

# **PATH TO CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES IN INDIAN SCENARIO**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has developed tremendously during the last decade. Business ethics and social responsibility are the themes that are given considerable attention in companies, as well as in academic journal. Employees, customers, suppliers, competitors, and government are all placing increasing demands on management. Stakeholders expect management to participate in the debate on societal problems (for example, health education, unemployment, poverty, infrastructure, greenhouse effect, etc.) and proactively think about the impact of businesses.*

*This paper gives a concise overview of the development of corporate social responsibility, its influence on business developments, and its relationship to safety and health at work in Indian context.*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In an increasingly conscience-focused marketplaces of the 21st century, the demand for more ethical business processes and actions (known as ethicism) is increasing. Simultaneously, pressure is applied on Indian industry to improve business ethics through new public initiatives and laws.

Business ethics can be both a normative and a descriptive discipline. As a corporate practice and a career specialization, the field is primarily normative. The range and quantity of business ethical issues reflects the degree to which business is perceived to be at odds with non-economic social values. Today major corporate houses lay emphasis on commitment to promoting non-economic social values under a variety of headings - social responsibility being one of them. In some cases, corporations have re-branded their core values in the light of business ethical considerations.

Hardly a day goes by without some mention in the media of corporate social responsibility and its growing significance on good business practices. CSR, as it is commonly known, is becoming increasingly important to us all, both as individuals and in our professional lives. Despite much public focus on large multinationals, it is the changing behaviour of the privately held business sector that is likely to make the greatest impact on global corporate social responsibility. Privately held businesses have always been the economic engine of the world, but in recent years their voice has been lost under the clamour of the large multinationals. Privately held businesses may not be conducting the expensive campaigns that catch the public's attention, but they are making changes which affect their bottom line. Whether changes are made in order to become more attractive employers, or a more appealing supplier to a large multinational or simply because of the ethical desire of the

owner, the changes have made privately held businesses more socially responsible. All privately held businesses are adhering to greater pressure to do business in a more socially responsible and transparent manner. The businesses that are responsive, quick and innovative will be the ones who not only survive the change, but emerge as winners.

The term CSR itself came in to common use in the early 1970s although it was seldom abbreviated. The term stakeholder, meaning those impacted by an organization's activities, was used to describe corporate owners beyond shareholders from around 1989.

## **II. WHAT IS CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY**

CSR is not new to India, companies like TATA and BIRLA have been imbibing the case for social good in their operations for decades long before CSR become a popular cause. And CSR is coming out of the purview of 'doing social good' and is fast becoming a 'business necessity'. The 'business case' for CSR is gaining ground and corporate houses are realising that 'what is good for workers - their community, health, and environment is also good for the business.

CSR, also called corporate responsibility, corporate citizenship, responsible business and corporate social opportunity is a concept whereby organizations consider the interests of society by becoming responsible for the impact of their activities on customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders, communities and other stakeholders, as well as the environment. This obligation is seen to extend beyond the statutory obligation to comply with legislation and sees organizations voluntarily taking further steps to improve the quality of life for employees and their families as well as for the local community and society at large.

## **III. POTENTIAL BUSINESS BENEFITS**

The scale and nature of the benefits of CSR for an organization can vary depending on the nature of the enterprise. However, businesses may not be looking at short-run financial returns when developing their CSR strategy.

The definition of CSR used within an organization can vary from the strict "stakeholder impacts" definition used by many CSR advocates and will often include charitable efforts and volunteering. CSR may be based within the human resources, business development or public relations departments of an organisation, or may be given a separate unit reporting to the CEO or in some cases directly to the board. Some companies may implement CSR-type values without a clearly defined team or programme.

## **IV. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE NATURE OF BUSINESS**

Corporations exist to provide products and/or services that produce profits for their shareholders, and at the same time have social obligations. Working within the framework of bye laws of the country, the business houses need to develop such a system which provides for self discipline, resulting into fulfillment of responsibilities towards society. Those who assert that CSR is congruent for business argue that improvements in health, longevity and/or infant mortality have been created by economic growth attributed to free enterprise.

