
Corporate Social Responsibility - A Study in National Aluminium Company Limited

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Abstract

In the late 1880s, in the introduction stage of industrialization, it was broadly discussed that whether or not companies should take their social responsibility. This discussion has today concluded as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Judging by the first-named author's recent media trawl (her book BRICS and Beyond is based on a six months survey of The Economist and Financial Times), there is an increasing level of interest in aspects of CSR in the operations of international business in emerging markets. This can take two forms – the more reactive approach of avoiding CSR-related “transgressions” on both sides – for both the foreign and local partners involved in international business in emerging markets; and the more proactive way of trying to launch CSR initiatives so that the international partner might add some value to the local community in which it is operating. The interest for CSR has grown rapidly in the recent years and people have started demanding that companies should take their social responsibility. In the same time companies have started to understand that they should use CSR as a powerful weapon to gain long term gains which has a direct and positive impact on wealth maximisation. Thus, philanthropy is no longer limited to signing cheques for social causes and welfare programmes. The corporate world is now reaching out to community. The commitment is getting much deeper as a large section of employees including members of top management are now doing their bit for causes close to their heart. In this context since the mining and manufacturing companies and their core business activities directly affect the resourcefulness of the society and to curb this they must make appropriate allocation in their budget. This paper focuses on the Corporate Social Responsibility of National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO). National Aluminium Company (Nalco) has so far spent more than Rs 100 crore towards various social sector development activities. Creation of infrastructure in the surrounding villages for communication, education, healthcare and drinking water gets priority in the periphery development plans of the company. The present paper examines the extent of its involvement in social activities and peripheral development with a view to recommend the strategic importance of being socially responsible to all the stakeholders. The methodology employed was that the researchers examine the Annual Reports, Accounts and other secondary data available, compared the turnover with their investment on CSR and made necessary comment on the compliance in respect of obligations towards the stakeholders.

Keywords: Corporate social responsibility, Stakeholders, Peripheral development, Wealth maximization

“Philanthropy is commendable, but it must not cause the philanthropist to overlook the circumstances of economic injustice which make philanthropy necessary”.

Martin Luther King (Jr)

Introduction

The field of corporate social responsibility (CSR) has grown exponentially in the last decade. There are different views on the role of the firm in society and disagreement as to whether wealth maximization should be the sole goal of a corporation. As a consequence of cross-border trade, multinational enterprises and global supply chains, there is an increased awareness on CSR concerns related to human resource management practices, environmental protection, and health and safety, among other things.

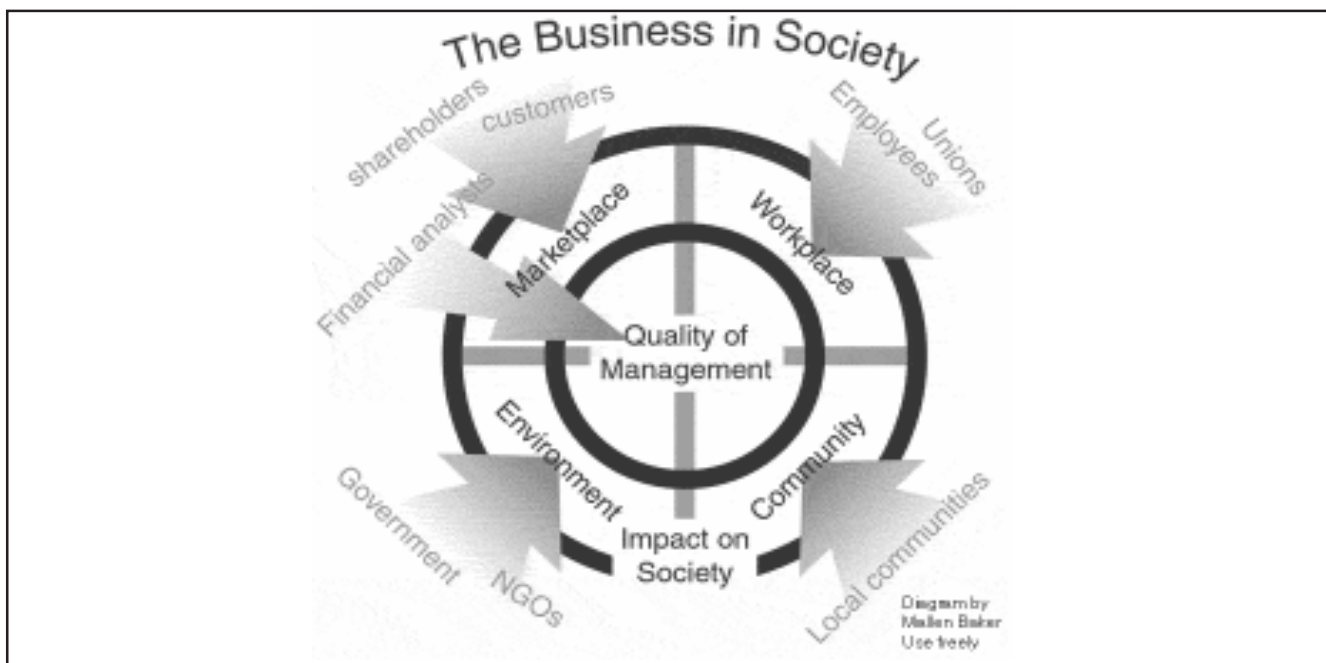
Reporting on the CSR activities by corporate is therefore increasingly becoming mandatory. In an increasingly fast-paced global economy, CSR initiatives enable corporate to engage in more meaningful and regular stakeholder dialogue and thus be in a better position to anticipate and respond to regulatory, economic, social and environmental changes that may occur. The role of business in society has undergone a dramatic change in India as well and also across the globe. From the

