

Role of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) in Promoting Education

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ABSTRACT

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a form of international private business self-regulation[1] which aims to contribute to societal goals of a philanthropic, activist, or charitable nature by engaging in or supporting volunteering or ethically oriented practices.[2] While once it was possible to describe CSR as an internal organizational policy or a corporate ethic strategy,[3] that time has passed as various national and international laws have been developed. Various organizations have used their authority to push it beyond individual or even industry-wide initiatives. In contrast, it has been considered a form of corporate self-regulation[4] for some time, over the last decade or so it has moved considerably from voluntary decisions at the level of individual organizations to mandatory schemes at regional, national, and international levels.

Considered at the organisational level, CSR is generally understood as a strategic initiative that contributes to a brand's reputation.[5] As such, social responsibility initiatives must coherently align with and be integrated into a business model to be successful. With some models, a firm's implementation of CSR goes beyond compliance with regulatory requirements and engages in "actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law".[6]

Furthermore, businesses may engage in CSR for strategic or ethical purposes. From a strategic perspective, CSR can contribute to firm profits, particularly if brands voluntarily self-report both the positive and negative outcomes of their endeavors.[7] In part, these benefits accrue by increasing positive public relations and high ethical standards to reduce business and legal risk by taking responsibility for corporate actions. CSR strategies encourage the company to make a positive impact on the environment and stakeholders including consumers, employees, investors, communities, and others.[8] From an ethical perspective, some businesses will adopt CSR policies and practices because of the ethical beliefs of senior management: for example, the CEO of outdoor-apparel company Patagonia, Inc. argues that harming the environment is ethically objectionable.[9]

Proponents argue that corporations increase long-term profits by operating with a CSR perspective, while critics argue that CSR distracts from businesses' economic role. A 2000 study compared existing econometric studies of the relationship between social and financial performance, concluding that the contradictory results of previous studies reporting positive, negative, and neutral financial impact, were due to flawed empirical analysis and claimed when the study is properly specified, CSR has a neutral impact on financial outcomes.[10] Critics[11][12] questioned the "lofty" and sometimes "unrealistic expectations" in CSR.[13] or that CSR is merely window-dressing, or an attempt to pre-empt the role of governments as a watchdog over powerful multinational corporations. In line with this critical perspective, political and sociological institutionalists became interested in CSR in the context of theories of globalization, neoliberalism, and late capitalism. Under CSR activities, many a times the charitable endeavors

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undertaken by companies have little to do with their core product or business practices like ONGC's support for Swachh Vidyalaya Campaign. There are also companies that promote CSR activities in the area of their expertise, like Infosys's support for Computers@Classrooms initiative. As the companies are essentially guided by profit motive, apprehensions arise that either these initiatives would be unsustainable or they are just a marketing strategy. Thus, the question remains that how 'social' can be the Corporate Social Responsibility.

Nonetheless, this philanthropic activity has attracted significant attention across globe, especially among policy makers. In India, with a goal of 'inclusive growth and equitable development', CSR was conceived as an instrument for integrating social, environmental and human development concerns in the entire value chain of corporate business. As a first step towards mainstreaming the concept of Business Responsibilities, in 2009, Ministry of Corporate Affairs had issued 'Voluntary Guidelines on Corporate Social Responsibility. In order to make the philanthropic activities more efficient and ensure more accountability and transparency, in 2014, Government of India made it mandatory for companies to undertake CSR activities under the Companies Act, 2013. With this Act, India has become one of the few countries in the world to have a statutory provision on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

