

Integrating Corporate Social Responsibility with Business Strategy

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Abstract: *The relationship between the corporation and its broader society has been an issue for executives since the advent of the modern corporation. Scholars in the field of business and society have made the case for long that the firm has dual purposes—to be economically successful and to be socially responsible. CSR has been traditionally viewed by many companies as charitable activities not fundamental to business sense and hence they have not actively promoted it. With ever increasing public awareness and information technology revolution, companies are faced with greater demands for detailed information regarding the social and environmental impacts of their business activities. CSR-related research has been dominated by studies in the context of western developed countries such as Europe, the USA, and Australia. Only a few studies have applied CSR to developing countries like India. Recent research also suggests that an integrated approach to CSR is largely missing in both theory and practice. This research gap provides a good opportunity to explore the field and come up with some new insights. In the current research we propose to explore and conceptualize how CSR-based strategy plays a vital role in a company gaining competitive advantage. The study also intends to explore some of the emerging trends in the domain of CSR. The research also looks at some real life examples (related to company practices in the domain of CSR) to support the arguments. The research is based on the secondary data in the form of existing literature on the subject. Research articles are collected from the databases like EBSCO, JSTOR, EMERALD, SAGE, PROQUEST, etc. and analysed to build up the theoretical constructs and arguments in a systematic manner. Some real life examples related to practices of various organizations with regard to implementation of CSR are also collected through the research articles, relevant sources available on internet, company websites, newspapers, business magazines, etc. The research would lead to some pertinent outcomes which would help business firms to create differentiation among competing market forces and help them develop effective strategies for CSR.*

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Public awareness, technology revolution, inseparable linkages, competitive advantage*

I. Introduction:

Business organizations have the obligation to address the needs of all stakeholders including community and the environment (Clarkson, 1995; Waddock et al., 2002). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a means which encourages them look beyond profit maximization and shareholders' interest, and considers objectives, values, and preferences of all members of the community (Carroll, 1979, 1991, 1999; Elkington 1994, Jackson and Nelson, 2004; Rudolph, 2005). Such comprehensive approach of businesses also paves the way for sustainable social uplifting. In CSR related studies, scholars have paid more attention to the practices in industrialized and developed countries/regions like Western Europe, USA and Australia, and ignored ex-colonial, smaller, and emerging countries (Belal, 2001). There is a scarcity of research on philosophy and practice of CSR in developing countries (Jamali and Mirshak, 2007). Underdeveloped regions may perform low on economic indicators but cultural and political systems prevailing in these regions support to address their social development needs. For example, the concept of trusteeship in India practiced since centuries addresses many serious issues such as hunger, old age care and education for the underprivileged children. Such practices are generally not researched and reported in CSR literature.

The CSR, as was practiced, depended more on philanthropic plank than a business model in the initial stages of its development. Most of the companies embraced CSR by associating themselves with social causes, environmental causes or for alleviating the sufferings of the poor. But things are changing now after businessmen started looking at the larger picture and realized the inseparable linkages between the company's well-being and the comprehensive social well-being. Once considered primarily a matter of corporate philanthropy, moral obligation or pure altruism (Porter and Kramer 2002), corporate social responsibility (CSR) has significantly drifted its domains and has now

shifted from periphery to central corporate agenda and a source of competitive value.

Businesses today are meant for earning profit but since it operates in the society, something more is expected of it. In a broader term the responsibilities that business has towards society is termed as Corporate Social responsibility (CSR). Carroll (1979) has suggested four categories of responsibilities a business has to bear i.e. economic, legal, ethical and discretionary or philanthropic. The definition suggested by Carroll extends the responsibilities of business beyond the basic economic role of the firm and argues that business cannot only be profitable and ethical, but they should fulfill these obligations simultaneously. In addition to fulfilling their economic and legal responsibilities, businesses are expected to fulfill ethical responsibilities as well (Carroll, 1979). Philanthropic responsibility includes general masses' expectations that business will engage in meaningful, purposive social activities not mandatorily required by law but derived out of voluntarism based on realization of its importance for all and more so for the sustainability and expansion of business in question.

