

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF RESEARCH IN COMPUTER APPLICATION & MANAGEMENT

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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON AWARENESS LEVELS OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO FORD FOUNDATION

V.PRATHIBA

ASST. PROFESSOR

DEPARTMENT OF MBA

VIGNANA BHARATHI INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

AUSHAPUR(V), R R DIST – 501 301

DR. S. V. RAMANA

PROFESSOR

DEPARTMENT OF MBA

VIGNANA BHARATHI INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

AUSHAPUR(V), R R DIST – 201 301

ABSTRACT

Globally Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has grown exponentially in the last decade. Today, the companies are ranked not only on the basis of their financial performance but also on their contribution towards the society. If this social responsibility is neglected, then the firm's reputation gets damaged there by creating a negative impact on the stakeholders and importantly on the society. The collapse of Rana Plaza factory in Bangladesh which exposed the unsafe working conditions can be cited as an example for the same. In the wake of the horrific collapse of building which killed as many as 800 workers in Rana Plaza factory, Wal-Mart an U.S retail chain store had pledged \$1.8 million to train Bangladesh plant managers in safety techniques as a part of CSR. On the other hand, U.S power plant Enron has become a by-word for corporate irresponsibility for its financial misrepresentation. Driven by the CSR movement, firms (especially multinational corporations) have sought to position themselves as good corporate citizens. Beyond protecting firm and brand reputation, companies that are considered to be 'good' corporate citizens may get listed in a special category called as Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) indexes. There are many NGOs who are into the services of Corporate Social Responsibility but this study is with respect to Ford Foundation. The Ford foundation is chosen as it is one of the largest and oldest international NGO which is into philanthropic services and charity for more than 75 years. This research does the survey about the awareness levels of select respondents in CSR and the ford foundation. The survey was done with the help of the structured questionnaire.

KEYWORDS

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Ford foundation, Non-Government Organization (NGO), Socially Responsible Investment (SRI).

INTRODUCTION

Ever since the emergence of civilization, social behavior has become an integral part of human life. However, due to competition and concept of "Survival of the Fittest" corporate started to concentrate on their survival, least worrying about the society. In the recent past the old ideology of giving back to the society what it got from it has emerged as the concept of *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*.

These days, the website of every Fortune 1000 company has some form of CSR report. Most use the detailed principles of the Global Reporting Initiative, a nonprofit that develops and disseminates sustainable reporting guidelines.

Today, the companies are ranked not only on the basis of their financial performance but also on their contribution towards the society. If this social responsibility is neglected, then the firm's reputation would badly damage making a negative impact on the stakeholders and importantly on the society. The collapse of the *Rana Plaza garment factory* in Bangladesh exposed the unsafe working conditions. In the wake of this incident which killed as many as 800 workers, *Wal-Mart* had pledged \$1.8 million to train Bangladesh plant managers in safety techniques as a part of CSR. Enron has become a by-word for corporate irresponsibility for its financial misrepresentation on the flip side of the coin.

AN OVERVIEW ABOUT CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The term "corporate social responsibility" came into common use in the late 1960s and early 1970s after many multinational corporations formed the term stakeholder, meaning those on whom an organization's activities have an impact. It was used to describe corporate owners beyond shareholders as a result of an influential book by R. Edward Freeman, *Strategic management: a stakeholder approach* in 1984. Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is also known as corporate responsibility or Citizenship or Sustainability or Corporate social performance etc.

CSR is about how companies manage the business process to produce an overall positive impact on society. For this the companies need to answer two aspects of their operations:

1. The quality of their management in terms of their people and their processes.
2. The nature and quantity of their impact on society in various areas.

DEFINITIONS OF CSR

In the words of Carroll and Buchholtz 2003 "CSR can be defined as the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point of time."

World Business Council for Sustainable Development, 2000 defines "CSR as the commitment of business to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life."

CONTRIBUTION OF NGOS TO CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Among the many business organisations that are involved in socially responsible activities the contribution of Non-Government organizations (NGO's) is significant. A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. The number of NGOs operating in the United States is estimated at 1.5 million. Russia has 277,000 NGOs. India is estimated to have had around 3.3 million NGOs in 2009, just over one NGO per 400 Indians, and many times the number of primary schools and primary health centre's in India. Types of NGOs:

DIRECTED NGOS

The CEO or the Chairman of the corporate heads these NGOs. This establishes a noble idea of the corporate towards the society.

