

'There's a force-field of possibility and potential in the world around us; when we give, freely and without expectation, we are drawn into this force-field and emerge richer, stronger and more self-actualised'



TINA Ambani

CHAIRPERSON, CSR, RELIANCE GROUP

SHE HAS JOURNEYED FROM THE CREATIVE REALM OF CINEMA, TO ESTABLISHING SEVERAL EVOLUTIONARY INSTITUTIONS ADDRESSING GAPS IN THE INDIAN HEALTHCARE SYSTEM WITH THE KOKILABEN DHIRUBHAI AMBANI HOSPITAL, AND HER TWO FOUNDATIONS: HARMONY FOR SILVERS AND HARMONY ART. HELLO! GETS TALKING WITH A LADY WITH MORE THAN ONE MISSION ON HER BUSY MIND



The nexus between different forms of creativity has been an idea that has fascinated you for a long time. Most often, it's only creativity – not more funding – that can lead to viable solutions for a host of issues around us. Would you agree?

"Yes, I do believe all expressions of creativity are interconnected at some level; there is a latent synergy there which is very powerful. The creative impulse is undeniably the genesis of any great idea. However, shaping that idea into a viable solution or sustainable endeavour, requires external help. That's where funding comes in – to support the idea, bring it to centre-stage and help it take wing."

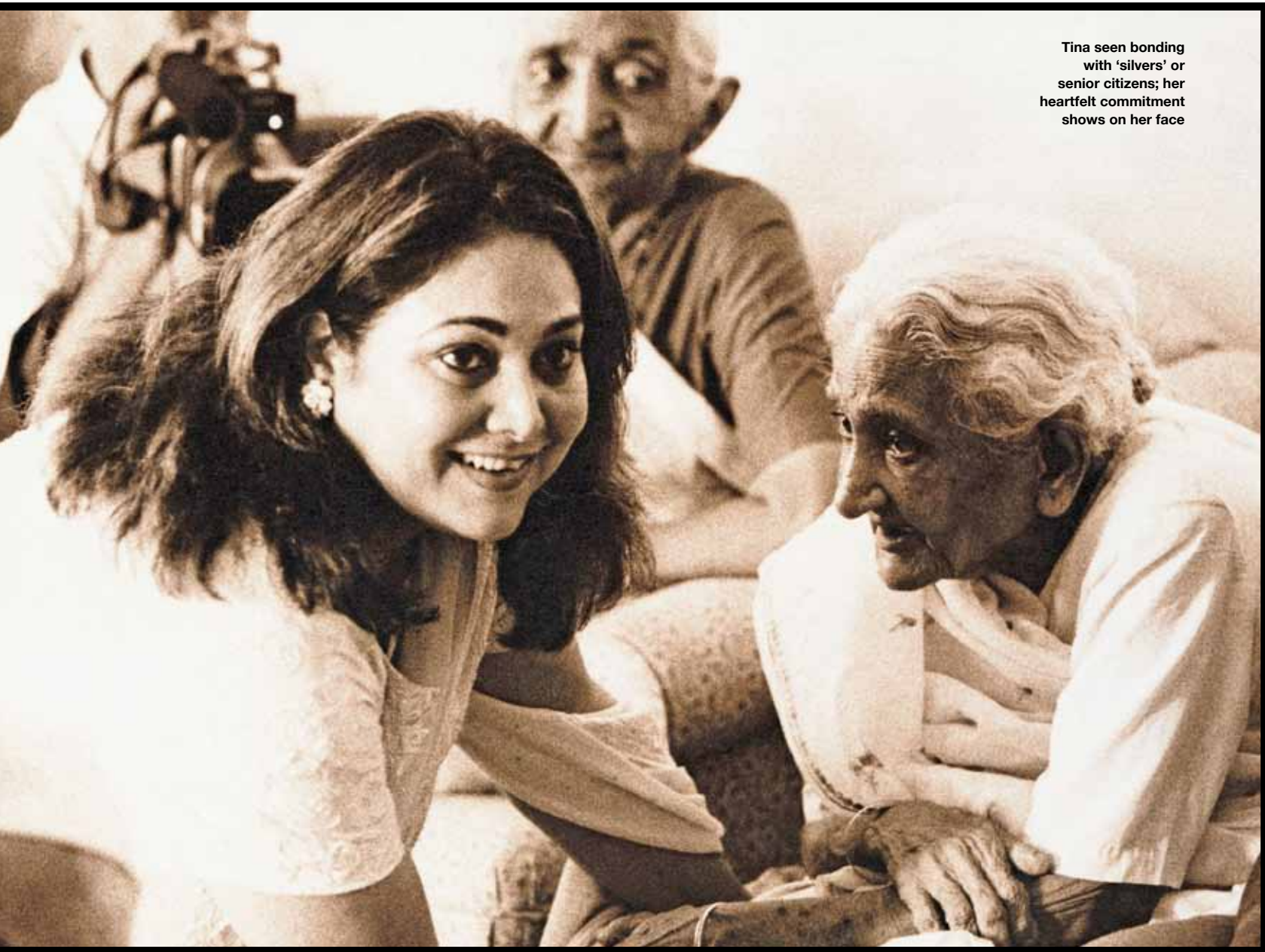
From your first Harmony Art Show in 1995 to the activities of the Harmony Art Foundation, which leaps of evolution make you most proud?

