

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR) IN INDIA: EMBRACING SOCIAL COMMITMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

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Abstract:

CSR is an important strategic move undertaken by companies to address societal and environmental concerns that go beyond simply making profits. By engaging in CSR activities, businesses acknowledge their role as stakeholders in society and commit to making positive impacts on communities and the environment. The need for CSR stems from the interconnectedness between businesses and the society they operate, highlighting the importance of sustainable practices and ethical behavior for long-term success.

In the Indian context, many leading multinational corporations (MNCs) have embraced CSR as an integral part of their business principles. Many prominent MNCs operating in India have shown unwavering dedication to CSR initiatives centered around education. Recognizing the transformative potential of education in shaping individuals and communities, corporations have focused their CSR efforts on enhancing educational opportunities.

The MNC's corporate social responsibility (CSR) endeavors in the education sector adopt a comprehensive approach, comprising the creation of educational establishments, offering scholarships, enhancing infrastructure, and executing skill development programs. Through these endeavors, the corporation endeavors to equip forthcoming generations, diminish socio-economic disparities and cultivate a proficient workforce for the betterment of the nation.

Additionally, corporations actively collaborate with local communities, government entities, and educational institutions to maximize the reach and effectiveness of their initiatives, thereby guaranteeing a sustainable and extensive impact on the educational domain.

To put it briefly, CSR acts as a crucial framework directing businesses towards responsible operations, with a strong commitment to society and the environment. The commendable endeavors of a prominent multinational corporation (MNC) in India towards the progress of education highlight the significant influence that strategic CSR initiatives can have, emphasizing the transformative power of education in cultivating a fairer and more prosperous society.

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Introduction:

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a business's commitment to ethical practices and societal and environmental improvements. It aims to create a sustainable future by balancing profit with societal and environmental improvements. In India, certain firms must set aside a portion of their profits for CSR projects, focusing on environmental sustainability, healthcare, education, poverty alleviation, and community development. CSR programs in India aim to strengthen sustainable development, promote inclusive growth, and benefit marginalized communities.

The importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in education in India will be examined in this research paper, along with the recent initiatives implemented by different firms. The foreseeable result or the type of influence that the CSR action will have is also being examined, along with the plan for the education sector.

Literature Review:

The top 10 Indian corporations that contribute to corporate social responsibility (CSR) are examined in a study by Pragnesh B. Dalwadi and Dr. Gurudutta P. Japee. The study focuses on women's empowerment, rural development, health, education, and the environment. It concludes that these businesses place a high priority on environmental sustainability, healthcare, rural development, and education and skill development. The results emphasize the necessity of a more thorough and inclusive CSR strategy in India.

Meetha Sengupta examines the arguments for and against CSR being required in India's educational curriculum. There's not much talk on the discrepancy between national spending and educational standards. The chapter highlights the significance of CSR contributions to Indian education by looking at the history of education and philanthropy, CSR expenditure on education, the implications of the law, trends in professionalizing CSR in education, and its role in changing education.

i) Significance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Business

In India's business environment, corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts are essential for improving a company's image, reputation, community ties, stakeholder engagement, and customer loyalty. They support sustainable and equitable development, particularly in the varied socioeconomic context of India. CSR initiatives close the educational gap by enhancing livelihoods, developing skills, and strengthening marginalized communities. Companies that adhere to CSR regulations can be sure that their plans complement national development goals.

ii) Role of CSR in Business Expansion and Development

Corporate achievement and growth in India depend mainly on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts. Businesses that have benefited from CSR programs include the Tata Group, Infosys, Mahindra Group, and Reliance Industries. Reliance Industries has enhanced its reputation and business expansion environment; the Mahindra Group finances infrastructure development; the Tata Group's healthcare and education initiatives have increased public confidence; and Infosys invests in talent development. These illustrations show how CSR may improve business performance, raise brand value, and promote long-term expansion.

Research Methodology:

This paper uses an exploratory research design. The secondary data is collected from organizations' websites, research articles, and magazines. The MNCs were chosen for the study based on their extensive contribution to the education field.