Those who are in favour of CSR claim that the type of capitalism practiced in many developing countries is a form of economic and cultural imperialism results in higher risk of exploitation of its citizens by multinational corporations, noting that these countries usually have fewer labor protections.

The REALeadership Alliance asserts that the business of leadership (be it corporate or otherwise) is to change the world for the better. Many religious and cultural traditions hold, that the economy exists to serve human beings, so all economic entities have an obligation to society (e.g., Economic Justice for All). Moreover, many CSR proponents point out that CSR can significantly improve long-term corporate profitability because it reduces risks and inefficiencies while offering a host of potential benefits such as enhanced brand reputation and employee loyalty.

## **V. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN MULTINATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PRIVATELY HELD BUSINESS**

In comparison to Privately held Businesses (PHBs), large multinationals have a far more powerful stakeholder group to consider and have, in many cases, adopted an holistic approach to CSR. Many businesses have signed up to the UnitedNation's voluntary framework, The Global Compact, a cross-cultural ethical practice for businesses who are prepared to commit to principles in the following four main areas:

- Human rights
- labour standards
- the environment
- anti-corruption

The United Nations Global Compact is not a regulatory instrument, but relies on public accountability and the self-interest of companies to further its aims without enforcing or measuring business actions.

## **VI. WHAT IS DRIVING CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY**

The adoption of ethical business practices is fundamental to the success of all businesses. The main factor driving corporate responsibility is the need for business to attract and retain high quality staff to meet current and future demands . The most important drivers behind CSR are: creating new opportunities (market enlargement, better reputation); better control of business risks for the continuity of the organisation. The increasing attention given to CSR is also fed by recent financial/accountancy scandals and the growing demands for integrity and transparency of companies. CSR also raises new issues for management, such as the importance of broad stakeholder involvement and adoption of innovative measures. Human resource management, health and safety at work , business ethics, adaptation to change, and organisational learning — requires participation of workers or their representatives. Global environmental concerns, safety and health in supply companies, corporate citizenship worldwide — requires communication with consumers, investors, globally operating NGOs, etc.

### **6.1 Governments**

While corporate responsibility principles are developed within companies and often fostered by non-governmental organisations, national governments have a major role to play. They can set reference frameworks, encourage action and promote dialogue but crucially can enforce action through legislation. Governments can use taxation to encourage ‘green’ practices, set minimum wages and impose restrictions on working hours. In many countries targets are set on businesses to reduce greenhouse emissions. Yet many businesses stress that government incentives, rather than punitive taxes, would do more to encourage ethical behaviour, especially on ‘green’ issues. Nevertheless, many PHBs are adhering to the highest ethical standards – why? In order to answer this question we need to understand what is driving business ethics amongst PHBs and what initiatives they are implementing. Although PHBs perhaps face the greatest challenge, it is these businesses who could make the greatest impact on global corporate social responsibility.

### **6.2 Competition between PHB and Multinationals**

PHBs are ‘the economic engine of the world’. Although public attention is often focused on large multinationals and how ethical their business practices are, PHBs are expected to adhere to the same ethical practices. However, the two sets of businesses differ greatly in terms of size and structure. When adopting more ethical business practices, PHBs are at a distinct disadvantage to their multinational counterparts. Primarily due to lack of resources, but PHBs also lack experience or peers in their industry group to develop examples of ‘best practice’. PHBs also are not subject to the weight of expectation and attention which falls on multinationals who impact our daily lives. Nevertheless, many PHBs are adhering to the highest ethical standards – why? In order to answer this question we need to understand what is driving business ethics amongst PHBs and what initiatives they are implementing. Although PHBs perhaps face the greatest challenge, it is these businesses who could make the greatest impact on global corporate social responsibility.

### **6.3 Employment**

Recruitment/retention of staff was a driver of social responsibility in all countries – and the main factor in almost half of surveyed countries. The proportion of respondents citing this driver as important varied from 53 per cent in Hong Kong to 89 per cent in Denmark. Unemployment in Denmark is amongst the lowest in the world, perhaps explaining respondents’ concern with labour recruitment/ retention. Labour market considerations also seem to lie beneath the high proportion citing this factor in Turkey (86 per cent) and Vietnam (85 per cent), where skills shortages in certain sectors are acute and some employers have great difficulties with staff retention.

