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# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SECTOR – A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO SELECT (IT) INDUSTRY IN CHENNAI

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## **ABSTRACT**

India is the first country in the world to enshrine corporate giving into law. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is referred as a corporate initiative to assess and take responsibility for the company's effects on the environment and impact on social welfare and to promote positive social and environmental change. It efforts that go beyond what may be required by regulators. The income is earned only from the society and therefore it should be given back. Further as per the CSR Rules, the provisions of CSR are not only applicable to Indian companies, but also applicable to branch and project offices of a foreign company in India. Many of the leading corporations across the world had realized the importance of being associated with socially relevant causes as a means of promoting their brands. Cause related marketing and corporate social responsibility has provided companies with a new tool to compete in the market. CSR refers to the corporation's obligation to all the stake holder. It seems from the desire to do well and get self satisfaction in return as well as societal obligation of business. This could be a strategic marketing activity a way for a company to do well by doing good, distinct from sales promotion, corporate philanthropy, corporate sponsorship, corporate Samaritan acts and public relations.

#### KEYWORDS

CSR (corporate social responsibility), The ministry of corporate affairs, company's act 2013, CSR committee.

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## INTRODUCTION

India has become one of the fast growing economies of the world. It is growing at the rate of 9 per cent per annum. As an emerging market all are looking at India from an international perspective. At the stage when India is set to acquire a global position, it is essential to measure whether the economic growth is due to successful business operations. Organizations must realize that government alone will not be able to get success in its endeavor to uplift the downtrodden of society. The present societal marketing concept of companies is constantly evolving and has given rise to a new concept termed as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

Under Companies Act, 2013 any company with a

- 1. net worth of the company to be Rs 500 crore or more or
- turnover of the company to be Rs 1000 crore or more or
- net profit of the company to be Rs 5 crore or more.

has to spend at least 2% of last 3 years average net profits on CSR activities as specified in Schedule VII and as amended from time to time. The rules came into effect from 1 April 2014.

- Further, the qualifying company will be required to constitute a CSR Committee consisting of 3 or more directors.
- The CSR Committee shall formulate and recommend to the Board, a policy which indicates the activities to be undertaken, allocate resources and monitor the CSR Policy of the company.
- If the company did not spend CSR, it has to disclose the reason for not spending. Non-disclosure or absence of the details will be penalised from Rs 50,000 to Rs 25 lakh or even imprisonment of up to 3 years

It is assumed to be responsibility of the business house too. Nothing builds brand loyalty among today's increasingly hard to please consumers, like a company's proven commitment to a worthy cause. Other things being equal, many consumers would do business with a company that stands for something beyond profits. In nutshell, CSR and cause related marketing results in increased sales, visibility and consumer loyalty and enhanced company image along with media coverage. On the other hand, a non-profit organization is an organization, which exists for providing some benefit or assistance or a sort of self-help group. Like the name suggests, the organization will have all the properties of a profit making organization ie., a mission statement, a vision, offices, infrastructures etc., but the objective will not include making a profit out of its operations. However, to run any organization, funds are needed and this has to come in to the non-profit in terms of financial ie., grants, subsidies, donations etc., or services in terms of staff support or infrastructure support. The sources for these funds could be individuals, the government or other charitable institutions and finally companies. These business houses through their CSR initiatives contribute to the mission of social progress and growth of India.

## CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Definitional issues regarding "CSR have been debated since many years. Early CSR models were initiated in the early 1960's. It showered the "Social aspect of CSR as referring directly to those responsibilities above and beyond economic and legal obligations. Many considered corporate social responsibility synonymous with voluntary and philanthropic acts by business organizations which are designed to alleviate social ills or in order to benefit a disadvantaged group chosen by the corporation's managers. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development in its publication "Making Good Business Sense" by Lord Holme and Richard Watts, used the following definitions. "Corporate Social Responsibility is 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".