Today with ever increasing public awareness and information technology revolution, companies are faced with greater demands for detailed information regarding the social and environmental impacts of their business activities. They cannot pursue it as part-time or once in a while event for brand-building exercise and hope to fool people. Many firms publicize their charity acts in exaggerated ways to score publicity point and impress their employees. The need of the hour is to measure, keep track of all such activities and share it with employees and public. In other words, CSR auditing needs to be done in a systematic manner and on a compulsory basis. That will not only increase the trust quotient of the organization among customers but also help it win the good faith of its employees. In the long run such initiatives will help establish clean, open and transparent system attracting the best of talent and most of market.

II. Research problem identified for the study:

It is increasingly evident and also clear that business norms across the world are moving CSR into the mainstream of business practice. However, while CSR may be an important new element of the relationships between business, government and society, the case remains to be established as to how it is related to marketing strategy in particular, and that CSR initiatives should be linked to their impact on the customer value that a company delivers to its markets. However, recent research suggests that an integrated approach to CSR in marketing is largely missing in both theory and practice (Maignan et al. 2005). Very few conceptual frameworks are there which present a comprehensive picture denoting linkages among the CSR initiatives, its integration in business strategy, consequences of that integration in market, effects of CSR auditing in organizational culture and employee transparency and the barriers in formulating and implementing CSR strategies. **CSR-related research has been dominated by studies in the context of western developed countries** such as Europe, the USA, and Australia. Only a few studies have applied CSR to developing countries (Lokshin *et al.*, 2001; Peinado- Vara, 2006; Reddy and Camelia, 2007) Visser (2007, p. 474). Four rationales are suggested for focusing on CSR in a developing country as distinct from CSR in the developed world: (1) developing countries represent the most rapidly expanding economies, and hence the most lucrative growth markets for business; (2) developing countries are where social and environmental crises are usually most acutely felt in the world; (3) developing countries are likely to have the most dramatic social and environmental impacts (both positive and negative); and (4) developing countries present a distinctive set of CSR agenda challenges which are collectively quite different to those faced in the developed world. This research gap provides a good opportunity to explore the field and come up with some new insights. Also in recent times, CSR has become a very crucial part of business

strategy of many organizations because of major identifiable trends which is also considered as part of the study.

III. Research objectives:

The primary objective of the present study is

- To explore and also conceptualize how CSR-based strategy plays a vital and major role in a company gaining competitive advantage
- To explore some of the emerging trends in domain of CSR. The study also intends to look at some of the real life examples to support the arguments.
- To draw some major inferences for future of CSR in the present business context

IV. Methodology used for the study:

The research is based on the secondary data in the form of existing literature on the subject. Research articles were collected from databases like EBSCO, JSTOR, EMERALD, SAGE, PROQUEST, etc. and were later analysed to build up the theoretical constructs and arguments in a systematic manner. Some real life examples related to practices of various organizations with regard to implementation of CSR were also collected through research articles, relevant sources available on internet, company websites, newspapers, business magazines, etc.

V. Significance of the present study:

Today CSR is emerging as an innovative and effective business tool which allows hitting two targets with one bullet. On the one hand, it helps an organization to stay focused on core business function and still innovate ways in which to be socially useful and on the other hand it helps build image among people as conscientious organization and hence creates market. It helps gain competitive advantage and would definitely create differentiation among competing market forces and work as an effective marketing strategy. It is a crucial bridge between the profit and non-profit world.

