

---

ORIGINAL ARTICLE



**CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND CHILDREN'S WELFARE**

**Dr. Deepali Karmali**

**Asst. Professor, Dept. of Economics, S.S. Dempo College of Commerce & Economics,  
Altinho, Panaji.**

**ABSTRACT**

*There has been worldwide change with respect to functioning and operations of economies due to onset of globalisation. There have been phenomenal changes in the roles played by private sector over a period of time. The new role has also changed the expectations from various stakeholders in the society. The influence of private sector has become more dominant across economies. Well-informed customer groups and new laws have made private sector commit to their social and ethical responsibilities. One of the major area which could be focus point under CSR of private sector could be welfare of children and their rights. The basic needs and requirement of children especially from under-privileged section of the society goes unnoticed. No doubt, the government of the nation is obliged to provide them with all basic facilities and protect their rights but unfortunately the efforts of the government have not been adequate enough and hence the role of private sector and other stakeholders in the society becomes necessary. In wake of this an attempt has been to understand and discuss the role played by selected corporate houses in promoting children welfare and their rights.*

**KEYWORDS :** *operations of economies , basic facilities and protect.*

**INTRODUCTION**

The World Business Council for Sustainable Development defines Corporate Social Responsibility "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." According to this every individual company is supposed to incorporate social, economic and environmental concerns of the society in to its values and culture, which should further reflect in the company's strategic decision-making and long-term policy initiatives.

The term 'Corporate Social Responsibility' may have been coined in recent times but evidence from literature suggests that businessmen were motivated to imbibe the spirit of social responsibility by philosophers like Kautilya from India and pre-Christian era philosophers in the west. Many religions are found to practice the 'Principle of Giving'- a share of one's own earnings towards the welfare of poor and disadvantaged. It's called 'Dharmadaan' by Hindus. 'Daashaant' by Sikhs and 'Zakat' by Muslims. A company manages its role as a producer, employer, customer and a citizen in a responsible manner through its commitment towards Corporate Social Responsibility. Some of the factors which determine

---

the level of commitment of each company towards Corporate Social Responsibility are its vision, work ethics, operational philosophy, business laws and regulations. CSR could be mere compliance to laws or it would lead to pure philanthropy. The beneficiary could be mere employees or society at large.

Globalisation has diminished the role of state while increasing the dominance of non-state players such as corporations in undertaking many functions traditionally reserved for government. With the changing scenario, the business environment has become more liberal and competitive. The efficiency in delivery of services has improved along with quality of products that are getting delivered to customers. The new set up is providing better opportunities to the corporate to yield higher profits and at the same time, the corporates are expected to make conscious efforts in performing their duty towards society. Corporate Social Responsibility demands more than quality products and services. It expects investments from the business world in social capital and for social empowerment. Many of the MNC's have taken up various initiative so as to attain goodwill and also create a sustainable competitive advantage.

According to Venu Srinivasan Corporate social Responsibility should not mean mere giving and receiving. CSR should aim at sustainable development of a less privileged community by being partners in their progress. The benefits of welfare schemes implemented by government do not trickle down to grassroot level as desired. Industries through their expertise in financial, personnel management and business planning should bring in required leadership and organisational qualities to establish the connectivity with targeted section of society and ensure that benefits of welfare measures reach the desired population. The catalyst for social development must be provided by Industries.

Several major CSR initiatives have been launched in India since the mid-1990s. Almost all the major businesses in India are undertaking corporate social responsibility initiatives in areas like education, health, livelihood creation, skill development and empowerment of weaker sections of the society. Substantial efforts have been noticed from the Tata Group, Infosys, Bharti Enterprises, ITC Welcome group, Indian Oil Corporation among others. The 2010 list of Forbes Asia's '48 Heroes of Philanthropy' contains four Indians. India features as one of the top ten Asian countries involved in increasing significance towards corporate social responsibility disclosure norms.

### **Child right and welfare**

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) emphasises the principle of universality and inviolability of child rights and recognises the need of urgency in all the policies related to children in the country. The Commission gives equal importance to the protection of all children in the age group of 0 to 18 years. The policies define their priorities by focussing on most vulnerable children, on regions that have backward communities and so on. The NCPCR believes that policies aimed at protecting rights of children sometimes end up in excluding large number of vulnerable children under the guise of targeted categories. Unfortunately, such policy decisions compromise on the task of reaching out to all the underprivileged children in the society. The commission believes that an atmosphere that would make needy children more visible and gain confidence to access their privileges should be created.

The Indian Constitution has many provisions for the protection, development and welfare of children. Different laws guarantee children their rights and entitlements as provided in the Constitution and in the UN Convention. Numerous programmes have been launched by the Government aimed at providing services to children in the areas of health, nutrition and education as a part of its five-year plan. In 1974, the Government of India declared the nation's children as '**Supremely Important Assets**' in line with National Policy for Children.

