

Innovative Business Practices for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development in India

Case Study on “Piramal Swasthya” a Connected Health CSR

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Abstract

This Paper reviews trends of innovative business practices operating in environmentally, socially and economically sustainable manner balancing the interest of various stakeholders including a bottom of pyramid population. Innovative business practices today are necessities as they add value to the organizations as well as to the nation. There is a need for unique and practical business practice model that connects dots between key issues in healthcare sector. Industries are encouraged to move towards sustainable and inclusive business practices hence companies at all level are struggling to innovate and implement business practices that are unique, economically sustaining and reach deep down to every part of a population. The Special focus being the Business responsibility or corporate social responsibility (CSR) in healthcare technology domain Piramal Swasthya's Telemedicine services was selected and studied in detail. **Piramal Swasthya** is a registered non-profit organization which is a part of Piramal Foundation. It is a unique model that is built on the backbone of telecommunication. Piramal swasthya initiative and its solutions address key issues by truly democratizing healthcare with a unique business model having technology as a backbone to cut cost without compromising on quality and scale its solutions throughout India and beyond.

Key words : Innovative Business Practices, Sustainable, Inclusive, CSR, Piramal, Telemedicine

Introduction

What are the innovative business practices? Is it possible that all innovative practices are sustainable as well as inclusive at the same time? If yes what are measures to be taken to innovate and implement the innovative business practices in India? This study seeks an answer to all such questions through extensive research and case study of a real-time corporate entity which has innovative sustainable agenda that is inclusive serving all kinds of populations.

Innovations in India :

India is a “dual economy” as on one hand it is the fastest growing economy on its way of becoming global innovator in key economic sectors like biotechnology, Information technology; IT-enabled services (ITES) managing high-tech products and services. On the other hand, India remains subsistence economy with very low per capita income. India must improve its innovation potential further to balance sustaining growth and address the unmet needs of poor.

Whole world is pursuing the Innovation Agenda however the Indian Government has declared 2010-2020 period as a “Decade of Innovations” with stated plans for designing a National Innovation Ecosystem to stimulate the public- private engagement on research and development. Any particular nation or organization is dependent on Research, Innovation, Knowledge, networking, and Competitive intelligence. The world is looking forward to India as a source of knowledge, information, and skilled resources.

Technological innovations in India solve problems in two key ways: by acquiring or developing technologies and by altering business models or capabilities. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as a powerful tool drives societal transformation to empower, enlighten and enrich its people. It is the continuous life-long learning committed to innovation, helps in building the core competencies and competitive intelligence of the people across the globe, thereby sustainable development and inclusive growth.

Innovative business practices today are necessities as they add value to the organizations as well as to the nation by increasing competitiveness, quality and sustainability. There is a need for unique and practical business practice model that connects dots between key issues in each and every industrial sector. Not only creating but implementing and disseminating those innovative models efficiently and responsibly can make a real impact on sustainable development in every sector be it in agriculture, healthcare or education etc. eventually contributing to economic growth.

Being sustainable and inclusive :

As per the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), sustainable development is doing good for serving needs of today with acceptance of environmental, economic and social principles. However besides being sustainable most of the businesses are not inclusive i.e. they are neglecting people at a bottom of the pyramid. Ideally business practice should cater to all the sections of the society as there lies a huge opportunity at the lowest income strata of the society (C. K. Prahalad & Hart, 2002). Recently organizations have realized the potential of being inclusive and they are taking steps towards it.

Industries are encouraged to move towards sustainable and inclusive business practices hence

companies at all level are struggling to innovate and implement business practices that are unique, economically sustaining and reach deep down to every part of a population. Innovative businesses ideally should have potential to be scaled up and advantage over competition in terms of efficiency, quality, and affordability.

Some measures that leads to Innovative business practices in any industrial sector are start-ups with new products or processes, Use of technology and reengineering, corporate social responsibility initiatives, environmentally sustainable organizations, being competitive and standardization or benchmarking for high asset use.