Today the significance of the study rests on the evident importance of CSR activities and its realization awakening in the corporate world. Research suggests that CSR is obviously associated with significant and measurable

benefits for companies. For example, CSR may have the impact of building long-term customer loyalty, legitimacy, trust or brand equity (Godfrey and Hatch 2007). Peter Senge and colleagues argue that after years of skepticism, big companies are acting to cut waste, cut carbon emissions, find sources of renewable energy and develop sustainable business models (Senge et al. 2008). There is an increasingly widespread view that there is a business case for social initiatives – behind the drive for sustainability lies a growing belief that environmental and social projects not only improve corporate reputations, but also foster innovation, cut costs and open up new markets (Skapinker, 2008). Cause-related projects may impact directly on income: if firms that create social gains realize cash value in terms of increased purchases by morally-conscious customers (or those customers are willing to pay higher prices), or in reduced costs. Porter and Kramer (2006) suggest that management attention should focus on *identifying the points* of intersection between the company and society – and CSR forms clearly one such intersection of prime importance.

VI. Some definitions of CSR:

A business should contribute to and support the broader community and improve the quality of society (Carroll, 1995; Snider *et al.*, 2003). Since Carroll's (1979) seminal work, many new definitions of CSR have been proposed. For example, marketing studies have identified CSR as a business entity's adherence to and fulfillment of the responsibilities that could bring benefits to the greater community (Carroll, 1991; Brown and Dacin, 1997; Albinger and Freeman, 2000; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001).

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (2006) has defined CSR as the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and to contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families, as well as that of the local community and society at large. Management studies have defined CSR as a company's commitment to operate in an economically and environmentally sustainable

way while recognizing the interest of multiple stakeholders and maximizing economic, social and environmental values (Waddock and Post, 1990; Wood, 1991; Matten *et al.*, 2003; Waddock, 2004). Although there is still no agreement on any one definition of CSR, each definition is based on the idea that CSR is about how a business takes account of its economic, social and environmental impacts in the way it operates. CSR includes several critical dimensions: (1) corporate responsibility to consumers, employees, and other shareholders; (2) corporate responsibility to the environment; and (3) corporate responsibility to community development. (Besser, T.L. 1999). The collaboration between the corporation and the community, which is a key issue in understanding the phenomenon of CSR, is typically explained through the voice of the corporation, neglecting the voice of the community.

Another approach towards CSR is the *Triple Bottom Line* notion which divides CSR into three sectors:

(1) responsibility for financial success (profit); (2) responsibility for the environment (the planet); and (3) responsibility for society (people) (Elkington, 1998; Marrewijk, 2003). The idea behind the Triple Bottom Line is that corporate performance can and should be measured, not just by the traditional economic bottom line, but also by social and environmental bottom lines (Norman and Macdonald, 2003). Here also the importance of social factor as one major dimension is evident.

The dominant stream in CSR studies now strives to achieve the middle path whereby the economic necessities of profit-making is balanced with social concern and community welfare. Mallen (2005) posits that business enterprises exist to serve the community and have a responsibility to contribute to society. The classical view that the sole responsibility of management is to maximize profits has long been challenged but not dismissed altogether. While the welfare of society is important, the aspirations of enterprises cannot be neglected. Scholars of ethics have called for decency, honesty and fairness in

business. Strategic managers must recognize and acknowledge the legitimate claims of other stakeholders of the firm (Pearce and Robinson, 2002). Jensen (2001) argues that managers have to take account of interests from all stakeholders, both economic and social. This is a direct attempt to balance different commitments to groups and individuals in the operational environment. Coelho *et al.*, (2003) and Frankental (2001) assert that this debate has allowed CSR to remain vague and ambiguous. Although consensus on definition and other issues are still in debate, it is generally accepted that CSR is a key component of business practice whether voluntary or legislated. The question of stakeholder perception has shifted CSR from being organizationally controlled to a model of partnership and interaction with more representational voices (Kuhn and Deetz, 2008). **Exploring and conceptualizing as to how CSR-based strategy plays a vital and major role in company gaining competitive advantage:**

A collaborative relationship becomes highly complex when members of one group consider themselves superior to the other. Such an attitude may signal a lack of appreciation for the interdependence between the two groups and a lack of awareness and respect for the values, norms, and history of the other group. It is suggested that each group, the community and the corporation, bring distinctive strengths to the operation of the CSR and that such multiple diverse competencies are needed to run a successful collaboration. (Boehm, 2002)