Research Objective:

This study seeks to identify the intrinsic value of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in the field of education, with a particular emphasis on how they aid in the growth of Indian companies. The study intends to thoroughly investigate and comprehend the complex effects of CSR activities on the advancement of

education, highlighting important elements that support both business expansion and societal advancement. Furthermore, the research aims to suggest and deliberate on novel tactics and methods that could be employed in the future, providing perspectives on cultivating long-term educational improvements for the mutual advantage of Indian corporations and society.

Results and Discussion:

Leading Indian Companies Demonstrating Effective CSR Implementation

India has made progress in CSR because of leading companies committed to improving society. By dedicating resources to social, environmental, and developmental issues, these companies show great CSR execution. Their actions go beyond profits, emphasizing ethical values and community welfare. They are role models for societal commitment, devoting resources to CSR efforts. Their actions demonstrate a thoughtful approach, contributing to sustainability, healthcare, education, and community development.

Below is the list of 4 companies in CSR activities funding in India for the financial year 2020-2021.

i) Reliance Industries Limited

In 2020–2021, Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) allocated Rs. 922 crores to corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Of these, the educational activities account for about 49% ^[6]. Through the Reliance Foundation, the business carries out its CSR efforts. The major contribution by the company includes:

Table 1. RIL FY20-21^[6]

CSR Activities	Healthcare	Education	COVID Relief	Livelihood enhancement	Sports
Amount Spent	Rs. 116Cr.	Rs. 444Cr.	Rs. 192Cr.	Rs. 42Cr.	Rs. 49Cr.
Percentage of Amount Spent	13%	49%	20%	5%	5%

ii) Tata Consultancy Services Limited

TCS, also known as Tata Consultancy Services, allotted Rs. 647 crores for corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects in 2020–2021. The corporation made a large donation to the PM CARES fund for COVID-19, which helped to provide food packages, disinfection, and quarantine centers throughout the pandemic ^[6]. Among the company's noteworthy contributions are:

Table 2. TCS FY20-21^[6]

CSR Activities	PM CARES Fund	Education	COVID Relief	Livelihood enhancement	Healthcare
Amount Spent	Rs. 256Cr.	Rs. 13Cr.	Rs. 17Cr.	Rs. 5Cr.	Rs. 5Cr.
Percentage of Amount Spent	40%	20%	26%	1%	1%

iii) HDFC Bank Limited

HDFC Bank, a prominent private sector bank in India, demonstrated a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility. Over 200 CSR projects have benefited from HDFC's contributions in the fiscal year 2020–2021. Despite having budgeted for Rs. 627.89 crores, the corporation ultimately contributed more than anticipated. In actuality, HDFC invested Rs. 634.91 crores, supporting farmers, startups, rural development, and education [6].

Table 3. HDFC FY20-21^[6]

CSR Activities	Financial Literacy Program	Rural Development	COVID Relief	Education	Startup
Amount Spent	Rs. 233.31Cr.	Rs. 140Cr.	Rs. 100.37Cr.	Rs. 47.31Cr.	Rs. 7Cr.
Percentage of Amount Spent	37%	22%	16%	7%	1%

iv) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited, the country’s largest integrated and diversified energy company [6], has spent 460.38Cr. which is Rs. 118Cr. higher than the allocated amount. The corporation founded the Skill Development Institute, Bhubaneswar (SDI-B) to provide jobless and impoverished students with skill development training to increase their prospects for employment. Giving these people the skills, they need to satisfy industry expectations and supply a qualified workforce to meet job requirements is the main objective. About 251 youths were skilled and certified from this SDI-B. [6].

Table 4. ONGC FY20-21^[6]

CSR Activities	PM CARES Fund	Education	COVID Relief	Skills Development	Sustainability
Amount Spent	Rs. 225Cr.	Rs. 30.9Cr.	Rs. 13Cr.	Rs. 24Cr.	Rs. 16Cr.
Percentage of Amount Spent	49%	7%	3%	5%	3%

Over a fiscal year, the aggregate impact of CSR projects in India has been noteworthy. Through promoting advancements in healthcare, and education, reducing poverty, and protecting the environment, these programs have significantly aided in societal progress. They also show how sincerely well-known Indian companies want to use moral corporate conduct to advance social change. Through their notable corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects, these organizations have exhibited their dedication to promoting social welfare, education, healthcare, rural development, and environmental sustainability. These efforts have yielded notable results.

