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IMPACT OF VILLAGE INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATED BY KORBA COALFIELDS OF CHHATTISGARH (INDIA) ON VILLAGERS' WAY OF LIVING

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ABSTRACT

While we speak a lot on inclusive growth, our negligence to 70 per cent Indians who live in rural areas won't help us to achieve the talk. That's why, off late, most of the bodies including the government started focusing on rural development not just because of helping the rural masses but most importantly for helping themselves in sustenance. Dreaming of improving the fate of rural masses without creating necessary infrastructure is just a day-dreaming that will never happen in reality. Thus, in the backdrop of rural development what lies most sternly is rural infrastructure like rural roads, rural water supply, rural housing, rural electrification, irrigation, etc. Government in India is not affluent enough to cater all necessary infrastructures to rural areas for their development. That's why the concepts of public-private partnership (PPP) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) have gained popularity in recent times. Keeping this in background, Korba Coalfields of Chhattisgarh has started CSR activities with the aim of improving the fate of the masses of nearby areas. Although, the said coalfields have been serving the society by way of launching a good number of CSR initiatives, this paper clusters around only the rural infrastructures given by the coalfields and tries to unfold whether the infrastructures provided have impacted the lives of rural masses in a positive way.

KEYWORDS

impact, village infrastructure, korba coalfields, csr, rural development.

INTRODUCTION

For achieving economic growth at the rate of 8% or more in our country, energy needs are to be met in a sustainable manner. Among the primary energy resources, coal is the dominant primary energy source, which contributes to about 52% of total energy requirement in our country. Therefore, coal production is to be produced at a growth not less than 8% to meet our energy security. To achieve this growth in coal sector, coal mining projects need 'LAND' which is a major input resource. Mining is a location specific activity, which insists upon land where mineral deposit exists. In the present socio – economic scenario land acquisition is a burning issue which is drawing country attention for solving this difficult task. Hence for making land acquisition easy and simpler, the poor land owners have to be taken care of by coal companies by extending all socio-economic services with promptness and seriousness according to the legal provisions and policies of the company. Then only way left out is, develop social bonding with the villagers situated in and around coal mining projects. This social bonding can be developed with the help of Corporate Social Responsibility, with which companies can influence local communities by providing community assets like roads, culverts, bridges, community centers, schools, play grounds, ponds, market yards, bore wells, dug wells, hand pumps, public health centers etc. Therefore, Corporate Social Responsibility to be discharged by companies becomes very significant in addition to the endeavor of government, NGO's, and other social organizations. But impact of CSR is to be assessed properly for knowing whether CSR initiatives are influencing target beneficiaries i.e., villagers. So, this area requires associated research for Impact Assessment Study.

Too often the community views the business organization's aims as selfish gain rather than advancement of the general welfare. This impression can be removed only if corporations are fully alive to their social responsibilities and helps our society to function in harmony. There is every possibility of perceiving the concept of CSR activities in a wrong way owing to traditional and rigid mind set of the projected beneficiaries and making propaganda against the efforts of the business houses in this regard by the vested interest-group people and community. At the same time, because of some additional expenses of the business houses for CSR activities and being unaware of the exact benefits accrued to both the parties, very often the business houses do CSR activities just for their duty-sake keeping their whole-hearted involvement aside from the project. By doing so, not only they cheat the society but also they get cheated by their own deeds. In fact, they do not put their sincere effort in implementing CSR initiatives with regard to the actual requirement of target group of community, then such attempts would go in vain. Had the projected benefits been assessed properly, probably every business house would have preferred to adopt the CSR activities as strategy for their growth and development. Thus there is a gap between what potential impacts the CSR activities bring forth and what the stakeholders perceive on it. There should be proper assessment of the impact of CSR activities on the society as a whole which requires Impact Assessment Study, in turn helps to strengthen the social bonding between coal producing company and adjacent communities of villages. Had the projected benefits been assessed properly, probably every business house would have preferred to adopt the CSR activities as strategy for their growth and development. (Urge for Impact Analysis).

