

WHY BILLIONAIRES GIVE

FAMILY
PHILANTHROPY

RELIGION AND ALTRUISM

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A WORLD OF GOOD

A deep dive into a new set of billionaire families that are going beyond writing cheques to support causes from climate action to women's empowerment

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A realistic journey to Net Zero

Cairn Oil & Gas, a Vedanta Group company through its innovations in technology and nature-based solutions has balanced the ecology and socioeconomic transformation in operational areas of Barmer in Rajasthan, and Ravva in Andhra Pradesh. This successful model can be replicated abundantly in India's journey to net-zero by 2070.



Cairn Oil & Gas offshore platform at Cambay, Gujarat

Nadis or open water structures were a common sight in the arid desert of Thar and its neighbouring districts like Barmer. These age-old structures would collect rainwater and, consequently, supply through the year to neighbouring areas. However, over time, climate change adversities and dwindling forest covers had caused massive silting in these ponds whose floors convexed with large depositions of topsoil. To revive these essential water bodies and restore Thar's natural ecosystem, a local CSR initiative employed labour to drain the topsoil and redirect it for farmers' use. Soon, the convex floor regained its concave shape and water gathered. These nadis now provide water for essential needs and have also assisted greatly in reviving the region's dying ecosystem. Greater Spotted Eagle and Black-headed Ibis are now common visitors here which is also home to insects, small birds, and migratory species. 28 such nadis have been revived across Barmer district of Rajasthan, consequently uplifting agrarian fortune by at least as many folds.

Similarly, the once swampy land of Ravva that was marked by irregular streams of backwater and tidal inconsistencies, with little vegetation and dwindling floral-faunal diversity, now has a revived avatar. Located on the Krishna-Godavari basin along the coasts of Andhra Pradesh, Ravva is now marked by verdant avifauna and flora that have found a new home in a man-made mangrove forest. Led by a CSR initiative, the 56 acres mangrove plantation within the Ravva terminal has now become a treasure trove that is home to a variety of ecologically sensitive species like the Smooth-coated Otter, Fishing Cat, Golden Jackal, and Olive Ridley Turtles. Also, various threatened species of avifauna like the Oriental Darter, Painted Stork, Alexandrine Parakeet, Black-headed Ibis, and more have found a home here. Ravva's rich greenbelt is also attracting diverse migratory birds adding to floral and faunal

diversity in the region.

The above instances from Rajasthan and Ravva, two of India's leading oil producing sites, lend invaluable insight into the imperative of balancing economic growth with sustainable development – a key priority for India as it doubles down on its goal of becoming net-zero by 2070 while ensuring successful economic expansion and energy security. The paths to achieving these goals are many – and the most compelling of these pathways require integration of business goals with an ecologically and socially driven vision that inspires local regions to lead a concerted effort in cutting emissions,

A microcosm of this vision and its practical implication can today be seen across these regions that are rich in hydrocarbons and home to key operational sites of Cairn Oil & Gas, a unit of Vedanta Group and India's largest private oil and gas exploration and production company.

promoting biodiversity, and building social inclusivity.

A microcosm of this vision and its practical implication can today be seen across these regions that are rich in hydrocarbons and home to key operational sites of Cairn Oil & Gas, a unit of Vedanta Group and India's largest private oil and gas exploration and production company. Rajasthan and Ravva – home to India's largest onshore field and first offshore asset, respectively, are not only playing a pivotal role in taking the country towards energy atmanirbharta but are driving the vision for net-zero with a keen eye on holistic socioeconomic upliftment. Duly, deep diving into successes here will be important as we attempt to take our country towards adequate energy access, clean energy transition and achieving holistic sustainability.