### **6.4 Cost Management**

Maintaining strict cost control encourages careful management of resources whose use can contribute to CO2 levels and environmental degradation. The IBR results show widespread agreement that the need to control costs encourages ethical behaviour amongst PHBs. It was considered as the leading driver in eleven surveyed countries, led by Brazil (87 per cent) and India (85 per cent).

*“Business ethic is a key factor for recruitment and retention. Privately held businesses ignoring CSR issues are facing future skills shortages that will threaten their global competitiveness.”*

### **6.5 Recruitment and Retention**

The IBR survey shows that privately held businesses appear more likely to adopt ethical business practices for practical commercial reasons than any other. Although unsurprising, it offers an insight into ways in which organisations and governments can improve global corporate social responsibility. While ‘saving the planet’ is a concern, by far and away the main drivers for action on corporate social responsibility are recruitment and retention issues followed closely by cost management. This highlights the power of the individual. Privately held businesses are having to take notice of individuals and install CSR initiatives because it is being demanded by their workforce through recruitment and retention issues.

### **6.6 The Demand for Action**

Another factor is the demand of the large corporates. CSR frameworks are filtering down the supply chain, influencing the business practices of privately held businesses. Such businesses are often able to change the direction of their business more efficiently due to the ability of the owner to individually alter the business’s operations. Corporate social responsibility is no longer the domain of the large corporate and is now a necessity rather than a choice. Those privately held businesses adopting ethical business practices quickly and efficiently will survive. These are the businesses who will secure the skilled workers and the contracts with the large multinationals. Those failing to act now face an uncertain future.

### **6.7 Ethical Consumerism**

The rise in popularity of ethical consumerism over the last two decades can be linked to the rise of CSR. As global population increases, so does the pressure on limited natural resources required to meet rising consumer demand. Industrialization in many developing countries is booming as a result of technology and globalization. Consumers are becoming more aware of the environmental and social implications of their day-to-day consumer decisions and are beginning to make purchasing decisions related to their environmental and ethical concerns. However, this practice is far from consistent or universal.

### **6.8 Globalization and Market Forces**

As corporations pursue growth through globalization, they have encountered new challenges that impose limits to their growth and potential profits. Government regulations, tariffs, environmental restrictions and varying standards of what constitutes labour exploitation are problems that can cost organizations millions of dollars. Some view ethical issues as simply a costly hindrance. Some companies use CSR methodologies as a strategic tactic to gain public support for their presence in global markets, helping them sustain a competitive advantage by using their social contributions to provide a subconscious level of advertising. Global competition places particular pressure on multinational corporations to examine not only their own labour practices, but those of their entire supply chain, from a CSR perspective.

### **6.9 Social Awareness and Education**

The role among corporate stakeholders to work collectively to pressure corporations is changing. Shareholders and investors themselves, through socially responsible investing are exerting pressure on corporations to behave responsibly. Non-governmental organizations are also taking an increasing role, leveraging the power of the media and the Internet to increase their scrutiny and collective activism around corporate behavior. Through education and dialogue, the development of community in holding businesses responsible for their actions is growing.

### **6.10 Ethics Training**

The rise of ethics training inside corporations, some of it required by government regulation, is another driver credited with changing the behaviour and culture of corporations. The aim of such training is to help employees make ethical decisions when the answers are unclear. The most direct benefit is reducing the likelihood of "dirty hands" , fines and damaged reputations for breaching laws or moral norms. Organizations also see secondary benefit in increasing employee loyalty and pride in the organization.

### **6.11 Laws and regulation**

Another driver of CSR is the role of independent mediators, particularly the government, in ensuring that corporations are prevented from harming the broader social good, including people and the environment. CSR critics such as Robert Reich argue that governments should set the agenda for social responsibility by the way of laws and regulation that will allow a business to conduct themselves responsibly.