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Focusing on Business and the New Social Compact, C.K. Prahlad (2012) opines, "We have come to a point now where the agenda of sustainability and corporate social responsibility is not only central to business strategy but has become a critical driver of business growth".

In order to address the social implications of corporate activities with concern for human rights, livelihoods, community engagement in decision making, ethical behaviour and the valuing of local knowledge and the environment, the role of Corporate social responsibility and Social impact assessment (SIA) to share fundamental values is most important for the organization (Bice, 2014). To bridge CSR and SIA, the researcher has suggested three types of changes. First, a "cultural shift" in which the values delineated in CSR Policies and frameworks are important which need to be integrated with SIA planning and implementation process. Second, "Behaviourally" the ways in which SIA and CSR are carried out need to be reexamined. Third, "voluntarily" the CSR programmes are executed should be checked with regulatory obligations and should achieve 'go beyond compliance' status which would bring out improved performance of the company. A new wave is a new business phenomenon, in which businesses of all sizes are building up partnerships with consumers, which supports socially relevant issues, such as environment, education, the homeless, children and the elderly people. These new business activism has developed into a strategy called philanthropic economics - "doing well while doing good" (Embley, 1993). In the present era the enlightened consumer is making buying decisions wisely keeping how companies are behaving responsibly towards social and environmental issues. Eventually the consumers would look into the following:

- Checks about whether the company is using such kind of input materials which harm the environment during the manufacturing process.
- Verifies whether the company is adopting animal testing for its research and development activities.

- Observes whether company is using environmental friendly packing and merchandising material or not.
 - Watches keenly its advertisements and promotions of product with a view to check the awareness levels of its internal employees and outsiders.
- So the present consumers are also driving the investments to be done in a socially responsible manner by the investors which is termed as "Socially responsible investing".

With regard to increased criticism from the stakeholders, the mining industry started to pay serious attention to social and environmental aspects through corporate social responsibility policies and strategies. Mining activity is site specific due to natural availability of mineral resources, which often exist near local communities and villages in turn give rise to mining conflicts. Mining industry has been viewed as "devil may care attitude" by the project affected communities by virtue of its mining operations which cause major devastation to the social legacy and to the environment (Jekkins, 2004). So Mining industry need to adopt the strategy of 'constructing the community' which helps in inclusive and equitable development of local communities, employees and aboriginal groups. The community construct is nothing but developing harmonic relations with adjacent communities by giving due significance to social values and policies and transforming them into assertive actions so that the company occupies at the heart of community. Community concerns, community interests and community wellbeing have to be truly covered as most important part of the business strategy to fulfill the company's interests.

3. OBJECTIVE AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of this study is to assess the impact of corporate social responsibility activities in the form of village infrastructure initiated by Korba coal fields of Chhattisgarh (India) on life style of communities in and around Korba coal fields of Chhattisgarh.

The primary data collected and made use of to find out changes in two time elements – before the launch of CSR initiatives and after a period of five years since the launch of CSR initiatives - pertaining to; People living BPL, incidence and depth of diseases, ambience of the village, enrolment ratio in primary, secondary and higher level of education, infant mortality rate and use of modern gadgets by the villagers

In fact, Primary data is collected and made use of to know the feel good ratio of the villagers in the same two time elements. This being a qualitative aspect of research, the data is collected through in-depth interview, questionnaire/schedule and observation.

The sample design made is as given below:

- The type of universe – Finite universe or population.
- Sampling unit – About 30 villages situated in and around coal mining projects consisting of about 4000 families.
- Source list or Sampling frame – Census list obtained from District Collector office.
- Sample size – 500 to 600 families (one respondent per family).
- Simple random sampling method is used for collecting primary data from the beneficiaries of CSR initiatives implemented by Coal Company in the villages of korba district of Chhattisgarh.
- The sample size for the purpose of the broad study is 500 (beneficiaries/projected beneficiaries) but for the pilot purpose a sample size of 63 has been considered and this research paper is on the basis of this pilot sample.
- a well-structured set of questionnaires (Questions mostly on Likert Scale) has been used for the Impact and Need Analysis.