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs enforced the Companies Act, 2013 "Act" and the Companies (Corporate Social Responsibility Policy) Rules "CSR Rules" from 1 April 2014. By doing so, India has become one of the first country to have a legal requirement to comply with CSR Rules. Since India was one of the first countries across the world to mandate Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), there is a growing interest among various stakeholders to see how the scenario is progressing. "CSR is about capacity building for sustainable livelihoods. It respects cultural differences and finds the business opportunities in building the skills of employees, the community and the government. "CSR is about business giving back to society. Traditionally, CSR has been defined much more in terms of a philanthropic model. Companies make profits, unhindered except by fulfilling their duty to pay taxes. Then they donate certain share of the profits to charitable causes. It is seen as training the act for the company to receive any benefit from the giving. In other words of Philip Kotler, "Corporate Social Responsibility": Doing the most good for your company and the cause" does a terrific job for describing the range of corporate social initiatives and suggests best practices for choosing, implementing and evaluating them.

#### **ACTIVITIES CARRIED ON BY VARIOUS COMPANIES**

CSR is a commitment to support initiatives that measurably improve the lives of underprivileged by one or more of the following focus areas as

- Eradicating hunger, poverty & malnutrition
- Promoting education
- Improving maternal & child health
- Ensuring environmental sustainability
- · Protection of national heritage
- Measures for the benefit of armed forces
- Promoting sports
- Contribution to the Prime Minister's National Relief
- Slum area development etc.

## **INDIA'S CSR REPORT SURVEY 2016**

India's CSR reporting survey 2016 analyses and brings together findings from CSR reporting of the top hundred (N100) listed companies as per market capital as on 31 March 2016. All these companies are required to comply with the requirements of the Act. CSR policy, CSR committee, disclosure on CSR in the Annual Report, CSR spends, and others were reviewed based on their availability in the public domain as on 30 September, 2016. A comparative analysis has also been presented to track progress as compared to the previous year. During the current year, 70 per cent of companies have disclosed the direct and overhead expenditure towards CSR projects. There is almost a 50 per cent increase in clearly disclosing the direct and overhead expenses as compared to the previous year, which indicates an increase in better financial monitoring of projects by companies. Eleven per cent of companies have spent more than 5 per cent of their total spends towards administration, which is not in line with the requirement of the Act.

The health, sanitation and education sector accounts for the 63.74 per cent (INR 4155 Cr.) of the total spends on CSR against 50 per cent (INR 2592 Cr.) in last year, an increase by 14 per cent. CSR spent on rural development sector has considerably increased from INR 443 Cr. (8.84 per cent) in 2014-15 to INR 804 Cr. (12.34 per cent) in 2015-16. Certain Schedule VII areas such as National Heritage, Support to War Veterans, PM Relief Fund, Sports, Technology Incubators, Slum Development, put together, accounted for merely 3 per cent (INR 154 Cr.) of the total spends this year as well (INR 153 Cr. last year).

The Roles and Responsibilities of the Board and CSR committee is being tabulated below in Table 1.

TABLE 1: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARD AND CSR COMMITTEE

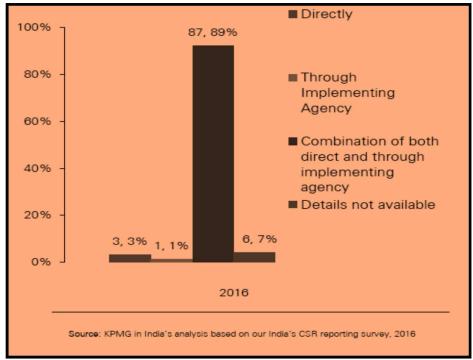
Board	CSR
<ul> <li>Constitute CSR committee</li> <li>Approve CSR policy</li> <li>CSR disclosure in Directors' Report and company website</li> <li>Ensure compliance to the Act with regards to CSR spends and disclosures</li> <li>Ensure concurrence of CSR initiatives listed out in CSR policy and actual implementation.</li> </ul>	Formulate CSR policy and recommend the same to the board for approval Recommend projects which are in alignment to the Schedule VII of the Act Recommend budget amounts to be incurred for project implementation Institute a monitoring mechanism for CSR projects Periodically monitor the CSR policy and projects.

