

Vol. IV Issue I, 2017

CSR *Mandate*

Enabling Sustainability



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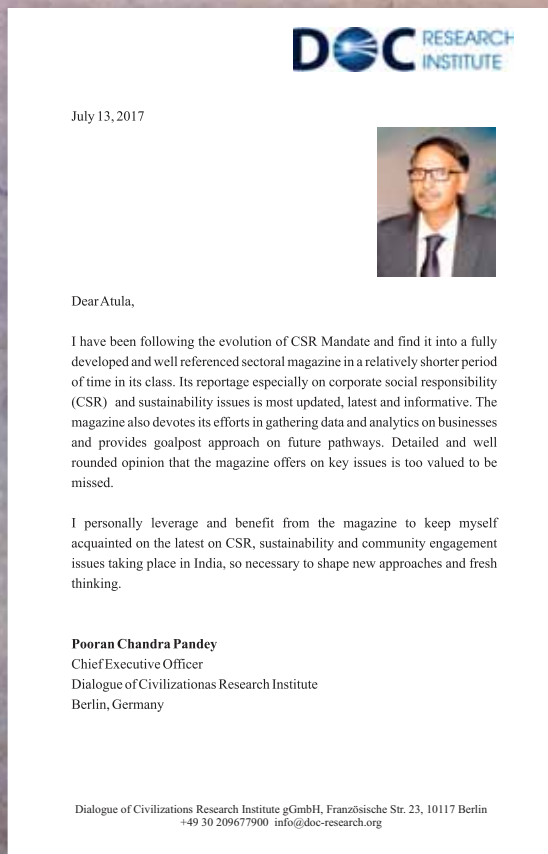
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Distributed by:

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Published by:

New Media Communication Pvt. Ltd, New Media House,

1 Akbar Villa, Marol Maroshi Road, Andheri (E), Mumbai - 400059

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Dear Readers,

It is said that 70 percent of India resides in its villages, and the real wealth is found in its grains. Agriculture has always been the backbone of our economy and contributes one-fifth of the GDP. Yet the Indian farmer and his village have been left behind in the growth trajectory.

Successive governments worked on rural development in bits and pieces, only concentrating on the cities, and that too, half-heartedly. This has left many parts of India underdeveloped. Some of the remote parts of the country have not even been touched by development. Building of physical and social infrastructure, such as schools and colleges, availability of good teachers, roads, electrification, water supply and other such basic amenities has only touched the peripheral rural areas outside the cities. Some genuine efforts have been met with agitation backed by vested interests, who would intentionally interrupt developmental works as they would hamper their personal interests.

However, the government has now drawn up a comprehensive strategy mainly focusing on poverty alleviation, eradication of hunger, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment. Science and technological interventions in the field of rural development is being paid special attention to help farmers yield better and healthier produce. Distribution pattern of food grains and agricultural produce are given priority.

Yet all these efforts look too little and too late until green shoots of growth and development begin to show positive manifestation of the schemes. Some talukas and villages have begun to show signs of prosperity, which is a good sign. This issue of CSR Mandate brings some thought-provoking articles as well as heartwarming stories on rural development, steps taken to combat malnutrition, and many more.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kamaljit Swaroop', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Kamaljit Swaroop
Vice Chairperson



Dear Readers,

Rural development in India has witnessed several changes over the years in its approaches, strategies and programmes. In the current scenario when India has to be globally competitive in order to stand in the international market, developmental work has assumed a new dimension and perspective.

One of the primary objectives of Rural Development Programmes is alleviation of poverty and unemployment through creation of basic social and economic infrastructure, provision of training to rural unemployed youth and providing employment to marginal farmers to discourage seasonal and permanent migration to urban areas.

Rural development can be enriched and made more contextual only through the participation of all stakeholders of development. Today, agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry, and dairy are the primary contributors to the rural business and economy. These have to be fostered, through participatory efforts of the people.

Quick and correct implementation is the touchstone of all planning, and people's participation plays a central role in the holistic and meaningful development of rural areas. People's participation is one of the foremost prerequisites of development process both from procedural and philosophical perspectives, as stressed by the Ministry of Rural Development.

This is where the lacuna remains. For decades, various ideological groups have tried to exploit the situation of rural peoples' ignorance, illiteracy and lack of understating of long-term benefits of the policies. We need concerted efforts from persuasive and like-minded groups to facilitate understanding and to bring people on a common platform.

In the last few years, some significant signs have been seen in some parts of India, yet there are miles to go before we see an overall growth. This issue of CSR Mandate brings some meaningful stories on development and growth in the rural sector, hunger and malnutrition.

Warm Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Archana Sinha'.

Archana Sinha
Editor



Pooran Chandra Pandey

Millennium to Sustainable: Public Good *VS* Private Welfare

With the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) having expired at the end of 2015, the consultation process among countries regarding the post-2015 development agenda is finally shaping up. The MDGs marked a turning point in history as the first ever global agreement to address pressing developmental issues, mobilising governments and business leaders to invest billions of dollars promoting cross-sectoral collaboration. MDGs have been scrutinised over the years for not being drafted in an inclusive and participatory manner, as only a few key civil servants and development experts were involved in the process of drafting them (Honniball and

Spijkers, 2014, pp. 251–256.). The process of drafting the SDGs, however, represented a new era of global participation in setting the development agenda, with multiple stakeholders, from civil society as well as the private sector included in the process. The first draft of the SDGs, produced by an Open Working Group (OWG) of the United Nations, consists of 17 goals and 169 targets (United Nations, 2014). The process of drafting the SDGs also provided a unique opportunity for stakeholders to influence the emerging development agenda. In a reaction to the Open Working Group's 'Focus Areas Document', the organisation Beyond2015 wrote: "The opportunity to rethink and redefine our global development pathway comes once in a

generation. This is our opportunity and we must seize it". The post-2015 sustainable development agenda calls for action from businesses, and there is a need for corporations to take a proactive role in promoting sustainable development in tandem with their influence and sphere of operations.

Sustainability: A Pathway to Value Creation

In recent decades, organisations increasingly find that their profit and loss statements are influenced by parameters that do not feature on the balance sheet. In order to be sustainable, businesses the world over have realised the need to recognise



and effectively address the complex relationship of good corporate performance, social development, and environmental protection. This paradigm shift in the global business environment has led to the Indian government promoting inclusive sustainable growth as a policy among corporations in India. Responding to trends, the capital market also shows signs of the shift towards sustainability with investors increasing inclination to invest in responsible industries.

This shift has been witnessed through policy-making mechanisms, with changes and amendments being made in legal documents that reinforce the policy and legal basis of sustainable development. In India, the pillars of sustainable development are embedded in the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution, which lays down the framework for social justice, inclusion, and equity. India was one of the first few countries to enact a comprehensive Biological Diversity Act in 2002 to give effect to the provisions of the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity. The National Environment Policy, adopted in 2006, has attempted to mainstream environmental concerns in all developmental activities. The Government of India, through its various policies, has been factoring ecological concerns into the development process so that economic developments can be achieved without environment degradation.

Corporate India has responded well to the call of the times and some leading businesses have started initiating measures designed towards sustainable development. The UNGC-Accenture-GCNI report on sustainability, with over 33 CEOs from public and private sector companies and subsidiaries of multinational corporations (MNCs) in India highlights that Indian companies have evolved from a philanthropic approach, and their priorities now reflect the lens of proximity, focusing

on immediate concerns. Indian companies are increasingly taking into account the triple bottom line impact of their businesses while taking decisions and shifting away from operations aimed entirely on profit motive, and are striving to integrate social and environmental issues into business decisions for achieving long term sustainability.

The UNGC, Accenture, and GCNI report highlights some of the unique and emerging themes that have enabled Indian companies to integrate sustainability for addressing global challenges and turn businesses as a force for good. These include:

1. Realism and Context:

Understanding and appreciation of the scale of global sustainability challenges and the opportunities they present.

2. Growth and Differentiation:

Sustainability as an opportunity to stand out to consumers and customers; to access new market segments with

“Indian companies are increasingly taking into account the triple bottom line impact of their businesses while taking decisions and shifting away from operations aimed entirely on profit motive, and are striving to integrate social and environmental issues into business decisions, for achieving long term sustainability”



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The change in consumer preferences towards green products, which saves on water usage, lessens GHG emissions, etc. has also pushed companies to develop green products using environmentally-friendly technologies for gaining greater competitive advantage

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new products and services, and to grow into new markets.

3. Value and Performance:

Measurement, monitoring, and management of sustainability metrics, quantification of business value, and tracking of impact on sustainability outcomes.

4. Technology and Innovation:

Investing in technology and business model transformation leading solutions to sustainability challenges, generating competitive advantage through new technologies and innovation.

5. Partnerships and Collaboration:

Partnerships within and across industries and sectors to find new solutions for sustainability.

6. Engagement and Dialogue:

Listening to and understanding the needs and wants of all stakeholders, establishing constructive two-way

dialogues to negotiate the role of business in sustainability.

7. Advocacy and Leadership:

Leadership in developing new systems and shaping the business contribution to global challenges; willingness to advocate for policy and market incentives that change the game.

Due to increased scrutiny on companies' stewardship of environment, sustainability and sustainable practices have become a key component of a company's business strategy. Companies are accommodating to constraints on natural resources by developing innovative new products, services and business models, thus bolstering their growth, profitability, and adding to societal values. From pollution control in operations, to innovating around green technologies, companies are taking proactive steps to reduce harmful impacts on the environment and society at large.

The change in consumer preferences towards green products, which saves on water usage, lessens GHG emissions etc., has also pushed companies to develop green products using environmentally-friendly technologies for gaining greater competitive advantage. Everyone involved in the lifespan of a product is pressured to take up responsibility to reduce its environmental, health, and safety impacts. Companies have thus begun to integrate sustainability into their entire product cycle to ensure that it meets the increased demand for sustainable products.

Moving beyond the factory gates and supply chain, sustainability for Indian companies resonates with their commitment towards community development and inclusion. According to a recent study, CEOs of top companies in India suggest that communities will have the greatest impact on the way in which companies manage their societal expectations.



About 63 percent of the respondents in the study believe that in the next few years, communities will have the greatest impact on the way businesses manage societal expectations, as opposed to the 28 percent of CEOs globally.