The issues surrounding government regulation pose several problems. Regulation in itself is unable to cover every aspect in detail of a corporation's operations. This leads to burdensome legal processes bogged down in interpretations of the law and debatable grey areas. General Electric is an example of a corporation that has failed to clean up the Hudson River after contaminating it with organic pollutants. The company continues to argue via the legal process on assignment of liability, while the cleanup remains stagnant. The second issue is the financial burden that regulation can place on a nation's economy. This view shared by Bulkeley, who cites as an the Australian federal government's actions to avoid compliance with the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, on the concerns of economic loss and national interest. The Australian government took the position that signing the Kyoto Pact would have caused more significant economic losses for Australia than for any other OECD nation (Bulkeley 2001, pg 436). Critics of CSR also point out that organizations pay taxes to government to ensure that society and the environment are not adversely affected by business activities.

### **6.12 Crises and their consequences**

Often it takes a crisis to precipitate attention to CSR. One of the most active stands against environmental management is the CERES Principles that resulted after the Exxon Valdez incident in Alaska in 1989 (Grace and Cohen 2006). Other examples include the lead poisoning paint used by toy giant Mattel, which required a recall of millions of toys globally and caused the company to initiate new risk management and quality control processes. In another example, Magellan Metals in the West Australian town of Esperance was responsible for

lead contamination killing thousands of birds in the area. The company had to cease business immediately and work with independent regulatory bodies to execute a cleanup.

## **VII. CSR AND QUESTIONABLE MOTIVES**

The practice of CSR is subject to much debate and criticism. Proponents argue that there is a strong business case for CSR, in that corporations benefit in multiple ways by operating with a perspective broader and longer than their own immediate, short-term profits. Critics argue that CSR distracts from the fundamental economic role of businesses; others argue that it is nothing more than superficial window-dressing; still others argue that it is an attempt to pre-empt the role of governments as a watchdog over powerful multinational corporations.

1. Some critics believe that CSR programs are undertaken by companies such as British American Tobacco the petroleum giant BP (well-known for its high-profile advertising campaigns on environmental aspects of its operations), and McDonald's to distract the public from ethical questions posed by their core operations. They argue that some corporations start CSR programs for the commercial benefit they enjoy through raising their reputation with the public or with government. They suggest that corporations which exist solely to maximize profits are unable to advance the interests of society as a whole.
2. Another concern is when companies claim to promote CSR and be committed to Sustainable Development whilst simultaneously engaging in harmful business practices. For example, since the 1970s, the McDonald's Corporation's association with Ronald McDonald House has been viewed as CSR and relationship marketing. More recently, as CSR has become mainstream, the company has beefed up its CSR programs related to its labor, environmental and other practices. All the same, in *McDonald's Restaurants v Morris & Steel*, Lord Justices Pill, May and Keane ruled that it was fair comment to say that
3. McDonald's employees worldwide 'do badly in terms of pay and conditions' and true that 'if one eats enough McDonald's food, one's diet may well become high in fat etc., with the very real risk of heart disease.'
4. Similarly Shell has a much-publicized CSR policy and was a pioneer in triple bottom line reporting, however, this did not prevent the scandal concerning its misreporting of oil reserves—an act which seriously damaged its reputation and led to charges of hypocrisy. Since then, the Shell Foundation has become involved in many projects across the world, including a partnership with Marks and Spencer (UK) in three flower and fruit growing communities across Africa.
5. Critics concerned with corporate hypocrisy and insincerity generally suggest that better governmental and international regulation and enforcement, rather than voluntary measures, are necessary to ensure that companies behave in a socially responsible manner.

## **VIII. IMPLEMENTING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN HEALTH SECTOR**

As a member of today's rapidly changing global community, we are striving to adapt to the evolving needs of society and contribute to the overall health and wellness of our world. We are continually reviewing and improving our efforts to lessen our impact on the environment, nurture a workplace of diversity and inclusion, conduct responsible business practices, and uphold the highest ethical standards in everything from research and

development to sales and marketing. And, we are building partnerships in communities throughout the world to strengthen health systems and find sustainable solutions to the health challenges of today, and tomorrow. Health Sector clearly stands out as a leader, when discussing the CSR issues partly because of its close relationship to its multiple stakeholders of society, government and other private sectors. Another part of the reason may be that its way of making profits has a bigger relationship to people's lives by affecting their health problems rather than other business entities.

