



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMMERCE, ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

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ETHICAL HUMAN RESOURCES WITH SUSTAINABLE RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS LEADING TO EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Business organizations have walked up to the need for being committed towards Corporate Social Responsibility. But still majority have just been taking up some form of philanthropic activities for its stakeholders. The employees of an organization occupy a central place in developing such a culture which underlines CSR values and competencies. The present study, therefore, is an attempt to explore the engagement of human resource management professionals in undertaking Corporate Social Responsibility. It also suggests Human Resource Management to take a leading role in encouraging CSR activities at all levels. The combined impact of CSR and human resource activities, which reinforce desirable behavior, can make a major contribution in creating long term success in organizations. Successful program on social responsibility rely heavily on enlightened people management practices. In this context HR department is assumed to be the coordinator of CSR activities in getting the employment relationship right which is a precondition for establishing effective relationships with external stakeholders and thus can orient the employees and the organization towards a socially responsible character. Armed with a strong and committed organizational culture reinforced by responsible Human Resource Management practices, the organizations can achieve heights of success by improved profitability, employee morale, customer satisfaction, legal compliance and societal approval for its existence.

KEYWORDS

CSR, Employee engagement, Sustainable Responsible Business.

INTRODUCTION

ustainable Responsible Business is a powerful way of making sustainable competitive profit and achieving lasting value for the share holder as well as for stake holders. CSR and the reporting there of is a win-win opportunity, not just for companies and for financial investors but for society at large. sustainable responsible business (SRB) also known as corporate responsibility, corporate citizenship, responsible business, Corporate social responsibility (CSR), or corporate social performance, is a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a business model.

In the late 1990s, SRB began to gain momentum as pressure from consumers, the media, activists and various public organizations demanded that companies contribute to society. In large part, the increasing focus on SRB has been fueled by a number of events in recent years, such as the highly publicized financial scandals of Enron and WorldCom, alleged sweatshop labor by retail clothing and sports shoe manufacturers and the alleged "under-the-table" deals that companies such as Halliburton have received. Now, reputation, brand, integrity and trust are increasingly considered important measures of corporate social responsibility.

HUMAN RESOURCES

A SRB program can be an aid to recruitment and retention, particularly within the competitive graduate student market. Potential recruits often ask about a firm's CSR policy during an interview, and having a comprehensive policy can give an advantage. CSR can also help improve the perception of a company among its staff, particularly when staff can become involved through payroll giving, fundraising activities or community volunteering. See also Corporate Social Entrepreneurship, whereby CSR can also be driven by employees' personal values, in addition to the more obvious economic and governmental drivers' lines for investing entities. Contents

Another concern is that sometimes companies claim to promote CSR and be committed to sustainable development but simultaneously engaging in harmful business practices. For example, since the 1970s, the McDonald's Corporation's association with Ronald McDonald House has been viewed as CSR and relationship marketing. More recently, as CSR has become main stream, the company has beefed up its CSR programs related to its labor, environmental and other practices.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS (SRB)?

Sustainable Responsible Business is viewed as a comprehensive set of policies, practices and programs that are integrated into business operations, supply chains, and decision-making processes throughout the organization – wherever the organization does business – and includes responsibility for current and past actions as well as future impacts. SRB involves addressing the legal, ethical, commercial and other expectations society has for business, and making decisions that fairly balance the claims of all key stakeholders. Effective SRB aims at "achieving commercial success in ways that honour ethical values and respect people, communities, and the natural environment." Simply put, it means "what you do, how you do it, and what you say." Several terms have been used interchangeably with SRB.

ENGAGED EMPLOYEE

An "engaged employee" is one who is fully involved in, and enthusiastic about, his or her work, and thus will act in a way that furthers their organization's interests. Employee engagement is derived from studies of morale or a group's willingness to accomplish organizational objectives which began in the 1920s. Thus the birth of the term "employee engagement" is an individual's emotional phenomenon. Engagement at work was conceptualized by William A. Kahn (1990) as the 'harnessing of organizational members' selves to their work roles. In engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) defines flow as the 'holistic sensation' that people feel when they act with total involvement. Flow is the state in which there is little distinction between the self and environment. When individuals are in Flow State little conscious control is necessary for their actions Employee Engagement as the extent to which workforce commitment, both emotional and intellectual, exists relative to accomplishing the work, mission, and vision of the organization. I see engagement as a heightened level of ownership where each employee wants to do whatever they can for the benefit of their internal and external customers, and for the success of the organization as a whole.