origin of the king's welfare to the liberalization and reduction in the regulatory framework, businesses have started to undertake CSR activities voluntarily as they consider their contribution towards society and environment is a symbiotic relationship. The majority of studies on CSR, however, are still embedded in the economic and organizational context of Europe and the US (Raman, 2006). Only a few studies have explored some of the multiple aspects of this concept in India, both theoretically and empirically (Arora and Puranik, 2004; Balasubramanian et al., 2005; Baskin, 2006; Narwal and Sharma, 2008). In general, studies that have looked at CSR, specifically the levels of integration within the business sector in developing countries, are limited. As globalization continues to alter the traditional balance of power between developed and emerging nations, businesses from emerging markets are vigorously challenging the hegemony of their international counterparts as business environment is becoming uncertain, dynamic and complex. Given this scenario, scholars and researchers have consistently called for more research in the area of corporate social responsibility and the growing influence of emerging markets and their leading companies. Our study focuses on companies engaged in mining activities, extracting the valuable natural resources involving a very high social cost causing extensive adverse effect on the biodiversity. Hence, it necessitates an extensive study on the CSR of the mining companies to justify the social cost benefit equation with special reference to National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO).

Meaning and Definition of CSR

The term Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become a part of the business lingua amongst commercial circles of India. Business activity in the developing nations across the globe has realized the need for business to respond to the needs of the environment in which it operates and therefore to accept social responsibilities for stable and sustainable development. The prime reason for involvement of business in developmental causes beyond economics is that business is a multi-operational activity with various agencies as stakeholders governments through chartering and ensuring implementation of effective rules and policies, conscientious consumers who demand and consume an ethical product, astute suppliers, punctilious employees who lay faith in their companies social projects, responsible investors and self-effacing entrepreneurs. Therefore, economic activity as a whole and business houses in particular are seen as forces primarily responsible for exacerbating the deteriorating position of the resources employed – both human and nature-based raw material. **Philip Kotler and Nancy Lee (2005)** define CSR as “a commitment to improve community wellbeing through discretionary business practices and contributions of corporate resources” whereas **Mallen Baker (2004)** refers to CSR as “a way companies manage the business processes to produce an overall positive impact on society.”