Vision for sustainable India

The Barmer district of Rajasthan, lying on the fringes of the Thar desert, was known for its treacherous climate and inhabitable conditions. Since the coming of the oil and gas industry, much has changed now. Home to India's largest onshore oilfield, Barmer has duly reaped the benefits of economic success in adequate socioeconomic development



Oil and Gas facility of Cairn located in Barmer, Rajasthan



Biodiversity at Ravva located on the East Coast, India



Fishing Cat at Ravva Terminal

that has today altered the landscape and livelihoods of the district. It has not only registered 650% decadal growth in per capita income since the coming of oil and gas exploration – but it is also now home to a floral biodiversity park, a 1,531-acre green belt with indigenous trees, rampant RO water ATMs, developed health services, opportunities in mother and child welfare, digital education programmes, skill development centres and much more. Similarly, marshy Ravva, home to many technology firsts in India’s oil and gas exploration and production legacy, is also nurturing a positive biodiversity outreach with the development of mangroves and a variety of floral and faunal species. Neighbouring regions, remote and isolated from big cities, are also benefitting from mobile health services and skill development centres.

Elaborating the company’s vision, CEO Nick Walker says, “ESG has always been a top priority for us. Our sustainability journey is centered on achieving holistic socio-economic development while we enable energy aatmanirbharta for India. Our vision of transforming responsibly to secure India’s energy future is a reinforcement of our commitment to deliver growth responsibly and sustainably. At Cairn Oil & Gas, we believe it is essential to protect our environment and create a positive impact on the society and nation at large. Through our ‘Transforming for Good’ agenda, we work on three pillars:

“Transforming the Planet,’ ‘Transforming Communities,’ and ‘Transforming the Workplace.”

Duly, Cairn has been driving a three-pronged approach of empowering communities, leading conservation of local biodiversity and transitioning the workplace to ensure a healthy ecosystem where business can co-exist in harmony with nature. The company has taken several biodiversity initiatives to strive for no net loss, further net positive impact on biodiversity and increased habitat restoration. Simultaneously, focussed initiatives have uplifted lives through

agriculture programs, dairy development initiatives and other livelihood opportunities that have empowered the grassroots.

“As humans, we have a responsibility to co-exist harmoniously with other species in the ecosystem, to ensure our planet is healthy. We must work together at all levels, from corporates to individuals,” emphasizes Walker.

Empowering local communities

Over the years, the company has rolled out several community-oriented initiatives in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, and Assam, such as awareness drives, community infrastructure developments, livelihood generation, among others. At the pivot of the vision for holistic economic development along with driving net-zero, rests the community – the people and how well they are empowered to accommodate and lead change.

Underlining the importance of empowering local communities, Walker, says: “Our local communities are key allies in our growth journey. We have undertaken initiatives to improve the socioeconomic conditions in our areas of operations and are dedicated to transforming the lives of millions at the grassroots level.”

This emphasis is aptly visible in a range of commitments outlined by the company. For instance, in pursuing the goal of educating 9 million students by 2030,



Nand Ghar in Barmer Rajasthan

Cairn created a model of state-of-the-art anganwadi, which aims to transform the lives of millions of women and children across India. In addition, climate-resilient technologies and new seeds are being distributed to rural farmers, backed by training programmes on more efficient agriculture. Nearly 350 farmers have adopted systematic rice intensifications resulting in 30-50 per cent higher yield, and several have also adopted vermicomposting.

To also enable permeation of technology, a key pillar under the goal of aatmanirbhar Bharat, 'Nivaaran', a web-enabled, online community grievance register has been set up for the community to submit requests/grievances from anywhere, anytime. Additionally, the development of infrastructure at government schools has enabled access to education while to prioritise health, the Nirogi Rajasthan campaign has led free health check-up camps in rural pockets.

Encouraging the component of private sector participation in achieving broader public goals, Delip Parihar, Assistant Director CSR Department of Education, Rajasthan, says: "Cairn has always been at the forefront with its support to education and school infrastructure. I appreciate the good work done by innovations such as E-kaksha digital education during COVID-19, whereby we have been able to broadcast educational content widely. Other initiatives such as ICT labs, electricity support, etc., have contributed to improved infrastructure. The department appreciates the work done on ground for the rural population of Barmer and looks forward to the continued support."