FUNDED NGOS

These NGOs are also established and funded by the corporate for the purpose of social activities. But they work independently without the interference of the corporate. They are registered bodies to conduct social responsibility activities.

ESTABLISHED NGOS

These NGOs are registered bodies under Societies Registration Act, Public/Private charitable Trust Act, or Companies Act as not-for-profit organization. They pull funds on their own through donations from philanthropic organizations, corporates. Some of the NGO's are funded by the government.

NGO TYPE BY LEVEL OF COOPERATION

Community-based Organizations (CBOs) arise out of people's own initiatives. They can be responsible for raising the consciousness of the urban poor, helping them to understand their rights in accessing needed services, and providing such services.

Citywide Organizations include organizations such as chambers of commerce and industry, coalitions of business, ethnic or educational groups, and associations of community organizations.

National NGOs include national organizations such as the Red Cross, YMCAs/YWCAs, professional associations, etc. Some have state and city branches and assist local NGOs.

International NGOs range from secular agencies such as Redda Barna and Save the Children organizations, OXFAM, CARE, **Ford Foundation**, and Rockefeller Foundation to religiously motivated groups. They can be responsible for funding local NGOs, institutions and projects and implementing projects.

OVERVIEW OF FORD FOUNDATION

The foundation was established on January 15, 1936, in Michigan by Edsel Ford (president of the Ford Motor Company) and two other executives "to receive and administer funds for scientific, educational and charitable purposes, all for the public welfare." It was originally funded by a US\$25,000 gift from Edsel Ford. It first started regional office in 1952 in New Delhi. Foundation provides grants to organizations in the United States, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. More than \$16.3 billion in grants distributed worldwide .Committed to more than \$565 million for program-related investments (PRIs) since 1968 Annually 40,000 proposals had been received and about 1,400 grants made Fiscal year 2011 assets valued at \$10.3 billion and approved US\$413 million in grants.

INITIATIVES AND ACTION PLANS

Initiative	Action Plan
Democratic and Accountable Government	Promoting Transparent, Effective and Accountable Government
Human Rights	Strengthening Human Rights Worldwide
Economic Fairness	Expanding Livelihood Opportunities for Poor Households
Sustainable Development	Expanding Community Rights Over Natural Resources
Freedom of Expression	Advancing Media Rights and Access
Sexuality and Reproductive Health and Rights	Youth Sexuality, Reproductive Health, and Rights

This data explains the various social issues in which Ford Foundation involves itself.

FORD FOUNDATION IN INDIA

At the invitation of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, the foundation established an office in India in 1952. Chester Bowles, US ambassador to India from 1951, initiated the process. It was the foundation's first program outside the United States. Through their office in New Delhi, foundation also has a limited presence in Nepal and Sri Lanka. Since its establishment, the New Delhi office has made more than 3,500 grants totaling more than \$508 million to nearly 1,250 institutions. Ford has chosen to focus on three particularly oppressed sections of Indian society — Adivasis, Dalits, and women. All three are potentially important components of a movement for basic change in Indian society. Foundation appointed *Kavita N. Ramdas* as representative in New Delhi serving India, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Of the total grants made across the different regions the grant made to India, Nepal and Sri Lanka is of **2.55%**, which can be viewed from the below tables.

GRANTS ALLOTTED FOR THE YEAR 2012 IN INDIA, NEPAL AND SRI LANKA

Initiatives	Amount
Democracy, Rights and Justice	\$3,758,500
Economic opportunity and Assets	\$4,552,021
Education Creativity and fire expression	\$3,900,000
Program related investments (PRIs)	-
Other Grant actions	\$1,222,912
Total	\$13,433,433

TOTAL GRANTS ALLOTTED ACROSS ALL THE REGIONS FOR THE YEAR 2012

Initiatives	Amount
Democracy, Rights and Justice	\$178,119,792
Economic opportunity and Assets	\$139,250,290
Education Creativity and fire expression	\$143,789,054
Program related investments (PRIs)	\$29,500,000
Other Grant actions	\$35,236,735
Total	\$525,895,871

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As per Beckan (2007) opined that it is universal that the motive of the business venture is to earn profits. Besides, it's true that the actions of business impact the local. National and global community, so businesses have a responsibility to ensure that the impact is positive.¹

Eraqi (2010) opined that CSR is a human activity, which encompasses human behavior, use of resources, and interaction with people, economics, and environment.²

Peter Chan et.al (2006) in their article suggested that the future research agenda on CSR and development should focus on following four areas: a) the relationship between business and poverty reduction; b) the impact of CSR initiatives; c) governance and dimensions of CSR; d) power and participation in CSR.³