Fig.- 1: The Business in Society

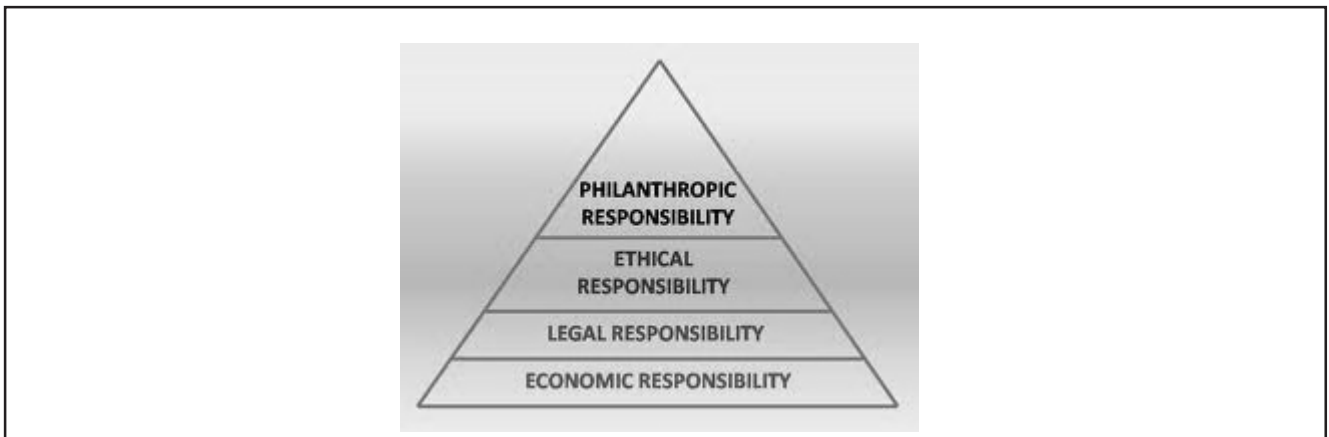


Source: <http://www.mallenbaker.net/csr/definition.php>

According to **World Business Council for Sustainable Development** “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”.

Fig. - 2 Responsibility Pyramid



Source: www.cbe.wvu.edu/dunn/rprnts.pyramidofcsr.pdf

Literature Review

According to Business for Social Responsibility (2007), CSR brings not only risks for the mining industry, but also creates a set of opportunities. It can help companies secure their social license to operate, contribute in a meaningful way to sustainable development, and ultimately add value not just for shareholders but also for all of their stakeholders- for the communities and others who are affected by the company's operations. Cernea (2007) has given examples of different countries on how they share the project benefits with the project affected persons. Colombia allocates a certain percentage of benefits from hydroelectric plants to the development of rehabilitated area. In Brazil there is a principle of reinvesting a percentage of royalties from hydropower to the resettlement area. Canada adopted a strategy of partnering with the local communities for equity sharing. In China there are important agencies, which have the responsibility of managing the reservoir development funds and initiating development interventions to benefit the resettlers. There are, appreciably, several cases of companies in India involved in diverse issues such as health-care, education, rural development, sanitation, micro-credit and women empowerment, arts, heritage, culture, and conservation of wildlife and nature, etc (Arora and Puranik 2004). Given the increase in corporate profits on the one hand and the reality of human-poverty and development indicators on the other, CSR seem to be in a embryonic stage in India. Critics also argued that CSR is primarily about green wash, or the projection of a caring image without significant change to socially and environmentally harmful business practices. Therefore, there is a need to increase the understanding and active participation of business in equitable social development highlighting it as an integral part of good business practice. Viviers and Boudler (2008) study investigated the CSR performance of selected mining companies listed on the Johannesburg Securities Exchange. The 2006 Annual Financial Statements of each company were analyzed by means of content analysis. According to their study, CSR issues with an economic impact, such as HIV/AIDS, tend to be

given priority by mining companies, where as CSR issues related to empowerment receive less attention. The study recommended that mining companies should focus more on health and safety issues and environmental issues which lie on the ethical and philanthropic levels of CSR. Jenkins and Yakovleva (2006) tried to explore recent trends in the reporting of social and environmental impact and issues in the global mining industry. It offers a detailed review of the development of media for social and environmental disclosure in the mining industry, and of the factors that drive the development of such disclosure. A temporal analysis of recent trends in disclosure using a case study of the world's 10 largest mining companies was presented. The result shows that whilst there is evidence of increasing sophistication in the development of social and environmental disclosure, there is considerable variation in the maturity of reporting content and styles of these companies. A study on Iron Ore mining industry in Goa shows that many large mining companies have their own initiative towards environmental and social development. However, a structured CSR policy and planning is generally missing, especially among the small and medium players in the industry. CSR has not yet emerged as an important theme among the mining community in Goa. Banerjee (2004) mentioned that for carrying mining activity in the future, adequate attention should be given to the social dimensions of mining.