FINDINGS - Building Futures: CSR Engagements for Education Enhancement

Considering the current education and skill-building program, there are over 17 projects (active projects) from different companies across India. The following details include the project name, firm, and budget of a few projects ^[11].

Table 5. Ongoing CSR Activities ^[11]

Project Name	Description	Firm	Budget
Infrastructure development for primary schools, Anganwadi, and other initiatives at manufacturing sites	To provide girls in tribal areas with high-quality education, the company supported the Tribal Welfare Girls Ashram School in Rampachodavaram by supplying computer systems, necessary infrastructure, and digital lesson materials in Telugu and English for the school's computer-aided learning center.	Reliance Industries Ltd	INR 11Cr
Scholarship and Education Support	Shri Dhirubhai Ambani's goal of developing future leaders from India's youth has been pursued by the Dhirubhai Ambani Scholarship (DAS) project. This scholarship is given to deserving students who have proven they require financial assistance as well as to deserving students with special needs. This year, 399 pupils were chosen, 110 of whom were youngsters with special needs.	Reliance Industries Ltd	INR 9Cr
Education Programme	The company supported CSR by increasing funding for facility and infrastructure upkeep at educational institutions and by providing UPS to the LA Govt—women's Junior College in Machilipatnam.	Bharat Electronics Limited	INR 2.81Cr
Skill Development Program	The company supported the training of apprentices under Skill India and the procurement of tools and equipment for the chosen Govt. ITI, Noida as part of their CSR efforts.	Bharat Electronics Limited	INR 13.36Cr
Promoting Education	The projects that the company has completed under the category of "Promotion of Education" are listed below: 1. Vocational Training at Don-Bosco Institute 2. School Building Construction at Vimlabai Nerlekar School	Mercedes-Benz India Private Limited	INR 4.61Cr
Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs)	There are now 47 PNB Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (PNBRSETIs) operating under the PNB Centenary Rural Development Trust.	Punjab National Bank	

Thoughtful Suggestions: Mapping Out CSR for Educational Impact

The proposed CSR initiatives aim to redefine educational contributions, surpassing conventional practices. The company's current focus on improving infrastructure and funding innovative student projects lays a foundation for impactful CSR. To further distinguish itself, the company suggests an innovative approach—introducing a curriculum for higher secondary students. This program aims to bridge the gap between school and college, aligning education with industry needs. By collaborating with schools nationwide, the company envisions molding young minds according to industry expectations, contributing to a skilled workforce.

Moreover, drawing inspiration from TCS's Computer Science and Business Systems (B. Tech CSBS) program for engineering colleges, which is approved by AICTE, the company underscores the potential for businesses. This comprehensive CSR strategy envisions nurturing a pipeline of skilled professionals, addressing infrastructure needs, and fostering innovation, ultimately fostering accelerated national growth. This proposal aligns with the company's commitment to advancing education and serves as a unique, forward-thinking model for corporate social responsibility in the upcoming years.

Conclusion:

The current research investigates the effects of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on the advancement of Indian society, specifically focusing on education. Leading businesses, like Reliance, TCS, ONGC, and HDFC, have demonstrated their dedication to education-focused programs through their study of CSR efforts. The study's conclusion offers a visionary recommendation for a new perspective on education progress, including creative tactics that businesses may use to enhance their CSR initiatives and so support the overall development of education in India.

Based on the results, it's clear that CSR can be a potent and meaningful force for good in India, especially when it comes to education. The study emphasizes the revolutionary potential of such programs as companies come to understand the interdependence of economic success and social responsibility. The conclusion affirms the growing importance of corporations as essential partners in establishing a more inclusive and enlightened future for the country, while also encouraging them to investigate novel yet effective paths for educational upliftment.

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