An estimate by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs shows India has 13,000-15,000 companies falling under the CSR mandate. However, in order to comply with CSR rules, among the 5,097 companies that have filed annual reports in 2015-16, only 3,118 companies had made some contribution towards CSR expenditure. In 2016-17, the domestic companies have lined up with an amount to the tune of Rs. 13464 crore to fund their CSR projects and activities and it appears that education is the most preferred intervention area for companies, especially companies with medium CSR budget. In fact, CSR in India has witnessed a surge in education spending over the last three years. Education and skill development together witnessed the largest absolute increase in allocation as the amount spent on this sector has increased from Rs. 3188 crore in 2014-15 to Rs. 5124 in 2016-17. This is around 38 percent of the total money spent under CSR in 2016-17. However, the distribution of CSR interventions for education varies across states. Maharashtra is the most popular destination for CSR followed by states like Gujarat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Mostly three models are adopted by these companies in these states to carry out CSR activities in the field of education - a programme owner or a fund provider or an implementation partner. An analysis of data found Reliance Industries Limited, Bharti Airtel group; Wipro Limited, Tata Consultancy services, Infosys and public sector undertakings like Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), and National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPCL) are some of the companies with higher CSR commitment for education and skill development.

KEYWORDS: Corporate Social Responsibility, education, projects, companies, services, ministry, computers, classrooms

Introduction

A mapping of education and CSR activities of the top 100 companies' shows infrastructure building, providing learning materials and supporting children with monetary and non-monetary incentives in schools are the most popular CSR interventions in education by these companies. Recently, under the Swachh Bharat mission, a number of companies taking CSR initiatives in constructing toilets at schools. As there is no separate category for sanitation projects in schedule VII of the CSR rules, these activities are reported as activity under 'promoting education'. [1]

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However, the other important areas of education like promoting sports & physical education in school, construction and development of libraries and laboratories, teacher's training, and early childhood care and education are not getting significant attention under CSR. Only 20 percent companies have actually aligned their CSR projects towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and have made disclosure regarding the same in their Annual Report. Also, for most of the companies, the data on CSR activities reported in the public domain are very sketchy and do not provide details of fund allocation and amount spent on different interventions/sub-themes under education.

The existing facts and figures on CSR activities on education reflect very little strategic thinking and innovation. This also shows that companies in India view CSR more as a charitable endeavour. In the absence of an enforcement mechanism or penalties for non-compliance, "mandatory" CSR remains largely voluntary in nature. Many activities that companies undertake are both profitable and good for society. With this mandatory clause, many of them are basically classifying their activities as CSR with no real change in social welfare. Even if there is a real increase in socially beneficial activities, the spending on activities is mostly determined on the basis of the companies' preference rather than the priorities for the sector or people or area of interventions.[2,3]