There are numerous epidemic diseases and other serious diseases in the world which needs close attention, both from public sector and private sector (i.e. HIV/AIDS, Avian Influenza, and etc.). In order for authorities to take close measures and keep the diseases under control a large volume of resources is required. Healthcare companies have been blamed in the past for their issues including different prices on some critical medications sold over the world. They simply cannot lower the price in countries where the critical amount is needed (e.g. HIV preventive medicine in Africa) since they've had incidents where the donation has been sent back to the local black market. There is also has a problem with regulations to deal with, although there are not clear solutions for these problems. Bottom line, Pharmaceutical companies should be willing to share their know how under no extra cost to provide medicine to these patients. There are two foremost jobs of Health Sector companies before they solve the complex issues of helping the needy.

First of all, the business units have to be earning in a responsible way. This has to be communicated to supply chain, marketing, finance, HR, and other departments throughout the company. If a company is contributing to HIV/AIDS issue but with the money from illegal transaction or from selling medicines packaged by children, what good is it?

Second, Health Sector, just like other business sectors, needs to focus on certain areas to contribute to the society and link it with their business. This does not have to directly relate to their products or service. This is certainly not an easy task but not impossible. When above two parts are implemented as a corporate strategy, a company in the health sector would be recognized by the public rather than be blamed upon for only chasing after the profit.

## **IX. CASE STUDIES**

### **9.1 Cipla**

Cipla is a prominent Indian pharmaceutical company, best-known outside its home country for manufacturing low-cost anti-AIDS drugs for HIV-positive patients in developing countries. Founded by Khwaja Abdul Hamied as The Chemical, Industrial & Pharmaceutical Laboratories in 1935, Cipla makes drugs to treat cardiovascular disease, arthritis, diabetes, weight control, depression and many other health conditions, and its products are distributed in more than 180 countries worldwide.

Cipla offers services like consulting, commissioning, engineering, project appraisal, quality control, know-how transfer, support, and plant supply.

Apart from its presence in the Indian market, Cipla also has an export market and regularly exports to more than 150 countries in regions such as North America, South American, Asia, Europe, Middle East, Australia, and Africa. Cipla is also considerably well-known for its technological innovation.

Today, Cipla is the world's largest manufacturer of antiretroviral drugs, (ARVs) to fight HIV/AIDS, as measured by units produced and distributed (multinational brand-name drugs are much more expensive, so in money terms Cipla medicines are probably somewhere down the list). Roughly 40 percent of HIV/AIDS patients undergoing antiretroviral therapy worldwide take Cipla drugs.

Indian law from 1972 until 2005 allowed no (end-product) patents on drugs, and provided for compulsory licensing, Cipla was able to manufacture medicines which enjoyed patent monopoly in certain other countries (particularly those where large, multinational pharmaceutical companies are based). By doing so, as well as by making an executive decision not to make profits on AIDS medication, Cipla reduced the cost of providing antiretrovirals to AIDS patients from \$12,000 and beyond (monopoly prices charged by international pharma conglomerates) down to around \$300 per year.

Today they are able to do so for under \$150 per patient per year. While this sum remains out of reach for many millions of people in Third World countries, government and charitable sources often are in a position to make up the difference for destitute patients. However, in producing generic versions of drugs which are patent-protected, the company has provoked the ire of the pharmaceutical companies which own the patents. Whilst Cipla has argued that the ethics of humanitarian relief should outweigh Intellectual property considerations, brand-name pharmaceutical companies have countered that high prices are vital to offset high Research and development costs (though typically such companies spend far more on marketing and administration than they do on research.