---

This policy strongly recommends for a comprehensive health programme aimed at supplementary nutrition for mothers and children, educating mothers on appropriate nutrition, free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14, non-formal preschool education, promotion of physical education and recreational activities, special consideration for the children of weaker sections of the society like the scheduled castes and the schedule tribes, prevention of exploitation of children and special facilities for handicaps children.

According to the UNCRC, the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the rights of children residing in that country are respected and realised has to be ensured by the state. However, the efforts of the state may not be adequate enough to meet the goal of realisation of children's rights. It is being increasingly recognised that progress and welfare of a society should be collective responsibility of the Government and other stakeholders in the society. In wake of this an attempt has been made to understand and discuss the role played by selected corporate houses in promoting children welfare and their rights. The corporate sector has a major role to play and is one of the prominent actors in attainment of this goal.

**I. The Aditya Birla Group:** India's first truly multinational corporation, the Aditya Birla group driven by a performance ethic pegged on value creation for its multiple stakeholders. It has a global vision which is rooted in Indian values. The Aditya Birla group is one of the first promoters of the concept of social responsibility in the country.

### **Programmes for Children**

#### **1. Education**

The Group ensures access to education to 62,000 children living in proximity to the Birla Plants by running 26 formal schools. Non-formal education centres and preschools are run where children learn by play way methods. This helps to create an educational environment in the communities and makes transition to formal schools smoother. Vocational training is also offered to adolescent girls, enabling them to stand on their own feet. To foster value-based education, residential summer camps are held for adolescent boys and girls.

#### **2. Support to the Physically Challenged**

Physically challenged children are offered help to enable them to procure supportive aids like crutches, calipers or wheelchairs.

#### **3. Healthcare**

Immunisation of children in the 0-5 age group together with ante-natal and post-natal services to women forms a major part of the healthcare services provided by the Group.

**II. The Azim Premji Foundation:** a not-for-profit organisation, was established in 2001. The Foundation, set up with financial resources contributed by Azim Premji, Chairman, Wipro Corporation, believes that education is the vital element in the development and progress of India.

### **Programmes for children**

**1. Learning Guarantee Programme** – aims at building a voluntary spirit of accountability among schools, community and government functionaries and study factors that influence learning.

---

**Programme Highlights:**

- Voluntary participation of schools
- Evaluation of each child in all participating schools on expected competencies
- Transparent, independent and high integrity evaluation
- Recognition and reward for winning schools
- Feedback of results of evaluation of each child to the school.

**Outreach:** The programme helps 725,000 children and 11,600 teachers in 3,886 schools in 5 states.

**2. Child Friendly School** – This programme, in partnership with the schools, parents, government and UNICEF, aims to improve quality of education in a sustainable manner.

**Programme highlights**

- Head teacher training for academic and managerial leadership
- School improvement in consultation with community/ parents
- Training of teachers for developing child centric teaching learning culture and subject matter competencies
- Providing school environment that is healthy, hygienic and conducive to learning

**Outreach:** The programme is active in the states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, covering 560 schools. The programme benefits 84,000 children and 4,000 teachers.

**3. Computer Aided Learning**

The Concept of Computer Assisted Learning Centre (CALC) was conceived in response to the need of the people in rural Karnataka. It aimed at measuring the impact of computers in attracting out-of-school children to school and the improvement in learning levels among children in their regular academic work. This also laid a strong foundation for IT literacy. The pilot project with 34 Computer Assisted Learning Centres (CALCs) was set-up in Bangalore and surrounding rural areas.

**Programme highlights**

- Curricular content that is child centric, interactive and playful with assessment tools that are fun.
- Engagement and education of teachers to use interactive content as an effective supplement for classroom teaching.
- Positive impact on children with specific learning disabilities: language (oral), communication motivation and social aspects.
- Confidence building and IT awareness among children.

**Outreach:** The scope of the programme includes 1,740,000 children and 27,350 teachers in 10,071 schools in 11 states.

In collaboration with the Government of Karnataka, the APF has a **Policy Planning Unit** that was established in March 2003 to work on policy and programme issues affecting academic capacities, administrative and technical capacities which includes financial and budgetary aspects and community utilization aspects of the education system in Karnataka and provide suggestions and policy inputs to the Education Department. The APF has criteria for selecting the area of operation. It works in geographical areas where:

- 
- Area is economically/educationally backward
  - School drop-out rate is high
  - High number of out-of-school girl children
  - Poor learning levels

**III. ICICI Bank:** The Bank is one of the few corporate entities in India which has incorporated social initiatives in its core business strategies. It has a well-established social initiative department called Social Initiative Group (SIG)

## **Programmes for Children**

### **1.. Health**

The Social Initiative Group (SIG) focusses on survival and quality of survival as two of its main goals for children's health, with reduction in Intra-Uterine Growth Retardation (IUGR) as its operational objective. The SIG supports action-research projects to gather critical knowledge and practice gaps in the priority areas of understanding the nature of nutritional deficiencies that leads to and endure IUGR, procedures of minimising these deficiencies and improving the nutritional status of women with improvement in access to primary healthcare.