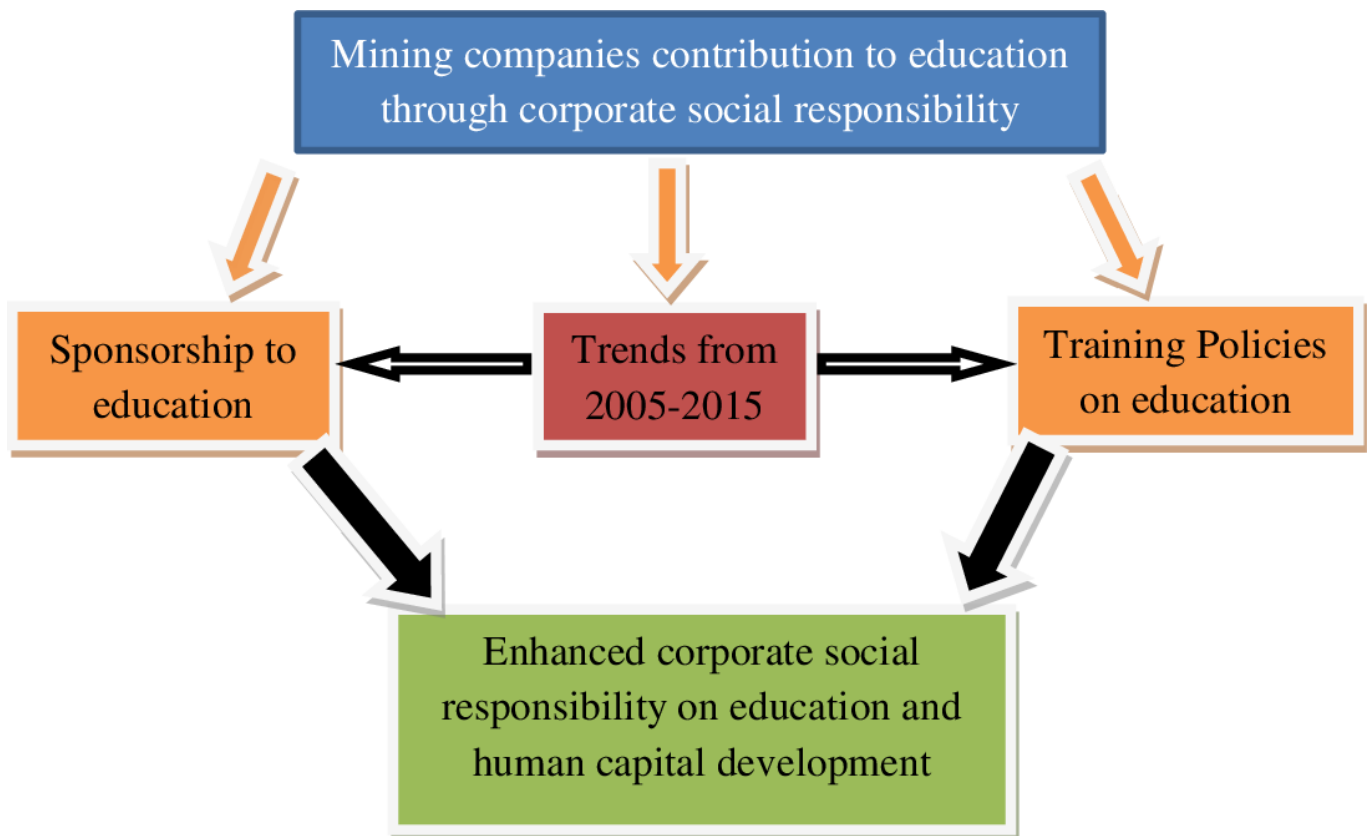
Despite its limitations Government of India has started to look at CSR as one of the potential sources of financing education and skill development. The draft education policy by MHRD for inputs (2016) states that 'government will take steps for reaching the long pending goal of raising the investment in education sector to at least 6% of GDP as a priority and in order to supplement the Government efforts, investment in education by private providers through philanthropy and corporate sector responsibility will be encouraged'.

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Investment on education and skill development through CSR is probably innovative at policy level. However, if we look at the total fund flow through CSR activities in education, in 2016-17, it was merely seven percent of the total MHRD expenditure and a negligible 0.033 percent of country's GDP. Currently India spends around 3.7 percent of GDP on education, which is way below the figure of six percent of GDP, recommended by Kothari Commission in 1966. Given the accumulated deficit of the years, this meager allocation through CSR is nothing but a drop in the ocean. Probably it would be a better alternative for the government to increase the corporate tax and use the additional revenue for provisioning of public goods like education to reduce inequality systematically and in a democratic manner.[4,5]

Corporate Social Responsibility refers to ensuring the success of a business by the inclusion of social and environmental considerations into a company's operations. It means satisfying your customer's demands as well as managing the expectations of other people such as employees, suppliers and the community around you. It means contributing positively to society. This support of corporate sector creates a new vision for Industry academia partnership, which linked with various advantages in terms of industry ready engineers. This partnership opens new chapters in terms of Corporate involvement in curriculum and content design, Joint seminars by academia and industry, Projects conducted under industry mentors, Industry experts in governing councils and boards of advisors, Summer internship opportunities, Academia generating ideas and acting as incubators for entrepreneurs, Industry visits for students and faculty, Guest lectures by industry representatives and much more.[6,7]