He has mentioned the commendable community development work done by many mining companies and to disseminate the knowledge generated. For example, the progressive Resettlement and Rehabilitation (R&R) policy adopted by Coal India and the transfer of lessons learnt from the World Bank's Coal Sector Environmental and Social Mitigation Project to other mines. This has the potential to bring in a major change to the social dimensions of the mining sector in the country. Hamann and Kapelus (2004) argued that CSR related narratives and practices can be fruitfully assessed with reference to accountability and fairness as key criteria. Brief case studies of mining in South Africa and Zambia suggest that there are still important gaps between mining

companies' CSR activities, on the one hand, and accountability and fairness, on the other. Their conclusion is that companies' CSR-related claims, and particularly the reference to a business case for voluntary initiatives, need to be treated with caution. Poor attention to community development and engagement with the landowners caused the closing down of a large copper mine in Papua New Guinea. The Phulbari coal mine project in Bangladesh was abandoned in 2006 because of community agitations for alternative livelihoods (Lahiri-Dutt 2007). The mining companies should try to place an equal emphasis on concerns related to the environment, the economy and the community. The representatives of companies, government officials, and community members should be involved in resolving problems, which arise because of mining. Most of the time, local communities, governments and mining companies are uncertain about their respective roles and responsibilities in the development of mining, and they are unable to act or participate effectively in decisions related to mining activities (Conway 2003). Some of the core issues, which the company should deal with, are: (a) Rehabilitation and Compensation issues should be dealt with equitably. The company should provide all infrastructure facilities to the rehabilitation colony. They should take into consideration the plight of landless households. (b) Proper care of environmental quality. Concerns about air pollution, water pollution and degradation, lands and forests should be given proper emphasis. (c) The company should invest in improving human and physical capital of the region. Education, basic amenities, health care, training opportunities should be provided not only to the employee's family but for the community as a whole. (d) Issues of post-mine closure like unemployment, income potential, migration, environmental cleanup should be discussed much in advance. (e) Effective administration, rule enforcement and accountability should be keywords in the process of rehabilitation as well the functioning of the mines.

CSR in Indian Companies

The practice of considering business responsible to its various stakeholders has long been a part of the Indian business tradition even before the advent of the industrial revolution in India, though it differed in its nature and the manner in which it is defined today as CSR. For India, CSR is not a new concept and it has had a major influence on business, government, and society relationships (Balasubramanian et al., 2005). Companies like Tata Steel (the oldest and best known Indian steel company, whose founder was more a nation-builder than a businessman seeking profits) were very involved in trying to tackle many social problems even before the term CSR formally entered the vocabulary of management texts (Singh, 2008). In fact, "so deep and extensive was the commitment that it earned the sobriquet of being the company 'that also made steel' – suggesting that it often gave the impression of being primarily a social, rather than a business, organization" (Singh, 2008, p. 124). The origin of CSR in India could be traced back to the days of Kings. According to Kautilya's Arthashastra, "In the welfare of the people lies the king's welfare and in

their happiness his happiness" (cited in Jose et al., 2003). In the nineteenth century, merchants and religious/ethnic groups came together to do something primarily for the community with some benefits also flowing outside the community (Jose et al., 2003). Religion and charity have always been linked with people in India brought up in an environment founded on the belief that giving is good (Jose et al., 2003). Even before India's independence in 1947, businesses made significant contributions to schools, hospitals, and rural development (Mohan, 2001). After independence, large public sector companies carried out state-sponsored CSR activities (Mohan, 2001). More recently, Indian CSR is becoming an important part of longer-term business development initiative (Balasubramanian et al., 2005). Corporate social responsibility is predominantly considered as a western phenomenon due to strong institutions, standards, and appeal systems that are weak in developing countries of Asia (Chapple and Moon, 2005). Such weak standards tend to pose considerable challenge to firms for practicing CSR in developing countries of Asia including India. Given that South and South-East Asian countries continue to experience many institutional changes, particularly in India with regard to its economic sector, the academic literature continues to focus on assessing the state of its CSR. Current research on CSR in India is mostly limited to self reported questionnaire surveys on CSR (Khan and Atkinson, 1987; Krishna, 1992), nature and characteristics of CSR in India (Arora and Puranik, 2004; Sood and Arora, 2006), perceptions of the Indian society on CSR (Narwal and Sharma, 2008), CSR perceptions of India by businesses (Balasubramanian et al., 2005), corporate social reporting (Raman, 2006), and policies and practices of multi-national corporations (MNCs) towards CSR in India (CREM, 2004) without linking it with any specific CSR model. This study intends to fill that gap by replicating and extending the past findings on CSR approaches, while examining the drivers and barriers of social responsibility in India.

