



EdelGive Hurun India Philanthropy List 2024



Kushal N Desai & Chaitanya N Desai:

Inspiring Change Through Purpose-Driven Philanthropy



APAR INDUSTRIES |  APAR
Tomorrow's solutions today

Kushal N Desai and Chaitanya N Desai, the visionary leaders of APAR Industries, are dedicated philanthropists committed to empowering communities through healthcare, education, rural development, and gender equality. Since its inception — long before Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) became mandatory — APAR's founders firmly believed that businesses have a responsibility to society at large. They were strong advocates of the idea that everyone, regardless of religion, gender, caste, or class, should have access to quality education and healthcare. In an interview with Hurun India, the Desai brothers discuss their mission to create lasting, positive change by investing in scalable, impactful projects that uplift underserved populations and drive sustainable growth.

1. Philanthropy has been deeply ingrained in the culture of APAR for generations. What does philanthropy personally mean to both of you, and how do you see your family's legacy of giving back evolving in the future?

Contribution beyond business has been central to APAR and our family's ethos for generations, reflecting our belief in collective action to uplift communities and foster meaningful change.

When I was growing up, my father was uncompromising on certain aspects. He wanted us to grow up with an intimate understanding of the issues our employees were facing. Whether it was the living conditions in and around their villages, or the aspirations and struggles of their children, we always grew up grounded firmly in that reality and a resolve that we need to make things better.

Philanthropy means creating opportunities for those in need and ensuring sustainable community growth. It is a personal commitment rooted in our family's values. Our founders were big believers in the idea that everyone, regardless of religion, gender, caste or class, received a quality education. On this premise, APAR has been an active participant in education,

healthcare, gender equality, rural development, sustainability, and community welfare. As leaders of APAR, we are committed to expanding our efforts to address pressing societal challenges, driven by the vision of creating a better future for all.

Our legacy focuses on addressing critical societal gaps and making a tangible difference. Looking ahead, we aim to embrace innovative solutions to emerging challenges, such as using technology to enhance access to education and healthcare.

2. APAR has been a major supporter of educational initiatives, particularly in Mumbai and Gujarat, through institutions like Dharmsinh Desai University and schools for underprivileged children. What impact do you believe your efforts in education have had on the local communities, and how do you plan to further this cause in the coming years?

Education is a transformative tool, and its impact is evident in the communities where our flagship institution is Dharmsinh Desai University (DDU). Dharmsinh Desai University stands as a cornerstone of this commitment, offering diverse programs in

Technology, Dental Sciences, Pharmacy, Medical Science, and Management while achieving Grade A accreditation by NAAC in Cycle III. The efforts have significantly impacted educational access in Gujarat since 1968, providing more than 5,000 students each year with access to quality education, leading to improved skills, better livelihood opportunities, and stronger community development.

Looking ahead, we aim to expand vocational training aligned with industry needs, increase scholarships for marginalised groups, and leverage digital platforms to make education accessible even in remote areas.

We actively support initiatives such as school-on-wheels programs and skill development efforts. We are proud to mention the impactful work spearheaded by my mother, Smt. Maithili Desai, in Palghar, which includes contributions to the Govardhan Skill Centre (GSC) and Anganwadis, fostering education and community development.

3. Your efforts in healthcare are truly transformative, with contributions to hospitals like the Dharmsinh Desai Methodist Memorial Heart Hospital and the Dr. N. D. Desai Faculty of Medical Science & Research. What has been the most fulfilling experience for you in the healthcare space, and how do you ensure that these initiatives continue to provide quality care to underserved communities?

Our support for institutions like the Dharmsinh Desai Memorial Methodist Heart Institute (DDMM) and the Dr. N. D. Desai Faculty of Medical Science & Research has enabled us to witness patients recover from life-threatening conditions. The Dr. N. D. Desai Faculty of Medical Science & Research, with its 775 beds, has treated over 13 lakh outdoor patients and performed nearly 35,000 surgeries, offering free consultations and treatments. The recent inauguration of the Dinsha Patel Dialysis Centre will further address critical kidney care needs. To ensure quality care, we prioritise advanced training for healthcare professionals, maintain modern infrastructure, and collaborate with like-minded experts.

The strategy at DDMM serves a dual purpose: it ensures that underserved communities receive essential healthcare services free of cost, and it provides medical students and professionals with invaluable hands-on training. Thus, enhancing the well-being of the community and contributing significantly to the national pool of skilled healthcare providers.

Furthermore, we've contributed to the Rotary

Foundation (India) for their project to provide eye care to thousands of underprivileged villagers through the Bhaktivedanta Eye Hospital in Barsana, Mathura District, UP.

4. With APAR's active involvement in mid-day meal programs across several states, feeding over 600,000 children daily, how do you measure the success of these initiatives? What challenges have you faced in scaling this program, and what keeps you motivated to continue making such a significant impact?

