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INTERVIEW

*Dr. Malini Saba,
Founder & Chairman,
Saba Group*

1- Tell us about your journey, the industries that you cater to and what drove you to venture into said industries?

My Journey of 30 years has been an incredible experience. I have taught myself, from the ground up, about risk investment propositions, the uncertainties of business and took the road less travelled. I feel proud to be someone who has made it into the male-dominated industries.

I started my entrepreneurial journey quite by chance. I had one aspiration since childhood that to make a difference in the world of the needy and make enough money to put that for charity. My primary aim in life is to help at least one billion people around the world to gain access to basic healthcare, education and opportunities that allow them to break the cycle of poverty, and eradicate illiteracy about human right issues.

'Saba Group' is a privately-held company that employs over 5,000 people, operates in more than 20 countries, and comprises 15 companies across 10 verticals. The group has an affinity towards agriculture and trades in the business of rice and has a strong foothold in pharmaceuticals and Fin-tech business. It also operates in gold mining, entertainment, real estate, Iron Ore, palm oil & lands, steel, hospitality sectors and does impact technology investments all over the world.

50 percent of the profits raised by 'Saba Group' go into philanthropy, which finances the initiatives of its CSR arm the 'Anannke Foundation'

2- What is the potential for gold mining in India vis-à-vis the rest of the world?

India has 501.83 million tons of gold ore reserves as of April 1, 2015, according to National Mineral Inventory data. However, a majority of it remains in the reserves. Having said that, India has a good potential to be a major gold resource. Our ancient knowledge and the understanding of gold will help us push through the market.

3- As a women entrepreneur navigating your way through various industries, can you share some of your biggest learnings?

It is important never to give up. During my journey, I realised that being someone who makes mistakes is not wrong, but not learning from them is a problem. I learnt how to stand my ground in this competitive industry and being on a constant journey of self evolution is what keeps me going. .

4- What are your thoughts about green energy solutions? How are you adopting them in your plants?

We have steadily started adopting ecological solutions in order to be more sustainable in the future. Our different applications have differing solutions where we try to implement green solutions to make ourselves compliant with the sustainable future.

5- What according to you is the future of Hydrogen fuel in India?

Hydrogen is bound to improve the clean energy agenda, however, at the current cost, the replacement might raise the cost of one ton of steel by one-third. However, this gap will be reduced by 2030.

Moreover, producing the required amount of hydrogen for decarbonization of the steel and iron industry would require 20% in electricity that would further encourage the expansion of the renewable resources. This might be a good thing because it can create a chain reaction of sustainability that would, further down the road improve the demand for solar and hydro energy to be specific.

6- Do you believe the adoption of clean energy is getting ample push from industry stakeholders and decision makers? What can be better?

There is significant push from corporate world and decision makers for climate considerations and carbon footprint reductions.

Clean energy transitions require an accelerated reduction in the use of fossil fuels for social, ecological and political reasons, but do not necessarily entail an immediate ramping of renewable energy infrastructures. The pace of clean energy deployment requires attention to the needs and interests served under different scenarios. It has to emerge through ongoing and long-term dynamics of power involving differences in visions, alliances and consequences.

Using energy-efficient devices, improving system operations within a house, business, city, Adopting local, state or federal policies and programs can greatly increase energy efficiency.

7- Where do you see your company in the next 3 years?

We have a simple goal - it is to grow in terms of innovation, workforce and resource capability. We would also like to be in vogue with the industrial trend and be a global go-to service provider.

8- How has the pandemic impacted business?

We too were dealt with a strict hand by the pandemic. Our workforce was affected by Covid and the entire organisation fell prey to lack of manpower and therefore, a sustainable CAPEX. However, we, along with our strong workforce overcame the tide and continue to exercise caution to keep the impact of Covid at bay.

9 - What are some trends that you are seeing in the iron & steel sector?

This industry has had its ups and downs - it will continue to do so as politicians use commodities to make demands and add sanctions.

The industry is under constant fluctuation. The dynamism is less because of the market trend but more because of the demands of a select few who undertake unfair means to control a lion's share in the market.

