

A STUDY OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY INDIAN CORPORATES- WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INFOSYS

Girish T.R,

Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce Government First Grade College, Gundlupet 571 111
Chamarajanagara Dist.

ABSTRACT

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) emphasizes obligation and accountability of business to society. CSR is emerging as a new field in the management research. It is an initiative to access and take responsibility for the company's effects on the environment and impact on social welfare. The business organizations have realized besides concentrating on Profit and Wealth maximization, it is also important to build reliable rapport with the community at large. Companies are employing CSR as a tool to integrate economic, environmental and social objectives with the company's operation and growth. The MCA has made CSR mandatory for certain companies who fill certain criteria through making provisions in the Companies Act 2013. In this paper, an attempt is made to study the CSR initiatives among the corporates – with a special reference to that of Infosys Company

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, MCA, Companies Act 2013, Indian Corporates, Infosys Company

INTRODUCTION

India has always believed in the philosophy of philanthropy and it does exist among the businesses too. The major social responsibilities of business is not to make losses, to make optimum utilization of scarce natural resources, improve quality of life and have responsibility of employment and income, environment protection and local development. With the rapidly growing industrial and service sector India has become an emerging economic power and business houses are accepting social responsibility and working towards the betterment of the nation and people. However business houses are facing new challenges, opportunities and responsibilities. Since the business operates within a society, uses its resources and depends on its functioning CSR has become an important responsibility of business organizations to be carried out for the welfare of the society and has become one of the important barometer to measure the company's contribution to society. The Companies Act, 2013, has markedly altered the mindset of corporate India. It has made them more conscious about their role as change agents. No longer are they just focusing on bottom-lines, but also on social impact and sustainability.

Globalisation has opened up economies world over and offered scope for investment in any part of the world and also brought the new opportunities to developing countries to participate globally in socio-economic and cultural affairs. Greater access to markets of developed countries and technology transfer hold out promise of improved productivity and higher living standards.

The process of globalisation has thrown up new challenges like growing inequality across and within nations, volatility in financial market, environmental degradation and competition among the corporations, to overcome these challenges the globalisation has given rise to the practice and concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

MEANING OF CSR

The term "Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)" can be referred as corporate initiative to assess and take responsibility for the company's effects on the environment and impact on social welfare. The term generally applies to company's efforts that go beyond what may be required by regulators or environmental protection groups. Corporate social responsibility may also be referred to as "corporate citizenship" and can involve incurring short-term costs that do not provide an immediate financial benefit to the company, but instead promote positive social and environmental change.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is commitment by organizations to balance financial performance with contributions to the quality of life of their employees, the local community and society at large is gaining worldwide value as a business tool and social effort.

Organizations are increasingly called upon to evolve beyond focusing on the financial bottom line and consider the social and environmental impact of their business decisions, particularly as globalization continues. Corporate social responsibility includes a broad range of practices and activities, from charitable donations to cause branding to business strategies addressing human rights and labor issues. How organizations demonstrate corporate social responsibility and the rationale behind such practices may vary according to the industry, sector and country in which organizations operate.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To know the origin of CSR
2. To know the motives of CSR
3. To study the CSR activities and initiatives carried out by Infosys Company

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design: Explorative in nature

Sources of data: Secondary

Nature of Study: An overview of literature related to meaning, origin of CSR and its motives and the CSR initiatives of Infosys Company

ORIGIN OF CSR

The concept of CSR has become recognized in the latest decades, its core idea can be traced through history. In the 18th century employers realized the value of having an efficient workforce and that a lack of food, housing and healthcare had a negative effect on the workforce. Medical facilities, housing and subsidized food that might have been seen as philanthropic improvements was actually created out of self-interest (Brown & Christopher Stephen, 2005). Thus, in the 18th century people saw positive economic consequences of CSR actions. The history of CSR highlights the ways in which business leaders and scholars have struggled to define and conceptualize CSR.

As America and Europe emerged from World War II and confronted the emerging Cold War tensions, thinking about business and the future course of the economic system in the West intensified. The preliminary research for the envisioned project revealed a range of opinion and ongoing efforts to articulate business responsibilities, to provide a philosophical foundation for those responsibilities, and to develop effective ways of responding to or implementing those responsibilities.

HISTORY OF CSR IN INDIA

India had a very well-developed commerce and industrial sector since ancient times. The concept of helping the poor and disadvantaged was cited in much of the ancient literature. The idea was also supported by several religions where it has been intertwined with religious laws. “Zakaat”, followed by Islam, is two percent donation from one’s earnings, which is specifically given to the poor and disadvantaged. Similarly, Hinduism follows the principle of “Dhramada” and Sikhs the “Daashaant”

The early pioneers of Indian Industry, whether TATAs, Birlas, or Bajajs, firmly believed in the concept of social responsibility of business. The founder of TATA Steel, Jamshedji Nusserwanji Tata expressed in his speak in 1903: “We generate wealth for the Nation. What comes from the people must, to the extent possible, therefore, get back to the people”. Gandhiji went on to elaborate this concept further by emphasizing the moral responsibility of business through his idea of Trusteeship. He viewed owners of capital, as Trustees holding resources on behalf of the society, which to produce goods and services, will benefit society, at large. The founder of Bajaj group, Shri Jamnalal Bajaj said: “Our wealth should be utilised for improving the quality of the society and the nation. We should never fail to spend at least a portion of our incomes on the social, economic and educational development of the province where we live.”

MOTIVES OF CSR

A number of factors are driving the increased adoption of CSR practices in the corporate India. Regulation obviously provides the baseline for corporate action, notably for employment practices and the environment. Beyond this, for many companies, being a good corporate citizen is a vital aspect of their identity, values, and vision.