"We have given a platform to a wide range of artists at different points in their careers, from all over the country. Over the years, Harmony has showcased the work of nearly 1,500 artists and attracted over half-a-million visitors – that is a source of extreme pride for me. Other milestones in our evolution include our residencies and workshops that began in 2007; an exhibition of 32 works during a 'Celebration of South Asian Modern and Contemporary Art' at Christie's, London, followed by a sale of works from the Harmony Art Foundation in association with Barclays Wealth; and our 2009 show, *A Tradition Revisited*, where we sought to renew pride and engagement in India's miniature art, which was followed in 2011 by *Fabular Bodies: New Narratives in the Art of the Miniature*, where contemporary artists interpreted the miniature form. Further, in 2010, Harmony Art Foundation was commissioned to install artworks along the Delhi Airport Metro Express Line. This took our mandate to make art more accessible to another level altogether: the public infrastructure sector."

A lot of artists in India sorely miss a critical, educated art press in India. Would the Harmony Art Foundation make a case to educate children about art movements in India, or like Christie's, conduct adult education workshops, so there is a less frivolous, more critical sensibility around art?

"You've raised an important point. Art is an intrinsic part of our heritage yet there is so little awareness of our art practices and history, and very little archiving or research. We need to create mechanisms in schools as well as institutes of higher learning to teach art as a comprehensive, substantial subject. Every Indian should have an understanding of our rich cultural legacy. I would be proud to play a role in this endeavour."

From the year 2008, when the Harmony Art Foundation showcased upcoming Indian artists at Christie's, London, to a world where Indian cultural creativity is celebrated across the world – from the 'Arts of the Deccan' exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, to Gaitonde at the Peggy Guggenheim; what role do



Tina seen bonding with 'silvers' or senior citizens; her heartfelt commitment shows on her face

you envision for the Harmony Arts Foundation in this brave new world?

"India has come of age in the global art arena – and it has come a long way. It's exciting to see the virtuosity of our artists being applauded by the cognoscenti across the world. Harmony Art Foundation remains committed to support Indian artists as they navigate this 'brave new world,' as you put it. The Christie's show is an example of this. Further, we closely work with museums like the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts, the oldest continually operating museum in the US, where I am also a trustee. We loan works by celebrated Indian artists from time to time to the Peabody Essex Museum as well as other museums like the Stedelijk Museum, Schiedam, in the Netherlands, and the Solomon R Guggenheim Museum in New York."

Our cities still languish for an aesthetic revolution... we see very little art in public spaces – one Arzan Khambatta sculpture near the Oberoi hotel... How about heritage buildings in Princess Street and Fort getting a paint job?

"Each city has a unique history, special stories to tell, echoes of the past that resonate through every street. These stories should be heard. One answer is to convert sections of our cities into public spaces; revive and

celebrate the rich heritage that lies herein. Here, we should take a cue from European towns with their lively public spaces. If the opportunity comes along, I would be glad to be involved in such a project."

How would you describe yourself as an art patron and a collector?

"I never set out to become a 'collector' and I consciously shy away from that label. My journey has always been one based on instinct and affinity—to both works of art and the creative process in its entirety. As I've always maintained, art is not an event but a journey."

With the breakdown of the family unit, world over, ageing has become a part of life most people fear. Would you agree?

"Ageing is inevitable; it's how we choose to view it that matters. Must it be a crisis to contend with or can it be an opportunity to explore new vistas and share one's wealth of wisdom with society? The latter requires an enabling environment. And that's what every society owes its elders. With the degeneration of the traditional family system, silvers – as we call elders – in India are often alienated and marginalised. We need to do better by our silvers and bring them back in from the fringes."

You had shared how in the West, a friend lost his mother and then shared that he had not spent too much time with

'While affluent urban silvers are living longer, living better and being feted by the market, the vast rural majority are struggling for survival, with even basic financial security and healthcare beyond their reach'

her... something that caused him great pain. We believe this provided the trigger for you to envision the Harmony for Silvers Foundation. How do the activities at your foundation help 'silvers' to add not just years to their lives, but life to their years?