Strategic integration of sustainability has thus become important, enabling companies to achieve better growth and cost savings, improve their brand and reputation, strengthen stakeholder relations, and boost their bottom line. It is through this integration that companies are aiming at sustainable value creation, which is, essentially, a business strategy recognising the opportunity of addressing societal issues and creating a competitive advantage that result in profits as well as a positive outcome for the community. According to a report by Accenture on value creation, "Sustainable Value Creation is, in many ways, an extension of the same capabilities at which leading businesses already excel: understanding consumer needs, investing in innovation, mobilising around change, creating markets, and managing a complex ecosystem of stakeholders". Globally, the business landscape is constantly changing and companies are adapting their business models accordingly so as to ensure that a company's operations complement the triple-bottom line: people, planet, and profit, that creates long term value for all stakeholders. Being referred to as 'Value-Based

Businesses', such businesses have placed profit alongside people and planet.

More and more businesses are assuming a more transformative role to ensure a win-win situation for all. They are opening up to learn, innovate, and collaborate with key stakeholders including governments, civil society organisations, and the community. They feel that governments can 'soft peddle' situations where sustainability practices and initiatives need to be scaled up several notches from the current levels. Business leaders are unanimous in their view that governments at the regional and national levels can play a more decisive role in allowing them to grow faster and innovate on a bigger scale by providing enabling policy support, a stable tax regime, and by incentivising good business practices with tax breaks and soft loans. This would also allow businesses to scale their initiatives and play a more vital role in growth and development of economies where they operate, yielding positive outcomes in the creation of capital, job opportunities, and development of infrastructure for more inclusive, sustainable, and justice-driven societies. This also helps businesses build a sound ground on which they can operate, with economies of scale, and move the existing 'business as usual' model into a more 'transformative business blueprint' (GCNI, 2015). ■



More and more businesses are assuming a more transformative role to ensure a win-win situation for all. They are opening up to learn, innovate, and collaborate with key stakeholders including governments, civil society organisations, and the community



Pooran Chandra Pandey is Chief Executive Officer at Dialogue of Civilizations Research Institute, Berlin, Germany. He is one of India's leading experts on advocacy, economic and social development work, management and the voluntary sector. Credited with pioneering the notion of involving civil society, businesses and government through a consensus-building approach for inclusive social dividends, Pooran Chandra Pandey has led the launch of national public service campaigns within India such as Lead India, Teach India and the Social Impact Awards.

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Paradigm Shift For The Millennial World

Making Available a Support System and Skills Sets to Help Millenials Accomplish Their Goals



Karon Shaiva

‘Give a man a fish and he eats for a day. Teach him to fish and he eats for a lifetime’ is an adage that is oft repeated to people who want to do good and make a difference. This has held good for decades, guiding social interventions across the world especially in the case of livelihoods and income generation for the marginalised. However, we see an increasing shift in the mindsets of our

youth – the Millennials. Youth from low-income families have the same level of aspirations as those from more affluent sections of society, and we need to take that into consideration while planning for their engagement.

The recent announcement by the government that skill training will be demand-led and not supply-based has underlined the failure of making our

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I believe humankind is intrinsically good-hearted and well-intentioned, despite the fast-paced lives we lead. However, thoughts are not actions, and to convert feelings into motivations, we need something more than just us. Others.

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youth employable. Crores of rupees have been spent and an impact assessment of these programmes may reveal a sorry tale. The truth is that the youth do not want to learn masonry, electrician and welder skills, even though a mason could earn a significant amount as compared to

many jobs in the market. They do not want a retail job that pays them Rs.7000 per month but requires them to travel for two hours and stand for 12. So, what is it that they want, and what does this mean for our policymakers who seek to leverage the demographic dividend? Surely not by teaching the youth to fish!!!

A paradigm shift is the need of the hour...

The time has come for us to teach the youth how to find the fish, if a fish is what they really want. The skills required for finding the fish demands critical thinking and a problem solving approach rather than a prescriptive, top-down solution. If they have aspirations, skills should be provided to them to reach their goal. Indeed, you may find that the original goal is not what they really understand; and may need further guidance to identify the true and practical path they can tread. The next step is to introduce them to an ecosystem that support and help them achieve their objectives. This in turn leads to yet another oft repeated quote by Mahatma Gandhi: 'Be the change that you wish to see in the world.' With all due respect to the Father of the Nation, not everyone is cut out to be self-sacrificing and altruistic at all times. Yet, I believe humankind is intrinsically good-hearted and well-intentioned, despite the fast paced lives we lead. However, thoughts are not actions, and to convert feelings into motivations, we need something more than just us. Others. Research states that millennials have an attention span of just eight seconds, definitely not long enough to engage for transformational change; hence, the need for anchoring from outside, or a push from the side. From 'Be the Change' to 'We are the Change' calls for collaboration. The ever-increasingly interconnected world calls for partnerships that leverage resources and avoid duplication. More important, they are

built on support systems which in turn are the result of trust and acceptance of each other: A much-needed era for collective impact rather than crusading warriors.

So how do we develop critical thinking skills and cultivate relations that foster sustainable change and nurture a better world for all? The concept of shared value creation has been instrumental in a shift in social good projects from a charity mindset to an economic framework of 'Do well by doing good'. This requires both critical thinking and alliances and yet, the focus is on commercial benefits as a pre-requisite for its success. Common purpose based on social good cannot be driven by profit-making, though it can be one of the objectives. Indeed we need to realise that it is precisely the ethical values we share that allow for shared-value creation (win-win proposition) and it is not always monetary. What then, are these values and beliefs that can drive joint efforts?

Let me give you an example that we follow here at IDOBRO. As a social enterprise that facilitates an active and

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Social entrepreneurship has gained ground precisely due to its sustainable foundation, and the significant amount of impact investing is testimony to their success
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deeper model of engagement to map and implement market-based solutions through a i5-Step Process: Inform, Interface, Interact, Integrate and Impact, we follow the RISE Values of Positive Action – Responsible, Inclusive, Sustainable and Eco-friendly. Every individual believes in them to some degree and even if they do not agree with your definition of each, they cannot deny the intrinsic value of each! It is



“

No one individual or organisation is capable of solving every issue. When we work in silos, we are unable to tackle the cross-cutting issues in community development; therefore the need for collaboration

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interesting to note that when we conduct workshops on the RISE Values, participants themselves identify them, pointing to its deep rooted presence in human behaviour and consciousness.

Being *responsible* is the first step towards doing the right thing. It requires one to be conscious of oneself and take ownership of their behaviour and realising the consequences of the same. The next step is to think about others, being aware and inclusive in our actions and plans. It is good to see many socially sensitive initiatives at a personal level, generally on birthdays and anniversaries, or as volunteers. Organisations too are *inclusive* by undertaking CSR projects or employee volunteering at least once a year. While any good social project is beneficial and can bring relief to those in need, a long-term approach is fundamental for true impact. This is why a demand for sustainable solutions by donors and planners too have forced the development sector to look at their Theory of Change (TOC) and outcomes rather than activities and outputs. Being *sustainable* demands diagnostic thinking around issues and design thinking for solutions. Social entrepreneurship has

gained ground precisely due to its sustainable foundation, and the significant amount of impact investing is testimony to their success.

Responsible, Inclusive and Sustainable seem like a long way on the road to creating lasting change and yet the problems of our world are so complex that every good gesture and enterprise still falls short. No one individual or organisation is capable of solving every issue. Moreover, problems are linked to each other - be it a malnourished child who cannot go to school and therefore has no formal education, or, an ailing adult that cannot go to work and earn an income to live a decent life. When we work in silos, we are unable to tackle the cross-cutting issues in community development; therefore the need for collaboration. Alliances do not just fill gaps by leveraging strengths and resources distinct to each stakeholder, but also avoids duplication of efforts and wastage of limited assets.

The RISE principle further expounds that these values are constantly evolving based on our experiences and learning. When we find others who share the same values and are of the same degree, we disco

ver ourselves to be in sync and the potential to collaborate manifests itself; thus, an ecosystem approach where stakeholders collectively work towards solutions. *Eco-friendly*, as the last value, includes ecosystem friendly as well as environment friendly. This then allows for holistic and integrated development.

The RISE framework based on the RISE values and principles propagates the creation of shared value for mutual benefit and communal impact. We need to train our youth in schools and adults in the workplace on the need for analytical skills that forces the question 'Why?' and discover partnerships that answers with a 'How'.

The time is right for this new paradigm shift to take positive action and together be the change makers. May our millennials rise! ■

Karon Shaiva is Managing Trustee of the RISE Infinity Foundation and Convenor of the RISE Summit that seeks to break barriers and build bridges on women, social and green issues.

She can be reached at karon.shaiva@idobro.com

R.I.S.E. Values and Principles



RESPONSIBLE

INCLUSIVE

SUSTAINABLE

ECO-FRIENDLY

- 1 The RISE values are a part of every individual and organisation in varying degree
- 2 The values are in a constant state of evolution depending on experience and knowledge
- 3 At some stage, they are in sync with the eco-system in which one operates and may be shared by other stakeholders
- 4 This creates the basis of a framework for positive action, collaboration and collective impact

Recognition

The role and contributions of CSR Mandate in bringing to the fore the initiatives of Corporate India and NGOs has resulted in the magazine being awarded the

**ICE Awards 2016 and
CSR Community Initiative Awards 2016**



Fostering Equality For All

Proper Utilisation of CSR Funds Vital for Reduction of Poverty



Rusen Kumar

Poverty is the biggest disease which slowly kills lives with evidence that is hardly noticeable. In my opinion, a major chunk of CSR funds should be invested in projects that have the capability to reduce the level of poverty. The Corporate sector should urgently identify those projects and programmes that have the potential to address poverty directly. CSR should be an effective tool to address the problems faced by the poorest of the poor living in the remotest of the remote.

Development is a continuous process that never stops. Our priority should be to upgrade mindsets and enhancing positives of the masses towards their local resources, land, and water, natural habitats and surroundings. Human development and a balanced ecology should be the focus rather than mere infrastructure development under CSR. Creating infrastructure

without inculcating among the people the sense of utility and capability to maintain serves no purpose.