Further, more than 14,700 youth are being trained at Cairn Oil & Gas' skill development centres in Rajasthan, which have a placement record of a whopping 80%. The centre offers training in vocational skills like automobile repair, welding, solar and wind machine installations, and IT with support from the Rajasthan Skill & Livelihood Development Corporation (RSLDC) for state-certified courses and from Rajasthan Integrated Leaders Development



Handloom weaving at Jorhat, Assam



Priya Agarwal Hebbar
Director, Vedanta Limited

"At Vedanta, we firmly commit to environmental stewardship through ESG practices and have been continuously striving towards innovating and reimagining a healthier and ecologically sustainable planet. In our journey to deliver responsible growth, we have committed to reducing our carbon emissions to zero by 2050 or sooner and have pledged \$5 billion over the next 10-years to accelerate this transition. Our mission statement -Transforming for Good, encapsulates the ethos of our sustainable journey, supported by three well-defined pillars: Transforming the Planet, Transforming Communities and Transforming the Workplace.

Sharing Vedanta's vision, Cairn Oil & Gas plays a pivotal role, emerging as the ESG leader in the sector while protecting health, safety, and the environment. It is leading India towards energy self-reliance through sustainable practices across its key operational areas while being committed to its vision of producing 50% of the nation's oil and gas. Our initiatives in enabling cleaner energy use, community upliftment, biodiversity enhancement, efficient resource management and green cover restorations are together driving the on-ground activation towards fulfilling our ESG goals. The inclusive development in Barmer has led to a 650% increase in per capita income and improved the quality of life. Our strong focus towards water conservation and four of our operational sites being identified as Net Water Positive assets has led Cairn to become a Net Water Positive company. With a focused vision, mission, goals and innovative solutions, Cairn Oil & Gas remains committed to furthering Vedanta's commitment to creating holistic social wealth through committed leadership and bringing individuals, cultures, and ideas together to create a stronger organisation. Our business is driven by the motive of enabling sustainable transition and we remain committed partners to the country as India progresses towards achieving net zero by 2070."



Mobile health van at Barmer, Rajasthan

Skill University. Other microlevel engagements too are active, such as constructing primary healthcare centres, providing support from medical professionals attending to patients in emergency cases, public partnerships to promote women's health, and more.

Community-centrism has been a leading driver for Vedanta in furthering business for holistic development. Corporates are today playing an increasing role in partnering with the government to develop infrastructure and facilities that reach the most remote, isolated and desolate pockets. Barmer and Ravva are shining examples, especially, for this success in reaching the last man, in the last line of the most peripheral regions.

Encouraging biodiversity and ecology conservation

India's commitment to achieving net zero carbon by 2070 is robust and imperative. For a country of 1.32 billion, the vision towards this end must be as multi-faceted. From increasing green cover, to enabling diverse nature-based solutions for decarbonization, to encouraging biodiversity growth, developing appropriate carbon sinks and exploring new age-fuels – all will together contribute to a net-zero future. In recognizing the imperative to develop a multitude of green options, Ravva – situated in the



RO plant at villages in Barmer

shallow offshore area of the Krishna-Godavari basin on the eastern coast of India – has achieved remarkable ecological transformation. Once a swampy land with intermittent backwater streams influenced by tidal waves, it is now a mesmerizing man-made mangrove – a transition that was enabled after Cairn began hydrocarbon production in the Ravva block in 1993.

The field has also pioneered many of India's operational firsts, including the use of time lapse (4D) seismic technology and Ocean Bottom Cable (OBC) seismic survey. With technological advancements,

Ravva is also known for hosting the largest mangroves in coastal India nurturing 56.4 acres of mangroves. It is also home to a greenbelt of 106 acres that provides habitat to over 150 species of birds and some 50 species of butterflies. Another lucrative instance of successful biodiversity enhancement is seen in reviving the Khejri tree, a perennial leguminous tree of arid and semi-arid regions dominant in western India. The indigenous and

ecologically sensitive floral species in the Thar ecosystem was widely protected, but excessive cultivation and grazing had significantly curtailed cover. Now, a floral biodiversity park hosting over 100 species dot the landscape of Barmer's Mangala Processing

Terminal with a 1531-acre green belt of indigenous trees like Khejri, Kumta, Neem. Cairn also launched an agroforestry programme in collaboration with farmers to develop in-house the Thar Shobha variety of Khejri by grafting (bud or root) which is extremely drought tolerant, high yielding even in rainfed condition, and has highly nutritious pods and fodder.

