

Corporate Social Responsibility & Tribal development in India: Evolution, Issues & Challenges

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Abstract - Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is not a new concept. It is in existence since Vedic times. Many Epics of India like Ramayana, Mahabharata, and Bhagavath Geetha have been teaching the values, culture, and Ethics which has enriched our Indian Heritage. The ethics that prevailed then now are termed as “Social Responsibility”. Instead of being associated with charity CSR is increasingly being viewed as an important part of the company's core business. This paper is based on secondary data sourced from websites, journals, and some published articles. This paper throws an insight into an understanding of the concept of CSR & analyses the development of CSR in India. It highlights the policies governing CSR in India and some issues & challenges facing the implementation of CSR in India. It analyses the problems faced by Tribes and offers some suggestions.

Index Terms - Corporate Social Responsibility, Tribe, Development, Culture.

INTRODUCTION

“All business firms must work like trust” – Mahatma Gandhiji

Formerly there was a time when the Indian Companies have rudimentary objectives to strive for profit maximization & thereby wealth maximization of shareholders. But nowadays Indian companies are in endeavor to discharge the stakeholders' responsibilities along with societal obligation as a result of the fruitful impact of CSR. We can relate CSR with the Gandhian Doctrine of Trusteeship. According to the Doctrine of Trusteeship, all the properties (Assets) of the firm must be used for social welfare. The owners of the firms are supposed to keep only a part of the profit for their livelihood. The residual of the profit must be equally distributed to social activities.

Being a developing country India needs an overall development in all aspects including social, environmental, economic, political & others. This paper focussed on the Tribal development in India & how the CSR join their hands in developing Tribes & Tribal areas. A "tribe" is a group of people who possess unique lifestyles & characteristics. They have their own culture, rituals, social system & lifestyle. Though they are amidst rich natural resources, they are the ones who are considered to be poor & deprived of various elements needed to lead a dignified life. They were found to be excessively backward in the sight of the modern civilized world because of their primitive way of life, illiteracy, ancient method of cultivation & production, Social abstain from urbanites, lack of knowledge, poverty, malnutrition, etc...

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To understand the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility.
2. To study the development of Corporate Social Responsibility in India.
3. To bring out the Issues and Challenges in CSR implementation in India.
4. To analyze the problems faced by Tribes and to offer some suggestions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research paper is developed by taking the support of secondary data which is available from Journals, Magazines, Newspapers, Books, Reports of the Government, and Websites about CSR.

CSR IN INDIA: ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION

India has had a rich Philanthropic tradition since long back. Kautilya and other great Indian Philosophers have preached and recommended the principles of Ethics that need to be carried out in business. The following are different phases to study the evolution of CSR in India.

1.The first Phase (the 1850s): During Pre industrialization period i.e., in the 19th century, as a charity wealthy merchants shared their profits for setting up temples for a religious cause. Later with the emergence of Indian Industrialists like Tata, Birla, Godrej, Bajaj, etc. Considerable societal development has happened.

2.The Second Phase (the 1940s): During the Independence movement the Indian Industrialists took ethical responsibility to combine Nation as one to struggle for freedom against the British. The abundant dedication was demonstrated by them towards the progress of society. At that time “Doctrine of Trusteeship” has started influencing the Indian Industries which was propounded by Mahatma Gandhiji. With this influence industrialists, besides establishing schools, colleges, and scientific institutions also took steps to abolish untouchability, rural development and encourage women empowerment.

3.The Third Phase (1960-80): In this period public sector undertakings emerged with a vital objective to ensure adequate distribution of resources to the needy. The stringent Industrial Licensing policy, high Tax Rates, and other restrictions forced the private sector undertakings towards the rear. New industrial policy has noticed that it is necessary to indulge the Private Sector undertakings along with public sector undertakings in socio-economic development. To be on track, Private sector undertakings started to emphasize transparency, social accountability & others.