Poverty is the biggest barrier for the progress of businesses. It is a burden to any society, government or nation, and thereby a threat to the stability of the economy and democratic system. Bringing equality should be the

primary effort of people, institutions and businesses. Serving the need of the poorest of the poor should be the prime focus of CSR and should be seen as an opportunity in bringing equality and creating opportunity for this section of people. Business can only grow and flourish in a progressive and prosperous society. Business needs good society. That is why business should serve the poorest of the poor.

The government must ensure that inequality should not be able to breed further.

We must have a development model that should increase dependency on agriculture and allied areas for livelihood. Our educated new generation avoids physical work and would rather avoid participating in agricultural activities in villages. What we should realise is that we are actually destroying our agricultural ecosystem. With the help of technology, we need





Human development and a balanced ecology should be the focus rather than mere infrastructure development under CSR. Creating infrastructure without inculcating among the people the sense of utility and capability to maintain serves no purpose

to create new hopes towards agriculture among our people.

Success of CSR should be measured with indicators of how much it has been able to serve the poorest of the poor and its ability to upgrade their thought process towards democracy and positives towards life. Without overcoming poverty, people cannot be happy, and ultimately their existence will not add value to the system. It is therefore not surprising that poverty thrives among illiterate people.

People are unable to find new ways to enable and upgrade their lives due to the fact that enormous socio-economic challenges over the years have defeated their mental and creative faculties. Many problems are directly linked to inequality.

Most CSR programmes are bogus and carry no meaning for the people as they are not designed scientifically. CSR should not promote technology and business and should not be a tool to satisfy the market. I have seen various companies' CSR models and have found that their CSR programmes are only drafted to protect their business interest and promote their hidden business agenda.

Under their CSR schemes, most of the

companies in India are trying to satisfy the government's ego and markets' needs. PSUs are most lethargic in implementation of CSR. They still believe in the philanthropy model of CSR. They donate cheques and give heavy amounts to the various government organisations and agencies in the name of development rather than implementing them. PSUs have shown their gross inefficiency in CSR spending.

Corrupt people in the system are channelising CSR funds for promoting their interest. CSR money is hijacked before reaching to the poorest of poor.

How is the Statue of Unity (dedicated to Sardar Vallabhai Patel) serving the poorest of the poor? Oil companies have contributed Rs 121 Cr of CSR funds to the agency that has been given the responsibility of constructing this statue. This is utter corruption, misleading the common man in the name of development. Responsible politicians should look into this matter. A certain Minister had earlier sought CSR funds for cleaning the river Ganga. Tell me, how will this address poverty and inequality?

Addressing economic inequality is a huge challenge before the government. The biggest challenge before the country is minimising the inequality

gap. There is no focus on creating jobs for our rural youths despite the fact that India produces more and more educated and talented manpower year after year. We should have a model where we can channelise our youth's energy in social progress and wealth creation.

The government should have a vision in this direction. Job creation for millions of rural youth, developing scientific temper among the new generation, focus on agriculture, and sensitising communities towards local resources, micro business and education should be among the prime agenda for businesses and CSR for the next decade.

How can the poorest be key stakeholders of progress? Every company should identify the poorest of the poor and start improving these areas, irrespective of whether they are part of their areas of operations or not. ■

Rusen Kumar is Founder of India CSR Network -www.indiacsr.in

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Responsible and Sustainable Business Through Conscious CSR



Anil Jaggi

"We are entering an era of new hopes as well as new fears. Both demand strategic but well-grounded actions."

- Bryan Smith, Author

Successful corporations have directly and indirectly contributed to most of the 21st Century's ecological and social problems. In this age of globalisation, sustainable strategies give corporations the choice to get ahead of the curve, defining and redefining new rules and being rewarded by stakeholders for behaving responsibly. Multinationals hold the future of our planet in their hands.

Scientists who study the effects of climate change say that we have only some 10 or 20 years before we trigger irreversible tipping points. Some regions of the world are fast losing access to food and water and heading for war; they are experiencing severe

resource, environment, health and pollution problems. All these issues need the urgent attention of our policymakers and business leaders. Each individual problem needs the collective effort and actions of our respective leaders in government, the corporate world, academia and spiritual institutions.

Our younger generation need a safer planet and that is only possible with a sustainable, responsible approach, and well-defined actions. These actions may come initially from deep concern, fear or even a sense of panic, but to be sustainable over time, our actions must ultimately be connected to our positive aspirations.

CSR and 21st Century

The term 'CSR' has been around for more than a decade now, along with its allied jugglery of words like "Sustainability in Business", "Business Ethics", "Corporate Competitiveness (CC)", "Corporate Governance

(CG)", "Corporate Sustainability (CS)", "Voluntary Commitment of a Business", "Triple Bottom Line" and so on. These jargons have inundated every fibre of corporate life but what we should focus on is, or rather, not to forget the mission and objective we all have: to contribute to the people living at the "Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP)". With the passage of the Companies Act 2013, the Government of India has also engaged India Inc. under the new legal obligation of CSR to contribute for the betterment of the society using their resources and professional expertise.

It is widely recognised that implementation of CSR and Sustainability requires time to reach maturity and the speed of achieving these goals is purely dependent on the vision and passion of the top management and its leadership.

I have been fortunate to be a part of this domain and witnessing the scenario before and after the implementation of CSR. It is commendable that the new Companies Act 2013 gave us a new direction, dimension and new life to this loosely connected sector of multi stakeholders; and when we look at the facts, figures and reports, it indicates that business in India is much more





The need to create sustainable revolutions through business organisations is one of the most urgent and important missions of our time and must be met with passion, energy and determination

responsible and sensitive today towards the burning issues of society i.e. taking India towards open defecation free, digital literacy, carbon footprint, literacy, health for all, skill development, etc.

When I look back at the history and stages of social work, charity and philanthropic activities done by local 'Seth' (wealthy individuals of the town) who donated big chunks of land for setting up schools/colleges, charity hospitals or dharamshalas on one side and the initiatives of, for example, Tata and Birla Groups on the other, it gives me a different perception about the present form of legal CSR under the Companies Act 2013 or ISO 26000.

After closely observing strategic CSR programmes, exploring agendas behind sustainable development projects and microscopically investigating probable reasons for the success and failures of the projects, I will share my innermost thoughts and experience right from its conceptualisation to execution i.e. CSR Eco-System.

Irrespective of the best concepts, working strategies, professional team, sufficient funds etc., many projects are not able to make any tangible impact

on the lives of target beneficiaries; while on the other hand, small projects are more successful and have a greater impact in the communities they work in. The obvious reason is the alternative ways of connecting, of looking at finance, wealth generation, understanding communities and their issues, etc. In other terms, it is all about the conscious and holistic approach of top leadership to keep on working with passion and determination for communities, with or without CSR.

I would like to highlight the importance of consciousness in the entire ecosystem, which may be a new entrant to CSR-related vocabulary. But I have a strong urge to include this transforming word, not because it is new and trendy, but because I feel this is the main cause behind the success and failure of all humanitarian endeavours in any form.

Though India is progressing well in the CSR space, especially after the Companies Act 2013, it is too early to judge and come to any conclusion. According to my observation, there is a major divide between 'Legal CSR' and 'Conscious CSR' - and this is having a phenomenal impact - right from conceptualising to the

implementation of strategic CSR frameworks.

Changing Mindsets

As influential US philosopher, William James said, we as human beings "by changing the inner attitudes of our minds, can change the outer aspects of our lives." With various initiatives and interventions by change makers, chief sustainability officers, NGOs and social entrepreneurs at the local, regional and global level of the business world, there is finally evidence of a change in the thought process for the good, and I call them conscious decision rather than strategic ones. Boards of Directors the world over are now starting to take sustainability and strategic CSR issues into account as never before. The question now is not 'why' but 'how'. The need to create sustainable revolutions through business organisations is one of the most urgent and important missions of our time and must be met with passion, energy and determination.

CSR and Consciousness

My suggestion to all CSR stakeholders is that we must consciously focus more on community-centric projects and not



The planet does not need more successful people. But it does desperately need more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every kind. It needs people who you have no fear of living with side by side. It needs people of moral courage willing to join the fight to make the world habitable and humane. And these qualities have little to do with success as we have defined it

David Orr
Ecologist and Writer



be confined to legal frameworks. The satisfaction knowing that you have done so will find better outcome; without chasing the glory of publicity and awards.

There may be different types of CSR – from internal and external, to obligatory and conscious, but I strongly feel that until our thoughts are matched with a clear purpose, there can be no major accomplishment.

Spiritual awakening (consciousness) of our business leaders and policy makers is also important for peaceful

existence, ethical business and inclusive development of all human beings. If the majority choose to be more conscious and adopt a sustainable way of being, different possibilities could be created in the world, thus, inspiring all of us to intentionally live a benevolent life and become catalysts for change.

When one starts functioning as a conscious leader, every choice they make will create a different future, not only for the decision maker (leader) but for the people in the immediate surroundings, and the world at large. What kind of world would you like to live in? It is your choice to create it; and making the right, conscious decision will make a huge difference.

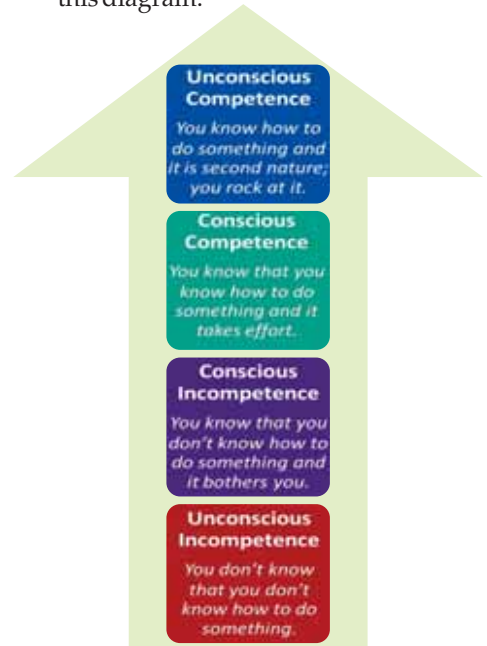
Need For Awakening

We can have a legal framework ready for CSR but we need a conscious framework to determine “Good CSR” and “Bad CSR”, and for that, it is essentially important to have ‘awakened’ business leaders in boardrooms to take correct decisions for the larger interest of humankind, and for our mother earth. We call this “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” in Hindu philosophy; meaning the whole world is one family under one God. Spirituality needs to awaken the human consciousness in order for the world to progress in the right direction.

