman who has to do that. She should have the ability to realize her dreams as well. Getting married should not halt the intellectual growth and dreams for a woman, in fact it should be the opposite. Having a man stay home is not a bad thing. He can stay home and let his wife earn the living. It goes both ways. We are in modern times and there is nothing wrong with that at all. Jump in with both feet because we need more role models for our young girls behind us.

### Please let me know about your industries status now? Where it is located?

We are in 20 different countries currently.

### How much are you spending annually on various social activities?

We give back more than 50 percent of 'Saba Group Holdings' annual returns on our various social activities.

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successful women entrepreneurs

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