On the basis of the responses of the beneficiaries/projected beneficiaries, the impact of CSR initiative on the society is assessed. While collecting data since the enumerators were engaged along with the researcher, to ensure data integrity, audits were conducted on regular basis.

4. CSR IN INDIAN COAL MINING INDUSTRY

As the Mining companies are location specific due to existence of minerals at particular part of land on planet earth. But in the public opinion about the mining industry is that it causes major devastation to the land, water and air resulting huge pollution due to its mining operations like blasting, transport and handling i.e., loading and unloading. So the impact of mining operations is not usually acceptable to the local residents, communities in particular and the entire society in general. Even if Mining Industry takes care of local communities and society with their community social development projects it appears to them that the mining industry displaying 'devil may care' attitude to the impacts of its operations. The CSR projects of mining companies have been considered to be on top priority to focus on community requirements and also to have impact in economic, social and environmental aspects. However, the effectiveness of CSR initiatives of mining companies is a million-dollar question. Now due to mandatory CSR under Companies Act 2013 and also due to the global approach towards CSR Projects and their implementation by various multinational companies, other public sector companies, the coal companies also have remodeled themselves for planning and implementing CSR initiatives in a big way to cause huge positive impact on local communities and society.

The reasons why CSR Initiatives are important for Mining Companies are as follows:

- Public Opinion of the sector as a whole due to the absence of consensus over environmental and social performance.
- Pressure groups like NGOs, Civil Society Organizations, local political bodies, and media targets the mining companies for existence in neighbourhood.
- CSR initiative may sometime be perceived as a compensatory measure to the damage already done to their livelihood and social fabric - so develop community information for less term.
- Skilled manpower is not adequately available from local areas so they think that they would not get employment in these companies. But the skill development CSR programs induces confidence among these people and also encourage and accept the technological advancement in the mining companies.
- Land disputes at the time of land acquisition which rises due to absence of transparent mechanism.
- Traditional culture may get affected due to vast mining operations.
- The benefits of the project to be extended constantly and consistently to the local communities to win their confidence- sustainable livelihood project.
- Supporting local business.
- Micro-credit finance schemes - to help and support in their investments according to their interests and priorities.

The benefits of CSR Projects should be extended to the affected communities throughout the existence of coalmining projects and also beyond its mine closure. The mine closure plan should judiciously be implemented to take of environment because which the mining company can give back to society in the form of land reclamation and afforestation and other resources for fish farming, agriculture etc.

Now with mandatory CSR policy, Coal India and its subsidiaries are actively indulged in taking care of society, environment by not only taking care of its internal stakeholders (specially employees), but also extending helping hand to adjacent communities through various CSR initiatives regarding community welfare, education, health, drinking water, infrastructure, skill development, environment, empowerment of women, sports & culture, etc.

Coal India Limited and also for its subsidiary companies has a structured CSR policy for promoting the standard and quality of life of nearby communities of mining areas.

- Providing medical services to all its employees, their families and local populace through 86 fully equipped hospitals having 5835 beds, 423 dispensaries, 1524 specialist doctors and 640 ambulances.
- Providing educational facilities through 536 schools and helping 100 Below poverty line students and 25 wards of land losers with Coal India Scholarships for studying in government engineering and medical colleges.
- Providing potable water to about 2.3 million populaces in remote mining areas.