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Education is the backbone of any society in this world but the quality of education matter a lot. In India Government has been taken several steps to improve education quality but government effort alone could not do enough. Everyone should give some contribution to improve quality of education. Like government Indian Corporate sectors has been also playing very vital role to enhance education quality through their Corporate Social Responsibility. This paper explains different Initiatives which has been taken by the top Indian corporates for betterment of education and also explore its impact on Indian education sector. The paper shares about CSR initiatives of Corporations in field of education to uplift the education infrastructure, system and shaping the knowledge culture for better future. Implications: This study insight on Indian education sector requirement and the significant aspects of CSR initiatives taken by top corporations of India. This study contributes towards the CSR strategy formation of the companies and government for enhancing CSR initiatives for uplifting Indian education sector. Today, education faces the rising challenges of standardized testing, strained budgets, teacher retention, and global workforce competition. Businesses have begun to take a more targeted approach in their corporate social responsibility programs and are seeking to impact areas that have a correlation with their own business goals. For many businesses, education is an important part of their plans, since the needs exist in all geographic areas, across all subject areas, and for all kinds of people. The bottom line is that educational outreach efforts have the capability to make a real and lasting difference for all players involved

The study is conducted to know whether higher education institutions might also be considered as corporations and whether the current ideas of CSR might have any say in principles and practices of the institutions where work is done[8,9]

Objectives of the Study

- To understand the concept of CSR
- To find out the scope of CSR
- To know how the Hetero group has fulfilled itsresponsibility towards all stakeholders; what specific activities, programs and strategies it has set, devised and implemented for the upliftment of masses by providing the better educational facilities.

Discussion

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is not new to India. What's new is a shift in corporate's voluntary philanthropic activities to making it a mandate core business practice. India is said to be 'The Nation Of Givers' from centuries and it was doing philanthropy and charity for social good from hundred of years. In the year of 2013, new companies act came up with a new corporate policy which was CSR policy under which all those profitable businesses which are having turnover of Rs. 1000 Cr. Or more , Net worth of Rs. 500 Crore or more and Net Profit of Rs. 5 Crore or more have to contribute 2% of their average net profit of preceding three years on social activities which are prescribed under schedule VII of companies act 2013. Nonetheless in past few years CSR policy has attracted significant attention across the nation. The concept of CSR in India is said to be an instrument for integrating social , economical , environmental and human development issues. The CSR policy notified the areas of CSR funding which includes major key issues of society and environment like health , education , employability , poverty , hunger , gender equality and many more. Out of which education sector has gained much attention from the beginning of this policy and it is highly concentrated funding area of CSR. It is top core dimension area of funding as well as it has potential source of financing education sector in India. The ecosystem of Indian education is very vast as well complex also. It has been widely holding attention from public as well as private stakeholders , that's why the quantum, of funds are invested in the domain of education by Indian corporate. CSR in education

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Visit: www.ijmrsetm.com

Volume 7, Issue 3, March 2020

sector demands for promoting quality education , promoting scholarships, sponsorships , increased access to digital education , career counselling , better infrastructure and teachers training to boost up the entire education ecosystem of India. As per the reports of NASSOM foundation , 60-70% companies invest in education projects. The theory behind uplifting education sector is the perception of corporate that in education sector there is high potential for skilled knowledgeable society.therefore the root that needs to strengthening most through CSR is education ecosystem of India. In India till date there are more than 4138 projects initiated by corporate either by them selves or with the help of implementing partners in this concerned sector. And providing support to Indian education ecosystem apart from government initiatives for education . The existing facts and figures of MCA reports showed that the contribution of CSR in India crossed Rs. 50,000 Crore in last five years out of which the total funding in education sector is Rs. 15,742 Crore from 2014 to 2019. Education sector basically receives major chunk of CSR expenditure and out of every ten companies atleast one of them is engaged in educational initiative.[10,11]

