

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE STUDENT COMMUNITY: AWARENESS, PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS, AND FUTURE EXPECTATION

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Abstract:

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to how Companies take responsibility to protect the society and the environment. In simple words CSR is about doing business which is ethical, sustainable, and beneficial for both the society and the environment. India is one of the First Country that has made CSR legally Mandatory for certain companies. If the company (Net Worth \geq ₹500 Crore or Turnover \geq ₹1000 crore or Net Profit \geq ₹5 crore) meets any of these financial limits in a Financial Year the it must Comply with the CSR Regulations. The Company must Spend at least 2% of the Average Net Profits of the Last 3 financial year on CSR Activities.

Purpose: *The objective of this research study is to analyze the degree of awareness among students of Pillai College, Navi Mumbai, about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The study aims to investigate the extent to which students are aware of the concept, aims, and practical implementation of CSR activities carried out by organizations. The study also aims to investigate the views of students about the effectiveness and genuineness of CSR activities in dealing with social and environmental concerns. The study also aims to identify the expectations of students about the future role of CSR in society and the extent to which they feel organizations should contribute to society beyond their profit-earning activities.*

Design & Purpose: *The research was conducted by gathering primary data through a questionnaire survey among students of Pillai College, Navi Mumbai. Secondary data was collected from CSR trend reports, available statistics on CSR, and year-wise growth in CSR, which were used to support the analysis in the report.*

Findings: *Most students think that CSR should be able to make a difference and that it is only effective if it is genuine, community-focused, and done in the right way. But they also think that a problem is a lack of awareness on the part of the public—that things may be happening, but people may not be aware of it or participating in it. Most students think that CSR is sometimes just a publicity stunt and that is why it lacks credibility. They also think that mismanagement of funds, corruption, poor planning, and poor implementation are some of the reasons why CSR fails.*

Key Words: *CSR, Students, Awareness, Future Expectations.*

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Introduction:

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) means that companies don't just focus on earning profits, but they also take responsibility for helping society and protecting the environment. In simple words, CSR is about companies doing good work for people, communities, and nature while doing business. Nowadays, people expect companies to act responsibly, not just sell products and make money.

CSR can include many activities like helping in education, supporting healthcare, cleaning and protecting the environment, helping poor communities, women empowerment, rural development, and many other social causes. Many companies do CSR projects, but the real question is whether these activities actually create a good impact and whether people even know about them.

India is one of the first countries to make CSR mandatory for certain companies. Under the Companies Act, 2013, companies that cross a certain financial limit (like net worth, turnover, or profit) must spend at least 2% of their average net profit of the last three years on CSR activities. Because of this law, CSR spending in India has increased a lot. But spending money is not the only thing that matters — what matters more is how useful and effective these CSR activities are in real life.

In this research, the main focus is on CSR and the student community. Students are an important part of society because they are the future employees, customers, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers. Their opinion about CSR matters a lot. If students are aware of CSR activities and feel that they are useful, it shows that companies are doing meaningful work. But if students feel CSR is just for show, marketing, or only for legal compliance, then it raises questions about how CSR is being done.

Overall, this research will help in understanding how students look at CSR and whether companies need to improve their CSR planning, communication, and impact so that it benefits society in a better way.

Review of Literature:

(Carroll A. B., 1991): The current research study is related to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the student community; therefore, the literature review is presented based on research papers published on CSR awareness, perception, and student engagement. A research study on CSR practices highlighted that CSR has evolved from a philanthropic approach to a strategic business responsibility, which focuses on the welfare of stakeholders and sustainable development. The study highlighted that organizations should focus on the integration of economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities for balanced development.

(Singh S., 2016): A research paper analyzed students' awareness of CSR concepts in higher education institutions based on selective indicators. The paper presented students' knowledge level, engagement with CSR activities, and the impact of the curriculum on CSR awareness. The study concluded that structured education on CSR can increase awareness and ethical values among students.