Researchers argue that the idea of voluntary response of corporate in social well-being is as old as business itself (Vardarajan and Menon 1988). The philanthropy researcher, Sundar (2000) traces the history and presents a detailed account of the philanthropic involvement of business activity in India against the economic, social political and cultural developments in the country. First, philanthropy in India is largely a story of Indian businessmen, as historically women did not play a very important role in business philanthropy. Second, it is a story of indigenous rather than expatriate business. Even though foreign businesses have had a major presence in India, their aim has been profit maximization rather than the development of the country. The exceptions are some organizations that have been present in India over a longer period of time and which have become more or less "Indianized". Third, as in most of Asia, philanthropy is largely a story of family businesses.

Despite these distinctive features, there are some similarities between the development of modern philanthropy in India and the West. Driving forces, such

as religious beliefs and sentiments associated with capital accumulation, industrial wealth and the resultant social consequences, hold true for India as for countries in the West. Moreover, the corporate philanthropy vehicles in India, such as the trusts and foundations, closely resembled what had been the norm in Western countries and elsewhere. However, similarities aside, the fact remains that the form philanthropy takes in any society depends upon a nation's unique history, culture, traditions and economic and political situation.

In India, corporate philanthropy has been the most prevalent and well-accepted form of executing social responsibility. However, corporate philanthropy is no longer considered an adequate response to demands for social responsibility, given its limited rationale and scope. The term CSR, is usually taken to include environmental, social and human rights-based impact and initiatives of companies (Ward and Fox 2002), and in many countries—both industrialized and developing the concept and practices are taken seriously (Hopkins 2003).

The practice of CSR in India got a new dimension after globalization, both in terms of the way it is executed and by agencies that practice it. The impact of increased revenues pocketed by way of globalization brought many big corporations under the surveillance of the now active and vigorous NGOs and media. It has been predicted that in the times to come companies will be "judged more by their social policies than on their delivery of products and services" (Juholin, 2004). Hence, many companies realizing the imperativeness, volunteered to march on the beats of CSR. CSR has now been accepted as an ongoing activity in sync with that of the business rather than an occasional affair to vitalize the corporate reputation.

Looking across the current practices of leading Indian corporates, a number of core elements emerge:

Community Development: Most large companies either have their own foundations or contribute to other initiatives that directly support the community upliftment, notably in health, education, and agriculture.

Environmental Management: Environmental policies and programmes are now standard, and many companies have implemented the ISO 14001 system throughout their businesses.

Workplace: Growing out of long-standing commitments to training and safety is a more recent emphasis on knowledge and employee well-being. (TERI 2004)

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are:

- (a) To highlight the scope of CSR activities of NALCO and its progress.
- (b) To analyze the details of CSR expenditure in the last five years.

- (c) To comment on the statutory compliance of NALCO with reference to its obligation towards Government and society at large.
- (d) To test the significance of correlation between CSR cost and Turnover.

Methodology followed

The research is entirely based on the secondary sources of data i.e. company website, annual reports, online databases, other websites, etc. (Data have been analyzed using the statistical tools viz. tables, diagrams, t-test etc. as required.)

CSR in NALCO

Brief Profile of NALCO

It was incorporated in 1981, as a public sector enterprise of the Government of India. National Aluminium Company Limited (Nalco) is Asia's largest integrated aluminium complex, encompassing bauxite mining, alumina refining, aluminium smelting and casting, power generation, rail and port operations. Commissioned during 1985-87, Nalco has emerged as the star performer in production, export of alumina and aluminium, and more significantly, in propelling a self-sustained growth. Set up in technical collaboration with Aluminium Pechiny of France (now Rio Tinto-Alcan). Besides, NALCO has been accorded Social Accountability System Certificate (SA 8000:2008) for being committed to provide a socially accountable work environment to all its employees. With time, all these remarkable achievements have translated into yet another creditable title for NALCO- a Navratna PSU.

Analysis and Interpretation – Discussion on CSR in NALCO

Along with its business, NALCO lays special emphasis on its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. When the company started its activities in Odisha in 1981, there was no such nomenclature like CSR. All that the company felt was its moral responsibility towards the society. But today, CSR has become a buzzword in the corporate world. The company has come to represent a better quality of life for communities residing in the vicinity of its plants and facilities. The company has comprehensively addressed the problems of rehabilitation of displaced families with adequate compensation, housing & employment to the extent feasible. These apart, the company assigns high importance to promotion & maintenance of a pollution-free environment in all its activities, mobile health services, water for drinking and irrigation facilities, free medicines and a free veterinary services. Also it has contributed towards major relief measures like National Defense Fund, Super Cyclone, Prime Ministers National Relief Fund and also to Chief Ministers Relief Fund. (Please refer NALCO CSR brochure for details)