Soni Yadav et.al in their article concluded that common people or general educated people are getting aware about the CSR and its role in society, and they have also maintained a positive approach towards it.⁴

NEED & IMPORATANCEOF THE STUDY

The above literature search indicates that enough research has not taken place in this field of CSR, especially with reference to a specific organization. Hence, a need for an empirical work has been felt in this regard. The outcome of the survey will certainly be beneficial to the society and organizations alike.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

To understand the awareness levels of the students and corporate executives and to analyze the same

OBJECTIVES

This study is being undertaken with the following objectives:

- To study the concept of CSR.
- To know the history of Ford Foundation.
- To survey the awareness levels of select respondents about CSR and Ford Foundation.

HYPOTHESIS

The following Hypothesis is being proposed:

Ho: There is no significance difference between the categories of persons and awareness levels.

H1: There is a significance difference between the categories of persons and awareness levels.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**PERIOD & SAMPLE SIZE**

The study was conducted during the year 2013. A sample of 100 students from different colleges and 30 employees from different organizations were taken through convenience sampling.

DATA COLLECTION

The study largely relied on primary data collected from the respondents with the help of structured questionnaire. However, some important text books, journals, websites etc., have been referred.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Various statistical tools like Percentages, Averages Chi-Square etc., have been used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE STUDY**1) CSR ACTIVITIES**

The respondents were sought to inform about the CSR activities taken up by their companies which is presented below-

TABLE 1: ACTIVITIES TAKEN UP

S.no	Activities taken up	Percentage
1	Donations	53%
2	Sponsorship of sports and other events	17%
3	Social cause	20%
4	Partnership projects of social solidarity	10%
5	Corporate foundation	20%
6	Corporate voluntary	10%
7	Others	7%

Note: In the above table the respondents have chosen more than one option, therefore the total percentage is 137.

The above data indicates that 53% of the companies have engaged in the CSR activities by way of donations to organizations having social and environmental utility. 17% are by way of sponsorships to sports and cultural events. 20% are involved in social cause related activities. 10% have taken up by having partnership projects. 20% are through corporate foundation and 10% are voluntarily involved. Only 7% are engaged through due to other reasons.

2) BENEFITS WITH CSR

The data given by respondents about the main benefits of adoption of social responsibility by companies is shown below:

TABLE 2: BENEFITS OF CSR ADOPTION

S.no	Benefits	Percentage
1	Corporate reputation	37%
2	Improving relations	57%
3	Strengthening employees	53%
4	Identifying reputational risk	0
5	Access to credit	0

Note: In the above table the respondents have chosen more than one option, therefore the total percentage is 147.

- 57% of the respondents feel that companies adopt social responsibilities for improving relations with suppliers, institutions etc. 53% adopt for strengthening the employee morale where as 37% adopt for the benefit of corporate reputation.

3) FUNDING SOURCES

The below data explains various sources of funding for these social activities.

TABLE 3: SOURCE OF FUNDING (n=80)

S.no	Source	Percentage
1	Self funded	20
2	Corporate funding	20
3	Government funding	20
4	Others	0

Note: In the above table the respondents taken into consideration are only those who have answered question no 9 as YES. Therefore the percentage is 60%.

From the above table it can be seen that self funding, corporate funding, and government funding form 20% of the source of funding for the organizations.

4) GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD OF THE ORGANIZATIONS:

The information about the Geographical spread of the organizations involved in social activities is given below:

TABLE 4: GEOGRAPHICAL SPREAD

S.no	Spread	Percentage
1	International	40%
2	National	20%
3	Regional	13%
4	Local	10%

Note: In the above table the respondents taken into consideration are only those who have answered question no 9 as YES. Therefore the percentage is 83% and the remaining 17% are not involved in CSR activities.

The above table indicates that 40% of the organizations have international spread, 20% has National spread, 13% regional and local spread forms 10%.

5) INFORMATION SOURCE

The various Sources of Information from where the respondents heard about ford foundation are shown below:

TABLE 5: SOURCE OF INFORMATION

S.No	Source	Percentage
1	Electronic media	13%
2	Print media	7%
3	Corporate journals	7%
4	Others	3%

Note: In the above table the respondents taken into consideration are only those who have answered question no 11 as YES. Therefore the percentage is only 30% and the remaining 70% are not aware of ford foundation.