Whether a human being is a political leader, business head or a CSR champion, our conscience should take the right decision irrespective of legal obligations. We have a large number of corporate leaders in India who are doing great business alongside sustainable CSR and this is able to bring tangible results through a holistic approach. If the top management of any corporation does not follow their own conscience in designing and implementing strategic CSR, the outcome will only be cosmetic and devoid of

tangible results.

There is a need to have clear cut directions, guided by our conscience for achieving goodness as explained in this diagram:



In conclusion, I would like to share a quote from Mahatma Gandhi where he linked economics with ethics, and cited the seven dangers of human virtue:

*Wealth without Work
Pleasure without Conscience
Knowledge without Character
Business without Ethics
Science without Humanity
Religion without Sacrifice
Politics without Principle. ■*

Dr. Anil Jaggi (PhD) is a trained Senior CSR Consultant. He is the CEO of consulting firm - Green Earth Alliance (South Asia). He is involved in promoting, supporting, incubating and mentoring various social business ventures at the micro and macro level.

He recently launched another multilateral initiative - “India-Middle East CSR Partnership Initiative (I-MECPI)” to promote CSR-related partnership between India and the Middle East Region.

Sowing Seeds of Change

CSR Training in Business Schools



Ranjana Agarwal

The Companies Act 2013 has been lauded as a game changer in the Indian economy. Section 135 and Schedule VII of the Act talks about the responsibility of companies, above a prescribed level of profit, to spend on CSR. Given this scenario, it becomes imperative for every business school to sensitise students on this issue. The need of the hour is to have a course related to CSR in business schools as they groom future business leaders of the country.

IMT Ghaziabad, a premier B-School in NCR, has been sensitising students on CSR. Between 2013 and 2017, the School introduced a compulsory course on CSR called Business, Government and Society (BGS) in India. The main aim of the course is to develop in students an understanding of social responsibility in the business context. It also focuses on ethics and value orientation of business. Future managers also need to understand that the success of a company lies not only in the creation of economic value, but also environmental and social value. Continuing with this trend, the Institute has, in the new academic session 2017, started another course called Sustainability and Social Responsibility.

Pedagogy and Evaluation

The pedagogy of the course includes documentaries, lectures, presentations

and case studies. Students are given a few lessons on CSR, stakeholder mapping and ethics. Students' assessment is based on a mix of different parameters as role play, film review, class participation and case study. A critical component of the course is the live project where a secondary research is conducted to get a macro view of existing problems. They then undertake a field visit and study various issues. They give their recommendations for finding solutions to the existing problems – What is being done about the report? Is it being forwarded to the government or related agencies? Are the concerned agencies doing any follow up or taking any action after the report is submitted? The takeaway from such surveys is to show how business, government and society can join forces together to solve existing problems. This project has around 25 percent of

weight in total assessment of the student.

This article describes some of the issues analysed by the IMT students in the areas of sanitation, healthcare and employment during January and February 2017.

1. Sanitation in the Villages of Ghaziabad

A project on sanitation was taken up by Team A. They visited two densely populated areas - Bhur Bharat Nagar and Bamheta in Ghaziabad. Bamheta is situated near Shahpur in Ghaziabad. Bhur Bharat Nagar is a slum area near Ghaziabad Railway Station. The team had informal interactions with the slum dwellers and shopkeepers.

On visiting Bamheta, Team A discovered that the village has many permanent structures made of brick and cement. Many residents have built



“Although the government has rolled several initiatives to address issues of sanitation and also build toilets, it was not enough. There is a need to address behavioural change and sustainable infrastructure as well as generate awareness about sanitation to achieve fruitful results

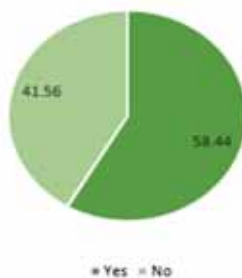
toilets. However, the drainage system is pathetic primarily due to improper slopes, insufficient maintenance, inconsistent and unpredictable flow of water. Inefficient garbage disposal is glaringly evident. Sewers have not been cleaned for ages and are completely blocked with loads of plastic bags and mounds of garbage. Residents are mainly affected by lack of sanitation facilities and have no access to potable drinking water. Residents are not serious about cleanliness drives. Food stalls are located near garbage trash containers.

The situation in Bhur Bharat Nagar is worse. This area consists mainly of shanty dwellings made of metal sheets with a tarpaulin roof supported by bamboos. Residents live in abject poverty, working as daily wage labourers, rag pickers, and the like. Many are unemployed and some are unwilling to seek a job. Most of the shanties lack basic sanitation facility. However, the slum area has a Sulabh Shauchalaya or community toilet. They are well maintained with separate sections for men and women, providing eight latrines and around ten to twelve taps for bathing and washing. The downside is that residents are deterred from using the facility due to usage charges of Rs3/-

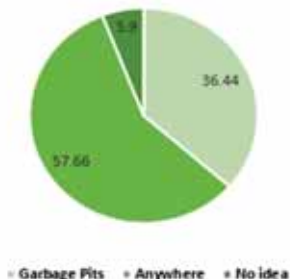
for toilet and Rs. 5/- for bathing. There are concerns on sewerage, and women and girls have limited access to feminine hygiene products. They also face daily challenges of proper and ethical disposal of sanitary pads.

Team A conducted a survey with 40 respondents to study their attitude towards sanitation

Do you have a toilet built at your home?



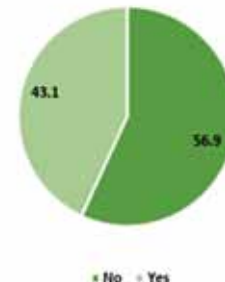
Waste Disposal Mechanisms



Is sewerage system cleaned regularly?



Awareness about Swachh Bharat Abhiyan



Team A realised that although the government has rolled several initiatives to address issues of sanitation and also build toilets, it was not enough. There is a need to address behavioural change and sustainable infrastructure as well as generate awareness about sanitation to achieve fruitful results. Making sanitation sustainable is a challenging task which needs the intervention of the society at large. The Team also highlighted the involvement of the local community in planning, implementation, and monitoring of sanitation activities.

Recommendations:

Introducing PPP Models to Ensure Sustainable Sanitation

- 75 percent companies support programmes related to creating infrastructure, such as the construction of toilets and water facilities, with little focus on programmes aim at influencing behaviour. Companies can tie up with NGOs and social activists who have the expertise to build the social connect and generate awareness among the masses.
- The operation and maintenance of sanitation facilities is essential to ensure that there is no 'functionality' gap due to poor conditions that render these facilities unusable. However, this part has been highly neglected by Corporates. Companies could finance operations and maintenance and hire an agency through an Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) to deliver required services on a regular basis. Subsidies and funding must be provided to start-ups who wish to build a sustainable business model and an efficient sanitation ecosystem.
- Proper support framework must be provided to the NGOs for innovating new mechanisms of recycling waste and treating waste water by companies.

- To build robust infrastructure to ensure proper sewerage and drainage systems, Government must tie up with private sector companies.

Promoting Cultural Shift

- Government and NGOs can aggressively put efforts to bring about the behavioural change of open defecation among the masses.
- Instituting incentives or penalties to reinforce desired behaviour.
- Nukkad Nataks and awareness programmes can be effective means.
- Building follow-ups into the campaign to ensure that messages are entrenched.

Promoting Education and Participation

- Introducing a school or community-based monitoring system with equal representation of men and women to ensure democratic participation in decision-making processes.
- Educating women and adolescent girls on the nuances of female hygiene and menstruation to prohibit harmful practices.

2. Children as Change Agents for Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

Another project was taken by Team B. They visited a private school - Manav Sanskar Kendra in Ghaziabad to conduct a social audit of the scheme - Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. The school

has 321 students. As they were not allowed to interact with the students, Team B visited one of the student's homes. They surveyed families in the area about their awareness of the scheme and found that people were aware about it. There have been some changes after its implementation. However, 40 percent of people in the locality are still defecating in the open. The main reason for this is the people's mindset regarding usage of toilets.

Recommendations:

Team B came up with a suggestion to utilise children as agents of change in the society regarding toilet usage. The reason behind this is that behavioural change could be brought about by partnering with schools. The main aim of these change agents (children) would be to spread the message among their peers regarding usage of toilets by conducting awareness sessions. This would be a win-win situation for everybody. Children would be benefitted as they would have a more hygienic environment to study. Schools would be benefitted as there will be a cleaner environment thereby aiding in the holistic development of students.

Students who are proactive in school activities and are regular in attendance are inducted into the Sulabh School Sanitation Club. Proximity to the school was also a factor in deciding who would become a change agent. Team C also suggested that their efforts should be acknowledged publicly to keep their motivation levels high. They could also be



provided an awareness kit containing a volunteer handbook, posters, badges, a token gift, and a certificate.

The Team recommended that focus should be on sustained campaigns in which all citizens and organisations are engaged to achieve the goals of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan by inspired and committed leadership. Social pressure should be created by monitoring the communities' progress through change agents. Laws should be implemented to penalise littering. Involving national and local NGOs along with private sectors will result in a flourishing rural industry of building toilets and their maintenance.

3. Solutions for Improving Healthcare – Alignment Towards CSR

Team C made an attempt at finding solutions for improving healthcare facilities. They visited both government and private hospitals. The idea was to study problems existing in government healthcare sector and offer solutions for improving healthcare.

To find the working of a government hospital, Team C visited the District Combined Hospital, Sanjay Nagar in Ghaziabad. They also studied the CSR initiative by Fortis Healthcare Ltd. implemented through Fortis Charitable Foundation (FCF) and its hospitals across India.