Recognizing the critical role of water as a precious resource, especially in the regions lying on the fringes of arid Thar, biodiversity growth has found a partner in significant water initiatives that are encouraging water-positive practices. The parched ecosystem of Thar that has seen dwindling capacity of natural reserves has witnessed driven programs to revive traditional waterbodies in the ecosystem that, in turn, are nurturing agriculture and livestock while hosting migratory species. Further, borewells built in areas with acute water shortage are providing water to approximately 5,000 families. Implementing the sustainable net water positive impact, interventions are also leading to purposive reduction in freshwater consumption, community

Dairy development project

rainwater harvesting projects, and maximising the recycling rate of trade effluent and produced water.

Balancing the human and natural environments while enabling progress and energy security is a key challenge that countries across the globe must overcome for truly holistic sustainable development. India's rich natural ecosystem is home to an expanding population, making the journey to the perfect balance ever more critical.

Enhancing sustainability from within

To enable the path to net-zero, companies and businesses themselves have to become sustainable. Here too, Cairn has taken the lead by becoming India's first oil and gas exploration and production company to issue its ESG roadmap that culminates in achieving net-zero by 2050 – pacing India's overall goal to become net-zero by 2070. Under its initiatives, the company has converted its Mangala pipeline – the world's longest continuously heated and insulated pipeline that runs ~705 km from oil fields in Rajasthan to refineries in Gujarat – to become complete solar-powered by 2025. With adequate Above Ground Installation (AGI), the pipeline will become a cleaner and efficient resource that serves economic purpose while furthering net-zero. Simultaneously, Cairn is also proactively opting for newer fuel solutions like geothermal power that can be developed by repurposing older and ageing fuels. Recently, the company also declared itself to be a Net Water Positive company with an NPWI (Net Positive Water Impact) index of 1.12.

Alongside, employee well-being and safety at the workplace are equally important ideals in pacing the goal of sustainable economic transition. Through continuous assessment, the health and safety measures across operations are benchmarked to the gold standards in HSE practices. This has reaped benefits and there has been a 60% reduction in total recordable injury rate in the last two years. Additionally, the Green OB (operational base) project is furthering

Revival of nadis around Barmer



the transition to green renewable power by decarbonising operational areas through installation of rooftop solar PVs for internal energy requirements. Encompassing the ESG vision, the company is also preparing to enable renewable energy power purchase of 25 MW by 2025 and 45 MW by 2030. There are also processes underway to enable carbon offsetting through nature-based solutions and CCUS (Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and/or Storage).

Further, the vision also includes a switch to an electric light motor vehicle fleet and Cairn is now partnering with BluSmart India, a ride-sharing company to encourage all its employees to use electric vehicles and curtail environmental footprint.

Transforming the workplace, thus, forms the third binding pillar in Cairn's vision of enabling energy security, sustainable transition and finally, net-zero carbon.

Together – for a greener world

Making a difference calls for collective action where the community is at the heart of every initiative. While the community is empowered, it must also become more conscious of its environment and duty to protect the same. Transforming communities in tandem with transforming the planet will, thus, be parallelly pursued in charting the way towards net-zero.

A reflection of these ideals can be witnessed in the eco-sensitive areas of Rajasthan and Ravva that have emerged as successful microcosms of our country's established goal to further energy security and access, empower people at the grassroots towards living more sustainable and successful lives, and achieve a flourishing economy that is net-zero by 2070.

As India hosts the G20 Presidency under the inspiring theme, 'One Earth, One Family, One Future,' Cairn's continued commitment to its ESG goals, which makes real impact on communities, will serve as a model for the private sector that can be replicated nation-wide to make a genuine and lasting difference. Ultimately, the goal is to chart and tread a successful path towards an aatmanirbhar Bharat. ■