"All our activities at Harmony for Silvers Foundation have one underlying imperative: active ageing. Our magazine, *Harmony-Celebrate Age*, which has completed 11 years, is our national voice and seeks to inform and inspire readers with news and views from around the world, stories of inspiring silvers, and features on senior products and services, health, travel, money, culture, books and lifestyle. Our other facets include a dedicated portal, www.harmonyindia.org and the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run held as part of the marathon in major Indian cities. Over the years, we have also published research monographs as well as a yoga book for silvers; participated in national and international seminars; raised awareness on issues like reverse mortgage; and felicitated silver achievers with the Harmony Silver Awards. We don't just shed light on the concerns of silvers but strive to make society – and silvers themselves – aware of their immense potential and worth."

We believe you made a deep study of the conditions and realities surrounding the elderly of India and answered related



Tina seen with her KDAH team with a sprinkling of celebrities like Anu Malik, Akshay Kumar and Gulshan Grover (above). Tina at the Harmony Senior Citizens' Run, part of the Standard Chartered Mumbai Marathon

questions at conferences held under the aegis of the UN and American advocacy group AARP. What part of your research most surprised you?

"The most vital learning is that there is no homogeneity whatsoever in the Indian silver population. While affluent urban silvers are living longer, living better and being feted by the market, the vast rural majority are struggling for survival, with even basic financial security and healthcare beyond their reach. This is a huge chasm that needs to be bridged through sustained intervention by government with the involvement of corporate India and civil society. National development means nothing if the weakest and most marginalised are left behind."

What is your detailed vision for the retirement home for the elderly in Jaipur? Why Jaipur?

"The Harmony Senior Citizens' Commune in Jaipur is an inevitable milestone in our work to improve the quality of life of silvers. We're not driven by commerce but the desire to establish a lively, sustainable community that embodies our mantra of active ageing. What sets us apart, is the tremendous body of experience we bring to the table and our understanding of the silver constituency, its needs and aspirations. The project, near New Jaipur Airport, is being built across an expansive plot and



will offer a range of elder-friendly accommodation catering to every budget with a host of services, infrastructure and amenities. Most significant, we will promote vocational activities to engender second careers and self-sustainability.

The Rajasthan government, recognising the need for such a project, supported us – thus, the decision to build in Jaipur. It is also a well-connected and developed city with a rich heritage, and offers silvers a serene environment."

Can you tell us what your vision was for the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital & Medical Research Institute (KDAH) in Mumbai?

"A tribute to my father-in-law, Dhirubhai Ambani, and dedicated to my mother-in-law Kokilaben, KDAH was created to strengthen medical care in the communities we serve and empower Indians to make informed choices. Our vision was to bridge the gaps in the healthcare system in Western India, and indeed the entire country, with the world's best technology and treatment protocols and a committed team of medical professionals. Building this project from the ground up, watching an idea become reality, has been a life-changing experience for me – intense and challenging, yet extremely gratifying."

‘Care at KDAH is completely patient-centric, leading to a culture of compassion with a strong sense of ethical practice. Our Full-Time Specialist System, where all our doctors work in a single hospital, fosters a culture of service and loyalty’

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Sadly, we see blatantly commercial values in healthcare today... in most commercial hospitals doctors rarely make time or care to follow up with immobile patients. Home visits work like a commercial ‘racket.’ How has your hospital sustained values of compassion and economic sensitivity?

“The perception of blatant commercialism in healthcare today revolves around the belief that doctors and hospitals have commoditised medicine and every patient encounter or procedure is looked upon as a business opportunity. However, at KDAH, which is the flagship CSR of Reliance Group, the healthcare services provided are not transactional. All our physicians are full-time specialists who are employees of the hospital on salaries. Care is completely patient-centric, leading to a culture of compassion across the organisation with a strong sense of ethical practice. Our Full-Time Specialist System (FTSS), where all our doctors work in a single hospital, fosters a culture of service and loyalty.”

What are some path-breaking surgeries that have been carried out successfully at KDAH?

“We were the first hospital in Western India to start comprehensive programmes in neonatal paediatric cardiac surgery, living donor liver transplants, multi-speciality robotic surgery and rehabilitation medicine. We have performed a substantial number of successful surgeries and procedures in these fields.”

What excites you about robotic technology? What type of surgeries most benefit from this new technology? How are doctors reoriented to adapt to new technologies and being rewired so to speak to think like tomorrow, not yesterday?

“Robotic surgery has made some extremely complex surgeries simpler and safer to perform owing to the precision, accuracy and surgical dexterity it delivers. Radical surgeries for cancers of the prostate, uterus, head and neck and thyroid are some procedures where it is finding increasing acceptance.