As a policy, Nalco started allocating 0.5% of its net profit every year for Periphery Development (PD) activities since 1998-99. The amount was doubled to 1% since 2002-03. Out of the total sum 40% for Damanjodi sector, where the Mines & Refinery are located; 40% for Angul sector, where

the Smelter & Power Plant are located; and 20% for rest areas. (Refer Table III). As per the policy of Government of Odisha, the Rehabilitation & Periphery Development Advisory Committees (RPDACs), at Koraput and Angul, headed by concerned Revenue Divisional Commissioners (RDCs), with local MLAs, MPs, Collectors and others as Members, decide all policy and project matters related to periphery development in these areas. Till 2011-12 fiscal, Nalco has allocated Rs. 157.56 crore under PD programme. In 2010-11 fiscal, Nalco Board decided to set up a standalone Foundation for its CSR activities. Among other things, the Board decided to allocate an

additional one percent of Nalco's total net profit every year to fund the schemes to be undertaken by this Foundation. With the setting up of Nalco Foundation, the CSR budget of the company now stands doubled at 2% of the net profit. The Foundation was registered on 28th July 2010, under the Indian Trusts Act 1882. The Foundation is based on the Guidelines on CSR for CPSEs, issued in March 2010 by the Department of Public Enterprises, Government of India. As directed therein, since Nalco's net profit is more than Rs.500 crore, its CSR expenditure range should be: 0.5% to 2% of the net profit. Nalco has opted for the maximum by setting up the Foundation.

Table - 1 : Year wise amount allocation to NALCO foundation

Year	Amount (In Rs Crore)
2010-11	8.14
2011-12	10.69
2012-13	8.49
Total	27.32

Source: http://www.nalcoindia.com/NALCO_FOUNDATION.pdf

Table - 2 : Expenditure incurred in CSR activities with Head-wise break up (Rs. In Crores)

Year	Plantation & Horticulture	Environmental & Pollution Control	Peripheral Development Expenses and Provision	Total
2007-08	2.55	0.75	24.48	27.78
2008-09	2.8	0.69	22.25	25.74
2009-10	3.62	0.62	13.84	18.08
2010-11	4.25	0.81	16.65	21.71
2011-12	6.69	0.91	26.62	34.22
Total	19.91	3.78	103.84	127.53