Source: KPMG annual report

### DISCLOSURE ON THE MODE OF IMPLEMENTATION IN CSR POLICY

Disclosing details regarding mode of implementation is a mandatory requirement of the Act. Over 89 per cent companies have disclosed their mode of implementation in the CSR policies, no change as compared to the previous year. The role of NGOs is well reflected here. Most of the corporate do collaborate with NGOs for the implementation of their projects as the graph alongside reflects.

FIGURE 1: DISCLOSURE ON THE MODE OF IMPLEMENTATION IN CSR POLICY



## **COMPANIES WITH A STAND-ALONE CSR COMMITTEE**

Companies are mandated to have a board level CSR committee. Out of the total companies disclosing their details, 88 companies have stand-alone CSR committee as compared to 80 last year.

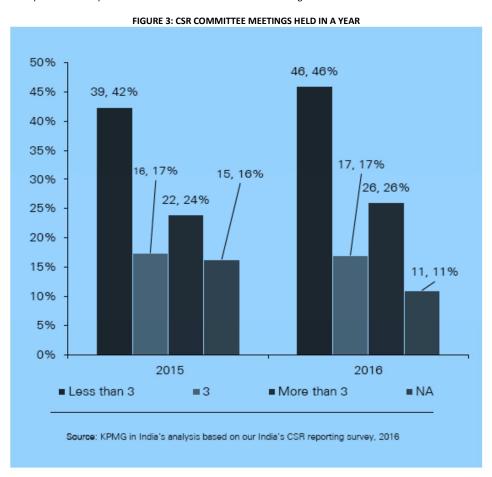
100% 80, 89% 88, 90% 90% 80% 70% No 60% Yes 50% 40% 30% 20% 10, 11% 10, 10% 10% 0% 2015 2016

FIGURE 2: COMPANIES WITH A STAND-ALONE CSR COMMITTEE

## **CSR COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD IN A YEAR**

89 companies have disclosed details regarding CSR committee meeting as part of their Corporate Governance section, compared to 77 companies last year, not a mandatory requirement. 43 per cent of companies had three or more CSR committee meetings which indicate an active committee.

Source: KPMG in India's analysis based on our India's CSR reporting survey, 2016



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#### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

Bhattacharyya & Chaturvedi (2012), article entitled "CSR looks set to emerge as an independent stream with measurable output" on India CSR site, stated about the proposed bill of CSR that how the bill will affect the company's policies. The researchers presented their views and said that due to this bill, company's activities will change a lot the companies who has not engaged in CSR activities till now, will start investing on society. Further, who has already engaged in these areas will get a strong foundation or bond with the society.

An article presented on India CSR entitled "Is CSR all Bullshit?" depicted that companies neither have a strong will power to invest in social activities nor they aware about the areas in which comes under CSR. The reason of this problem is ignorance about the concept of CSR and not any legal framework. The researcher also presented the solution of this problem that knowledge should provide in the institutions through training, induction programmes and through other teaching programmes. If needed, foreign experiences should be used in India for Indian society welfare.

Bibhu Parshed (2012), article presented that CSR is the face of industry face of doing trade. Bibhu said that today, corporate houses took CSR as a medium fulfillment of profit greed of corporate houses. Further the article explored that companies today invests in a lot of areas like child labour, ground water, food, education, employment etc. but nobody is aware about the essential need of world"s poor. The article suggested that profit earning is a natural fact of companies but CSR is beyond the natural and statutory obligation of the companies. At last it was concluded in the article that sustainable development is the development of society as well as the company in a balanced way.

Bansal, Parida, Kumar (2012), paper entitled "Emerging trends of Corporate Social Responsibility in India" in KAIM Journal of Management and Research analyzed 30 companies of 11 sectors listed in the Bombay Stock Exchange with the help of their annual reports. Some of these sectors were Transport Equipment sector, Finance and Metal Mining sector, IT & Power, Capital goods, Telecom, Housing, FMCG, Oil & Gas and Cipla. The paper considered the nature and areas of society in which the companies are investing. By considering all those areas it was concluded in the paper that today companies are not working only to earn profit but also have realized the importance of being social friendly. So, on the basis of the paper it can be said that social responsibility has now started taking a turn in the new direction.