According to Ingham (2006) CSR is meaningless in day-to-day operations if management's prime concern is not with continuing the long-term health of the enterprise. CSR is also viewed as becoming an industry; it seems not to be about simple corporate generosity, but an identity and relationship to stakeholders. An extreme view of CSR perception is expressed by Fougere and Solitander (2009). They argue that CSR is seen by some sections as corporate colonialism. With many small and medium enterprises (SMEs) unable to sustain CSR undertakings, multinationals and large players are seen as the drivers in the eyes of the public. Jye and Castka

(2009) agree that the philanthropy of some firms with huge sums of money has shaped public opinion as fancy business management practices. A positively handled CSR programme will enhance not only the social picture of the firm but is its very economic reasons for existence as well. However, the key issue on the journey towards a wider diffusion and acceptance of CSR is the presiding confusion over its meaning, content, and relationship with other organizational functions in various contexts.

VII. Dimensions of CSR:

The society as such is an integral part of the organization. Most of the resources are coming from the local society. So do the ethical standards. Consequently, the relationship between the society and the company plays an important role in the company's success or failure. In order to show ethical sensitivity to stakeholders, successful companies need to build a good relationship with customers, employees, business partners, environment, communities, and investors.

Customers: In order to become and stay competitive and successful, companies should build lasting relationships with customers. These relationships are based on mutual interest in terms of understanding what customers need and what an organization can offer to them. The focus is in the quality and reliability of products and services.

Employees: The quality of life in the workplace affects employee's private life and their families. Providing meaningful work as well as fair wages and healthy and safe work environment helps employees develop and realize their working potential. Therefore, it is important that companies do contribute to employee's work which at the bottom line develops and realizes their potential. Also, the workplace security and working conditions add value to employee's performances. Doing so, the company demonstrates internal CSR.

Business partners: Global competition has brought new paradigm in the business arena. Business partners such as suppliers, joint venture and alliance partners, and in some cases even

competitors are very important to company's success. Instead of competing by using unpopular actions (i.e. price cutting), business partners should develop long-term relationship. Doing so, they can increase ethical awareness and reduce complexity and costs.

The Environment: Ethics in business lead to corporate social responsibilities. Managing sustainable environment makes good business sense. Promoting and practicing eco-efficiency benefit not only the environment, but also the company. The life cycle of the product and of the company can be extended. The energy inputs, toxic dispersion and material recyclables help the company and environment to build the good ethical image and extend the life cycle by using renewable resources.

Communities: The success of business heavily depends on the communities in which it operates. Stable and prospering community can produce benefits to the company in terms of the buying power and increased demand for products and services demands. The company invests in communities in terms of charity (i.e. charity contributions), social investment (i.e. education, social issues, and unemployment), partnerships with social partners and economic responsibility (i.e. provide products and services that the community wants at a reasonable price that secures a fair return on investment).

Investors: As we are closing the first decade of the 21st century and have witnessed many corporate scandals, shareholders are recognizing that being ethical investors or socially and environmentally conscious investors is good for a business and it pays off in the long run. Contributing to society and to other stakeholders and still having returns on their investments, ethical investors can take an advantage of being ethical and respectful to other stakeholders.