SIG supports innovative community-based approaches to improve intra-household distribution of nutrition, as well as access to and utilization of healthcare especially by women and children, to prioritise and improve early child health outcomes. At present SIG supports 7 action research projects both in the rural and urban areas.

### **2. Elementary Education**

The goal in elementary education is to work towards universalisation of elementary education with noticeable difference being made by the year 2010. The SIG pursues to contribute towards increasing access and improving efficiency of the government school with respect to attendance rates, learning levels and retention rates. Its focus areas are preschool education and teacher performance. The SIG supports programmes and works with groups and organisations actively engaged in improving the quality of the public education system. The SIG also supports initiatives of providing quality education and addressing the issues of inaccessibility and mainstreaming of children who have never been enrolled in school or are school drop-outs.

The two initiatives that need a mention in the preschool education programme are the Pratham Mumbai Initiative – an urban slum programme in the city of Mumbai reaching out to more than 70,000 children in the age group of 3-5 years and the Jana Sanskriti Centre which adopts theatre as a medium to interact with preschool children enabling their smooth transition into formal school.

An important area of interest for the SIG has been to utilise mass media to stimulate the process of learning and thereby make the work being done by children and teachers in schools enlightening. The SIG has been supporting an educational television serial, CII Khullam Khulla, designed to motivate children to learn and teachers to perform better. The series brings to its viewers the alphabet, numbers, concepts, values and specific subjects in science and social studies through an interesting mix of puppetry, animation, graphics and music.

**IV. Reliance Industries Limited:** Late Shri Dhirubhai H. Ambani (1932-2002) founded the India's largest private sector enterprise: The Reliance Group, with businesses in the energy and materials value chain. Reliance Industries Limited is a Fortune Global 500 company.

---

## **Programme for Children**

### **1. Education**

There are nine schools catering to 13,251 students spread across different parts of India. CSR teams from RIL's manufacturing divisions and E&P operations work passionately to support the educational requirements of the community and schools in the neighbouring region benefiting thousands of students from the underprivileged section of the society.

RIL plays a crucial role in supporting Government's initiative towards education of girl child. In Gujarat, under the project "Kanya Kelvani", the financial support towards education of girl child in the state has been provided by RIL's Dahej Manufacturing Division.

RIL has created a platform for computer learning in many villages. Computers to primary and secondary schools under the company's computer literacy initiative.

RIL continues to provide support to school run by Lions Club of Naroda Charitable Trust. The school renders quality education in English medium to children of labourers working in GIDC, Naroda area, who are economically and socially backward. Jamnagar Manufacturing Division constructed a school building for village Kana Chikari of Lalpur taluka in Gujarat. Hoshiarpur Manufacturing Division has adopted village Mangrowal- Nari primary school. Annually free uniforms, books, shoes and school bags are given to students and also free electricity is provided to the school.

RIL's CSR teams continue to provide uniforms, books etc, to students of neighbouring villages of manufacturing divisions and E&P operations. Further, continuous monitoring is being done in local schools for improving the performance of students. Regular counselling sessions are also being arranged with experts in personality development and psychology for motivating the children to achieve better results.

To inspire school children from neighbouring villages in their learning process, Nagothane Manufacturing Division and the MADER Foundation provided school uniforms to the tribal and underprivileged students. Eleven schools were selected for this initiative, out of which seven Zilla Parishad schools are located on a hilltop near the manufacturing division. Further, meritorious students were felicitated with an objective of encouraging them for higher studies.

RIL's Project Jagruti is the project aiming to tackle dyslexia in Surat. It is setting the pace for the community's response to the social belief of the mentally underprivileged children. More than 8,800 hours have been spent by 35 trained teachers and more than 1,000 hours by RIL volunteers to uplift and bring the dyslexic students from the underprivileged segment into the main stream. RIL employee's spouses are supporting this activity and many teaching aids have been developed. NIOS registration has been initiated for Academic Year ("AY") 2011-12.

Partnership with similar associations across the country and UNESCO / BBC has been initiated to spread awareness and benefit the students with latest training aids. Awareness stall was put up that attracted thousands at the national book fair organized by Surat Municipal Corporation (SMC). Membership of Maharashtra Dyslexia Association and International Dyslexia Association has been taken to make the project more focused with proven scientific practices and to get availability of resourceful experts, sourcing global knowledge / resources and best practices / models in the LD/Dyslexia space. Focus is on early identification of learning disability in child and procuring various screening tests for the same.