Team C found the problems faced by medical personnel in government hospitals. They found that lack of incentives and undefined Key Result Areas (KRAs) led to demotivation among hospital staff. Absence of appraisal system and bureaucratic hurdles in making any change or reform proves to be a detriment to medical personnel. Doctors were lax in following work timings. Most of the doctors had studied in good colleges but quality of services in the hospitals is far from satisfactory. Team C felt there was low awareness of social

etiquettes and decorum in hospitals. Visitors to the hospital do not maintain silence thus disturbing the patients. Medical waste is not disposed properly. The hospital has tobacco spit marks and unclean bathrooms.

Team C found totally different results after studying a private hospital - Fortis Healthcare Ltd. This is a CSR initiative through Fortis Charitable Foundation (FCF) which is committed towards providing healthcare for the socially marginalised and deprived sections of society. They ensure that their programmes are efficient, sustainable and relevant to beneficiaries.

It is seen that Fortis Healthcare has a robust mechanism to implement, record, review and measure the outcome of the initiatives. 300 employees are involved in their programmes - Sewa, Aanchal and Savera. There is proper disposal of medical wastes and developments to tackle X-ray exposures. The support staff is well trained and is able to respond or tackle situations. There are proper signs and caution boards in the aisles reminding people to maintain decorum.

Recommendations:

Team C recommended the following changes to improve the present condition in the government hospital.

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Using CSR funds for healthcare can prove to be a win-win situation for Corporates as well as the community. CSR health initiatives can be organised along internal or external lines. Internal strategies may be implemented to improve the working environment, to reduce negative externalities or to establish access to facilities that are of relevance to the corporation's demographic and risk profile. External CSR health initiatives may be introduced to mitigate risks or to extend benefits to the environment and communities

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- Appraisal and incentives for top performers of the support staff.
- Good training provided to support staff.
- Bureaucratic hurdles should be relaxed and contributions by doctors should be highlighted.
- Proper supervision regarding medical waste disposal and cleanliness.
- Monitoring doctors' arrival and departure.
- Implementation of feedback system suitable and easier even for the uneducated to give a proper feedback of the hospital
- Proper sign boards and people should be made aware of the hospital decorum to be maintained

Recommendations for Corporates:

More CSR funds should be diverted towards healthcare to improve the overall situation in the healthcare sector, especially in rural areas. Team C studied CSR initiatives taken by healthcare organisations like GlaxoWellcome Manufacturing Pvt. Ltd, Danone and Emirates. It is seen that GlaxoWellcome Manufacturing Pvt. Ltd, an organisation making products for GlaxoSmithKline (GSK),

has recorded significant changes in employee health and productivity. Using CSR funds for healthcare can prove to be a win-win situation for Corporates as well as the community. CSR health initiatives can be organised along internal or external lines. Internal strategies may be implemented to improve the working environment, to reduce negative externalities or to establish access to facilities that are of relevance to the corporation's demographic and risk profile. External CSR health initiatives may be introduced to mitigate risks and/or to extend benefits to the environment and communities.

4. Employment Issues - Evaluation of MNREGA Scheme

Team D studied employment benefits under MNREGA. They studied the benefits of MNREGA in a macro perspective and then did a survey. They studied the gaps in the existing system which needed to be changed to increase the overall benefits of the scheme. The survey was conducted in areas of Muradnagar and Modinagar in U.P.

Analysing from a macro perspective, Team D concluded that MNREGA has the potential to make considerable impact on society regarding the

following issues:

1. Employment Generation and Asset Creation in Rural Areas
2. Women Empowerment in Rural India
3. Employment Provided in Drought-affected Areas
4. Financial Inclusion

A survey was conducted to study the functioning of this scheme. Team D found that awareness level about the scheme was created among villagers through Gram Panchayat meetings, newspapers, village schools, etc. All local communication channels were utilised to spread awareness and information about the scheme. 50-60 percent households registered for the scheme but the Gram Panchayat officials were struggling with its teething problems. Most of the households are not able to work for more than 30-35 days on an average; women participation being very less. The process of enrollment, registration and issue of job cards is very smooth and most of the households have been issued these cards by the officials. 10 percent of adults are not registered on the job cards. Photographs on the MGNREGA card were not seen in a few households. Unemployment allowance is not provided to any of the households. Some Gram Panchayats



are not making efforts to create a sustainable environment for work.

Monitoring and supervision of the scheme takes place at regular intervals. The Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayats meet three to four times where they also recheck all the rejected applications. It is observed that the payment process is quick and transparent. A downside of the scheme is that the cards, although issued in names of villagers, are kept with the Gram Panchayats and are provided to the persons concerned only 2-3 days prior to the start of work. The nature of work is mainly construction activities. On studying worksite facilities, Team D found that drinking water was available at most of the worksites. Open defecation was still a problem.

It was seen that the MNREGA scheme has made an impact on socio-economic conditions in the villages. The minimum earning level has gone up by a marginal amount. Women employment has increased leading to an increase in women empowerment. Expenditure on food and non-food items such as bicycles, loan repayment, etc. has increased due to higher earning capacity of villagers. A significant impact of the scheme was that it managed to reduce distress migration. It is commendable to note that out-migration has reduced by up to 35-40 percent.

Recommendations

Team D recommended that the weaknesses of the programme should be tackled. Considering the far flung impact of MNREGA, the following steps should be adopted:

- There is low awareness among some women workers of MGNREGA. To come out of this anomaly, more awareness campaigns have to be conducted to educate people about the provisions of the programme.
- There is delay in payment of wages for some workers. To avoid this,

appropriate steps are to be taken by the government to maintain uniformity in wage payment.

- Some of the worksite facilities are very poor. Steps should be taken to provide adequate worksite facilities. Separate mechanisms should be evolved for this purpose.
- For comprehensive participation of women, they should be allowed to be involved in planning for MGNREGA.
- Women participation can be enhanced by appointing female supervisors on MGNREGA works and in conducting social audits.
- Women should be involved in the selection of works, which can create further mainstream employment in the village.
- Designing special Statement of Rates (SOR) for women, preferably

by conducting a systematic time and motion study, to ensure that they earn the set minimum wages.

- Improving overall quality of employment of MGNREGA.

CONCLUSION:

The Teams analysed different socio-economic issues and gave recommendations for improving the existing situation. These recommendations, if implemented, would go a long way in solving problem existing in the society. Today's world is a solution economy where problems are being solved in a collaborative manner. In a liberalised economy, businesses are the fulcrum of development and growth in society.

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There are more than 3000 business schools in our country. If all of them inculcate values of social responsibility in their students, more problems in our society can be solved through scientific solutions

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The government is trying to solve the problems present in the society and it is joining hands with business, academia and society to find solutions to the problems. Social enterprises and innovations are leading the wave of change. There are more than 3000 business schools in our country. If all of them inculcate values of social responsibility in their students, more problems in our society can be solved through scientific solutions.

Dr. Ranjana Agarwal is an Associate Professor, Economics at IMT Ghaziabad. She is involved in several action research related projects and is actively working in promoting sustainable livelihood for tribal women in Jharkhand. ■

Passion to Perform

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AXIS BANK **Revolutionising Rural India** **Through Economic Inclusion**

Axis Bank Foundation has identified women as key drivers of economic reforms in rural India. In the process, the Foundation has envisaged that the goal of gender justice will be fulfilled. Water security will form the crux of a bouquet of sustainable livelihood initiatives for farmers in India particularly among the most marginalised communities in some of the poorest districts in the country. ABF has targeted provision of livelihood activities to 2 million households by 2025. The basket of livelihood activities include skill development programs for the differently abled.

Axis Bank Foundation (ABF) is the CSR arm of Axis Bank, the third largest private bank in India. It was formed in 2006 with the aim of giving focus and structure to its philanthropic activities. The Foundation is governed by a Board represented by senior leaders from Axis Bank, industry experts and development sector professionals. An executive trustee and CEO lead a team that owns and implements the Foundation's strategic programmes.

Initially, the Foundation focused its efforts on education and a highway trauma care programme. Over a period of time, the Foundation has developed a strategic programme that aims to enable economic inclusion through livelihood initiatives for rural communities, especially those that were dependent on subsistence agriculture. These initiatives also focus on creating employment for youth and persons with disability through a skilling programme. They are designed to create livelihoods that can cope with and recover from stress and shocks (resilient), are well integrated (equitable opportunities) and address

the three key dimensions of economic, societal and environmental well-being (sustainable development).

The Foundation, in the month of September 2017, achieved its goal of creating one million sustainable livelihoods.

ABF has a robust process for

programme management. Projects are co-created in consultation with NGOs and communities. Based on in-depth understanding of local issues, ground realities, discussions with NGO partners and the communities, projects are designed to enable creating, strengthening and sustaining livelihoods.



Water harvesting structure created to facilitate irrigation

Monitoring and Evaluation indicators are designed to be comprehensive but customised for each project to ensure relevance. Aspects covered include Coverage, Community Mobilisation, Agriculture, Livestock, Non-Farm based Interventions, Income Generation Asset, Watershed Structures, Vocational Training, Financial Inclusion, Health, Arts and Craft, VOCSETs (Victim of Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking) and Innovations. Impact is assessed through multiple criteria such as increase in income, financial inclusion (through savings and credit solutions), levels of women empowerment, increase in farm output and placements for skill-trained participants, to name a few.

CSR activities have led to greater employee engagement within Axis Bank through engagement of senior leaders providing their voluntary time to support the programmes. ABF has supported livelihood creation through over 20 NGO partners with a footprint across 24 States, impacting the lives of more than one million individuals.

CSR Initiatives:

For more than 10 years now, Axis Bank Foundation has been working towards

a change that is sustainable and self-perpetuating. The goal is to enable communities to envision a different future and igniting their confidence in their own ability to drive change. ABF realises that women play a central role in such social transformation and ensures that women acquire necessary skills to realise their vision through empowerment instead of 'delivering' services and solutions. Based on the extensive work done by its partners on agriculture and water structures, ABF found availability and access to water enables rural population to build and sustain a basket of livelihood activities. Hence, water security is at the crux of a large number of sustainable livelihood initiatives supported by ABF. Skill development was found to be another key area which helps provide employability and entrepreneurial skills to artisans, youth, women and differently-abled people through various courses and training resulting in a wider access to opportunities for the economically excluded. Other themes include afforestation, community building, backward and forward market linkages, credit access, formation of women-focused self-help groups (SHGs), alternative livelihood options for the farmers and inclusion of

Axis Bank Foundation has been working towards a change that is sustainable and self-perpetuating.