 <p>QUALITY EDUCATION</p>	 <p>CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</p>	 <p>GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>	 <p>SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>	 <p>CLIMATE ACTION</p>
Education	Sanitation & Hygiene	Health	Community Development	Environment

The mandate CSR in companies act 2013 has opened the doors for corporate to create positively impact society and to make good relation with the stakeholders .In CSR education sector is one of the most beneficiary thing which will result in improved funding for the educational institutions. Apart from the various developmental sectors of India , there is still a darkest phase prevailing in India where more than 8 Crore childrens are being forced to work instead of going to school/college or even after being educated 11.4% students are unemployed. The drop out rate or the reason behind such conditions is lack of quality education and skill development education in India. In last five years education sector received huge amount of funding from government as education budget and from corporates through CSR. The role of government and organisations in education ecosystem is too crucial and complex but looking towards the funding and initiative trends , the collaborative or joint hands of public policy and CSR policy is ray of hope for fulfilling the dream of offering quality education to Indians.

Despite decades of reforms and government initiatives, a large number of students drop out of school for lack of quality education facilities. This phenomenon clearly shows the need for a distinctive approach to achieve the goals of providing quality education to the children of this country. Procuring quality education is the foundation of improving the lives of many. Major progress has been made to achieve the goal of providing quality education at all levels, yet India has a third of the world's illiterates based on a report published by UNESCO.[12,13]

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering, Technology & Management (IJMRSETM)

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Volume 7, Issue 3, March 2020



The quality of education provided to children in India is a huge concern. According to the Annual Status of Education Report 2016 (ASER 2016) which surveyed 589 rural districts of India, only 47.7% students of class 5 can read class 2 level texts. This has declined from the previous year's performance of 48.1%. The students also failed badly in Arithmetic and English comprehensions. The proportion of all class 8 students in rural India who are willing to divide a three-digit number by a single-digit one has dipped to 43.2% in 2016 from 44.2% in 2014. And while 32% of children in class 3 could read simple English words, in Class 5, only 1 out of every 4 students could read an English sentence. India wants to achieve the most skilled workforce in the world. Therefore, governments have started numerous education programs to make education accessible to all. The enrollment rate of children in schools is as high as 97%, but the quality of education provided in the schools is below average. In 2016, 30.5% of all elementary school children were in private schools as against 30.8% in 2014. States like UP, Haryana, Punjab have more than 50% of elementary school children in private schools, indicating the dwindling faith in government schools. All the government schemes like the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Mahila Samakhya, schemes for infrastructure development have worked so far only to enrol children into schools. Facilities of providing adequate training to teachers have been not at par. According to a report published by District Information System for Education (DISE) in 2012, more than 91% of primary schools have drinking water facilities and 86% of schools built in the last 10

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Volume 7, Issue 3, March 2020

years have a school building. However, this is not enough to overcome the huge challenge of providing quality education and not only the government but everyone needs to make efforts towards imparting quality education. We need think tanks, innovators and leaders in the society to deliver the numbers. Though there are various government initiatives, the Indian corporate sector can play a major role in improving the quality of education. As per government mandate, corporate organisations with at least ₹5 crore revenue in a financial year will have to devote 2% of their annual revenue to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This is where the corporates can contribute to providing quality education to students.[14,15]

Several private organisations are joining hands with the government to make quality education available for students. Some of the best examples of CSR activity in this field include Tata Group. The Tata group leads from the front with a whopping ₹1000 crore budget on CSR for the year 2013-14. Tata Steel was the highest spender. It aimed at launching 1,000 schools project in Odisha, for improving the quality of education in government primary schools.

Tata Motors, for example, has also started an award-winning education program in Pune, where every year, they identify 600 boys and girls enrolled in secondary schools. Through this program, there has been an increment in the pass percentage of students to 98% and the dropout rate was reduced to 5%.[16,17]



The Tata Teleservices has done its best in providing education to students from the underprivileged community in government schools. The teacher training programs undertaken by them has enhanced the quality of education being imparted to students studying in government schools.