HR'S ROLE IN SRB

HR'S ROLE IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

With the growing importance of SRB in companies, HR professionals play a key role in initiating, developing and sustaining SRB activities in the organization. While some companies have separate SRB executives who are responsible for coordinating and managing events, most companies expect HR personnel and

other employees to invest their time and participate in such activities. Given this hectic pace of work, it's a challenge for any organization to sustain SRB initiatives. Therefore, HR professionals have an indispensable role to play in the areas of creating strong organizational culture aligning with core company values, fostering relationship that is sensitive to the community culture, engaging every employee in active community activities, and assessing the environment in order to identify threats to the community.

INDIA'S HUMAN RESOURCE (HR)

Over the last decade, India's vast manpower has played an instrumental role in its economic success story. Several corporate bigwigs are now thinking of ways of building the skill sets of their employees. Indian companies are shifting their young managers abroad to handle diversity at an early stage and help create a reserve of globally competent people.

The Tatas, Aditya Birla Group, Essar Group, Infosys and mid-cap firms like Glenmark Pharmaceuticals and S Kumars Nationwide (SKNL) are among companies that nurture global talent. The way a company treats its employees contributes directly to the company being seen as willing to accept organizations wider responsibilities. Building credibility and trusting their employer are being increasingly seen as important by employees when they choose who they want to work for. HR manager should instill individual social responsibility in every employee in the organization.

Human Resource Departments play a critical role in ensuring that the company adopts Corporate Social Responsibility programs. Furthermore, HR can manage the SRB plan implementation and monitor its adoption proactively, while documenting (and celebrating) its success throughout the company.

HR STRATEGIC FOCUS

- As a HR professional, must make their employees aware of the company's commitment to SRB & to motivate the employees to participate in such activities.
- SRB initiatives can be integrated in the philosophy of the organization and assimilating it in the core values and mission statement of the company.
- HR practices should include SRB as one of the strategic imperative of the company's annual goals and therefore make SRB every body's business and not relegate it to any specific group of employees.
- HR professionals need to play a more proactive role in defining, implementing, adding value to and monitoring SRB policies and practices, if they are to involve and meet the expectations of the key stake holders is that employees.
- Organizations need to create structure and policies to provide assistance, financial and in kind, as well as contribution of time and expertise, emphasizing on engaging employees in community program.
- The performance appraisal process can also measure the contribution of an employee towards the community development and adequate weightage can be given for providing rewards and promotions.
- A part from employees, SRB activities should also involve business partners, stake holders and customers to amalgamate their involvement and make it inclusive and far reaching.

SUSTAINABLE RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS (SRB)

SUSTAINABLE RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS IN INDIA

Indian companies are now expected to discharge their stakeholder responsibilities and societal obligations, along with their shareholder-wealth maximization goal. Nearly all leading corporate in India are involved in corporate social responsibility (CSR) program in areas like

- education
- health
- livelihood creation
- skill development
- Empowerment of weaker sections of the society etc.

Notable efforts have come from the Tata Group, Infosys, Bharti Enterprises, ITC Welcome group, Indian Oil Corporation among others.

The 2010 list of Forbes Asia's '48 Heroes of Philanthropy' contains four Indians. The 2009 list also featured four Indians. India has been named among the top ten Asian countries paying increasing importance towards corporate social responsibility (CSR) disclosure norms. India was ranked fourth in the list, according to social enterprise SRB Asia's Asian Sustainability Ranking (ASR), released in October 2009.

The companies have on an aggregate, identified 26 different themes for their CSR initiatives. Of these 26 schemes, community welfare tops the list, followed by education, the environment, health, as well as rural development.

Further, according to a study by financial paper, The Economic Times, donations by listed companies grew 8 per cent during the fiscal ended March 2009. The study of disclosures made by companies showed that 760 companies donated US\$ 170 million in FY09, up from US\$ 156 million in the year-ago period. As many as 108 companies donated over US\$ 216,199, up 20 per cent over the previous year.

FACTORS LEADING TO SRB ACTIVITIES

Many factors have led to companies paying attention to the CSR activities.

These include:

- Sustainable development
- Governance
- Communications
- Ethics
- Leadership
- Globalization
- Corporate sector impact
- Finance
- Consistency and Community
- Business Tool etc.