VIII. Corporate-community interface-changing dimensions:

New model of CCR differs greatly from the traditional style of community relations historically practiced in the corporate sector. Under the old style, contributions were given

because executives valued certain causes and often mandated recipients. Most programs were controlled and carried out only in the headquarters community. Local managers maintained good community relations by responding to complaints and crises. Some of the companies in the study still practiced this type of community relations; a relationship was found between these firms and lower overall corporate social performance. (Altman, 1999)

IX. CSR and socio-cultural factors:

Wong *et al.* (2009) compared perceptions from the USA, China, and India and found culture to be an underlying factor. Such comparative studies of different settings could enrich our understanding of CSR. There have been many debates and instances where companies have been criticised for not paying enough attention to their social and environmental impact because of their lack of understanding that environmental and social issues have become an economic reality (Buchholz, 1993; Dehant and Altman, 1994; Welford, 1994; Jaffe *et al.*, 1995; Porter and van der Linde, 1995; King and Lennox, 2001; Schaltegger and Synnestvedt, 2002). However, in many cases, environmental and social issues influence both costs and income of a company and therefore have a more or less direct influence on the economic success of that company (King *et al.*, 2001; Schaltegger *et al.*, 2002).

X. Emerging trends in domain of CSR:

In India several companies have started realizing that it is a rational move to take up CSR activities and integrate it with their business process. Corporations are becoming increasingly aware of their role

towards the society. They are responsible bodies that feel a sense of duty towards the common welfare and the environment. This comes with a growing realization that they, as an integral part of this society themselves can contribute to its uplifting and empower the entire country in turn. Thus companies now are setting up specific departments and teams that develop policies, strategies and goals which are for their CSR programs and allocate separate budgets to support

them. In the modern era, the new generation of corporate leaders considers optimization of profits as the key rather than the maximization of profit. Companies conduct events like health camps, population control measures, support a few sick people, give some scholarships, organize a few SHGs, a few sports events and impart trainings for some livelihood practices without linking them to further growth in the process of conducting CSR. Some corporates have been found to work on disability, some on elderly issues, some work on street children.

XI. Emerging trends in domain of CSR:

Some of the demonstrable trends which are particularly interesting are as follows:

- Moving from reporting to engagement: In terms of quality of data the current model of CR reporting has hit something of a ceiling.
- Transparency: As with technological change, transparency is indeed an irreversible force. Reporting and disclosure will certainly continue to grow, also driven by ever-lower barriers to various information access, higher public interest and regulatory changes. Already over 5,000 corporations disclose their ESG performance on annual basis and this number is bound to grow.
- Trust factors: Ever-growing impact of business on society means that consumers and citizens expect corporate power to be exerted responsibly. As citizens are found to be skeptical and also prone to challenge authority, the corporate community will have to raise its learning curve on building trust.
- Community participation: Business is generally expected to do more in areas which used to be the exclusive domain of the public sector, ranging from health to education, community investment and environment stewardship. Environmental issues are certainly good examples of this blurred line. It is now believed that natural resources are finite and under stress. What was once unthinkable is becoming reality today; water and even air now come with price tags. Those companies which collaborate with civil

society, scientists and public regulators show early on that they are very much part of the solution which will come out ahead.

- Accessing new markets responsibly: Businesses of today are now moving from resource taker to market builder. With economic growth mitigating southward and eastward, foreign direct investment is becoming more about building and also gaining access to new markets and less about simply exploiting low-cost inputs. Trying to overcome major barriers to growth such as civil violence, uneducated workforce and also unsustainable sources of energy, minerals, water and soil is now in the interest of many businesses.

- Initiatives to engage companies: Today there are various means for engaging corporate sustainability which proves to be plentiful and growing. Maintaining standards, taking initiatives and driving consultancies are booming today at both national and global levels.

UN Global impact is engaging 8,000 companies in more than 145 countries on human rights, labour standards and environment and anti-corruption. Many others are also producing practical resources in other such key areas.

Thus for businesses, environmental, social and also governance responsibilities are by far no longer add-ons, but indeed they are integral part to success. While a great majority of companies have yet to commit to this particular trajectory, there is also a strong upward growth curve in most of the actively engaged companies.

XII. CSR activities of some major Indian companies:

- ONGC and Indian Oil Corporation have been spending 0.75-1 per cent of their overall net profits on CSR activities. Also ONGC's CSR projects mainly focus on higher education, grant of scholarship, aid to deserving young pupils of very less privileged sections of society and facilities for constructing schools, etc.