More companies like Tata, Wipro and others should come forward to participate in imparting quality education to students. Only then we can achieve the goal of imparting quality education for all.[18]

Results

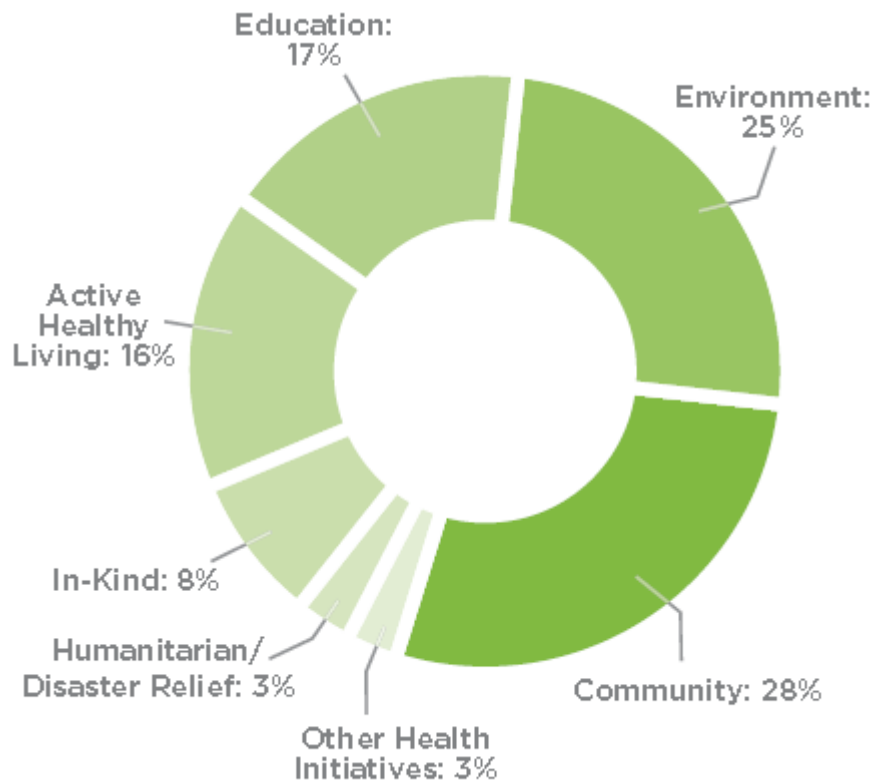
Activities eligible under CSR as per Schedule VII of the Act: eradicating hunger, poverty and malnutrition, promoting preventive health care and sanitation and making available safe drinking water promoting education, including special education and employment enhancing vocation skills especially among children, women, elderly, and the differently abled and livelihood enhancement projects promoting gender equality,

International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research in Science, Engineering, Technology & Management (IJMRSETM)

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Visit: www.ijmrsetm.com

Volume 7, Issue 3, March 2020



empowering women, setting up homes and hostels for women and orphans; setting up old age homes, day care centres and such other facilities for senior citizens and measures for reducing inequalities faced by socially and economically backward groups; ensuring environmental sustainability, ecological balance, protection of flora and fauna, animal welfare, agro forestry, conservation of natural resources and maintaining quality of soil, air and water; protection of national heritage, art and culture including restoration of buildings and sites of historical importance and works of art; setting up public libraries; promotion and development of traditional and handicrafts; measures for the benefit of armed forces veterans, war widows and their dependents; training to promote rural sports, nationally recognized sports, Paralympic sports and Olympic sports; contribution to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund or any other fund set up by the Central Government for socioeconomic development and relief and welfare of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes, minorities and women; contributions or funds provided to technology incubators located within academic institutions which are approved by the Central Government rural development projects[19]

One of India's biggest conglomerates, Reliance Industries helps Indian education by several ways. The group has started out a string of CSR activities in the education sector by constructing and renovating school buildings, providing free note books and text books to students, rewarding the meritorious with scholarships. They have also built remedial centers and are spreading awareness about the need for computer education in rural India. With

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Volume 7, Issue 3, March 2020

schemes like Dhirubhai Ambani Programme, Reliance Dhirubhai Ambani Protsahan Scheme, Education for Specially-abled children, Reliance is contributing to Indian education.



