

## **Discussion:**

# **“Case Study of Sikh Diaspora Philanthropy in Punjab”**

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# Summary

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- Innovations in mode of philanthropy
  - Grass roots fundraising
  - Involvement of international donor agencies
  - Health and education projects
- Issues in diaspora philanthropy
  - Political infighting
  - Management practices
  - Preference for conspicuous philanthropy

# Background on Philanthropy

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Themes (Chana 2009, survey of 477 villages):

- Conspicuous giving
- Religious vs. social projects
  - Increased move toward latter, e.g. education
  - But still limited investment in basic infrastructure (roads, sewerage) or services (primary health care)
- “Spontaneous, non-planned, and largely unorganized contributions appeared to characterize NRI philanthropy in Punjab”.

# Constraints

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- Failure of givers or structural constraints?
- Limited NGO and civil society organizations on the ground
  - E.g. compared to TN or Kerala
  - Models worth studying and replicating
- Implications
  - One-shot projects much more feasible than sustained service delivery
  - Even within productive development uses, bias toward infrastructure
    - Problematic for sustained improvement in outcomes

# Example: Education

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- Common educational investment: building schools, auditoriums, etc
- Education in Punjab (Pratham 2010)
  - School enrollment: 98%
  - Students in Std V who cannot do basic division: (30-40%)

# Role of Philanthropy

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## 2 potential purposes

- Relief
  - Sources of spiral to debt: health shocks, crop failures, borewell failures
  - Providing relief for indigent households
- Development
  - Proactive investments in human capital (education, health)
  - Proactive investments in improving agricultural sustainability
  - Proactive investments in movement away from agriculture (VCs with limited interest in profits)
- What are potential models for (feasible) diaspora intervention?
  - Focus within current constraints today
  - (Importance of more substantive approaches cannot be overstated!)

# Models for Development (I)

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## **Delivery of Relief services**

Example: Baba Nanak Education Society

- Activities
  - Document farmer suicides
  - Providing monthly transfers to survivors (conditional on school attendance)
  - Proactive educational programs, computer training, etc
- Assets
  - Strong community support
  - Reliable infrastructure and activities
- Challenges
  - Funds and focus on operational sustainability
  - Necessary for institutionalization
- Role for diaspora
  - Identify good organizations (domestic or international)
  - Invest actively in institutionalization (start-up costs are huge)

# Models for Development (II)

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## **Development: Improvements in agricultural sustainability**

Example: Columbia-PAU Tensiometers project



Explaining tensiometer technology to farmers.

- Project
  - Pilot with 525 farmers
  - 22% water savings among those who took-up
- Benefits
  - Role for academics (this crowd!)
  - Good way to attract institutional and multilateral funds



# Models for Development (III)

## Development: Cash transfers

### Example: Give Directly (Kenya)



#### Introducing a radical new way to give: directly

Use GiveDirectly to send money directly to the poor

- ① You donate through our webpage
- ② We locate poor households in Kenya
- ③ We transfer your donation electronically to a recipient's cell phone
- ④ The recipient uses the transfer to pursue his or her own goals

#### latest news

GiveWell has named GiveDirectly one of three "top-rated" charities.

GiveDirectly has received a Global Impact Award from Google. Read more on our [blog](#) and from [Google](#).



# Models for Development (III)

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## **Relief & Development: Cash transfers**

Example: Give Directly (Kenya)

- Cash transfers: one of the biggest forms of development assistance in last 3 decades
- Evidence on improvements:
  - Education and health (many countries)
  - Investments in businesses (Sri Lanka)
  - Little evidence for increased drug and alcohol use
  - Targeting to women is powerful mechanism (outcomes & power in household)
- Potential relevance for Punjab
  - Requires little infrastructure
  - Main constraint: identifying HHs
  - Arguably easier and more scalable than traditional projects