(Fatma M., Rahman Z., 2015): Another research study tried to evaluate the students' perception of corporate CSR efforts and their effectiveness. The study evaluated the students' views on environmental sustainability initiatives, community development projects, and ethical business practices. The study concluded that students have positive perceptions about socially responsible businesses, especially when CSR efforts are transparent and effective.

(Sharma R., Kiran R., 2013): A research study conducted on management students in Indian universities revealed that CSR education is an important factor in instilling socially responsible values and leadership qualities in students. The study highlighted that experiential education activities like internships and community service programs improve students' perceptions of the effectiveness of CSR efforts.

(Bhattacharya C. B., Sen S., 2004): Another research study on students' expectations from business corporations revealed that the younger generation wants business corporations to perform beyond profit-earning activities and contribute to environmental conservation, ethical business practices, and social welfare. The study suggested that students want to work with organizations that have strong commitments to CSR.

(Kolodinsky R. W., Madden T. M., Zisk D. S., Henkel E. T., 2010): A comparative analysis on the perception of CSR among students of different academic streams revealed that business and

management students demonstrated greater awareness of CSR compared to students of other streams. The study highlighted the need for incorporating CSR into all streams to promote awareness and participation.

Research Gap :

From the literature review above, it is revealed that various studies have been carried out on the awareness and perception of CSR among students and on the corporate CSR efforts in general. However, very few studies have addressed the combined aspects of awareness among students, perceived effectiveness, and future expectations within a single framework. There is a lack of research that combines the three aspects to analyze the impact of awareness on perception and the effect of both on future expectations of CSR. Therefore, there is scope for further research on Corporate Social Responsibility and the Student Community based on awareness, perceived effectiveness, and future expectations with the help of selected indicators.

Objectives of the Study:

- i. To understand the Awareness about CSR Activities among College Students
- ii. To get to know about the perceived effectiveness of the CSR among the students
- iii. To understand what are the future expectations of students in accordance to CSR
- iv. To understand the main source from which students get to know about or the information about the CSR activities.
- v. To study the relationship between Awareness & Perceived Effectiveness of CSR Activities
- vi. To get an overall understanding of college students view on Corporate Social Responsibility with reference to Awareness, Perceived Effectiveness & Future Expectations.

Research Methodology:

The research design for this study is descriptive. It aims to describe the awareness, effectiveness, and future expectations of college students about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). This study is primarily based on the primary data collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was close-ended, aiming to determine the awareness and expectations of college students about CSR. Secondary data is also used to support the findings, especially the growth of CSR over the years.

Type of Research Design: Descriptive Research Design
Nature of Study: Combination of Primary and Secondary Data

Scale Used: Multiple Choice Questions

Sample Size: 54 Respondents

Source of Primary Data: Responses collected through Google Form from college students

Source of Secondary Data: Government data from MCA Portal

Tools Used for Analysis: Percentage Analysis, Tabular Presentation, Graphical Representation

Limitations of the Study:

Limited Sample Size: The study is conducted on the basis of 54 responses from students, which may not be a complete representation of all college students.

Geographical Limitation: The study is conducted on the basis of students from one college, and the results may not be applicable to students from other regions.

Response Bias: Students may have responded to questions in a socially desirable manner rather than expressing their actual views.

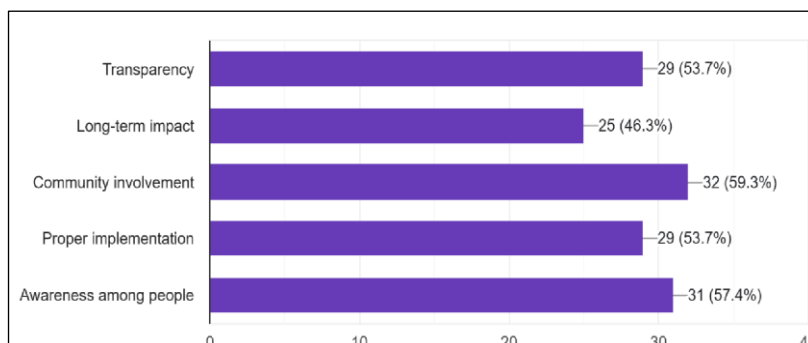
Limited Practical Exposure: Students may not have practical exposure to CSR initiatives, which may impact the responses.