The goal is to enable communities to envision a different future and igniting their confidence in their own ability to drive change

women in the economic reform of rural India, including victims of commercial sexual exploitation.

Past and Present Themes Undertaken by ABF:

Financial Inclusion through Gender Mainstreaming

ABF lays great emphasis on women inclusion as a way to improve gender justice and promote women empowerment. This is done by mobilising and organising women collectives focusing on savings and credit to help address their sense of vulnerability and providing assistance to help re-position themselves in their families and community with subsequent forward linkages to other stakeholders. ABF encourages creation of women SHGs as community institutions, training them at individual and enterprise levels on leadership, entrepreneurship, financial management, asset creation, healthcare, women rights and relevant government schemes. Women are supported with opening of personal bank accounts and entrepreneurial women are linked with markets or supply chains. Most women are



Field cultivated using Systematic Root Intensification (SRI) method

unskilled workers, farmers and artisans from remote tribal regions. Women are encouraged to undertake savings and inter-lending through SHGs, which are then linked to formal financial institutions for availing credit thus enabling access to credit for production and consumption and saving for future needs.

Watershed Management and Agricultural Productivity

ABF works with some of the most marginal communities inhabiting several of the poorest districts in India. A large part of its work is in the poverty hotspots of central dry lands which are marked by acute water deficiency, high incidence of poverty, low development and high tribal population.

Water plays a pivotal role in the economic development of farmers.

Therefore, ABF targets several drought hit areas through NGO partners to carry out interventions related to watershed development and water security working in close proximity with state-run programmes such as M G N R E G S and I W M P. Simultaneously, ABF's interventions in water resource development include creation and conservation of various models, viz:

1. Tank irrigation model through renovation of community-managed village tanks
2. Localised low-cost solutions like Doha and Phad models which are gravity-based water structures
3. Community-managed lift irrigation projects
4. Participatory irrigation management to ensure availability

of water to all the farmers in the command area

For enhanced agricultural productivity, ABF provides farmers with improved and responsible farming practices leading to increase agricultural income. One such practice is System of Rice Intensification (SRI), an agro-ecological methodology to reduce consumption of water required to yield rice, improve seed variety, promote organic manure, and aggregate input supply and that of the produce, for better market realisation.

Livestock Enhancement

Livestock rearing is an integral part of rural households, providing an alternate source of income to families, besides farming. The objective is to create income generating assets which not only augment farm income but also reduce the uncertainty around its



Poultry farming serving as an alternate mode of income for rural households

seasonality; thus creating resilient communities. Activities include poultry and duck farming, rearing of goats, pigs and cattle. Dairy development is also undertaken by building the value chain and linking producers with the market. As of March 2017, 57,617 households had been provided with livestock assets under ABF projects. The programme had also equipped pashusakhis (para vets) with adequate training to provide basic veterinarian care to livestock.

Livelihood for the Disabled

The disabled population in India is often disregarded in terms of special skill-based trainings and employment opportunities. Only two percent of People with Disabilities (PwDs) are educated and barely one percent employed. Lack of awareness among parents regarding special schools for PwDs act as a deterrent for them to

gain the required skills. Stigma associated with educating a special child is another important area resulting in impeding their growth. ABF supports PwDs by creating opportunities through market-linked trainings and jobs in the organised sector and enabling self-dependency and livelihood opportunities.

Vocational Skill Development

Vocational training programmes are promoted and implemented to increase employability among youth. The programme focuses on school dropouts, unemployed youth, tribal communities and women, with the objective of providing them an opportunity to lead self-sustained and economically independent lives. Individuals are trained on varied subjects including nursing, hotel management, sewing, welding, electricity, beauty, computer hardware

and software, health and sanitation, incense sticks-making, candle-making, etc. ABF ensures approximately 60-65 percent placements through strategic linkages with industries and banks and also helps entrepreneurs set up basic infrastructure for a small enterprise.

Future Steps

ABF achieved its target of creating one million sustainable livelihoods in September 2017 and plans to augment the learning congregated on this journey to accomplish its next mission. The Foundation will continue on its path with an extended goal of bringing sustainable livelihoods to two million households in the new mission period that runs till 2025, using a block-concentration approach. ABF will also begin to play an intentional role in building the rural livelihoods ecosystem by both serving as a role model and facilitating learning. ■



Trainees acquiring welding skills as a part of their vocational training

Accelerating Rural Development Through Entrepreneurship



Meera Tenguria

India's 7.5 percent growth though capital-intensive is not labour intensive. In the scenario of jobless growth, there is an increasing consensus that entrepreneurship is the key to development and critical to poverty reduction, gender equality and environmental sustainability.

Entrepreneurship as a strategic

development intervention could accelerate rural development by creating employment potential as well as keep the young generations interested to stay in the community; reducing migration to cities. For women, opportunities near their homes provide autonomy, independence and a sustainable livelihood for the family.

Within the framework of integrated rural development, entrepreneurship is an enabler to improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities. However, to make this a reality at the ground level, an enabling environment that encourages entrepreneurship is critical. Initiatives for entrepreneurship development are necessarily linked with policies in infrastructure, education, skills development, technology, research, finance and capacity building. This means that programmes by the government and the private sector have to work together for encouraging and supporting rural entrepreneurs. Community-based support and an entrepreneurial climate are critical to the success of new business owners, more so in the case of women entrepreneurs.

Rural areas in India make up for about 70 percent of the population contributing to around half the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Global companies are addressing this market. This clearly points out to the great opportunity for entrepreneurship. However, building vibrant ecosystems is not easy. Meeting these challenges will require



rural India to reinvent past models of growth and industry.

With better seeds and farming techniques, farmers are increasing productivity whereas the same surplus is resulting in a price crash for the final produce. The irony of the recent farmer issues underlines the issue when debt ridden farmers in the major agrarian States of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, who were struggling with low prices amid a surplus of produce such as lentils, oilseeds and cereals, protested. Increasing the connectivity of rural communities in terms of access to infrastructure, global and capital markets, the internet, and human capital, is essential for their future success.

Value addition in food industry or other traditional non-farming industries such as weaving and handicrafts need up-skilling and a more entrepreneurial approach.

Agricultural universities should emerge as incubators to encourage and facilitate student entrepreneurs to create self-employment. Areas such as contract farming, drip and sprinkler irrigation, crop diversification, improving farm practices, all hold opportunities for business enterprise.

Government policies and ease of access to investment, connecting outputs to the world markets present challenges for which large corporations can provide solutions by networking with small-scale producers.

Contract farming provides a good framework for flow of credit to marginal/small farmers or self-help groups at a reduced transaction cost. Sustainable entrepreneurial opportunities exist not only in farming techniques, but also in rural energy - in areas such as solar, biogas and innovative solutions.

Even where innovators have brilliant products and better services, without enough resources and support, it is daunting to convert it into a thriving business operation. There is a need to intensify efforts in promoting rural entrepreneurial talent by creating an ecosystem of government groups, educational institutions, non-profits, corporates and private citizens that support entrepreneurs. Sometimes the real problem in rural entrepreneurship is not the non-availability of programmes or initiatives, but non-awareness of what is available and how to access it. There is a need to disseminate information and facilitate

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Sometimes the real problem in rural entrepreneurship is not the non-availability of programmes or initiatives, but non-awareness of what is available and how to access it

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the setting up of small industries so that entrepreneurs can take the first step and reach out; for instance, guiding them on how to apply to programmes like Rural Entrepreneurship Development Programme (REDP), a programme supported by NABARD for the creation of sustainable employment and income opportunities for the benefit of educated unemployed rural youth; the various programmes by the Ministry of Skill Development, and also by various Corporate foundations.



It is therefore essential that institutional training is imparted to orient the entrepreneurs so that local resources can be harnessed properly. A rural business model that provides market coordination and support systems to rural enterprises can achieve rural development objectives in a financially sustainable way.

Providing rural entrepreneurs with internet access in the local language would offer a fillip in the 'platform-enabled economy' with a village-to-consumer-supply chain creating better income levels. Road, railways and digital infrastructure support flows of people and ideas, but for entrepreneurial success, people need to be plugged into broader market trends.

Rural tourism, for instance, has huge potential but not fully explored yet. Some great business ideas are contributing to growing this industry including concepts such as offering tourists the taste of real India, ecology living, farming tourism and many more, providing excellent entrepreneurship opportunities for rural communities as well as promoting India's tourism. These concepts can also foster business models that incorporate local produce sales.

Small business development as a core

strategy for economic growth and community sustainability means that scarce resources can be maximised through collaboration amongst entrepreneurs. Non-governmental organisations can be instrumental in developing rural entrepreneurship in the country.

Entrepreneurship in rural areas is usually community-based, has strong extended family linkages and a relatively large impact on a rural community. While rural communities need entrepreneurs in order to revitalise their economies, entrepreneurs are dependent on the community for access to capital and other professional services. Entrepreneurs and communities are interdependent; the opportunities for rural development thus become symbiotic.

A supportive culture is vital for encouraging entrepreneurs. Without an environment that values innovation, entrepreneurs will become discouraged. Rural communities can be distrustful of the changes and risks that entrepreneurs introduce into their communities. Awareness campaigns can help increase public support and decrease resistance to change.

Entrepreneurship does not necessarily have to be something new but could also be the adoption of new

technologies and new company producing goods not previously available at a location. Mitticool, a refrigerator that runs without electricity, a brake system for bullock carts, a carrot cleaning machine, making disposable plates and cups from tree leaves, smokeless chullah; the success stories of those who have made it are many; and the opportunities for many more, exist.

The economic goals of an entrepreneur and the social goals of rural development are strongly interlinked. For this reason, in trying to shape ecosystems, care must be taken by the government not to try to pick winners, over-influence the system, or flood the system with too much easy money.

Pulling together a package of resources (not loan waivers) to exploit the opportunities combined with the dreams, determination, and willingness of the youth to work hard will create a sustainable mechanism for the development of rural communities. ■

Meera Tenguria

A Stakeholder Engagement Strategist and trainer with over 20 years of experience in Corporate Communications, Crisis Communications, Stakeholder Communications, Content Strategy, Sustainability & CSR Communication.