Cipla developed a three-in-one tablet called *Triomune* containing a fixed-dose combination (FDC) of three ARVs (Lamivudine, stavudine and Nevirapine), something difficult elsewhere because the three patents were held by different companies. Another popular fixed-dose combination is produced under the name Duovir-N. This contains Lamivudine, Zidovudine and Nevirapine. Cipla manufactures generic versions of many of the most commonly prescribed anti-retroviral medication in the market, and is a highly capable manufacturer in its own right. This innovation made ARVs far more accessible and easy-to-take for patients everywhere, but particularly in poor- and middle-income countries, where the vast majority of people on anti-retroviral therapy (ART) now take such combination pills. Cipla is one of the first companies to register AIDS drugs under the US program PEPFAR. In May 2009, Cipla won approval from the World Health Organization certifying that its drug Antiflu was as effective as Tamiflu, and Antiflu is included in the World Health Organization list of prequalified medicinal products.

## **9.2 Indian Oil**

At IndianOil, corporate social responsibility (CSR) has been the cornerstone of success right from inception in the year 1964. The Corporation's objectives in this key performance area are enshrined in its Mission statement: *"...to help enrich the quality of life of the community and preserve ecological balance and heritage through a strong environment conscience"*.

Indian Oil have defined a set of core values for themselves – Care, Innovation, Passion and Trust. That's why, they have coined the phrase, "Indian Oil – India Inspired", in their corporate advertising. Public corporations

like Indian Oil have significant public resources deployed in their capital base. They are aware of the need to work beyond financial considerations. They know that they are not just the chariots of profit maximization, but they are expected to work towards improving the quality of life of its customers, employees and society as a whole.

By building value for its shareholders and customers. Indian Oil has been taking concrete action to realise its social responsibility objectives. The Corporation respects human rights, values its employees, and invests in innovative technologies and solutions for sustainable energy flow and economic growth. In the past four decades, Indian Oil has supported innumerable social and community initiatives in India. Touching the lives of millions of people positively by supporting environmental and health-care projects and social, cultural and educational programs.

Besides focusing primarily on the welfare of economically and socially deprived sections of society, Indian Oil also aims at developing techno-economically viable and environment-friendly products & services for the benefit of millions of its consumers, while at the same time ensuring the highest standards of safety and environment protection in its operations.

Every year, Indian Oil sets aside a fixed portion of its profits for spreading smiles in millions of lives across the country through a comprehensive community welfare and development programme. About one-fourth of the community development funds are spent on the welfare of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe beneficiaries.

Indian Oil has a concerted social responsibility programme to partner communities in health, family welfare, education, environment protection, providing potable water, sanitation, and empowerment of women and other marginalised groups. Indian Oil has always been in the forefront in times of national emergencies. Indian Oil People have time and again rallied to help victims of natural calamities, maintaining uninterrupted supply of petroleum products and contributing to relief and rehabilitation measures in cash and kind.

Indian Oil's community-focused initiatives include allotment of petrol/diesel station dealerships and LPG distributorships to beneficiaries from among Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, physically handicapped, ex-servicemen, war widows, etc. The Corporation has also unveiled kisan seva kendras as small-format retail outlets to reach quality products and services to people in the rural areas. Indian Oil has also set up the Indian Oil Foundation (IOF) as a non-profit trust to protect, preserve and promote national heritage monuments. The Corporation also supports a variety of endeavours in arts, culture, music and dance, apart from organising programmes on its own under the banners of Indian Oil Art Exhibition, Indian Oil Sangeet Sabha and Indian Oil Kavi Sammelan.

As part of its environment-protection initiatives, Indian Oil has invested close to Rs. 7,000 crore in state-of-the-art technologies at its refineries for production of green fuels meeting global standards. To further reduce dependence on precious petroleum products and secure the nation's energy security, the Corporation is now in the process of commercialising various options in alternative fuels such as ethanol-blended petrol, biodiesel, and Hydrogen and Hydrogen-CNG mixture.

With safety, health and environment protection high on its corporate agenda, Indian Oil is committed to conducting business with a strong environment conscience, so as to ensure sustainable development, safe work places and enrichment of the quality of life of its employees, customers and the community. Indian Oil is also

committed to the Global Compact Programme of the United Nations and endeavours to abide by the 10 principles of the programme, some of which are already part of the Corporation's Vision and Mission statements. It is the firm resolve of Indian Oil people to move beyond business, touch every heart and fuel a billion dreams.