The Economic Times (11 Jan.2013), news highlighted about the company Dell's strategy of motivating its employees in initializing CSR. The news discussed that company's employees are the power that forced the company to do more for the society. Company with its employees has engaged in social responsibility activities in the areas of education, environment and employee's welfare. Beside Dell Company, the news also discussed about other companies like Maruti and Gogrej that these companies also provide induction training to its employees for preparing them for community services. Maruti Company run a program named e- parivartan for a group of employees to make them aware about community problem and their solution.

#### **NEED FOR THE STUDY**

The basic aim of the study is to gain familiarity or formulating a problem or to achieve new insights into it. In this particular study, an attempt has been made to comprehend and gain insight into behavior or the attitude of companies towards various aspects of social contribution. This study deals with the behavior of the corporate. It tries to identify the complex behavior and set patterns in it. The present study relates to the attitude of 25 companies in Chennai so as to predict the behavior

Why will any company give funds or services to a non-profit? The government will provide for funds and or services as it is responsible for the social welfare of the people. Similarly a charitable institution will do the same as it is their objectives to help the social cause. An individual may donate to a non profit due to reasons of Philanthropy (Charity) or in memory of some person etc., but why does a commercial organization contribute for a social cause? The basic objective of a commercial organization is to make profits. Why will it divert substantial funds to a non profit if there is no return on that investment?

The objective of the study was to try to try and understand why an organization contributes to a social cause and what it expects to gain in the process. It is philanthropy, is it a feeling of obligation to the society in general or is for financial benefits in terms of tax exemptions etc.,

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

India needs is large-scale social innovation and systems change and mandatory spending achieves a little in this direction. It also deflects pressure on companies to change their business practices. CSR should be more inclusive by which an organization should think about and evolve its relationships with stakeholders for the common good, and demonstrate its commitment by adopting appropriate business processes and strategies. A set of national voluntary guidelines to spell out what responsible business should look like and set out that CSR is more than just charitable giving should be formalized. This motivated the researcher to undertake a study on Corporate Social Responsibilities.

# **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of the study are

- 1. To know the concepts and framework of CSR
- 2. To identify the contributions made by Information Technology industry in Chennai.
- 3. To critically analyze the success / failure of the CSR

### **HYPOTHESIS**

There is a relationship between the designation of the respondents and the objective of the company towards customer satisfaction.

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

To understand the reason why an organization contributes to a social cause, it was necessary to get an insight into the organizations view of the business, its views, its policies, the reasons why it contributes and its objectives and relationships with all its stakeholders i.e., employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders and society. The questionnaire was designed accordingly to get the relevant information from the respondents. In this study the researcher has adopted convenience sampling. Population of study includes companies located in Chennai.

# **SOURCES OF DATA COLLECTION**

The research consists of the application of both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected by administrating questionnaire. The secondary data was collected through websites and from various journals and magazines. Reasons for contribution to CSR by organizations were a sensitive issue. The questionnaire was administered to various companies HR. Anonymity of the responses was promised. The responses were obtained through the human resource departments of the company directly or indirectly through the concerned department or official handling the area.

### **FINDINGS**

The various findings of the study are listed below

# VIEW TOWARDS BUSINESS

Eighty two point four percentage of the respondents of the companies seem to strongly agree that business means maximizing benefits, making money and doing your work well. No company disagrees on this point. 17.6% more agree than disagree to the same. 76.5% says that business is making money. 88.2% strongly agree as well as agree that it is all about social responsibility while 17.8% more disagree.

#### PLACE FOR ETHICS IN BUSINESS

Eighty-three point three percentage, believe that there is place for ethics in business. However, a small majority, 11.8% strongly feel that there is no place for ethics in business.