Fig. - 3: Expenditure incurred in CSR activities with Head-wise break up

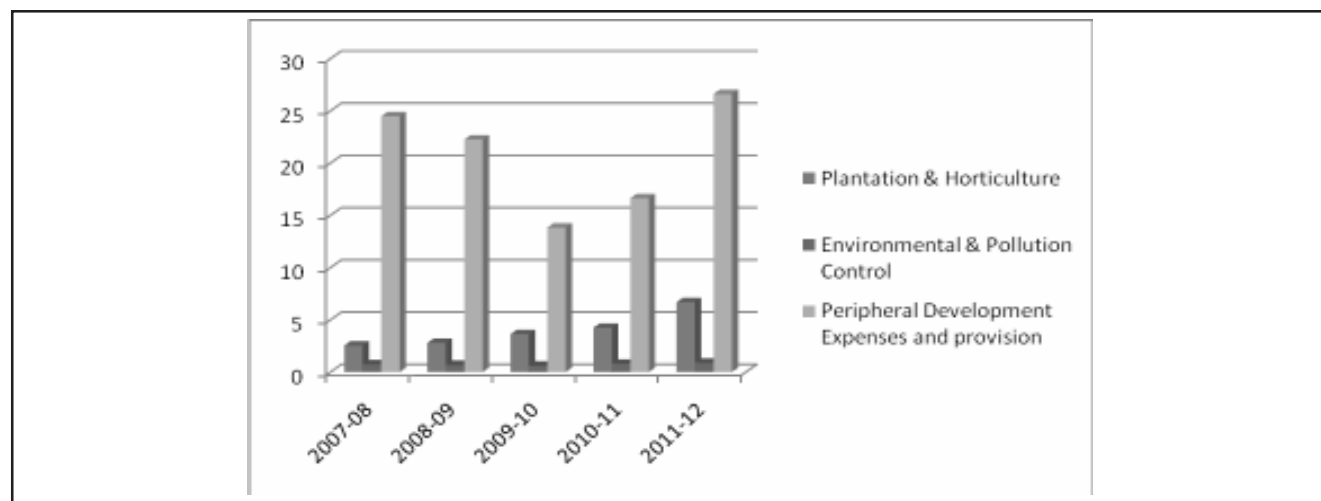
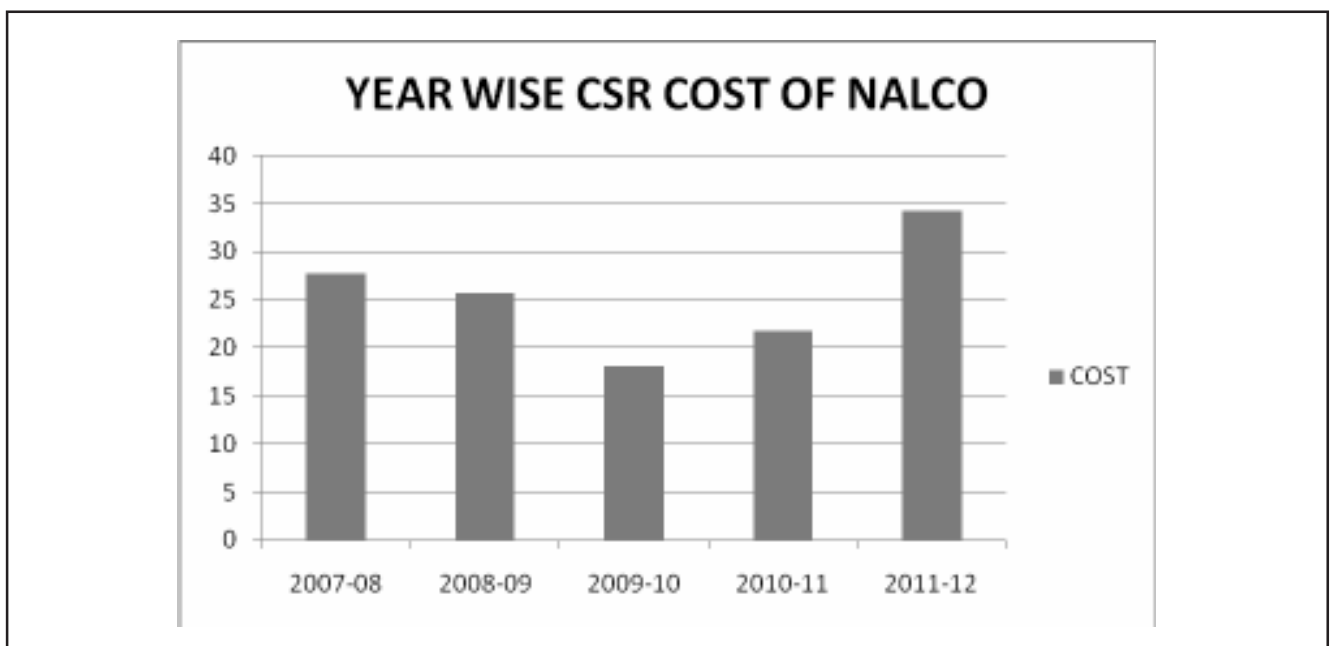


Table - 3: Year-wise CSR cost of NALCO

(Rs. In Crores)

YEAR	COST
2007-08	27.78
2008-09	25.74
2009-10	18.08
2010-11	21.71
2011-12	34.22
Mean Expenditure	25.50

Fig. - 4: Year-wise CSR cost of NALCO

Looking at the year wise CSR cost it is showing a decreasing trend up to 2009-10 (refer table-3). In 2011-12 NALCO has incurred highest amount of expenditure amounting to Rs. 34.22 Crore in complying its social