Use of Closed-Ended Questions: The questionnaire was designed in a way that it consisted mostly of multiple-choice questions, which restricted the collection of personal views.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

From analysis of primary data following findings are revealed

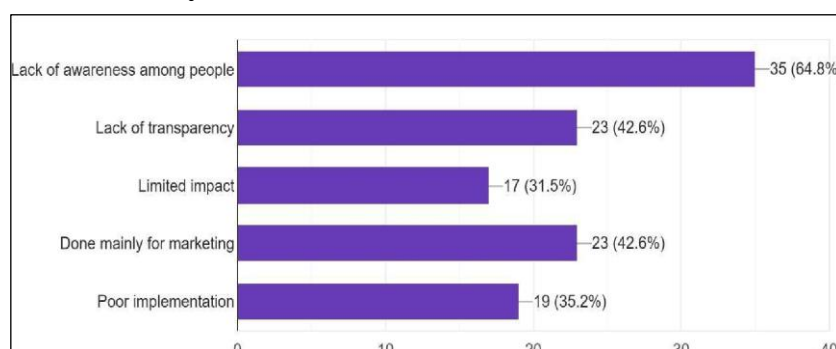
Factors that make CSR activities effective:



(Source: Compiled from primary data)

Interpretation: People believe CSR works best when communities involve themselves, awareness is strong, and organizations are open about their actions and run projects effectively. This shows that impact and trust are more important than just intentions.

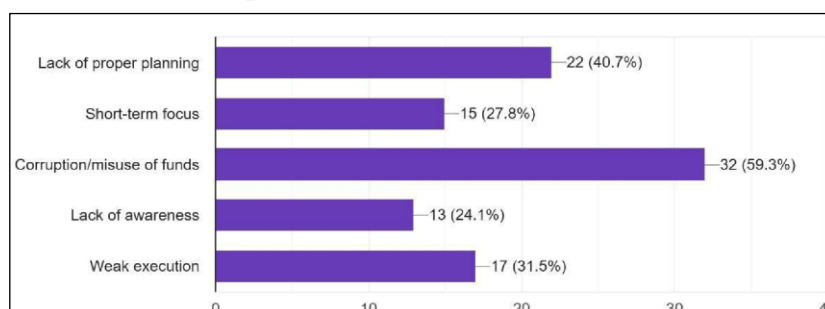
Problems that exist in CSR activities today:



(Source: Compiled from primary data)

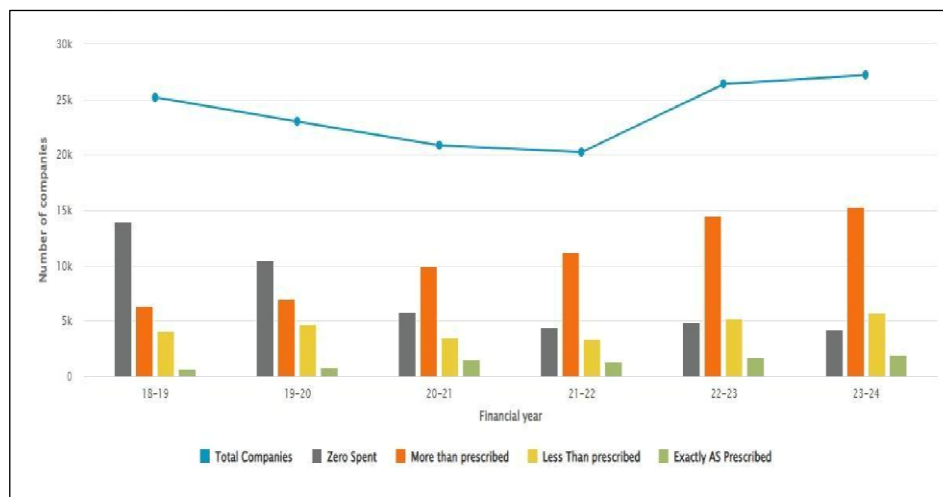
Interpretation: The biggest concern is low public awareness, along with issues of transparency and CSR being used mainly for marketing. Many feel that without honesty and real impact, CSR loses its purpose.