Indian Healthcare Business

India is an innovator and has resources as well as competitive advantage, but there are still some gaps that affect the equitable and quality healthcare access to entire population:

Key Gaps/ Barriers	Need	Opportunity (Innovation)
Huge disparity in terms of accessibility	1. Deliver more value at less cost for all including bottom of pyramid population	1. Inclusive Business Model 2. Mobile Healthcare & telemedicine 3. Public Private Partnership
Low-level expenditure on healthcare	1. Need more funding and involvement of government, private	1. Private Sector & government initiatives 2. CSR & Funding
Scattered knowledge and fragmented industry	1. Knowledge based economy with uniformity of information	1. Connected/ networked healthcare 2. Technology

Complex nature of healthcare delivery	1. Accessibility to quality and affordable care	1. Mobile Healthcare & Telemedicine
Vast population & Poor health indicators	1. Improve health of community	1. Inclusive Business Model
Low Affordability	1. Healthcare Insurance 2. Increase efficiency & lower cost	1. Inclusive Business Model 2. Low cost through technology

Healthcare service provision to poor, especially in a rural area is primarily taken care by the government. Some NGOs play the corresponding role and almost all the private sector players are predominantly focusing on urban areas (tier I and tier II cities). However as a result of the buzzing innovation agenda, competitiveness and sustainability the private sector is also started tapping the potential of smaller towns expanding its focus further. The private sector is developing innovations to address the challenges of health inequities, improving healthcare access and balancing quality care with affordability (Source IFC)

Healthcare Trends

1. Increasing investments : The healthcare sector has seen an immense increase in investments from private equity (PE) players. A number of corporate houses have also entered the healthcare space. For instance, the HCL group has forayed into healthcare by setting up a chain of primary clinics.

2. Frugal innovations : The private sector, MNCs and Indian players, are increasingly driving frugal innovations in healthcare. Technology is increasingly being used in both product and process innovations to increase healthcare cover in scalable and cost-efficient ways. For example, Indian organizations like Forus, MediVed, and Perfint Healthcare have developed innovative and low-cost solutions. Patient monitoring, emergency medical response, telemedicine, and HIS are some other areas where technology is playing a key role in expanding healthcare.

Case Study: “Piramal Swasthya” a Connected Healthcare CSR Initiative

Organization Profile

Piramal Group, India is a private pharmaceutical company with operations in over 30 countries and a strong presence in more than 100 markets around the world. The Philanthropic arm of the group is **Piramal Foundation**; which strongly believe there are unexplored innovative solutions that have the potential to make a significant impact on the problems India confronts. With creative solutions & technological support, Piramal Foundation undertakes initiatives in four broad areas of healthcare, education, water and women empowerment.

Piramal Swasthya is a registered non-profit organization which is a part of Piramal Foundation. It is a unique model that is built on the backbone of telecom. Piramal Swasthya leverages cutting edge information and communication technologies to cut cost without compromising on quality as well as establishing partnerships to scale its solutions throughout India and beyond. The three foundational principles behind Piramal Swasthya beliefs and solution are:

- Accessibility – Healthcare should be accessible for everyone
- Availability – Healthcare should be available for everyone
- Affordability – Healthcare should be affordable for everyone

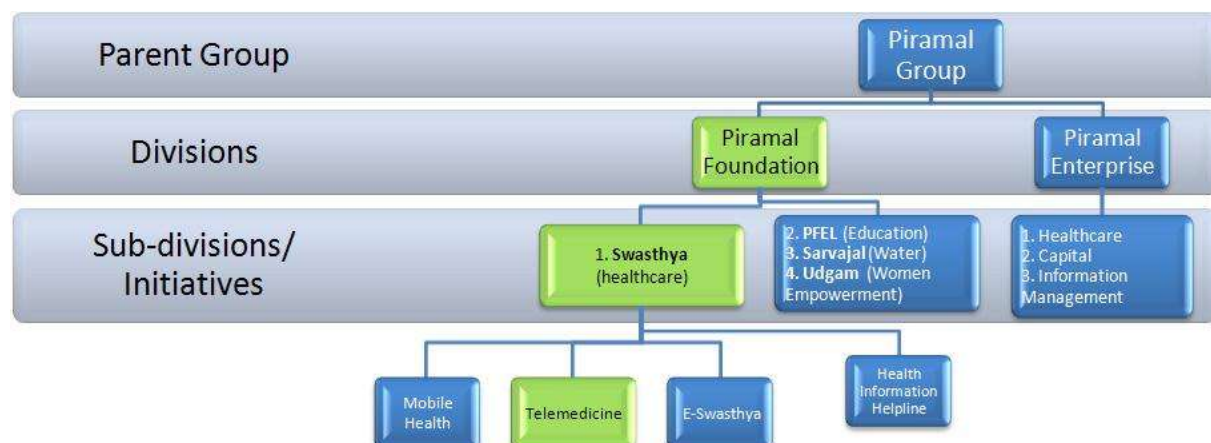
Business Model : A remote healthcare delivery telemedicine

model Presence : PAN India

Staff : 1400 +strong force comprising of 150+ Doctors and specialists.