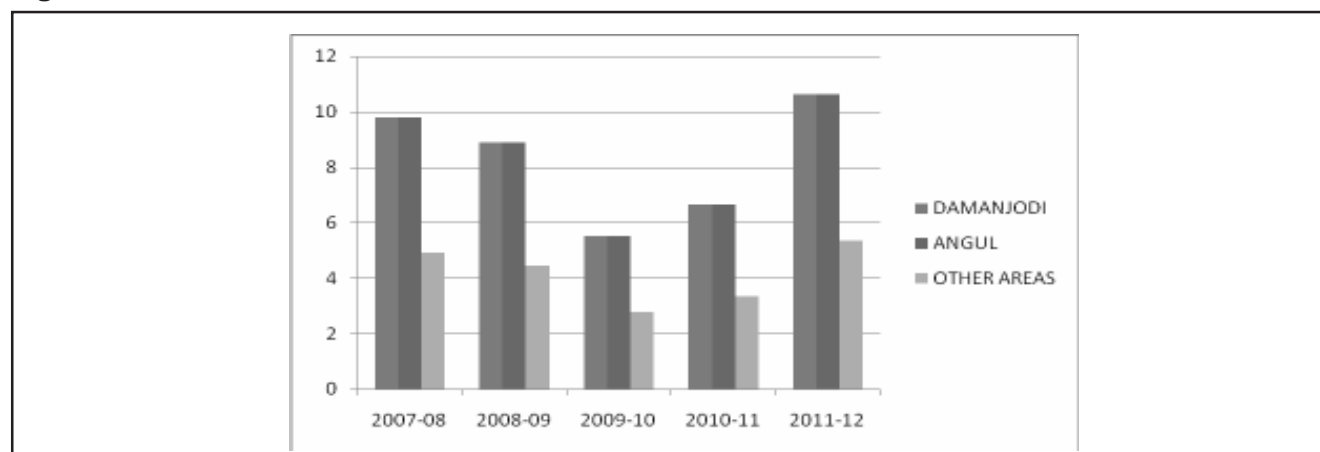
responsibility. The expenditure has gone up to 21.71 Crore in 2010-11 and maintains an increasing trend in the following year as well. The average expenditure as calculated in the Table is Rs. 25.50 Crore.

Table - 4 : Area-wise CSR Cost

(Rs. In Crores)

Year	Damanjodi	Angul	Other Areas	Total
2007-08	9.79	9.79	4.9	24.48
2008-09	8.9	8.9	4.45	22.25
2009-10	5.53	5.53	2.78	13.84
2010-11	6.66	6.66	3.33	16.65
2011-12	10.64	10.64	5.34	26.62
TOTAL	41.52	41.52	20.8	103.84

Fig. - 5: Area-wise CSR Cost



Analyzing the area wise CSR cost it is reflected in the table that Damanjodi and Angul areas (refer table- 4) have claimed the lion's share in terms of getting 40% each followed by other areas which get 20% where NALCO is mainly operating.

The management of a company should comply with all applicable Govt. laws, rules and regulations. Legal

compliance also means that corporate should abide by the tax laws of the nation in which they operate such as corporate tax, income tax, sales tax, entry tax, excise, royalty to govt. etc. In view of these compliances, NALCO has made the payments as mentioned (refer table-5, table-6) in a span of five years.

Table - 5 : Payment made to Govt. by NALCO during last five Years

(Amount in Rs Crore)

Year	Royalty	Excise Duty	Entry Tax	Income Tax	Total
2007-08	40.66	485.65	6.90	849.80	1383.01
2008-09	39.28	423.00	8.90	634.92	1106.1
2009-10	46.41	255.74	0	315.31	617.46
2010-11	59.10	411.00	N A	421.74	891.84
2011-12	65.63	427.00	NA	237.94	730.57
Total	251.08	2002.39	15.8	2459.71	4728.98

Hypothesis Testing

To test the hypothesis five years annual turnover and CSR expenditure (2007-08 to 2011-12) have been taken into consideration. It was found that there is no strong correlation between the two which is .61174 as calculated.

Applying t-test the table value was found to be 5.841 which is more than the calculated value of t i.e. 1.692. Hence the null hypothesis is accepted and there is no significant correlation between turnover and CSR cost.

Table- 6 : Significance of Co-efficient of Correlation "r" and student's t-Test

Particulars	Correlation between Annual Turnover and CSR cost
Correlation(r)	.61174
Calculated value of t	1.692
Table value of t	5.841
Significant	No
Level	5%

Conclusion

Good corporate governance itself is a social responsibility. It is evident from the foregoing analysis and interpretation that NALCO by involving itself in peripheral development, community development, providing education and health services in different sectors, paying taxes timely and avoiding tax evasion, it is fulfilling its obligation to government & society at a large. An increasing trend is seen in corporate social expenditure which may be due to its profit making as a result it is showing extensive coverage in respect of peripheral development in and around the neighborhood where NALCO is operating during the study period. Going a step further, NALCO has set up a standalone for CSR and for this, the company shall be allocating one percent of its net profit every year. So far, NALCO was spending one percent of its net profit for its periphery development programme with the setting up of NALCO foundation, the amount now stands doubled. The Foundation is based on the guidelines on CSR for Central Public Sector Enterprises, Govt. of India. NALCO comes under the third category and is supposed to spend 0.5% to 2% of its net profit for CSR activities. The company has opted for the maximum, by setting up the Foundation and becoming an example for other companies in the State.

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