4.The Fourth Phase (After 1990): In the 1990s a great endeavor was exercised to implement LPG(Liberalisation, Privatisation, Globalisation). Many restrictions on trade were liberalized which paves way for foreign investments. Privatization tasked the private entities to implement the Government Programmes/services which were previously monopolized by state-run Agencies. Because of Globalisation, import and export business get flourished. Foreign Cos are more particular about environmental and social standards. Indian companies

having business relations with such companies needed to pay attention to compliance with the standard set. Implementation of CSR in India: Issues and Challenges

Following are some issues and challenges listed below:

1.Initially, the Government used to direct and regulate the social and environmental objectives in business sectors. Lack of proper resources and distrust of regulations leads to non-regulatory and voluntary initiatives.

2.To conduct any CSR projects, Co usually needs the help and cooperation of local agencies through which it has to conduct. But the local agencies many times do not have complete awareness regarding how to do and what to do. This limits the ability of Co to undertake initiatives from time to time.

3.The local community usually resists any changes. The companies need to create awareness regarding CSR and they need to make them understand the benefits that they are going to avail themselves. But most of the time Companies fail to communicate it properly at the grassroots.

4.It is very difficult for any companies to take up CSR projects without knowing the actual needs of the community which are usually identified and assessed by NGOs. There is a lack of well-organized NGOs to work in rural & remote areas to identify the actual needs.

5.CSR initiatives entirely depend on the size of the company. The larger the company larger will be the CSR project and vice versa. There are no statutory directions or policies or guidelines to have a definite framework for CSR activities.

6.The media will play a major role in sensitizing the local community regarding the CSR initiatives of the company by highlighting the success of other CSR initiatives. This influenced many NGOs to take part in their CSR initiatives but they missed out on many primary purposes of CSR because of lack of awareness.

7.Nowadays customers are conscious of social good causes, the customer supports and tends more towards the company's product ethic has good ethical conducts towards society.

8.A company having ethical concerns will always attract investors.

9. Nowadays mere salary and allowances do not capture the interest of employees. To retain skilled employees' company should always strive to enhance their working conditions and should undertake social welfare activities.

PROBLEMS OF TRIBAL PEOPLE

Following are Some of the challenges faced by tribal people:

1. Bonded labor

Bonded labor is to be defined based on labor and services extracted from a person as a penalty where the person has not been involved voluntarily. In India, bonded labor is characteristically more complex. Major reasons for bonded labor are caste, social structure and bondage, traditional feudal social relations, and bonded labor. Small scale and localized quarrying and mining invite laborers from nomadic tribes and rural poor. They are irregularly paid and are made bonded without proper workplace protection.

2. Naxalism

Naxalism is a great threat that is raised in Indian Tribal. They are becoming victims and harassed by both the extremes i.e., Naxalites and Police authority. Because of this most of the tribal people are suffering from a psychological disorder.

3. Poverty

Poverty is the main disease of tribes. There are various causes behind this problem. The majority of tribes live under the poverty line. Lack of proper awareness and knowledge, Primitive occupation, disrespectful social and economic life, illiteracy are the various causes for poverty.

4. Issues related to health

Because of lack of nutrition, the tribal population suffers from chronic malnutrition diseases. The deficiency of iodine and calcium had made them miserable. Unorganized social and economic life forced them to addict to intoxication like alcohols, tobaccos and all which causes Tuberculosis, liver dysfunction, leprosy, etc., Their social and family life is also getting hampered as they are not aware of modern medical facilities instead, they use their traditional methods of treatment for the diseases which is not effective for recovery out of it because still the existence of superstitious practices prevailing over there.

5. Land Problems

Karl Marx Theory says that 'have groups always exploits have not grouped'. The primary occupation of the tribal is agriculture, hunting, etc. The exploitation of the tribal by the urban people like Zamindars, traders, and money lenders is still prevailing. In the name of industrialization and urbanization, we are witnessing deforestation which is detrimental to tribal life as it directly affects their primary occupation.