From the above table it can be known that 13% of the employees are aware of ford foundation through electronic media while 7% know through print media and corporate journals. 3% are aware through other means of sources.

6) PRACTICE OF CSR

The below data shows the opinion of the respondents in practicing CSR when they become entrepreneur:

TABLE 6: OPINION

S.no	Opinion	Percentage
1	YES	83%
2	NO	17%

From the above table it can be known that 83% of the employees show interest in practicing CSR while 17% are not interested in CSR as they are not interested in Entrepreneurship.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

1) AWARENESS OF CSR

Calculated value obtained is 23.92604 and the table value is 7.815. It is found that there is significant difference between categories of persons about the awareness of CSR. Hence employees are more aware then the students as per the chi-square.

2) ENGAGEMENT OF COLLEGES AND COMPANIES IN CSR

Calculated value obtained is 20.68015 and the table value is 3.841. It is found that there is significant difference between categories of persons about the involvement in socially responsible activities. Therefore companies are more involved in these activities then the colleges as per the chi-square.

3) LEVEL OF ACTIVITY

Calculated value obtained is 45.33 and the table value is 7.815. It is found that there is significant difference between categories of persons about the level of activities performed as a part of CSR.

Companies are regularly involved in the activities of CSR when compared to the colleges as per the chi-square.

4) MAJOR HINDRANCE IN PRACTICING CSR

Calculated value obtained is 10.51433 and the table value is 7.815. It is found that there is significant difference between categories of persons about the opinions for not practicing CSR activities, as per the chi-square.

5) RECENT INVOLVEMENT OF COLLEGES AND COMPANIES IN SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE ACTIVITIES

Calculated value obtained is 65.5651 and the table value is 5.991. It is found that there is significant difference between categories of persons involving in recent social activities. Companies are more involved in these activities as compared to the colleges as per the chi-square.

6) AWARENESS OF FORD FOUNDATION

The chi-square calculated value is 1.3628 and the table value is 3.841. This indicates that there is no significance difference between the categories of the persons about the awareness of the ford foundation.

7) AWARENESS ABOUT FORD FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES

Chi-square calculated value is 2.764977 and the table value is 3.841, hence there is no significance difference between the categories of the persons about the awareness of the ford foundation activities.

FINDINGS

1. It is found out form the study that the awareness levels about CSR and Ford foundation is low among the respondents. However, employees are more aware of the CSR and Ford foundation when compared to the students.
2. It is observed that companies are adopting social responsibilities for improving relations with suppliers or for strengthening the employee morale, or may be to improve their corporate reputation.
3. Students are engaged in social activities through college NSS and also on individual basis through other institutions such as Crazy head, Street cause, Art of living, Yuvatha, Mother Tereasa orphanage, Helping hands for poor and Bachpan bachao.
4. Most of the funds raised for these social activities are Self Funded and corporate funding in case of companies.
5. Students are keen to know more about CSR and they felt that corporate companies to should spread awareness about CSR by visiting different reputed universities, long standing colleges etc.

SUGGESTIONS

- 1) It is suggested to the companies to spread the information about CSR to all the educational institutions so that students can be made aware of social responsibility. It can be done by collaborating with NSS, NCC wings of different colleges and also by visiting select reputed colleges and make a presentation of the cause and invite memberships from students.
- 2) Ford Foundation is herewith suggested (as an outcome of survey) to use different media so that general public will become more aware of the same.
- 3) It is suggested by the employees in the survey that every company should spend a percentage of net profit for the society.
- 4) Students suggested in the survey that Ford foundation should expand its branches across the country so that people in need can be approached.
- 5) It is suggested to Ford foundation that students involving in social activities through various institutions should be given a chance to participate in their activities.
- 6) There is a provision for CSR of 2% in the companies' bill which should be implemented by the government.

CONCLUSIONS

The survey results presented in this report indicate that the awareness levels about CSR and Ford Foundation is very less among the respondents. As students are tomorrow's citizens and new entrepreneurs they should be made aware of this CSR. The Ford Foundation is one of the very big NGOs operating worldwide but its activities are unknown to the people. Companies are adopting social responsibilities for improving relations with suppliers; institutions etc or for strengthening the employee morale and for benefit of corporate reputation but there are only few companies which come forward for the benefit of the society. There is an overall need for corporates to look at giving something to society.

LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the study are:

1. As the study is with respect to the Hyderabad region hence, it may become a limitation.
2. The small number of respondents may become a limitation.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

There is a scope of further empirical research for the study as there are other organizations and NGOs which are into the social service.

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