### **Reliance Dhirubhai Ambani Protsaham Scheme**

This Scheme was launched in academic year 2008-09, continues to support poor meritorious students. Recipient students of Reliance Dhirubhai Ambani Protsaham Scheme got admissions in junior colleges of their choice. With admissions of AY 2010-11, the total strength of students receiving support

---

under the scheme has gone up to 656. The first batch of the Protsaham students passed out the intermediate examination held in March 2010 with flying colours and from AY 2010-11 onwards, financial aid is being provided by RIL to the toppers for pursuing their higher studies in engineering and medical streams.

### **Mumbai Indians Education for All Initiative**

Under the banner of 'Education for All', Mumbai Indians decided to take up an initiative of education as a primary social issue. This initiative was launched during the Indian Premier League (IPL) season in 2010 to create a drive, to back hard work and to provide quality education to all children. Mrs. Nita Ambani who is a passionate advocate for the cause of education conceptualised this initiative making it her brainchild. Five NGOs carrying out exemplary work in the field of education namely Akanksha, Nanhi Kali, Pratham, Teach for India and Umeed were selected to achieve this noble cause. An aggressive campaign was launched to highlight the cause of education and to promote the work of these five organizations through official Mumbai Indian videos, TV commercials that ran through the duration of the IPL, sale of Mumbai Indians 'Education for All' wristbands as part of the merchandizing and awareness creation through its radio partners and in stadium announcements during games. Through the sale of the wristbands and additional support, Mumbai Indians was able to gift Rs. 11 lakhs to each of the groups at the conclusion of IPL 3.

### **Community Health Care**

In order to provide comprehensive health services covering preventive, promotive and curative health care services to the community from neighbouring villages, RIL has established Community Medical Centres near most of its manufacturing divisions.

The manufacturing divisions conduct regular health check-ups for children in schools of their respective neighbouring regions. Doctors advise children and their parents on various health care issues and personal hygiene. Patalganga site has conducted a series of health awareness programs in local schools and nearby small scale industries.

A 'Project Balkalyan' is being run by Jamnagar Manufacturing Division with an objective to provide nutritional support to children affected with HIV infection. Nutritional kit is distributed to all HIV positive children when they visit the Centre for monthly follow up. Hazira Manufacturing Division, through Reliance Ladies Club (an association of spouses of RIL employees) has a similar ongoing child adoption programme 'Project Hope', at Hazira to take care of nutritional requirement of HIV positive children.

RIL has established an Early Intervention and Rehabilitation Center for supporting the mentally challenged children living in Tallarevu Mandal and Yanam Union Territory. This center is being run with the technical support of NGO Uma Mano Vikasa Kendram, Kakinada. At present, children from the region having different disabilities have already been enrolled.

### **CONCLUSION**

No doubt, the corporate houses in India are doing their bit to improve child welfare but lot needs to be done. The study suggested that other than Reliance group of Industries hardly any other industries has been spending considerable amount on specifically selected programme for children, though they spend on general education and healthcare programmes. An important and noticeable factor common among all the corporate houses is that the spending on health or education is always undertaken in co-operation with NGO's or government. The New Economic Policy of India in 1991 has

---

entrusted larger role for private sector in economic field which also implies that their role in shouldering social responsibilities along with the state is vital.

#### **The initiatives that may be taken**

- Subsidizing medical cost for children from poor and lower income groups especially the medical expenses for chronic diseases
- Scholarships for meritorious students for study abroad programme
- More programmes for women empowerment.
- Orphan ages to be set up, institution to take care of street children, juvenile delinquencies.

#### **REFERENCES**

- Corporate Social Responsibility and children's Right in South Asia- A study by Save the Children Foundation, 2007.
- Muruganatham G., (2010), "Case study on Corporate Social Responsibility of MNC's in India, paper presented at International Trade & Academic Research Conference (ITARC) - London 2010.
- Rao J., "The History of Child Rights in India" National commission for protection of child right
- Srinivasan V.,( 15 June 2007) 'Corporate Social Responsibility', *The Financial Express*.
- Sustainable development and corporate social responsibility-A special publication of the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada, March-2007
- Sustainable development innovation briefs-Publication of UN- feb 2007 issue 1, ILO publication on child labour and corporate social responsibility in Indonesia.
- Welford R., Chan C., and Man M., "Priorities for Corporate Social Responsibility: A Survey of Businesses and their Stakeholders, Paper Downloaded
- Official websites of all the selected corporate Houses.
- <https://campuscrosswork.org>
- <https://www.magtzer.com>
- <https://www.indiamart.com>
- <https://corporate-social-responsibility.ozg.in>