6. Educational Problems

Education is distant to tribals. Formal Education is not reaching to the tribal community because of various reasons like transport facilities, unattraction of administration and government, old mentality etc. are the various reasons responsible for the degraded educational situation. Employees are worried about Naxalites, so they are not ready to perform their duties and responsibilities in the remote areas of tribal community. To discharge the Social Obligations, tribals considered as Formal education is not necessary. For this reasons education becomes one of the major problems in tribal community.

7. Cultural and Religious Problems

Like any other cultures, tribal communities also have their own culture. Because of Interaction with other communities, the tribal's are exchanging the culture and they are spoiling their own culture. Due to the impact of other cultures, the problem of dual languages has developed which led to indifference towards tribal language. The same situation is also for religious problems which create the daily hassles on the way of tribal's. Adopting unnecessary religious and cultural activities disturb tribal's and wrench towards ineffectiveness. Therefore, recklessness cases, tension, stress, familiar disturbance takes place in these communities.

8. Women related issues

They divide the work among the men and women. Usually, tough and heavy work will be performed by males, and secondary works are done by females. Due to Inequality in gender tribal women are in secondary place. Tribals women are Exploited by husband, heavy load of children, full burden of work, and the load of work hamper directly to the tribal women.

9. Problems and exploitation of Childs

Child misuse and mistreatment are common in tribal communities. In tribal communities the number of kids is more in a family because they follow the concept of 'kids are the natural gifts of god'. Childs are abandoned and eluded from their basic human rights.

Instead of educating their kids parents are involving them in their routine work. In that way, they spoil their childhood as well as entire life.

10. Problems of Administration and Government

Government of India has implemented various plans and schemes for the development of tribal community. But the expected result could not achieve because of various reasons such as proper framed developed policy, lack transportation, naxalites, few officers and employees are not willing to render their services in the remote areas. The NGS's and Social reformers active services can be seen in urban and rural areas where in tribal society their contribution are comparatively less. Therefore, still tribal's are in non-develop stage.

Strategies Adopted by Corporate in Solving the Problems of Tribes:

For the healthy and fast development of tribal's, there is a need to establish convenient and proper developmental plans and strict implementation of them. Unfortunately, improper control of government and involvement of corruption in the administrative process could not give the expected result. However, many NGOs and other Corporate Houses are rendering their services to reduce the problems faced by the tribals. By organizing campaigns in the remote & tribal areas many NGOs & Corporates are creating awareness regarding health and cleanliness among tribes through Camps like Eye Camp, Blood camp, free health check-ups, distribution of free medicines, etc... Education is the foundation for development. Corporates are encouraging the tribal students by offering Merit Scholarships, Hostel Facilities for tribal students studying in Urban colleges, Adopting Girl children, and bearing all her educational expenses. Business houses are indulging themselves in organizing programs that spread awareness about Self Help Groups, Micro Finance, Microinsurance, and others.

SUGGESTION

- Creating awareness about CSR amongst the Tribes to make CSR initiatives more effective.
- CSR as a subject or discipline should be made compulsory at B-schools, in colleges and universities to sensitize students about social and development issues, mainly focusing on Tribes and their development.

- Corporate houses and NGOs should be actively involved in pooling their resources to implement best CSR practices for Tribal Development to bring them into the mainstream.
- Government should recognize and reward corporate houses/NGOs and their partners in effectively implementing projects for the poor and the underprivileged in Tribal areas.
- Government should take initiation to establish proper plans for the development of Tribes and implementation of the same effectively. All the plans should be corruption-free and depend on democratic principles.

CONCLUSION

Companies in India have been practicing CSR for decades. Many leading corporate houses have been successfully implementing their Programs too. However, a majority of them remain still ineffective. Some of the main reasons attributable to the ineffectiveness of CSR are lack of understanding of sector & issues, targets, lack of trained personnel. Some companies undertake these activities apparently for promoting their brand names to get highlighted in the Media.

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