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A STUDY ON THE AWARENESS ABOUT CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ENVIRONMENT AMONG MBA STUDENTS IN ARTS AND SCIENCE COLLEGES IN TRICHY

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THANJAVUR**


ABSTRACT

Social responsibility of business means the obligation of business enterprise to make decisions and follow lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of society. Decisions may affect environment, consumers and the community. There have been changes in attitudes of management in taking social responsibility. The social responsibility of business involves ethics which must be reflected in the philosophy of business organization. Society and business organizations are tightly interwoven since society's needs are catered to fully by the business enterprises. As global population increases, so does the pressure on limited natural resources required to meet rising consumer demand. Industrialization in many developing countries is booming as a result of technology and globalization. Consumers are becoming more aware of the environmental and social implications of their day-to-day decisions and are beginning to make purchasing decisions based on environmental and ethical concerns. However, this practice is far from consistent or universal. As corporations pursue growth through globalization, they have encountered new challenges that impose limits to their profits, adhering to government regulations, tariffs, environmental restrictions etc.

KEYWORDS

corporate social responsibility, environment, mba students, attitudes, technology.

INTRODUCTION

 Social responsibility of business means the obligation of business enterprise to make decisions and follow lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of society. Decisions may affect environment, consumers and the community. There have been changes in attitudes of management in taking social responsibility. The social responsibility of business involves ethics which must be reflected in the philosophy of business organization. Society and business organizations are tightly interwoven since society's needs are catered to fully by the business enterprises. It is the responsibility of business units to fulfill all requirements of the society. Business serves the society in different ways such as education, health, abatement of pollution, afforestation, reduction of environmental pollution, supply of quality goods and services and community development. Not only does business have responsibility towards the society, but the society also owes something to business. First and foremost awareness needs to be created before fixing the responsibility of the corporates. So assessing students knowledge about corporates responsibility towards the society is inevitable.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The idea for study was drawn from the following literature:

Tiwari Commission Report (1980). India accepted the need to cultivate sound and well organized interest in environment and incorporate environmental education at all levels.

Baddesha and Rao (1986) from their study found that the industrial effluents containing heavy metals are usually discharged into sewage canals of cities polluted the water bodies and soil.

Davidson (1992) cites that conversion of forests for cattle ranching as well as the cultivation of cash crops are responsible for 50 percent of the deforestation in the tropics.

The World Bank's (1992) World Development Report cites deforestation, land degradation, water shortage and contamination, air pollution and the loss of biodiversity as some of the many environmental problems faced today both in developed and developing countries.

Perkins and Thomas (1993) argues that in certain areas excessive grazing by domestic livestock has led a complete removal of grass cover which in turn has led to soil erosion by both wind and rain.

Schneider (1994) cited that environmental education could be achieved by working with local communities and their institution.

Ahmed (1994) evaluated a newer concern in environmental education monitoring and evaluation of the activities that are essential as feedback of information of decision makers to the public.

Jeevan Rao et al (1999) revealed that the huge amount of solid waste generation has posed serious threat to the eco-friendly atmosphere in urban areas. In India, three lakh tones of solid waste is generated daily from major urban areas.

Wesley (2004) stated in his study that increasing sewage discharge, dumping industrial wastes, effluents and agricultural run off have increased their level of depletion.

Singh and Aggarwal (2005) found from their study that higher level of metal accumulation affected the vegetation and reproductive growth.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The MBA students may become part of business concerns, so their level of understanding the concept of CSR is important. The ethical values learnt by the students are useful because the society needs conscious and morally upright managers.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) To compare the level of awareness about CSR between male and female students pursuing MBA degree
- 2) To know the level of understanding among the students about CSR.
- 3) To study the awareness of corporates ethical values among the MBA students of Arts and Science Colleges

METHODOLOGY

This is an exploratory study. Random sampling method is followed for selecting the sample size of 100 respondents. The primary data was collected by issuing questionnaire, SPSS package was used for analysis. The study relates to a period of three months i.e., from October to December 2008.