4.1. MAJOR CSR ACTIVITIES UNDER CSR POLICY IN COAL INDIA LIMITED

- Education: Financial assistance to schools, scholarships, adult literacy, cycles to needy girl students.
- Water Supply Including Drinking Water: Installation and repair of hand pumps, dug wells, bore wells, laying pipelines.
- Health Care: Organizing health awareness camps on AIDS, TB, Leprosy, diet, nutrition, family planning, facilities of mobile medical vans etc.

- Social Empowerment: Training and Development in different fields such as welding, fabrication, tailoring, farming etc for weaker section of the community for self-employment.
- Sports and Culture: Promotion of sports of different events in coalfields including nearby villages.
- Infrastructure Support: Construction of Community buildings, roads, culverts, repairing and supply of furniture for educational institutions.
- Generation of Employment: By setting up cooperative societies, construction of shopping complex etc.
- Relief of Victims against natural calamities.
- Adoption of Villages: For carrying out activities like infrastructure development such as providing solar light, pavan chakki, construction of roads etc.
- Financial Assistance to NGO's: For undertaking different activities towards uplifting of the under privileged, backward, physically and mentally challenged children.
- Financial Support: For organizing medical camps, free consultation, distribution of medicines awareness for under privileged and slum dwellers in association with local community.
- Various Activities Towards Protection of Environment: The impact on the environment due to extraction of coal is being monitored constantly by the CIL subsidiaries and adequate measures for control of air, water, and noise pollution, land degradation, deforestation etc are being undertaken in accordance with the provisions of all statutory norms, acts and rules on a regular basis by way of the following environment protection activities:
 - Plantation – Massive plantation is being carried out in command areas by state forest department every year to mitigate all sorts of pollution. Further the following measures are being undertaken to mitigate environment pollutions:
 - Air pollution control measures.
 - Water pollution control measures.
 - Land reclamation/Restoration and General cleanness.
 - Noise pollution control measures.
 - Environment Management Plan monitoring.
 - Executing statutory requirements of state pollution control boards.

4.2. CSR IN SOUTH EASTERN COALFIELDS LIMITED (Source:www.secl.gov.in)

SECL has been committed to sustainable development and inclusive growth in the adjacent villages of coal mining projects through various CSR projects implementing across 7 districts of Chhattishgarh and 3 districts of Madhya Pradesh to bridge rural – urban gap. The CSR projects of SECL are categorized under five types namely Project Buniyad, Project Armaan, Project Swasthagram, Project Vasundhara and Project Swavalamban.

Project Buniyad – aimed at providing rural infrastructure such as roads, community centres, health centres, schools, play grounds, market places, water supply etc in the targetted 350 villages located in and around coal mining project areas.

Project Armaan – aimed at improving standard and quality of education in rural areas to supplement the endeavour of central and state governments to give wings to rural children.

Project swasthagram – aimed at developing health – care programs with 17 hospitals, 47 dispensaries and 159 ambulances which manned by 251 doctors and 874 paramedical staff. Under this initiative various medical camps including eye camps, family plannong camps, diagnose camps etc being organized in nearby villages from time to time.

Project Vasundhara – aimed at protecting environment and mitigating initiatives to control pollution due to air, water, noise and land in and around mining areas through massive plantation, water harvesting, ground water recharge, waste land development, development of parks, development of eco-tourism.

Project Swavalamban – aimed to create awareness on entrepreneurship and self-employment, skill development through vocational training programs for villagers by partnering with Chhattishgarh Centre for Entrepreneurship Development in 7 districts of Chhattishgarh and 3 districts of Madhya Pradesh.

Although, SECL is dealing with various CSR initiatives, this paper is entirely on Project Buniyad, i.e., rural infrastructure.