#### **BUSINESS & ECONOMIC ATTITUDE**

Eighty two point three percentage, believe that business needs only an economic attitude while 17.7% respondents felt that business does not need an economic attitude, however, what is needed is balance feel.

#### **CUSTOMERS**

Forty seven point one percentage, have their objective towards the customer as satisfying them by providing quality, and within this 50% them their relationship as friendly. Another 29.4% objective is to give good value and satisfactory service.

#### **SHAREHOLDERS**

Among the total respondents, 41.2% objectives are more towards good returns and 35.3% express the real picture of the company, while 23.5% assure profit to its shareholders

#### **EMPLOYEES**

Out of the total respondents, 64.7% feel that their objective towards the employees is to motivate to achieve goals and rewards, 23.5% satisfy by fulfilling need while 5.9% feel that their relationship is that of family feeling and another 5.9% provide them with an opportunity for self-development.

#### COMMUNITY

Over 52.9% of the companies have social welfare as the objective towards the community. 11.8% companies have stated that their relationship with the community is that of a family member so as to provide help to the target group who needs it and 17.6% have stated that their relationship is cordial and friendly. They are sensitive to the needs of the community and another 17.6% include community welfare in the objectives of the company.

#### **CHI SQUARE TEST**

#### **HYPOTHESIS**

- Ho There is a relationship between the designation of the respondents and the objective of the company towards customer satisfaction.
- Ha-There is no relationship between the designation of the respondents and the objective of the company towards customer satisfaction.

#### **TABLE 2: OBSERVED FREQUENCY TABLE**

TABLE E. OBSERVED TREQUERET TABLE							
Designation	Company's objectives towards customer satisfaction						
	Quality	Friendly relationship	Good value	Satisfactory service	Total		
Team Member	4	15	6	2	27		
Team Leader/ Project Manager	5	8	7	3	23		
HR Manager	4	4	1	1	10		
Total	13	27	14	6	60		

Source: Primary Data

#### **TABLE 3: EXPECTED FREQUENCY TABLE**

Designation	Company's objectives towards customer satisfaction					
	Quality	Friendly relationship	Good value	Satisfactory service	Total	
Team Member	5.85	12.15	6.3	2.7	27	
Team Leader/ Project Manager	4.98	10.35	5.37	2.3	23	
HR Manager	2.17	4.5	2.33	1.0	10	
Total	13	27	14	6	60	

Source: Primary Data

The calculated value (5.04828) is less than the Table value (7.05). Hence the hypothesis is accepted. Therefore it is known that, there is a relationship between the designation of the respondents and the objective of the company towards customer satisfaction.

### **LIMITATIONS**

- 1. The sample size being very small, the result of the study may not represent the whole population.
- 2. The respondents were reluctant to respond.
- 3. The result cannot be generalized.
- 4. The study was restricted to limited area and time.

# SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The researcher has done the research with reference to Information Technology industries alone, hence

- Research can be done with textiles industry, or any sector of the researcher's interest.
- A comparative analysis of contribution made by any two sectors.
- o Research can be conducted to know the impact of CSR in Tamilnadu.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study was conducted to find out the company's reasons towards corporate social responsibility on cause related and its impact on the company's brand image and sales. The important factors that influence the company to contribute are: Customer oriented, Humane oriented. Financial benefits in terms of tax benefits also are important, though the responses to this issue seem to be guarded. Companies must generated awareness to the various stakeholders regarding its contribution to corporate social responsibility through its affiliation with social cause through event management (Marathon events, Eye camp) and company websites as it is directly related to increase in sales and brand loyalty. India being a developing country with over 250 million strong middle class families has a large potential for any marketer and at the same time it can support quiet a good number of causes which benefits the society at large. For example, due to operation of CRY 89244 children lives were permanently transformed 1013 communities experienced 100% school enrollment, 159 primary health care centres began functioning and long term rehabilitation program were initiated in almost 100 tsunami affected villages in Tamilnadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Earth quake relief and rehabilitation programs were initiated in 11 villages in Jammu and Kashmir. So it may be concluded that corporate social responsibility and cause related marketing is beneficial both for company and the society.

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