The mid-day meal program is one of our most impactful initiatives, addressing both hunger and education by providing nutritious meals that help children focus better in school. This work is closely tied to our partnership with the Annamrita Foundation (ISKCON Food Relief Foundation), where APAR has been a steadfast supporter for generations. As Chairman and Trustee of the foundation, I (Kushal) take immense pride in continuing the legacy of my father, Dr. Narendra Desai, whose vision and commitment have shaped the multi-generational dedication to this mission.

Annamrita operates centralised kitchens that supply meals to schools, hospitals, and underserved communities across India, dedicated to eradicating hunger. While scaling this program presents challenges, such as logistical complexities and securing consistent funding, we remain committed to expanding our efforts and finding innovative solutions to maximise its impact on children's well-being.

5. APAR has played an important role in uplifting children and young girls through scholarships, rehabilitation programs, and homes for orphans. Can you share some success stories or moments that highlight the impact of these initiatives? How do you foresee expanding efforts to support the education and independence of girls in India?

Dedicated to uplifting children and young girls, APAR focuses on scholarships, rehabilitation programs, and homes for orphans. The Govardhan Skill Centre (GSC) in Palghar, run by Sri Nityananda Educational Trust, has empowered over 650 tribal students with skill training and placements, trained 300+ women in stitching and other courses, and increased household incomes by INR 1.5 Lacs. GSC's FabLab/Maker's Space also promotes micro-entrepreneurship. We also support socio-economically disadvantaged women in STEM through Human Capital for Third Sector, sponsoring students to complete higher education and become leaders.

Our collaboration with Katalyst India exemplifies our commitment to education and empowerment for girls in India, illuminating pathways for underprivileged girls in STEM and guiding them toward corporate success. Through initiatives like the Badi Didi program, led by mentor and board member Mrs. Noopur Desai, we aim to build a more inclusive, sustainable, and educated world, empowering communities and promoting gender equality.

6. Your alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals reflects a strong commitment to sustainability. Could you share more about the results you've achieved in these areas and the future of APAR's sustainability projects in India?

To design & manufacture Building Blocks for Energy Infrastructure, Transportation & Telecommunication Sectors that contribute meaningfully to make this world a more energy efficient, environmentally sustainable and safer place.

Our commitment to sustainability is evident in our product development strategies, including biodegradable transformer oils and medium voltage covered conductors. We are the largest exporter of and largest cable manufacturer for the renewable sector in India.

In our manufacturing processes, we have prioritised waste management by implementing robust systems for responsible disposal and innovative recycling methods to minimise environmental impact. The company is also working closely with suppliers to promote sustainable practices across its supply chain and has begun computing Scope-3 emissions to address value chain emissions comprehensively. We aim to reduce its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions intensity by 50% by 2030 as part of its commitment to the Science-Based Targets Initiative (SBTi).

APAR's ESG roadmap, aligned with UN SDGs, focuses on eight key areas, including carbon reduction, water management, renewable energy, and circular economy. Recent achievements include increasing renewable energy to 7.3%, commissioning projects expected to save 10,000 tCO₂e annually, and reducing GHG emission intensity by 5%. We've also lowered our water footprint by over 13,000 KL and harvested 61,497 KL of rainwater. These efforts underscore APAR's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable innovation.

7. Both of you are deeply involved in various philanthropic projects nationwide. Could you describe how traveling the length and breadth of India has shaped your perspective on the issues that need the most attention? Are there any particular regions or sectors where you feel a stronger focus is required?

Our travels across India have highlighted the diverse challenges communities face, from limited access to education and healthcare in rural villages to environmental issues in urban areas. I, (Kushal) started my career at APAR in sales and was travelling from Monday to Thursday for the first two years. We both continue to travel to our beautiful country for safaris, pilgrimages and more. Travelling to less developed parts of the nation reinforces the need to prioritise empowerment and rural education, particularly in remote areas where inadequate infrastructure and limited awareness pose unique challenges. Targeted interventions combined with community involvement are crucial for addressing these issues effectively.

8. Looking ahead, where do you see yourselves and APAR contributing the most over the next five years? What is one area of philanthropy where you wish to create lasting impact, and why?

In the next five years, we will prioritise education, healthcare, and sustainability while focusing on impact analysis to drive meaningful change. We envision creating more entrepreneurs in rural areas via skill development and providing job placements through the Govardhan Skill Centre (GSC). Our efforts will extend to Anganwadis and women's empowerment, ensuring fair and equal opportunities. Through Dr. N. D. Desai Faculty of Medical Science & Research and Dharmsinh Desai Methodist Memorial Heart Hospital, we aim to nurture more doctors in India and increase awareness and accessibility to healthcare. Our goal is to create lasting positive change in communities.