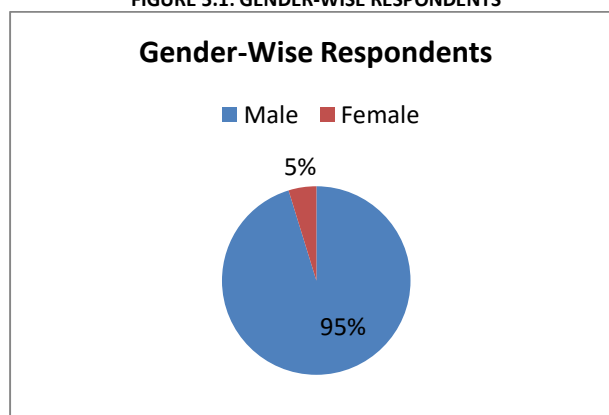
5. ANALYSIS

In order to assess the impact of rural infrastructure initiated by the Corba Coalfields of Chhatisgarh (India), 63 beneficiaries of the same belonging to 63 households were interviewed, the demographic details of who are given below.

TABLE 5.1: GENDER-WISE RESPONDENTS

Gender	No. of Respondents
Male	60
Female	3

FIGURE 5.1: GENDER-WISE RESPONDENTS

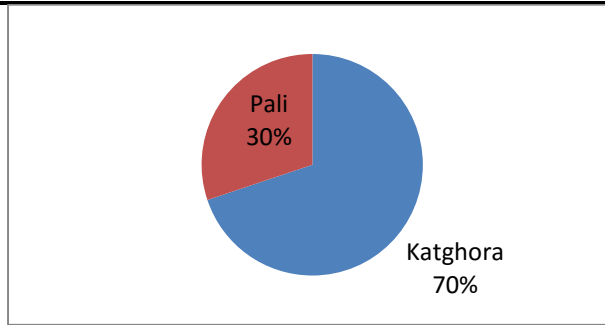


Source: Primary Data

TABLE 5.2: TEHSIL-WISE RESPONDENTS

TEHSIL	No. of Respondents
Katghora	44
Pali	19

FIGURE 5.2: TEHSIL-WISE RESPONDENTS

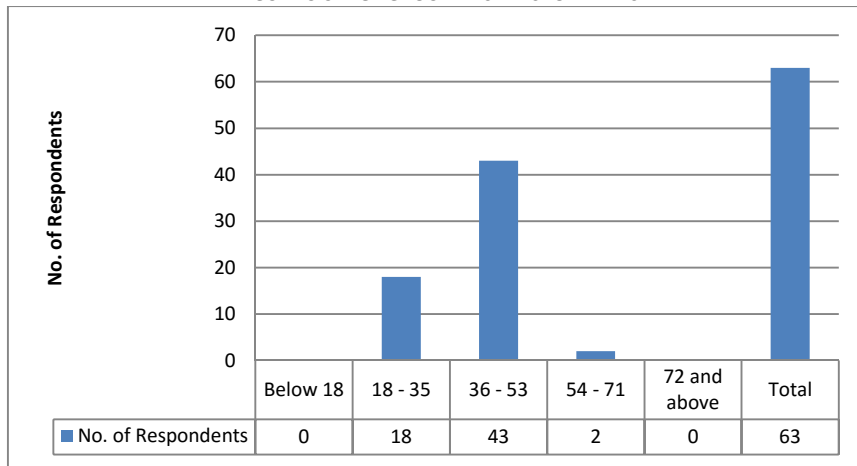


Source: Primary Data

TABLE 5.3: AGE GROUP-WISE RESPONDENTS

Age-Group	No. of Respondents
Below 18	0
18 - 35	18
36 - 53	43
54 - 71	2
72 and above	0
Total	63