- SAIL also has taken successful actions in environment conservation, women empowerment, providing drinking water facilities, health and medical care, education for the underprivileged, etc.
- Indian Airlines and BHEL have been acclaimed for disaster management efforts. Besides, BHEL has also adopted 56 villages having nearly 80,000 inhabitants.
- Mahindra and Mahindra launched a unique kind of ESOP- employee social option in order to enable Mahindra and Mahindra employees to generally involve themselves in socially responsible activities of their own choice.
- Glaxo Smithkline Pharmaceuticals' CSR programs primarily focus on health and healthy living. They also work in tribal villages where they provide medical check-up and treatment, health camps and other health awareness programs. They also provide money, medicines and other equipment to non-profit organizations which work towards improving health and education in certain under-served communities
- Bajaj Electricals Limited's corporate social responsibility activities include education, rural development related activities and environment related concerns.
- India's largest software service company Tata Consultancy Services has won the Asian CSR award for initiating community development work and also implementing various programs and devoting leadership and sincerity as an ongoing commitment in inculcating and incorporating ethical values. The company focuses mainly on education sector. The company is also working on literacy program that uses TCS-designed computer based literacy model generally to teach adults and this particular program is known as adult literacy program.
- Infosys: As a leading software company, Infosys is providing language and computer education. Besides, the company has also been organizing special program for underprivileged children by which it teaches them various skills and changes their outlook too. The company also donates chess boards, carom boards, chocolates, etc. to the needy ones.
- ITC Limited: One of India's leading private sector companies having assorted portfolio of businesses is working with the concept of Triple Bottom Line which will contribute to the growth of economy, environment and also social development. The company is involved in raising agricultural productivity thus helping rural economy to be more socially inclusive.
- Maruti Suzuki: India's trusted automobile major works on global warming and other global issues like climate change. Of late, the company has been strongly investing on environmental friendly products and also manufacturing quality products for the society. Maruti Suzuki is working upon conserving environment and also preserving natural environment. Concept of reduce, recycle and reuse has been promoted by the company in all of its manufacturing units.

XIII. Major inferences for future of CSR in the present business context:

The development of the stakeholder perspective implies the transformation of the tradition of bilateral relationship established between the firm and only some of the relevant groups, such as shareholder or owners into alternative multilateral relationships, which include the employees, unions, customers, suppliers, Government, investors, media, competitors or the local community (Argandona, 1998; Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2014). The origin of the stakeholder concept arises from the field of business management, introduced by Freeman and defined as any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the decisions and the achievement of corporate objectives (Freeman, 1984: 25). Given the multitude of parties involved in organizational activities, such as those stated

by Freeman (1984), Good Paster (1991) and Clarkson (1995), it is necessary to differentiate between and prioritize them according to a single criterion in order to meet their expectations with a logical order. These previous works use a double distinction of stakeholders by way of consensus regarding their nature and the relationship established with the organization:

- a primary group, which usually has a formal contract with the firm and is essential for its proper functioning (owners, shareholders, employees, unions, customers, suppliers, etc.) and
- a secondary group which, despite not being directly involved in the economic activities of the company and not having a contractual relationship with it, can exercise a significant influence on its activity (citizens, competitors, local community, the Government, public, etc.). The influence, power and claims that each of these parts has on the company has been analyzed in works such as Mitchell, Agle and Wood (1997). In this regard, a solid and broad theoretical framework has been built related to the stakeholder's theory that shows how satisfying the interests of these parties can help companies to improve their financial performance and subsequently their competitiveness and sustainability (Harrison, Bosse & Phillips, 2010). Specifically, Good Paster (1991), Donaldson and Preston (1995) and Fassin (2009) argue that there are different forms of analyzing and studying the management of interest by companies.

In a conceptual and theory development piece, *Perception-induced effects of corporate social irresponsibility (CSIR) for stereotypical and admired firms*, Voliotis et al. (2016) explore new frontiers by developing a model of how stakeholders react to corporate social irresponsibility (CSIR).