In the recent years corporate business houses have substantially involved towards societal responsibilities. Companies have started to realize the importance of corporate social responsibility and initiating the steps towards it. The reasons that motivate organizations to involve in corporate social responsibility activities are discussed as follows:

1. Globalization and market forces
2. Laws and regulation.
3. Social awareness
4. Ethical Consumerism
5. Stakeholder priorities
6. Consumers Satisfaction
7. Employees Satisfaction
8. Image Building

9. Risk Management

10. Environment protection.

CSR INITIATIVES OF INFOSYS COMPANY

The CSR initiatives of Indian IT major- Infosys technology limited. The company is actively involved in the areas of healthcare, education, art and culture, destitute care, environmental contribution, rural development and community involvement. The company also provides an insight into the expected role of company in CSR.

The foundation focuses on five thrust areas to bring meaningful impact:

HEALTHCARE: Since its inception in 1996 the foundation has funded healthcare projects involving the construction of hospital wards, rest houses, buying of medical equipment and transport vehicles, sponsoring medicines and organizing health camps across both remote and urban areas of India. Infosys understands the importance of healthcare accessibility. In a society where well-being is a fundamental right, Infosys Foundation's healthcare projects have played a pivotal role in providing medical assistance and promoting good health in remote and underserved areas. Being a C-suite professional means understanding the broader implications of healthcare on workforce productivity and community well-being. Infosys' healthcare initiatives have helped to improve access to quality healthcare for people in underserved communities. The company's Healthcare program has supported the construction and operation of over 50 hospitals and clinics in underserved communities, reaching over 10 million people. The Mobile Medical Units program has provided mobile medical services to over 10 million people in remote and inaccessible areas. And the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care program has reached over 1 million people with awareness and prevention education, and provided care and support services to over 10,000 people living with HIV/AIDS.

EDUCATION: The foundation promotes primary education through global partnerships and sponsor midday meals, scholarships, teacher training programs, construction of schools and development of infrastructure such as libraries and laboratories. The foundation also works with higher institutes of learning to make the pursuit of learning and research viable and competitive. Some of the significant investments in higher and specialized education are in the areas of sponsoring chairs and courses. In our ever-evolving world, education remains the cornerstone of societal development. Infosys Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Infosys, has implemented numerous initiatives to promote education. Infosys' education initiatives have helped to improve access to quality education for students from all backgrounds. The company's Computer Classrooms program has provided computers and other educational resources to over 50,000 schools in India, reaching over 10 million students. The Rural Reach program has provided scholarships and other support to over 200,000 students from rural areas, helping them to pursue higher education. And the Fellowship Program has provided fellowships to over 1,000 students pursuing postgraduate studies in science and technology, helping to develop the next generation of leaders in these fields. This commitment to education is not merely a responsibility; it's a reflection of the company's recognition of the role education plays in shaping a better future.

ART AND CULTURE: The foundation identifies and promotes underprivileged artists who do not have access to promotes. These include writers, painters, poets and musicians. The foundation assists them on a need basis by offering financial support, encouraging their art, or helping them receive much deserved recognition.

DESTITUTE CARE: Support and vocational training help the destitute to live with dignity and earn a livelihood. The foundation partners with non-government organization to support destitute women and children, and funds programs that provide specialized training. Infosys' destitute care initiatives have helped to provide food, shelter, and other essential services to the destitute. The company's Destitute Care program has provided food, shelter, and other essential services to over 10,000 destitute people. The Old Age Homes program has supported over 50 old age homes that provide care and support to over 5,000 elderly people without families or support systems. And the Orphanages program has supported over 100 orphanages that provide care and support to over 10,000 orphaned children.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT: The foundation works with local administration across the country to achieve community development goals. It funds project that involve infrastructural development and also works towards rehabilitating victims of natural and national calamities especially rural areas. The foundation encourages projects that create awareness about hygiene, sanitation, vocational training and entrepreneurships. Infosys' rural development initiatives have helped to empower rural communities and improve their livelihoods.

The company's Rural Development program has supported initiatives in areas such as agriculture, water resource management, and sanitation, benefiting over 1 million people. The Self-Help Groups program has supported over 100,000 self-help groups among women in rural communities, helping them to become economically empowered. And the Microfinance program has provided microfinance loans to over 500,000 rural entrepreneurs, helping them to start and grow their businesses.

CONCLUSION

Corporate social responsibility focuses on the idea that a business has social obligation above and beyond making a profit and concentrates on social well-being. It requires a management to be accountable to the full range of stakeholders. Corporate social responsibility is the continuing commitment by the business to behave ethically and contribute to the economic development of the country while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families and local community and society at large. CSR is achieving commercial success in the ways that honour ethical values and respect people, communities and the natural environment, as well remains as a bench mark for the corporate objectives achievement. Infosys has been ranked No. 11 in Fortune's Change of the world list, lauded for its ESG and CSR initiatives and impact. Infosys and Infosys Foundation have been honored with the Mahatma Award under the 'ESG Excellence' and 'Social Good and its Impact' categories.

REFERENCES

Corporate Governance, Values and Ethics, Neeru Vasishth, Namita Rajput, Taxmann's November 2022

Infosys CSR - Infosys Foundation <https://www.infosys.com/infosys-foundation.html>

Infosys Foundation - Education Initiatives <https://www.infosys.com/infosys-foundation/initiatives/education.html>

Infosys Foundation - Healthcare Initiatives <https://www.infosys.com/infosys-foundation/initiatives.html>