FEW EXAMPLES OF SRB IN INDIA

- ✓ The training of employees through "CSR Living Our Values Learning Tool" at Cadbury Schweppes (Young, 2006), the major global beverage and confectionary organization, has been a good example of partnership between HR and CSR. The company has also included social responsibility in the latest management development initiatives like the global "Passion for People" management skills program.
- ✓ According to a National Geographic survey which studied 17,000 consumers in 17 countries, Indians are the most eco-friendly consumers in the world. India topped about in energy use and conservation, transportation choices, food sources, the relative use of green products versus traditional products, attitudes towards the environment and sustainability and knowledge of environmental issues.
- ✓ IBM has joined hands with the Tribal Development Department of Gujarat for a development project aimed at tribals in the Sasan area of Gir forest.
- ✓ Wipro inculcates CSR values amongst its workforce right at the beginning during the induction process
- ✓ Companies like Wipro, Infosys, Dabur, and ICICI have even framed whistle blowing policy and showing their positive approach towards unethical practices

BENEFITS OF SRB

- 1) SRB can be used to measure the performance management systems of a company
- 2) Sustainable responsible business can be a Competitive Advantage in Attracting a Quality Workforce
- 3) SRB can survive Global economic recession:
- 4) Creating a Safe and Healthy Workplace
- 5) From a corporate social responsibility perspective, the implementation of a workplace health
- 6) Minimizing harm to the environment
- 7) SRB will not harm human stakeholders

- 8) Increased production output or innovative production methods
- 9) Because of SRB HR are less likely to leave the company voluntarily
- 10) HR may spread word of mouth advertising about how good the company is to work for.

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

The essence of employee engagement is to provide a positive environment where employees are free to contribute, and desire to contribute, more of their energy, efforts and thought processes in ways that significantly and favorably impact the goals of the organization. The Towers Perrin report further stated that companies who choose to invest time and attention in leadership, management, career development, and relevant rewards would eventually be viewed as employers of choice and more successfully engage their workers. Obviously, such investment doesn't come easy. But ask yourself what it is worth to significantly elevate employee engagement in your organization.

What happens when we have true employee engagement? Each employee has accepted a specific challenge and responds in a favorable way towards achieving a goal. There is a willingness to help the organization achieve its goals. The organizational goal has also become a personal goal for the engaged employee. This blending of goals is what drives successful outcomes because the employee truly cares about attainment of a favorable result.

FACTORS INDUCING EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

There are some nine factors that define employee engagement within a given organization. They are listed in descending order:

- Senior management communicates clear vision for long-term success
- Employees have decision-making input
- Employees have resources needed to perform jobs in a high quality way
- Employees work well in teams
- Company has a reputation as a good employer
- Employees have excellent career opportunities
- Company cares a great deal about customer satisfaction
- Employees have appropriate decision-making authority
- Company provides challenging work
- Senior management has sincere interest in employee's well being

BENEFITS OF EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

- ✓ Increased productivity.
- ✓ Motivational driver
- ✓ Improved employee competency
- ✓ Recruitment of highly qualified staff
- ✓ Retention
- ✓ Enhanced corporate pride
- ✓ Integrate fellowship into HR practice
- ✓ Identify internal champions for change

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

- The HR department should take the responsibility to develop a formal policy on sustainable practices involving employees.
- The orientation program of newly recruited candidates should be designed in a manner that corporate philosophy about SRB gets highlighted.
- The Training facilities may also be made available to instill the SRB culture among employees.
- Responsible Human Resource Management practices on equal opportunities, diversity management, whistle blowing, redundancy, human rights, harassment shall give credibility to the SRB initiatives of the organization.
- HR should make employees aware that every single person in the society has responsibility to the society they belong irrespective of the job, class, caste or gender.
- The separation of employees during mergers, acquisitions, downsizing etc. should be strategically aligned with the business strategy as well as Corporate Social responsibility.
- The Human Resource department should effectively measure and evaluate SRB activities.
- SRB activities are generally designed by top management. The HR role is only the execution of those plans.
- SRB can be integrated in to processes such as employer brand, recruitment, appraisal, retention, motivation, rewards, internal communication, diversity, coaching and training.
- SRB is a strategic opportunity which is market –led and is restrained by bureaucracy. It needs dynamism, creativity, imagination and even opportunities.
- Indian companies have to be sensitized to SRB in the right perspective in order to facilitate and create an enabling environment for equitable partnership between civil society and business.
- A part from individual efforts, companies as part of the strategy are coordinating with social organizations to take up projects like specialized medical care, blood banks, labs, slum development programs, education endeavors, environment friendly projects etc.

CONCLUSION

SRB activities undoubtedly enhance the reputation, respect and the brand image of the company in the place they operate. This would inevitably improve their profitability, attract, and retain talent, increase savings, institute diversity and establish their strong foothold in their sphere of operation. In a larger sense, they ensure a better world for the generations to come. Moreover, an individual can significantly grow and learn by participating and connecting with the society. Individuals gain self- confidence and self-esteem by helping others. The insights, knowledge and tremendous satisfaction one derives can be more enriching than monetary awards. It is the HR Professionals who can instill, nourish and stress the importance of CSR activities to the employees and management of the organization and make it a reality. Otherwise, like in most companies, SRB unfortunately would only remain in the annals of discussions and presentations.

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