FIGURE 5.3: AGE GROUP-WISE RESPONDENTS

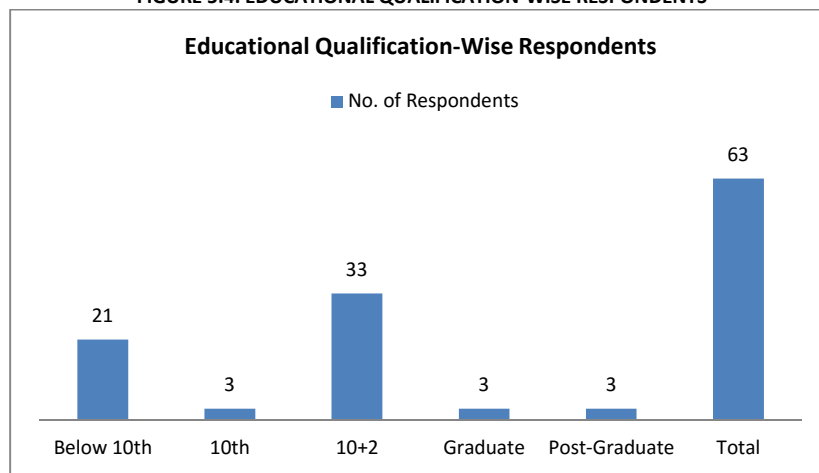


Source: Primary Data

TABLE 5.4: QUALIFICATION-WISE RESPONDENTS

Qualification	No. of Respondents
Below 10th	21
10th	3
10+2	33
Graduate	3
Post-Graduate	3
Total	63

FIGURE 5.4. EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION-WISE RESPONDENTS

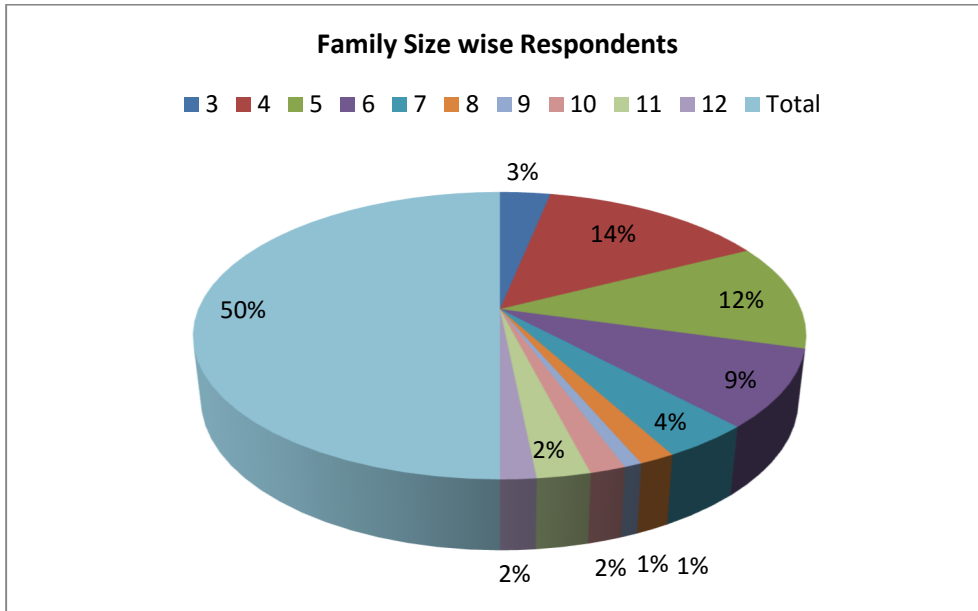


Source: Primary Data

TABLE 5.5: FAMILY SIZE-WISE RESPONDENTS

Family Size	No. of Respondents
3	4
4	18
5	15
6	11
7	5
8	2
9	1
10	2
11	3
12	2
Total	63

FIGURE 5.5: FAMILY SIZE-WISE RESPONDENTS



Source: Primary Data

TABLE 5.6: OCCUPATION-WISE RESPONDENTS

Occupation	No. of Respondents
Agriculture	40.00
Sarpanch	1.00
Advocate	1
Driver	1
Business	4
LIC Agent	1
Mazdoor	4
Mason	1
Govt. Job	1
Pvt. Job	1
Self-Employed	1
Unemployed	7
Total	63