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Crafting Magic Through Exquisite Handiworks



Tata Chemicals Empowering Tribal Communities

India has traditionally been home to different cultures and people. Unity in diversity is one of the most prominent and unique features that India has been bestowed with. A significant portion of this diversified population is comprised of the tribal people, the original inhabitants of the land. The tribal culture of India and their traditions and practices pervade almost all aspects of Indian culture. The Okhamandal region of Gujarat is no different. It is home to many tribal cultures and has nourished them from the very earliest periods of history. Living in an arid region where livelihood opportunities are hard to come by, these tribal communities have never known an easy life. But what they do know well is their magical art of mirror work and patchwork, a heritage

handed down through generations. The stark monotony of the arid landscapes in this region is relieved by the bright shades of handicrafts made by the tribal women belonging to tribes like the Rabaris, Vaghers and Ahirs. The traditional skill of making exquisite handicrafts in mirror work, patchwork, appliqué and embroidery that these communities inherit from their forefathers has been an important part of their lifestyle, rituals and ceremonial ensembles for centuries. The most prominent tribe here, the Rabaris, are semi-nomadic and known for their survival and adaptation in the arid regions of Gujarat and Rajasthan. They follow a pre-agrarian, pastoral lifestyle found mainly in the Kutch and Saurashtra regions of Gujarat. They lead a quaint, colourful and rugged

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The Okhamandal region of Gujarat is home to many tribal cultures. These tribal communities have never known an easy life. But what they do know well is their magical art of mirror work and patchwork, a heritage handed down through generations

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lifestyle which finds manifestation in the embroidery and crafts made by them. The colorful apparels, ethnic accessories and furnishings have a rustic charm, but with a contemporary twist. The objects they embroider highlight important events, rites and rituals and values in their lives. Rabari girls traditionally embroider blouses, skirts, veils, wall hangings, pillows, purses, etc.

In the absence of any other significant income-earning opportunity for these tribal groups, Tata Chemicals Society for Rural Development (TCSR) realised the need to empower these groups to reduce their poverty and exclusion by providing them with a source of livelihood they are already well skilled in, i.e., to manufacture beautiful garments and artifacts in the traditional native art of mirror work, appliqué, patchwork and embroidery. Thus was born Okhai, a lifestyle brand, in 2002.

TCSR plays a pioneering role in encouraging this handicraft art form. The Okhai initiative has not just generated livelihood, it has also empowered the women in the region. What began with a target of helping

200 women in the first leg, has at present, 500 rural women benefitting from this programme. This initiative is a powerful statement by the communities of the Okhamandal villages; a statement that empowers them; a statement that gives them and this region an identity; a statement that not only makes people notice this beautiful art form but also appreciate and patronise it.

Over the years, Okhai has expanded its reach to bring more rural communities into its fold, beginning with Saurashtra handicrafts at Mithapur (Gujarat) to the rich traditions of the Karjobi art form of Babrala (Uttar Pradesh); the jute culture from Haldia (West Bengal); the weavers from Varanasi, and the Chikankari work from Lucknow. In the absence of incentives to continue the art, the elders in these communities are not in a position to promote it among future generations. With time, the unique art could be lost to the world but Okhai has allayed the fear of these art forms dying an unnatural death. Okhai strives to save their identity from getting lost in the long run. The exclusive apparel, accessories and

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Okhai has expanded its reach to bring more rural communities into its fold, beginning with Saurashtra handicrafts at Mithapur (Gujarat) to the rich traditions of the Karjobi art form of Babrala (Uttar Pradesh); the jute culture from Haldia (West Bengal); the weavers from Varanasi, and the Chikankari work from Lucknow

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furnishings from Okhai, in lively and unique designs, catch the fancy of an urban consumer immediately. The project, thus, has the potential to grow enormously and Okhai is sure to touch



Testimonial

At 34, Rami Ben from the Okhamandal Taluka in Gujarat, is a self-made entrepreneur. She joined the Tata Chemicals Society for Rural Development (TCSRSD) Self-Help Group (SHG) at Okhai in 2001 and was trained to make appliqué patterns. She is instrumental in making the arid landscape of the region don the vibrant hues of prosperity and self-reliance. As the master craftsperson of the initiative, Rami Ben has been organising and motivating women from different tribes like Ahirs, Rabaris, Charan and other communities inhabiting the area, to use their craft to earn a livelihood and be financially independent.

Understanding the market trends and customer preferences, Rami Ben has been actively contributing towards product development in Okhai by introducing new designs. She now leads a team that conceptualise and develop new designs and products, adding a modern angle to the traditional handicrafts that are marketed in Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Chennai, Pune, Mumbai, Bangalore and other cities.

Rami Ben's decision to join TCSRSD's Self Help Group was a turning point in her life and marked the beginning of a journey towards self-reliance and financial emancipation not only for her but for several other women in a male-dominant social system. Her



perseverance has not only changed her life but has also transformed the lives of hundreds of tribal women.

Rami Ben is today a veteran and a spokesperson, and is the key force behind the Okhai brand.

and brighten the lives of thousands of women from Okhamandal.

Okhai has made a significant contribution to the lives of the women artisans working with it and has been continuously facilitating them with

various initiatives for the development of self, family and society, thereby improving their economic and social status as well.

The Okhai products are sold online and through the handicrafts centre at

Mithapur, Gujarat. Okhai also holds sale-cum-exhibitions in corporate offices from time to time to promote the brand. With Okhai, the Company has been successful in making a remarkable difference in the lives of rural communities. It has not only helped them earn better livelihoods, but has also spread awareness about the traditional crafts of the region, thus helping preserve a rich part of the national cultural heritage for generations to come.

Tata Chemicals set up the TCSRSD in 1980 to promote its social objectives for communities in and around Mithapur, Gujarat, where its facility is located. This service was further extended to the communities in and around its Babrala and Haldia facilities. The Society works to protect and nurture the rural populations in and around Tata Chemicals facilities, and help people achieve self-sufficiency in natural resource management, livelihood support and the building of health and education infrastructure. ■

Contributed by Tata Chemicals





Rural Talents of Karnataka Win Accolades At The World Skills Competition 2017

Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) talents have won the third and sixth position at the internationally-renowned '44th World Skills Competition' that was held from October 15 - 18, 2017, at Abu Dhabi. Also called as the 'Skill Olympics', the coveted event is one of the most prestigious forums recognising excellence in vocational education and skills. All three contestants who represented TKM at the Competition were trained at Toyota Technical Training Institute. While Mr. Kiran bagged the Bronze Medal in the Prototype Modelling Skill, Mr. H. Varun and Mr. T A. Anand Kumar, were ranked sixth amongst 39 participants from across the globe in the Mechatronics Skill category.

This year, the Competition saw participation from more than 1300 competitors from 59 countries challenging each other in 51 skill categories. India took part in 26 categories winning two medals (silver

in patisseries and bronze in prototype) and nine medallions of excellence in the respective categories. The Team which consisted of 28 talented young minds showcased the best ever performance by India since the country began to take part in the competition in 2007. The participants were selected through a nationwide screening process under the guidance of National Skill Development Council (NSDC).

Initiated in 1950, The World Skills Competition is the global hub for skills excellence and development through international cooperation and development between industry, government, organisations and institutions. The competitors are all under the age of 22 years (except for four skills that have the age limit of 25). It is considered to be the global meeting place for government, education, industry and association leaders to discuss relevant and

important issues related to skills management.

Commenting on the occasion, Mr. Sailesh Shetty, Vice President (HR) Toyota Kirloskar Motor said, "We at Toyota are honoured that contestants who have been trained at TTTI are making the nation proud at an international platform. The young dynamic talents from rural Karnataka have time and again made their mark at the World Skill Contest under the rigorous training from TTTI. Toyota's skill development initiatives are aimed at contributing to the Prime Minister's 'Skill India' mission by bridging the gap between India's rapidly growing industrial sector and availability of highly skilled workforce to match up with the ever changing auto industry. We further look forward to contributing to India by passing our global manufacturing skills to budding talents across the nation."

Revitalising Rural India

Sevalaya's Call of Duty Transforming Communities and Changing Outlook



V. Muralidharan

As an NGO focused in imparting education for the underprivileged and rural upliftment, Sevalaya is truly committed in improving their lives for their better. Sevalaya's motto, 'Love All, Serve All' is followed in true letter and spirit, as it draws inspiration from three social giants - Mahakavi Bharathiyar, Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda.

Sevalaya was established in 1988 in Thiruvallur and Kancheepuram districts of Tamil Nadu. What started as a home with just five children in a rented accommodation has extended to us being privileged to work and serve in 40 villages in and around

Kasuva village which once had 100 percent child labour. Over a quarter century of operations covering education, shelter for destitute and rural uplift, these villages have reached total school enrollment, as part of the ongoing transformation.

Our varied activities fall under three categories: Education, Rural Development and Homes, each inspired by Mahakavi Bharathiyar, Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda.

Sevalaya's Mahatma Gandhi Unit aptly takes care of rural development. The activities fall under various categories, as elucidated below:

Women Empowerment

Our focus on women empowerment is multi-faceted. Community colleges impart vocational training for rural unemployed girls as nursing assistants, beauticians, garment stitching and making crafts. Over the past few years, more than 1000 women have been trained in these categories. 78 percent of the women are either gainfully employed or have chosen the



entrepreneurial route. The girls who successfully completed their nursing assistant course have a higher rate of employment, which is closer to 100 percent.

Distribution of sewing machines turned saviour for a large number of women in distress, supporting or supplementing livelihood. One group that benefitted from our initiative is the nomadic Irula community. The sewing machines given to the 300 families have proven to be a life saver and a means of livelihood after the epochal floods of 2015 washed away their possessions. Tiruttani, Gummidipoondi, Ponneri, Vadanallur and Chidambaram Taluks were some of the worst hit in Thiruvallur, Kanchipuram and Cuddalore districts during the floods. In addition, to maximise the benefits, they were provided training so that they could learn the intricacies of different styles of garment cutting, stitching, and embroidery work.