Factors why CSR sometimes fail to create impact.

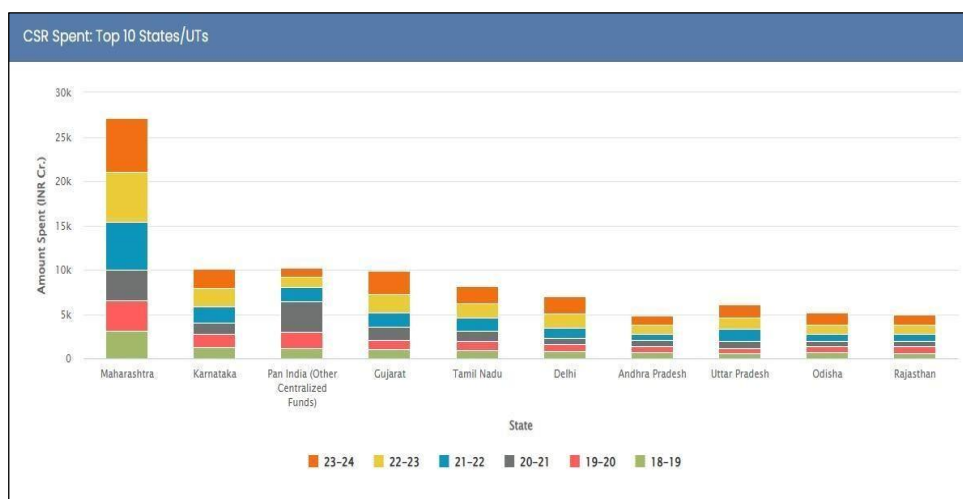


(Source: Compiled from primary data)

Interpretation: Corruption or misuse of funds is viewed as the main reason CSR fails, followed by poor planning and weak execution. This reflects a fear that good ideas fall apart without accountability and proper management. From analysis of secondary data following findings are revealed.

CSR Compliance: Company-wise.


Interpretation: Over the years, there has been a positive shift in the level of CSR compliance. There are fewer companies that are trying to evade their CSR obligations, and this is a sign that there is greater awareness and accountability. At the same time, there are more companies that are spending above the mandatory amount, and this is a sign that there is a greater sense of commitment to social causes. Even though some companies are spending less than the mandatory amount, the level of participation has improved.

CSR Spent: Top 10 States/UTs


(Source: <https://www.csr.gov.in/content/csr/global/master/home/home.html>)

Interpretation: The CSR expenditure is largely routed through a few major states, with Maharashtra leading the pack in all the years. Karnataka, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu are the other states that feature in the list of top-spending states, which is an indication of a strong corporate presence in these states. The overall trend suggests that the CSR expenditure is increasing over the years, especially in 2022-23 and 2023-24, which is an indication of an increasing corporate presence. States such as Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, and Rajasthan suggest moderate CSR spending.

Conclusion:

This research reveals that the concept of CSR in India is slowly becoming more significant and effective. Students these days are relatively aware of CSR and its significance in the well-being of society and the environment. However, they still have doubts about the effectiveness of the money being spent, which is quite natural.

The statistics also depict a positive scenario, where fewer companies are disregarding their CSR duties and more are doing more than the mandatory expenditure. This indicates that companies are slowly recognizing CSR as an extension of their overall social responsibility, rather than just a mere legal requirement. However, the fact that most of the money is being spent in a few developed states reveals that the benefits are not yet equally distributed.

The concept of CSR in India is slowly going in the right direction, with increased participation and compliance. However, for it to make a long-lasting impact, there needs to be more transparency and focus on the unattended areas. With continued efforts, CSR has the ability to bring about more profound social change.

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