



CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ITS CONTRIBUTION IN QUALITY EDUCATION IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT:

Despite of the continuous efforts and various initiatives taken by Government of India, it is observed that a large number of students drop out of school. The policy efforts made by the government have failed to achieve its targets over a period of time. 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.

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 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.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Education

INTRODUCTION:

The phrase Corporate Social Responsibility was coined in 1953 with the publication of Bowen's 'Social Responsibility of Businessmen'. In 1984, the renowned Management consultant Peter Drucker spoke of the need to turn social problems into economic opportunities. CSR has acquired new dimensions in this era of Globalization, Privatization and Liberalization.

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is defined through the ethical relationship and transparency of the company with all its stakeholders that has a relationship as well as with the establishment of corporate goals that are compatible with the sustainable development of society, preserving environmental and cultural resources for future generations, respecting diversity and promoting the reduction of social problems (Filho et al. 2010). While CSR points out a way for companies to contribute to the well-being of the society, it also gives the opportunity to create a true competitive advantage and positive reputation for the business world (Smith 2007, Porter and Kramer 2006).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The Objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To study the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility.
2. To examine the need for CSR in education in India
3. CSR initiatives in Indian Education sector

CONCEPT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:

Corporate Social Responsibility is a management concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and interactions with their stakeholders. Social Responsibility of business indicates norms and obligations of decision making authority to take appropriate actions which can protect and improve the welfare of society as a whole along with protecting the interest of business concern. Thus, social responsibility implies the involvement in addressing the legal, ethical,

commercial and other expectations which the society has for business and take decisions which balance the claims of all stakeholders.

NEED FOR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN INDIAN EDUCATION:

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.

Lack of funds is the major reason for the education problem in India. If funds are allotted, they are not used properly. At the same time lack of funds hampers education, and many times, the funds are just inadequate to solve the issue. The situation is worst in hilly and rural areas. About 72.2% of India's population lives in villages. Majority of the residents of these places are illiterate and severe gender, regional and caste disparities exists in their societies. And even when a graduation degree doesn't guarantee employment then the anti education attitude gets solidified.

The global ranking of Indian institutes, of both the school and university level is far below satisfactory. In 2018, India did not even participate in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) organised by OECD for evaluation of education systems across the world. According to the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University rankings 2018, IIT Bombay which ranked 162nd is the highest ranking Indian University on the list.

CSR INITIATIVES IN INDIAN EDUCATION SECTOR

Businesses in today's modern era are taking a much targeted approach in their CSR program. They are intending to concentrate on areas which are co-related to their business goals. Education is an important part for many

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businesses as there exist a need for all kinds of people and education has both the capacity and ability to make a real difference for all the players involved in the education sector, for a number of reasons such as: improved financial performance, building up of a positive goodwill amongst stakeholders, increased ability to attract employees, development of brand recognition, increased consumer loyalty, improvement in sales, building up of a more educated work force, etc. On the other hand, faculty, students and educational institutions can also benefit from the experience and expertise that the corporations bring. There are many corporates that supports education. Some of the CSR initiatives undertaken by corporate entities in India are enumerated below:

WIPRO LIMITED:

Wipro's work in education is driven by the belief that education is a key enabler of social change and a better society. Wipro cares, an initiative by Wipro Ltd. focuses on education for children with disabilities, especially those from disadvantaged background. Another national level programme, Sustainability Education earthian brings together school education with sustainability. Wipro also takes efforts for: a. Skills Development for students that are based on a comprehensive framework of post-graduate level education and b. Capacity building among the faculty of engineering colleges. Also, Wipro Academy of Software Excellence program helps Science graduates to study for a Master's degree in software engineering.

TATA MOTORS

Education initiative 'Vidyadhanam' which focuses on improving the academic performance of secondary/college going students, engaged in disbursing scholarships to the needy/ meritorious students, while facilitating them with special coaching classes. Sanctioned 9,612 scholarships and supported 28,078 students with special coaching in FY 2017/18. Tata Motors initiatives to improve School infrastructure continue to enhance the learning environment for the students.

APPLE INDIA PVT. LTD.

The Company has undertaken, through funding or other means, the following activities in, collaboration with or through one or more NGOs:

- Delivery of high-quality education to low-income communities, with a focus on primary education, initially in one or more of Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Pune, and Mumbai, but potentially other or different locations as may be determined;
- Addressing environmental issues in the local communities in which schools and teachers in connection with the foregoing operate; and/or
- Enhancement of curricula and teaching approaches through use of technology for use in the promotion of low-income high-quality education at underserved schools.

MAHINDRA AND MAHINDRA

Mahindra & Mahindra has been making an impact through its ongoing CSR programs, some of the notable ones include Project Nanhi Kali, which supports the education of underprivileged girls, Mahindra Pride Schools, which provide livelihood training to youth from socially and economically disadvantaged communities and a variety of other scholarship programs, which range from providing opportunities to youth from low income group families to undergo diploma courses at vocational education institutes, to allowing meritorious students to pursue their post graduate studies at reputed universities overseas, to allowing meritorious and deserving students to study at the Mahindra United World College in Pune.

RELIANCE FOUNDATION:

To accelerate the educational quotient of India, Reliance Foundation's educational programs address the need of the hour and fosters the youth by providing open access to quality education using a multi-pronged approach:

- Providing access to quality education through a network of schools
- Offering Dhirubhai Ambani Scholarships to the meritorious students
- Planning to set up a world class university
- Supporting like-minded partners.

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Aarambh is a community-based organisation working with thousands of children of migrant workers, who live in the slums and shanties of Navi Mumbai. Aarambh's work focuses on the areas of education, health care and skill development. The Aarambh chapter of the EFA programme covers 4,500 children from five slum communities in Navi Mumbai. The children are enrolled in regular schools and provide all the paraphernalia of formal education, including uniforms, school bags, shoes and books. At the schools, they also enjoy the experience of digital learning.

CONCLUSION:

With the low standard of educational institutions, India still has a far way to go. The problems are multiple and too huge to be solved in a short span of time. A number of factors have to be employed simultaneously to improve the system. The unified system as proposed here in this article will allow equal growth of all students. It will also lead to better governance. It will also reduce parochialism and discrimination. Further, with equal opportunities given to every child irrespective of his caste, class or social background, the government will get an opportunity to review the reservation system and its need in the society. The government needs to take careful consideration of all facets before enacting any legislation, but ultimately, the unified system will benefit the students. This will further advance the global standing of Indian institutions and bring them at par with the leading institutions of the world.

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