RESEARCH DISCUSSION

The quality of the results depends on reliability of the data. Reliability of the data is obtained by scientific method. Discriminant function is used to discriminate between two groups of MBA students male and female, with regard to CSR. The purpose of this analysis is to discriminate the awareness of one group with another group so that the differences, if any, may be determined statistically. For this, the following independent variables are chosen as shown in table no. 1.

TABLE NO. 1: AWARENESS VARIABLE IN CSR

S. No.	Variable	Description
1.	X ₁	Not maximizing profit
2.	X ₂	Protecting the interest of the consumers
3.	X ₃	Not to pollute the environment
4.	X ₄	Providing welfare measures
5.	X ₅	Conservation of natural resources
6.	X ₆	Supplying quality products
7.	X ₇	Abiding by the laws

The primary data pertaining to the variables are compiled from the questionnaire. The standard discriminant function of the awareness of the CSR variable is $D = -.537X_1 + .419X_2 - .324X_3 - .075X_4 + .077X_5 + .034X_6 + .478X_7$ and the function at group means is given in table no.2

TABLE NO. 2: FUNCTION AT GROUP MEANS

Category	Group means	Group means in percentage by eliminating negative value
Male	-.224 (=0)	0.00%
Female	.285 (=0.61)	6.10%

From the study, it seems that the female (MBA) students have a positive attitude towards awareness of the CSR when compared to the male students. Protecting the interest of the consumers and abiding by the laws have made significant contributions to discriminant between the groups of the MBA students regarding CSR.

As MBA students may take up entrepreneurship there is a need to acquire knowledge about CSR. For this reason, the following points were taken for discussion:

- Business cannot survive, if they do not act in a socially responsible manner
- Any business corporate should protect consumers interest
- Social responsibility is an obligation to protect environment
- Quality standard should be maintained in production
- Owners expect a fair rate of return
- All business should adopt anti-pollutional measures
- Stakeholders complaints must be handled with care
- Social welfare measures must be provided

The respondents have been asked to express their opinion on a five point Likert's scale. One way ANOVA is used and the results are given in table no.3 for testing the hypothesis;

H₀: There is no significant difference among the opinions of the MBA students on the factors of corporate social responsibility.

TABLE NO. 3: ANOVA

Source of variation	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean sum of squares	F ratio	Significance 'p' value
Between groups	7	28.042	4.006	5.025	.000*
Error	792	631.447	.797		
Total	799	659.489			

* Significance at the 5% level

The 'p' value of the ANOVA table no.3 is less than 5%. It seems that the opinion about CSR factors among the MBA students is significant. Therefore to identify the highly significant CSR factors among the MBA students, one can compare the mean scores of opinions by using the multiple comparisons test. The CSR factors mean scores of opinions are arranged in the descending order which is given in table no.4

TABLE NO. 4: CSR FACTORS MEAN SCORES OF OPINIONS

CSR factors	Mean scores of opinions
Quality standard should be maintained in production	4.3600*
Any business corporate should protect consumers interest	4.3300*
Social welfare measures must be provided	4.0909
Social responsibility is an obligation to protect the environment	4.0800
Stake holders complaints must be handled with care	4.0693
Business cannot survive, if they do not act in a socially responsible manner	3.9200
Owners expect a fair rate of return	3.8000
All business should adopt anti-pollutional measures	3.8000

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

Quality standard in production and protecting consumers interest are the significant factors relating to other CSR factors. Hence supplying quality products and protecting the interest of consumers ought to be the most important concern of the corporates.

In order to study the important contributory factors for the corporates, the students were asked to give their opinions on the following;

- Not maximizing profit
- Protecting the interest of consumers
- Not to pollute the environment
- Providing welfare measures
- Conservation of natural resources
- Supplying quality products
- Abiding by the laws

One way ANOVA is used and the results are given in table no.4 for testing the hypothesis;

H₀: There is no significant difference among the opinions of the MBA students regarding the important factors for the corporates.