### **9.3 Zensar**

To care for the community is an essential component of corporate social responsibility at Zensar Foundation with offices in 18 countries of the world. They endeavor to make a positive contribution to the underprivileged communities by supporting a wide range of socio-economic, educational and health initiatives. Many of the community projects and programs are driven by active participation from their employees. Their commitment to address important societal needs extends throughout their philanthropic outreach programs driven by the Zensar Foundation. Established for the purpose of improving, guiding and inspiring the lives of the underprivileged, the Foundation facilitates programs and gives direct assistance and resources to individuals, families and other charitable organizations. Nurturing experiences and personal opportunities are also provided for those in the community who have little or no access to any assistance. The Zensar Foundation has taken up several initiatives to improve living conditions of the underprivileged and make a positive difference in their lives. The Foundation has adopted Ambedkar Nagar, a small community near the Zensar Campus for sustained community development programs. Health and education have been identified as the primary objectives in the community development process. The foundation works relentlessly to ensure improvement of general health and spread of non-formal education among all members in the community. A number of focused initiatives have been implemented to bring about general health awareness and improve the level of education.

### **X. WORKERS HEALTH IS A CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY!**

A look at corporate responsibility for workers' health in developing countries reveals stark inequities. In many countries, a corporation's prime responsibilities are to expand the bottom line for shareholders (corporate economic responsibility) and comply with regulations the health and safety of its workers (corporate legal responsibility). But social responsibility is an ethical or ideological concept operating through informal legal and social controls. Thus, social responsibility is self-imposed and is beyond legal obligations. It is normed by social mores and values already ingrained in societal belief systems, and activated by the practical involvement of businesses, government agencies, NGOs, local communities, and social activists. For a basic understanding of the root of societal responsibility to protect health and safety of the working population, one may look at the objectives of occupational health. Occupational health should aim at the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, mental and social well-being of workers in all occupations; the prevention amongst workers of departures from health caused by their working conditions; the protection of workers in their employment from risks resulting from factors adverse to health; the placing and maintenance of the worker in an occupational environment adapted to his physiological and psychological capabilities. Despite the increasing awareness of health being an important determinant of the productivity and progress of a nation, occupational health and safety remains neglected through-out the world. Work related risk factors are responsible for occupational injuries, work place exposure to carcinogens, dust, noise and ergonomic stressors. These afflictions

bring hardship not only to the victims but also to their families, because most of the affected individuals in the developing countries are in the prime of their lives. They are the sole earners in their families, with neither social security nor any form of health insurance. This human suffering is coupled with an economic dimension. Unfortunately, the major instruments to protect health and safety of workers, namely, regulatory mechanisms and the provision of occupational health services, are available only to about 10-15% of the working population of developing countries. Furthermore, in these countries, even where such regulatory mechanisms do exist, they are largely ineffective due to weak institutional infrastructure and stakeholder apathy and failure to recognize the health of the workers as a corporate social responsibility.

## **XI. CONCLUSION**

Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in India sets a realistic agenda of grassroots development through alliances and partnerships with sustainable development approaches. At the heart of solution lies intrinsic coming together of all stakeholders in shaping up a distinct route for an equitable and just social order.

The roots of social responsibility lie in the moral obligation of the corporate entity; to give something back to the society in which it functions. The rise of ethical consumerism in recent years has led to greater concern in the corporate sector with regard to environmental and occupational impact of their products and activities. Thus, many companies now certify their products with ISO standards guaranteeing sound environmental management, occupational health and safety. Protection of health from the adverse work environment may be seen as a legal obligation that is burdensome to the employer. However, far from being a burden, health promotion and placement of workers in healthy work environments are an economic benefit. Positive environments and better health for workers mean greater efficiency, less sickness and absenteeism, less spending on health care, less labor turnover, higher longevity of the workers (less spending on training of fresh workers), avoidance of legal actions, and a better corporate image in the society. All of these benefits ultimately lead to better business outcomes. A win-win situation for employer and employee!

## **XII. ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The author thankfully acknowledges the cooperation and efforts of many friends and family members who assisted in developing this research paper and welcomes any suggestions or notes regarding this work, at the following correspondence address: meenuvermain@yahoo.com.

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