

ROOTED TO GROUND

Swas Healthcare in Kutch provides traditional medical cure to the needy

WHEN the 2001 earthquake devastated the Kutch region of Gujarat, IIM-A student Sanjay Singh rushed there with an NGO to help the victims. Working amidst the rubble and destruction that claimed thousands of lives, he found a greater calling, one that was to prompt him to leave his five-year cushy job at Glaxo Pharma. "I was struck by the thought of setting up a healthcare centre for nearby villagers," says Singh. That idea is today known as Swas Healthcare.

Incorporated in 2006 as a small unit, with an initial capital of Rs 50 lakh, Swas Healthcare seeks to provide traditional medical treatments for a range of disorders. "I borrowed some money from my IIM-A friends and family to kick-start the venture along with my co-founders," says Singh. While doing his due diligence for the venture, Singh came across Swati Sanghavi, a yoga expert and Dr Jay Sanghavi, a practicing naturopath with many decades of experience. Singh wasted no time in teaming up with both of them and started his company's operations in 2007. "We all had the entrepreneurial zeal and an urge to help the needy," says Swati, who is now married to Singh.

Swas's health care centre at Bhachau, in Kutch, claims to be the first-of-its-kind naturopathy hospital that treats chronic diseases like arthritis, kidney and liver problems, diabetes, hypertension, spondilitis and fibromyalgia, with a combination of naturopathy, ayurveda and yoga.

About 500 annual visitors, one-fifth of whom arrive from foreign shores, get 'treatment of the mind, body and heart' at the 50-bed hospital campus (owned by a trust). The cost ranges from Rs 300 to Rs 1,500 per day for most treatments and the hospital gets a large number of patients from nearby villages. "I have man-



HEALING TOUCH: Jay Sanghavi & Sanjay Singh plan to expand to other rural areas

aged to reduce stress levels with the help of specialised therapists from Swas. Also, this place is quite economical," says Johanne A, 30, a visitor from Canada, who is struggling with alcohol addiction.

Like him, hundreds of people are raving about the benefits of Swas's treatment methods. The healthcare firm runs on a reverse 'hub and spoke' model of naturopathy clinics and hospitals. "We plan to establish more such hospitals in rural areas and provide professional services at economical prices," says Singh.

Come next week, his firm will inaugurate a day-care clinic in Ahmedabad. The firm also plans to open two more clinics, one each in

Rajkot and Kutch, for which it has been talking to VC funds to raise capital. Last year, Swas raised nearly Rs 2 crore from Aavishkaar India Micro Venture Capital Fund to invest in expanding new centres and upgrading infrastructure facilities. Also, Singh is planning to initiate training

and mobilising centres to produce more therapists and yoga experts for Swas's facilities. "We have firm plans to expand our reach to the whole country in the next two years and enhance our manpower from 40 to over 100 people," says Singh.

The firm has been growing at more than 25% year-on-year on occupancy rates. Recently, Swas Healthcare tied-up with corporates such as the Parle Group and Excel Industries to provide regular healthcare treatment to their employees. Swas Healthcare has already done business of Rs 1 crore, and is hopeful of doubling this figure by this year end. As Singh talks to VC funds for the next round of funding, Dr Sanghavi has been weaving plans to enter the global market. "A few healthcare units from the US, Japan and the Middle-east are interested in setting up such healthcare facilities in their country," says Dr Sanghavi. Singh is also planning to hire an experienced graduate from IIM-A to add value to the firm.

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