

# Asia's 2018 Heroes Of Philanthropy: Charity Is New To India's New-Economy Titans

NAAZNEEN KARMALI NOVEMBER 12, 2018

*This story is part of Forbes' coverage of Asia's Heroes Of Philanthropy 2018. See the full coverage [here](#).*

Indians are no strangers to the concept of daan, or charity, whether it is giving alms to street beggars or making donations at temples. (Some of the world's richest houses of worship are located in India.) But large-scale, Western-style philanthropy is yet to catch up with the country's recent runaway wealth creation at the top.

India now has the world's fourth-largest pool of billionaires, with more than 100 three-comma fortunes. In the past five years, a rising stock market has boosted the combined wealth of [India's 100 richest](#) by more than 40% to \$492 billion.

Despite the rising prosperity of the ultrarich, a 2016 study by philanthropy advisory Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) India estimates the total share of giving in India at 0.37% of gross domestic product versus 1.44% in the U.S.

***More On Forbes:** [Asia's 2018 Heroes Of Philanthropy: The Mogul Who Gifted His Kidney To Save A Stranger's Life](#)*

"Wealth creation is far surpassing giving," acknowledges Deval Sanghavi, cofounder and partner at Dasra, a Mumbai firm that advises nonprofits and philanthropists. "There is an even larger gap between the quantum of giving and the impact it has."

Older family fortunes such as Birla, Bajaj and Godrej have had a long tradition of philanthropy. They were created in the pre-Independence era and were influenced by the Gandhian philosophy of wealth being deployed for mass good. Descendants of the Tata clan, for example, don't even feature among the nation's top 100 richest as their ancestors transferred their shares to a handful of charitable trusts.

Among the newly rich, the idea of social philanthropy is just settling in, says Rohini Nilekani, wife of tech billionaire and Infosys chairman Nandan Nilekani and founder of Arghyam, a foundation focusing on water and sanitation. The Nilekanis are among India's leading philanthropists and one of the seven Indian families to sign the Gates-Buffett Giving Pledge.

India's "giving" culture got a boost in 2014, when the government made it compulsory for businesses of a certain size to earmark 2% of net profit for social welfare projects. Despite that, in CAF's World Giving Index 2018, which tracks money donated, volunteering time and helping a stranger, India's ranking dropped 43 spots from the previous year to No. 124 out of a total of 146 countries.

Meenakshi Batra, CEO of CAF India, says one reason for the slide could be that a 100% tax break for donations to approved charities was

withdrawn last year. Other experts in the field say that for philanthropy to grow a thriving social sector is needed. Since it came to power in 2014, the nationalist Narendra Modi-led government has cracked down on nonprofits, subjecting them to tighter scrutiny of needed foreign seed funding. Recently, Amnesty International's Indian arm was raided by the Enforcement Directorate, a federal investigation agency, and its bank accounts were frozen for allegedly flouting regulations on receiving foreign funding. Amnesty said it was compliant with Indian laws.

<http://outline.com/xyZxbb>

**COPY**

 Annotations · [Report a problem](#)

Outline is a free service for reading and annotating news articles. We remove the clutter so you can analyze and comment on the content. In today's climate of widespread misinformation, Outline empowers readers to verify the facts.

[HOME](#) · [TERMS](#) · [PRIVACY](#) · [DMCA](#) · [CONTACT](#)