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AN ANALYSIS ON THE PERCEPTIONS AND INITIATIVES OF CSR IN IT INDUSTRIES OF SOUTHERN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Today the concept of CSR has undergone radical change. It has integrated social as well as environmental issues into their missions and decisions. Companies take keen interest in informing about their CSR activities to their stakeholders. In developing economies like India, CSR is seen as part of corporate philanthropy in which corporations augment the social development to support the initiatives of the government. Many countries separate philanthropy from social responsibility. While in India, it is seen as a weapon for social activities including recruitment and retention. Also, many argue that it helps in building an image of the organization. While some argue that government does away with their role of playing a regulatory body over the powerful business houses. Others criticize that CSR is not their basic economic role of business. Some even say that CSR is put in place to gain commercially as well. While some others state that the impact of the CSR is not only impacts profits but benefits the society at large. The more the open and honest disclosure, the stronger and trusting relationships can be built with the stakeholders and consumers. In this paper we are analysing the perception of the selected companies towards corporate social responsibility and what type of corporate social responsibility activities done by them.

KEYWORDS

CSR initiatives, corporate social responsibility, employees, development.

1. INTRODUCTION

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 CSR Asia's Asian Sustainability Ranking (ASR), released in October 2009.

During 1980s, the CSR concept grew to integrate corporate objectives with the social responsibility of business thereby making it responsible to care for environment, employees and also make good profits. In the 1990s, Peter Drucker and many other authors propagated CSR as a part of corporate strategy. The stakeholder model of CSR emphasizes on survival of the corporation which throngs upon not only the responsibility towards shareholders but also towards employees, governments and customers. CSR is interchangeably used with several terms like business ethics, corporate citizenship, social and environmental responsibility, corporate sustainability.

World Business Council for Sustainable Development defines Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as "The continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large."

According to CSR Asia, "CSR is a company's commitment to operating in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner whilst balancing the interests of diverse stakeholders."

Across the globe, business enterprises have undertaken CSR initiatives in the areas of water conservation, healthcare, rural welfare, environment protection, poverty alleviation, education, community investment projects, culture and heritage, bio-diversity, disaster management and relief, culture and heritage, green environment, product responsibility, governance, waste management and gender equality.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the perceptions of IT companies towards CSR practices.
2. To study the various CSR initiatives implemented by different IT industries.
3. To make suggestions for accelerating CSR initiatives.
4. Finally, to map the information collected from various sources.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The paper consists of both primary and secondary data. Primary data has been collected through the distribution of Questionnaire to the employees working in various IT Industries. The secondary data sourced from journals, articles etc.,

4. CHALLENGES OF CSR

In India the CSR managers face number of challenges in managing CSR activities. The biggest problem is of lack of

- budget allocations followed by
- insufficient information
- support from employees
- knowledge in implementation
- professionalism and
- absence of trained and developed staff are the limiting factors for reduced CSR initiatives.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In the present study data was collected through questionnaire from 80 employees working in various IT industries, in southern India. Presence of corporate social responsibility activities is very usual in these companies but the levels are different, i.e., all the companies have been involved into corporate social responsibility

and the study will provide an insight as to at what level the companies is doing CSR activities. The data generated by the primary survey was processed by the computation of Percentage analysis.

The cumulative data of Employees response towards the fifteen variables related to corporate social responsibility activities have been presented below:

5.1: How long has your company been operating?

It is inferred that, 48% of the companies are operating more than 5 years, 22% of the companies are of more than 10 years, 20% of the companies are of 1-3 years, and 10% of the companies of less than 1 year age.

5.2. What sources of funding are used/allocated for CSR Initiatives?

It is found that, 56% of the employees agreed that the company is allocating the percentage of profits, and 44% of the employees said that the company allocates the budget in the Annual allocations for the CSR initiatives.

5.3. What are the main motivations of the company to engage in CSR programs?

It is revealed that, 40% of the companies engage in CSR programs for the employee satisfaction and fulfilment, 24% of the companies for the better corporate image, marketing and advertising strategy, 22% of the companies to improve competitive advantages, productivity & business opportunities, and 14% are engaged to gain support of communities, market and stakeholders.