Impact: 43 million Beneficiaries

Source: Piramal Group Website



Current Solution Stack

E-Swasthya :

Piramal eSwasthya has a prime motive to democratize healthcare and uses a micro-franchise model to deliver the services of a doctor in reach of villages as remote as 1000 to 1500 population. Female health workers armed with a medical kit, marketing material, and a mobile phone, they set up a tele-clinic in their homes. During patient visits, they are connected with a call center and enter the information into a simple e-diagnosis system, generating an automated response with a recommended prescription and treatment (validated by doctors at the call center). eSwasthya has 100 centers/ tele-clinics across three districts in Rajasthan. Source: Piramal Swasthya Website

Health Information Helpline :

Health contacts center that aims to reduce the minor ailment load on the public health system. There are five Health Information Help lines. With the help of HIH, people can seek medical information and advice, counseling services or lodge a service complaint against any public health facility. Qualified and trained paramedics, counselors, and doctors utilize the cutting-edge software. Medically validated algorithms and disease summaries provide paramedics and doctors with the support to drive this high level of standardized care forward. Public-private partnership model is adopted by Piramal in partnership with state governments in India

Mobile Health Services (MHS)

MHS under Piramal Swasthya deploys mobile health units – vans equipped with technology, medical devices, and medicine and health workers – to villages where primary healthcare is not accessible. MHS primarily focuses on chronic diseases, maternal and child health and minor ailments. Currently, 110 mobile health units are operating in partnership with state governments and NGO's.

Telemedicine Services :

Telemedicine Services bring much needed specialist healthcare to remote areas which has no access or very limited access to healthcare facilities focusing on both the beneficiary and the doctor by utilizing medically-validated equipment and digitally interface with software for easy and accurate dataflow. Partnerships are with the State Governments & philanthropic organizations to run several telemedicine initiatives across various states and have established 41 telemedicine centers across India.

Asara© Telehealth Services (Originally funded by MacArthur Foundation, currently funded by HMRI) Provides MCH services to tribal women in Araku Valley, AP.

Source: Piramal Swasthya Website

- Health outreach and education
- Training traditional birth attendants
- Videoconference consultations with an OB/GYN specialist

DOX-IN-BOX® Telemedicine technology is specifically designed for remote areas. It emphasizes general physician functionality, is easy to use and digitally captures, stores and transmits vital signs.

SWOT Analysis	
Strengths : 1. Access to doctor or medical expert 2. At the doorstep 3. Right drugs at the right price 4. Scalable and sustainable 5. Use of technology 6. Strategic partnerships	Weakness : 1. Limited funding from private firm with pressure to fulfill every worth of the penny invested
Opportunities : 1. Global scale: can be scaled up even on the global platform 2. Environmentally sustainable healthcare delivery models at rural level. 3. Uses innovative approaches of healthcare delivery like telemedicine, clinical decision support systems, village-based human resources. 4. Make affordable healthcare accessible to India's rural population	Threats: 1. Adoption or Building trust in the village 2. Availability of skilled field manpower

Conclusion

Piramal Swasthya initiative and its solution stack address key issues by truly democratizing healthcare with a unique business model with technology as a backbone to cut cost without compromising on quality and scale its solutions throughout India and beyond.

Innovative Business Practices

1. Technology and Reengineering :

- Innovation in service removes the distance barrier in rural healthcare through cutting edge technology. Provide specialist healthcare services to the remotely-located rural poor
- Mobile used to dial up telemedicine center manned with paramedics and doctors and Prescription communicated by the doctor over the phone.
- Automation & standardization of process through CDSS: Paramedics when receive the call feeds the information in clinical decision support system (CDSS) a clinical diagnosis platform that automates the generation of provisional diagnosis and prescription developed by TCS. It helps in cost reduction, uniform quality output, and scalability.

2. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):

The objective of Piramal Swasthya parallels the vision of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), to strengthen the primary health center and establish a network in each village. The penetration of this network would be much denser than that of the sub-centers.

Sustainability

- Reduce the financial burden of healthcare on the poor
- Financial benefits for all the stakeholders
- Social Equity: CSR credibility among the potential stakeholders
- Public-private partnership adopted to serve various states

Inclusivity

- Unique way to engage community participation at every step of process
- Female health workers trained and equipped to work at remote locations
- Serving the Poor/ bottom of pyramid population seeking medical help.

Participation of each member in the delivery chain, use of technology, standard process and other key features of this business practice model has feasibility, effectiveness and scalability to larger zones. Scaling it up would make the model even stronger and effective in the creating the impact Piramal envisioned for.

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