Source: Primary Data

TABLE 5.7: ANNUAL INCOME-WISE RESPONDENTS

Annual Income	No. of Respondents
0	1
5000	2
6000	3
9000	2
10000	1
18000	4
20000	1
22000	1
24000	1
25000	1
30000	1
36000	12
40000	2
50000	6
56000	1
58000	1
60000	5
65000	1
70000	3
72000	1
80000	4
84000	1
90000	2
95000	1
100000	3
110000	1
450000	1
Total	63

Source: Primary Data

ASSESSMENT OF SATISFACTION LEVEL ON THE BASIS OF LEVEL OF AGREEMENT OF THE RESPONDENTS

The satisfaction level of the respondents has been ascertained by tracing their agreement level in a 5-point Likert Scale in which 1 is denoted for Strongly Disagreed, 2 is denoted for Disagreed, 3 is denoted for Undecided, 4 is denoted for Agreed and 5 is denoted for Strongly Agreed. For the purpose, seven statements have been given to the respondents to rate on the basis of their agreement and the same is presented in Table 5.8.

TABLE 5.8: SATISFACTION LEVEL OF THE RESPONDENTS

Facet	No. of Respondents on Rating				
	1	2	3	4	5
The facilities provided as mentioned above are exactly in line with my requirements	34	7	3	11	8
I along with my family members do not have any difficulty in using these facilities	35	7	3	11	7
The quality of facilities catered by Coal Company is excellent	36	5	4	10	8
These facilities have been helping my family to easily face the emergency and maintain a sanitary living	35	2	8	9	9
Absence of any of the facilities provided would have been proved to be costly affair for me to maintain the present standard of living	33	8	3	9	10
Infra facilities provided by Coal Company have been reflected in the efficiency of my family in the form of performance in earnings, savings and growth	34	4	4	11	10
These infra facilities have made our (family's) life ease and comfortable	39	1	5	9	9

Source: Primary Data

As it is reflected from the facts generated, more than 60% of the respondents are not feeling that the infrastructure facilities provided by the Korba Coalfields have bettered their way of living. However, around 30% of the respondents are agreeing that they have found an improvement in their standard of living by virtue of the infrastructure facilities provided by the Korba Coalfields.

It is inferred that those who have agreed or strongly agreed to the statements have definitely felt the change leading to the betterment. But respondents' disagreement or strongly disagreement to the statements does not mean that the rural infrastructure facilities have no impact on their living. In fact, if some facilities are benefitting a group in the society, they are having beneficial features and assets created by the Korba Coalfields must have some positive impact on all. Still since a good junk of the respondents are disagreeing, that means, either they are not getting what they were wanting or they fail to assess their satisfaction level or they responded becoming vindictive for non-fulfillment of one or other desires by the sponsoring body. Moreover, it is found that the dissatisfaction is not due to the steps in providing infrastructure facilities but due to not taking care in maintaining the same for long.

6. CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings of the study, the stakeholders involved in CSR initiatives will come to know the real benefits of such activities and hence will be aware of their rights and responsibilities. Not only the beneficiaries will be keen to take the advantages of the CSR activities provided by Coal Company but also the management who feel these activities burdensome and tasking may get motivated to adopt such activities as a strategy for their growth. In fact, this study will help understanding the role of CSR in strengthening the social bond. The relevance of this Project can be extended to social welfare schemes of govt. or charity organizations/NGOs/Multilateral funded Projects.

It is inferred from the analysis that the infrastructure facilities provided by the Korba Coalfields of Chhatisgarh (India) in spite of having multiple beneficial features, all the beneficiaries are not getting the benefit equally or not making use of the facilities optimally. Thus to facilitate best use of the rural infrastructure by the projected beneficiaries, the sponsoring authority must educate them aptly about the benefits of the same and how to maintain the infrastructure for long. In fact, the sponsoring authority has to inculcate the practice of Individual Social Responsibility (ISR) that make the CSR fetch the best to the society.

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