The Indian multinational conglomerate, Aditya Birla Group is helping raise awareness about the education of a girl child by awarding meritorious students with scholarships. The group is also doing its bit by providing the necessary technical education and practical knowledge to Indian college students in a bid to make them industry-ready. The brand has its own schools spread over 11 states along with Balwadis (govt.-run pre-schools for economically weaker section) and Aditya Birla Vidya Mandirs providing education for kids from all classes of the society. [18]



They are also looking at penetrating the rural areas to drive out the problems in the education sector by providing computer education in schools and also promoting distance education.

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Visit: www.ijmrsetm.com

Volume 7, Issue 3, March 2020

“Those who value education in a company’s social impact efforts are more likely to spend more money on a product even when a more affordable option exists, recommend a brand to a friend, follow a brand on social media, download their app and donate to a charity that brand supports.” The brands will benefit not only from a more educated workforce, but also from greater brand loyalty. “Education-concerned consumers are high-value customers. Investing in attracting these customers via education efforts can pay off for companies in the form of increased engagement and ongoing loyalty.”

The Coca-Cola Company’s CSR program known as 5×20 has the goal of employing five million women in developing countries by now in both bottling and distribution roles. This goal will not only benefit the women in the communities surrounding Coca-Cola manufacturing plants but could also benefit the communities as a whole, as the company aims to provide better access to health care and improved education to their employees.[17,18]



The corporate social responsibility model implemented by Visa provides financial opportunities for people in developing areas of the world. By partnering with local governments and nonprofit organizations, people who previously did not have access to the benefits of banking and financial services now do. The Gates Foundation found that this type of service helps low income and poor people manage their finances in trying times, build assets, and increase connectivity worldwide.

On a smaller scale, there are entrepreneurial companies known as B Corporations employing CSR into the very fabric of their own businesses. Their missions are threefold: people, planet, and profits. The “B” refers to beneficial, and thirty-one states in the U.S. currently recognize B Corps. These businesses are required by law to meet strict standards of social and environmental performance, with companies like Seventh Generation, Pura Vida, and Etsy great examples of B Corps.[16,17]

Conclusions

More consumers than ever are demanding that companies change the way they do business, become more transparent, and take an active role in addressing social, cultural, and environmental issues. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has taken its place in today’s corporate world, and businesses that ignore it do so at their own peril. As the millennial consumer population grows, it is critical that companies consider their corporate social responsibility status. Instilling a model of social responsibility is necessary for attracting what is becoming one of the largest market segments. Millennials are particularly tech-savvy, and they don’t think twice about researching a

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Volume 7, Issue 3, March 2020

company and looking into its ethical record and labor practices. Many feel like it is their duty to do their part in making the world a better place, and this burgeoning generation does not want to be associated with or support companies who do not take responsibility for the world and the people in it.[19]

Employee engagement is also tied to a company's CSR reputation. A recent Deloitte survey found that 70 percent of millennials acknowledged that a company's commitment to social responsibility influenced their choice to work there. With millennials soon to be the largest generational segment of the workforce, companies looking to hire these workers will need to embrace CSR in order to attract and retain talent. Millennials don't just want to consume products and services made by companies that have a CSR presence; they want to take part in making these social and environmental changes also.

Corporate social responsibility is more than just a business trend or fad. Businesses that want to stay relevant to new generations and who want to help people in need around the world while increasing their own revenue and efficiency will benefit from embracing CSR.[20]

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