Our surgeons underwent training at leading centres in the world and mentors from these centres were present during the first few surgeries done in our hospital. Now, surgeons trained in conventional surgery are rapidly adapting to this new technology and developing innovative surgical ideas.”

Tell us how the rehab and sports medicine departments have stepped in to fill critical gaps in our healthcare system as well? Have any of our sportspeople chosen to be healed here?

“Our Centre for Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine has been able to bridge the gap in both these areas by bringing in dedicated physicians supported by teams of dedicated sub-speciality therapists in neuro rehabilitation, musculoskeletal rehabilitation, cardiovascular rehabilitation and paediatric rehabilitation. State-of-the-art technology assists the therapists. Many leading sports personalities have chosen to be treated at our Centre with excellent outcomes.”

Reliance Group engages in comprehensive CSR activities. Why do you feel that businesses have a responsibility to give back to society?

“Organisations, like individuals, depend on the environment and communities for their sustenance and growth. In turn, the support and goodwill of our communities must be paid back in a constructive and sustained manner. As a responsible corporate entity, we have constantly endeavoured to transform lives and build more capable and vibrant communities. Every organisation must consider the interest of the society in every step it takes; take responsibility for every action and its impact; and make every attempt to contribute to society. This CSR philosophy guides us in all our actions and impetus. Programs like JalDhara, Aarogyam, PRAYAG, Young Energy Savers, VIDYA and many more encompass areas ranging from education, employability skills, economic empowerment of women, youth, differently abled individuals and farmers, to preventive healthcare and sanitation, ecological sensitivity

and sustainability, inculcating entrepreneurship, conservation of art and culture, and nurturing the youth and silver citizens. Our focus has been to enable growth and touch – and transform – lives.”

How did you become involved with The Global Goals Campaign for Sustainable Development ?

“Our mandate at the Reliance Group is to actively contribute to building ‘Tomorrow’s India;’ we believe this is possible by taking along each stakeholder and every segment of society. We view partnerships and co-creation as critical means to usher in sustainable development. The Global Goals campaign was also envisioned with a similar mandate to reach out to the masses across the globe to promote the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the latter half of 2015. Its aim is simple: each one of us across the world must come forward, work together, stem the damage done to our planet, and give future generations a chance to survive and thrive.

Thus, when we were approached to lead the campaign in India, we saw a synergy between our agendas in terms of the focus of the project, and the imperative of embracing integrated development approaches through collective action. Reliance Group is well-positioned to reach out to the community through our various business verticals and we believe we can play a leading role in promoting The Global Goals mandate through our existing communication channels. We are integrating the campaign into our business processes and promoting the same through our various customer-facing platforms.”

How will the SDGs build on the legacy of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)?

“The SDG’s, or as they will now be known The Global Goals for Sustainable Development, shall provide continuity and momentum to MDGs. They shall build upon them by generating greater public awareness and building sustainable meaningful partnerships for galvanising global action towards a concerted outcome. The campaign in India aims to make everyone aware of The Global Goals through participation and support from the government, development organisations, civil society and corporates.”

Which of the Global Goals particularly resonate with you?

“Reliance Group is committed to all 17 Global Goals for sustainable development; in fact, we have been working on most of these since inception. In my personal capacity, of course, I have been deeply associated with healthcare (‘Good Health’) and silver advocacy (‘Reduced Inequalities’).”

What do you see as being the greatest challenges to achieving The Global Goals?

“The greatest challenge is to build public awareness. No government can bring about change in a vacuum without the participation and commitment of people. With this campaign and partnership of organisations, we hope to build a platform for people to come together; take ownership and responsibility for the future of our peoples and planet; and work towards achieving the Global Goals by 2030. It’s important to understand that this can’t be a one-time event but a continuous, sustained process going forward.”

What advice would you give to influential Indians who are interested in making a difference?

“All of us, influential or otherwise, have the power to craft change. What’s



Tina at a symposium at KDAH on childbirth and its challenges (above) and leading a campaign for Organ Donation Day (below)

important is to believe in that power and use it in whatever way we can for the greater good. There are no prescriptions, really, to make a difference – all it takes is a sense of purpose.”

What, to you, is the POWER OF GIVING really all about?

“I believe that you don’t choose a cause – it chooses you. It’s about following your heart, trusting your instinct, and believing you can make a difference, that you can leave the world a little better than how you found it. The power of giving isn’t something you can express, it’s something you experience. In my view, the more you give, the more you get. These gains are intangible—greater meaning to life, a deep gratification, a sense of spiritual purpose. There’s a force-field of possibility and potential in the world around us; when we give, freely and without expectation, we are drawn into this force-field and emerge richer, stronger and more self-actualised.”

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