5.4. What benefits plans does your company offer to employees?

It is identified that, all the companies are offering Training and Capacity Building programs to its employees as a part of their CSR initiatives. In addition to this, 78% of the companies are providing Health Insurance Schemes, 65% are providing Maternity/Paternity allowances, 60% are allowing pension plans, 54% are providing Life Insurance Schemes, 52% are allowing Defined Contribution Plans, and 38% of the companies are providing Loan/access to credit facilities.

5.5. Please select the type of assistance programs your company provides to employees?

The data reveals that, all companies are providing the Functional Skills Development Programs to the employees. In addition to this, 85% of the companies focuses on the Health & Wellness programs and 74% focuses on the Family & Life style programs.

5.6. From the list below, tick the stakeholders your company reaches out/consults with on CSR initiatives? Using the scale 1 (strongly significant) to 5 (strongly insignificant), say how stakeholders are playing significant role in influencing the programs of planning and implementation?

From the data, it is inferred that, majority of the companies are consulting the employees when framing the CSR policies. Next priority goes to shareholders, government/regulators, next to Customers and Local Communities and the least priority given to Suppliers/Vendors.

5.7. Does your company have any of the following systems in place to ensure customer/client satisfaction?

It is noticed that 73% of the companies maintains Website/online/email complaints system, whereas 35% maintains Complaint Reporting through telephone, letter etc., and 20% of the companies conducts the customer satisfaction surveys to collect the customer/client satisfaction levels.

5.8. Tick the tools used by the company to communicate the CSR activities to stakeholders.

For the above question, it is clear that all the companies communicate about CSR activities through the Meetings, Mass Media, Websites, Company newsletters/leaflets/posters and Press releases/press conferences, and few of the also companies preferring campaigns for this.

5.9. Does your company have taken any steps to prevent the use of child labour?

It is observed that, 81% of the employees said that their company abolished the use of child labours, and the remaining employees opted NO option for this.

5.10. Does your company provide for security of employment?

It is noticed that, 80% of the employees opted YES for the above question and the remaining doesn't agree with this.

5.11. Does your company ensure occupational health and safety?

It is clearly identified that, 91% of the companies ensuring the health and safety measures to the employees, and very few doesn't agree to this.

5.12. Does your company guarantee handling of complaints?

It is inferred that all the companies are having the grievance redressal mechanism.

5.13. Does your company give donations to community causes?

70% of the employees accepted that their company is donating for the community causes, and the remaining disagreed with this statement.

5.14. Does your company sponsor community events?

55% of the employees opted for YES for the statement that their company sponsors the community events, and remaining disagreed with the statement.

5.15. Does your company work with local schools/colleges/universities?

It is identified that, 65% of the employees opted NO option and 35% opted YES for the statement that the company works with local schools/universities.

6. CONCLUSION

Everyone in the organisation needs to recognise their own role in promoting CSR. Companies should provide wider professional development activities. Majority of the companies are allocating percentage of profits rather than the allocation in annual budget for the CSR activities. The companies operating more than 5-10 years are more focusing for the satisfactions of the employees, and the remaining are more concentrated to improve productivity and to gain support from community etc.

All most all the companies are providing the benefits like health insurance schemes, maternity/paternity allowances etc, if also concentrates on Loan provision/access to credit facility etc., then they can gain more loyalty from the employees.

The companies which are running long term are also focusing on child labour abolishment, providing job security, donating for charitable/community causes etc., If these are concentrated by the young companies, then they too sustain in the market for a longer period.

It is advisable for the government to look into policies and legislations for the benefits of companies adapting CSR and take up initiatives aimed at encouraging to involve in CSR which should be easily accessible and relevant. Media can come up with strong support for informing the people at large about the CSR initiatives taken up by the companies. It can sensitize population and also make them aware of the benefits of CSR to them.

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