TABLE NO. 5: ANOVA

Source of variation	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean sum of squares	F ratio	Significance 'p' value
Between groups	6	229.760	32.293	49.904	.000*
Error	693	531.760	.767		
Total	699	761.520			

* significance at the 5% level

The 'p' value of the ANOVA table no.5 is less than .05. The null hypothesis is rejected. It seems that the opinion of the corporate factors among the MBA students is significant. Therefore to identify the highly significant corporate factors one can arrange the opinions mean scores in the descending order of magnitude which is given in table no. 6.

TABLE NO. 6: CORPORATE FACTORS MEAN SCORES OF OPINIONS

Corporate factors	Mean scores of opinions
Supplying quality products	4.5361*
Protecting the interest of the consumers	4.5100*
Abiding by the laws	4.3900*
Not to pollute the environment	4.3301
Providing welfare measures	4.0400
Conservation of natural resources	4.0000
Not maximizing profit	2.7600

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

Supplying quality products is highly significant for the corporate followed by protecting the interest of consumers and abiding by the laws are significant factors compared to avoiding environmental pollution, providing welfare measures, conservation of natural resources and not maximizing profit.

Students opinion about ethical values for the corporates are studied by considering the following ethical factors

- Avoiding false advertisement
- No tax evasion
- Not supplying low quality products
- Complying with rules and regulations of the government
- Preservation of scarce resources
- Avoiding deceptive weight measures

One way ANOVA is used and the results are given in table no.7.

The hypothesis H_0 : There is no significant difference among the MBA students awareness on the ethical values of corporates.

TABLE NO. 7: ANOVA RESULTS ON CORPORATES ETHICAL VALUES

Source of variation	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Mean sum of squares	F ratio	Significance 'p' value
Between groups	5	106.277	21.255	15.422	.000*
Error	594	818.682	1.378		
Total	599	924.958			

* significance at the 5% level

The 'p' value of the ANOVA table no.7 is less than .05. It seems that the opinion the students regarding the ethical values of the corporates is quite significant. The corporates ethical values of the mean opinions scores are given in the table no.8

TABLE NO. 8: CORPORATES ETHICAL VALUE SCORES OF OPINIONS

Corporates ethical values factor	Mean scores of opinions
Avoiding false advertisement	4.0700*
Preservation of scarce resources	4.0396*
Complying with rules and regulations of the government	3.9200*
Avoiding deceptive weight measures	3.5859
No tax evasion	3.4700
Not supplying low quality products	2.8600

* The mean difference is significant at the .05 level

The highly significant ethical values are avoiding false advertisement followed by preservation of scarce resources and complying with the rules and regulations of the government. The respondents feel it is unethical to supply low quality products.

FINDINGS

The female students have a positive attitude towards CSR than the male students. Generally profit maximization is one of the important concerns of the corporate and this study reveals that it should be given the least preference. The corporates need to consciously adhere to the rules and regulations of the government, as it is their duty and responsibility. The respondents feel that supplying quality products and protecting the interest of consumers are important factors for the corporates. The students felt that the corporates should avoid false advertisement.

CONCLUSION

As global population increases, so does the pressure on limited natural resources required to meet rising consumer demand. Industrialization in many developing countries is booming as a result of technology and globalization. Consumers are becoming more aware of the environmental and social implications of their day-to-day decisions and are beginning to make purchasing decisions based on environmental and ethical concerns. However, this practice is far from consistent or universal. As corporations pursue growth through globalization, they have encountered new challenges that impose limits to their profits, adhering to government regulations, tariffs, environmental restrictions etc., From the study it is clear that corporates can be successful only if, they produce quality products and protect the interest of consumers, which stands to be the most important concern. Corporates have to make conscious efforts to become socially responsible, recognizing that the role and functions they perform inevitably have an impact on the society.

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WEBSITES

3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility
4. www.CorporateRegister.com

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