Prior research has tended to focus on positive stakeholder reactions to CSR, whether those CSR practices are meaningful in scope and embedded

in a firm's operations, or more symbolic and superficial. Relatively overlooked, however, are negative stakeholder reactions to a firm's irresponsible business practices. In another departure from existing perspectives in which CSR and CSIR are typically viewed as opposite ends of a single continuum, these authors propose there are distinct psychological mechanisms involved in interpreting and reacting to CSR vs. CSIR. Building on theories from the stereotype content model and the BIAS map (behaviors from intergroup affect and stereotypes), the authors propose a model to explain stakeholder reactions to CSIR. For a typical for-profit firm, the authors propose that stakeholders will react to CSIR through the mechanism of respect/disrespect and like/dislike, which can lead to anger and in turn motives to create harm for the firm. In contrast, for stakeholder reactions to CSIR among admired firms, the positive reputations of those firms can buffer stakeholders' negative reactions. The authors explore other new frontiers by proposing various boundary conditions for these effects (e.g., perception of the firm's culpability in the CSIR).

XIV. Findings

An insight into the history of CSR reveals that till 1990s it was exclusively dominated by the idea of philanthropy. Considering CSR as an act of philanthropy, businesses often constrained themselves to one time financial grant and did not commit their resources for such projects. Moreover, businesses never kept the stakeholder in mind while planning for such initiatives, thereby reducing the worth and efficiency of CSR initiatives. However, over the last few years, the concept of CSR has been changing. There has been a clear transition from giving as an obligation or charity to giving as a strategy or responsibility. Review of the case studies and work done on CSR by companies in India suggests that the CSR is slowly moving away from charity and dependence and starting to build on empowerment and partnership. Nowadays corporates are treating CSR as a separate entity and dedicating attention to it. Most of the corporates have a vision and mission statements

often at the corporate level or sometimes at the CSR level that compel their CSR initiative. Discussions are made to choose specific issues and initiatives. It has been observed that the areas they choose somewhere relate to their core values. Companies today are increasingly sensitive about their social role. The companies not only concentrate on how they will position their product or how they will sell it but also they have a social strategy. They believe that brands are built not only around good quality of the product; but also around emotions and values that people ascribe to those products.

XV. Conclusion

Business houses in India are realizing their stake in the society and engaging in various social and environmental activities. CSR holds a very important place in the development scenario of India today and can be an alternative tool for sustainable development. As companies have shown great concerns for their immediate community and the stakeholders, it can be safely concluded that much of the fate of society lies in the hands of the corporates. A successfully implemented CSR strategy calls for aligning these initiatives with business objectives and corporate responsibility across the business principles to make CSR sharper, smarter, and focused on what really matters. This study provides insights into an area of growing concern of firms towards the society. Firms have been making great effort for the achievement of business goals and marrying the business goals with social responsibility practices. CSR has come a long way in India. From responsive activities to sustainable initiatives, corporates have clearly exhibited their ability to make a significant difference in the society and improve the overall quality of life. In the current social situation in India, it is difficult for one single entity to bring about change, as the scale is huge. Corporates have the expertise, strategic thinking, manpower and money to facilitate wide social change. The implication for policy makers either as individual companies or through umbrella bodies is to engage various stakeholders to profile a local meaning of CSR. The academic community could contribute

through empirical studies, civic and community leaders through sharing feedback, and government through the private/public partnership network (Bagire, V.A. et al, 2011). As emphasized by Ingham (2006), CSR is about corporate sustainability through engagement with various stakeholders. Humphreys (2000) argued that a company that does not listen attentively will not pick up nuances of community opinion and cannot expect to establish a secure basis for good-quality relations. Effective partnerships between corporates, NGOs and the government will push India's social development at a tremendous growth. As per the changing market demands, the need of the hour is for the development of CSR framework that has been imposed by the government. In such a case, we can contribute more to make our planet a better planet to live in.

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