Conserving our Rural Environment

In our continued quest to educate the rural communities about the need to conserve the environment not just for their present but most importantly, the future generations, environmental education is imparted to all our students as part of the curriculum.

They are taught to segregate degradable and non-degradable wastes for disposal. We have successfully turned our Kasuva campus into a green zone.

Rural Greening Through Seed Balls

Social and environmental awareness is part of every project undertaken by Sevalaya in the rural community. When we taught the children about the seed ball (a clay ball made from red soil, water, and vermicomposting with a seed embedded in it), they were fascinated and went about making thousands of them. Since all the three vital elements (water, clay and organic fertiliser) bind the seed, the process of germination is facilitated and it can sprout anywhere - ditches, shady or arid areas. The children gives the seed balls to their parents who in turn sow or toss them in and around their compounds, with all probability that a tree will sprout, thus helping in building the forest as well as provide greenery in barren and man-made deserts.

Smokeless Bhogi

Bhogi is a tradition of collecting and burning unwanted materials. It is environmentally unsafe. Each year, our students are encouraged to walk around the villages to spread awareness against this habit. Students

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In our continued quest to educate the rural communities about the need to conserve the environment not just for their present but most importantly, the future generations, environmental education is imparted to all our students as part of the curriculum

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from four local schools including Sevalaya and New College, Chennai, undertook a 5 km walk around Pakkam and Puliyur villages, spreading the message of smokeless Bhogi. We have been running this seasonal campaign since 1990, with perceivable reduction in this traditional practice.

900 Bio Mass Stoves to Rural Kitchens

Extending our bid towards reducing carbon footprint in rural Tamil Nadu,



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India lives in its villages.

The country cannot be
called developed until the
last village is developed

- Mahatma Gandhi

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we partnered with Shell India Pvt. Ltd to distribute energy-efficient and low smoke bio-mass stoves to 900 rural families around Kasuva village, Thiruvallur district. As part of the Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation initiative of Shell India Pvt. Ltd, post the Chennai floods, these stoves reduce smoke by 80 percent, improve cooking experience and are environment friendly.

Organic Farming

We also encourage organic farming and conduct regular workshops to propagate this within the campus and

in nearby villages. In the two acres that have been earmarked for this purpose, the activity of seeding and harvesting is manually done at Kasuva campus and the satellite centres at Thirumalaivaivayavur and Madhuranthakam (Kanchipuram district). Cow dung, panchakavya and vermicompost are used as bio-fertilisers.

Water and Energy Conservation

Born out of a SHELL-NXplorers workshop on energy, Sevalaya NXplorers Club conduct workshops on energy, creating awareness about water and energy conservation in the villages. Between November 2016 to March 2017, Sevalaya students visited two villages and two schools in a 10 km radius. 190 villagers and about 260 students participated in the events. The children enact plays and sing folk songs to convey the importance of water and energy conservation.

Mobile Medical Units

A very large chunk of India's population, about 78 percent, reside in the rural areas; yet only two percent of medical professionals can be found working among this population.

While such statistics is disconcerting, we also cannot deny many welfare organisations that have been steadily helping the rural masses by providing as much healthcare as possible. Healthcare is the right of every individual, and we at Sevalaya have been contributing in this most vital aspect of the survival and continuity of our rural community.

Until 1994, Kasuva village did not even have basic medical facilities. The nearest public health centre was about three km away, and it functioned only till noon. To mitigate this, we started a medical centre at Sevalaya, which has now grown into a 12-bedded hospital. Playing the role of a first responder, the Centre provides medical treatment to 16 villages within a three km radius. It also offers treatment to 80 senior citizens who are part of our Old Age Home, to 173 girls and boys who belong to our Children's Home as well as to the 2000+ students who study at our school. The Centre employs a total of 180 staff, 40 of whom reside in the campus. The Centre is also equipped to deal with a target to provide complimentary healthcare to two lakh villagers staying within a ten km radius suffering from various ailments. It also treats patients suffering from dehydration, diabetes and stress. Treatment, including medicines, is offered free of cost.

Our mobile medical van has benefitted 2,800 patients since July 2016 through its 290 visits in the interior villages. Health camps, including 11 physiotherapy camps and eye camps, have benefitted 9451 patients. 1,536 patients have been referred for cataract surgeries and 1,927 patients have been provided free eyeglasses since 2014.

Over the past year, partnerships with corporate institutions and private individuals have led to enhanced reach of medical care in reaching out to the community to provide quality healthcare at their doorstep. Two



mobile medial units, with a team of doctors and a couple of nursing assistants, visit 70 rural villages each month in Thiruvallur and Kanchipuram districts. Medicines worth two and a half lakhs rupees are dispensed free to the patients, annually. Regular eye camps are conducted and prognosis is suggested on a case by case basis. Patients requiring surgeries are referred to hospitals that provide them free of cost. Their follow-up care is also complimentary. Physiotherapy camps are conducted from time to time at the villages to alleviate patients who suffer from osteoarthritis, cervical and multiple joint pains.

Water ATM: Clean Drinking Water for Villagers

Adhigathur, a remote village in Thiruvallur district was identified as a test village to provide RO water. Water ATM is a novel concept where the village drinking water, stored in the municipal tank, is cleaned through an RO filtration system and provided to the villages. This eliminates the hardness of the water as well as removes impurities present in it. About 500 families have been provided with a Water ATM Card. They can refill the ATM card at the local panchayat office and draw water based on their needs.

Anti-Alcohol Pledge

Following in the footsteps of one of our inspirations - Gandhiji, who, prior to

his departure to London for higher studies in August 1888, made a solemn promise to his mother, Putli Ba, that he will not consume wine, we also took upon ourselves the responsibility of changing the situation around Sevalaya. Many families are affected by the scourge of liquor consumption. In 2015, we organised an event called Putli Ba, in honour of Gandhiji's mother. Every year on 5th August, over 500 boys of Sevalaya School hold their mothers' hands and make a pledge that they will not touch alcohol throughout their life. T-shirts carrying the message: 'I promise that I will never drink alcohol' are also distributed to the students.

Our success in Kasuva village has brought recognition and praise from many parts of the country. They want to replicate our model in their respective areas. Despite the many milestones achieved, we do not want to rest on our laurels yet. There are miles to go; more rural communities need to be reached and developed. Our long time goal is to start a free university that will benefit orphans, the destitute and poor children.

Apart from the above, Sevalaya has also encouraged sports and physical activities like athletics, basketball, volleyball, opening opportunities for children and the youth of different districts for healthy competitions.

Sevalaya also started Thiramaipor (War of Talent) as a joint venture with



Rotaract Club of Akash in 2008 to foster and nurture sports talent among rural schools in Thiruvallur district. The weekend sports meet covers eight games, besides track and field events.

While the children, youth and men take part in these competitions, we make sure that the womenfolk are not ignored. During Pongal, the womenfolk in the villages ready themselves for the Rangoli competition. It is friendly yet fiercely competitive. On an average, about 40 villages and 1000 women have been participating each year for the past 17 years. The competition is a joyful display of congeniality and a splash of colours, bringing delight to everyone.

I would like to end with this quote from Mahatma Gandhi: "India lives in its villages. The country cannot be called developed until the last village is developed."

V. Muralidharan
Founder & Managing Trustee,
Sevalaya





Ranjit Singh

Creating Meaningful *and* Lasting Impact

Maruti Suzuki's Social Projects Bringing Qualitative Difference to Rural Communities

India is set to surpass China in a few years as the country with the highest population. While it also remains one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, it is struggling to reduce the income inequality. This is due to the country's difficulty in getting a young workforce to drive economic activities; and the entire situation circles back to the basics - lack of quality education, basic amenities and a skilled workforce to steer this growth.

Slowly yet steadily, India's leading passenger vehicle manufacturer, Maruti Suzuki, has been identifying these gaps and is providing solutions for a holistic development of the society and bridging the economic disparity by making the youth, especially in the rural and tribal areas, job-ready. To have a more streamlined approach, the Company has broadly categorised the social initiatives into three areas - Skill Development, Community Development and Road Safety.

Skill Development for Employment

With employment as the main focus, we strive to offer India's youth the skills relevant to industry requirement through our Skill

Development, a pan-India initiative.

Currently, the automobile industry contributes around 7.1 percent to India's GDP, and we at Maruti Suzuki believe that the industry can produce 6.5 crore jobs by 2026. As of 31st March, 2017, we have worked in partnership with over 140 Government ITIs across 27 States to offer vocational training to the youth through a curriculum that is designed to address the skill gap existing in the industry. For this, the students are given exposure to latest technology and industry environment.

With automobile technology constantly evolving, we are continuously upgrading training models to impart new learnings and skill sets. To meet the needs of this

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Maruti Suzuki is providing solutions for a holistic development of the society and bridging the economic disparity by making the youth, especially in the rural and tribal areas, job-ready

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dynamycity, we have set up Automobile Skill Enhancement Centres (ASEC) at 60 ITIs. Each of these centre is equipped with a model workshop on which practical training is imparted by full-time trainers provided by the Company. Over 6000 students have been trained and 50 percent have been absorbed by the Maruti Suzuki dealer service network.

Testimonial

A big surprise awaited 17 year old Shubham Maurya the day he walked into Pusa ITI's automobile trade course section. Having visited two ITIs where his friends were studying to get course information, he did not know what a company-supported ITI meant till he enrolled here. It was only when he completed his first week of theory and practicals that he realised the edge he had over his contemporaries elsewhere. A meticulous curriculum with relevant lesson plans was backed by demos in the workshop where state-of-the-art equipment and guidance by trained faculty on the latest car models and spare parts, ensured every student got ample time to practice. Ongoing sessions on soft skills, how to sit for job interviews and trainings by organisations like HIDA from Japan, prepared him and his batchmates for the upcoming placement season. Additional time spent in company dealer workshops provided relevant exposure to service, management and practical side of automobile repair and maintenance.

Community Development

We consider the local community as the direct stakeholder group and thus,



we are devoted to the cause of improving their quality of life. Under this initiative, we provide must-have basic amenities to enhance the quality of life in villages. These include facilities like drinking water, roads, individual household toilets, community grounds, reconstruction of school infrastructure.

We follow a holistic approach and undertake projects based on preliminary baseline surveys to address the sanitation issue in the villages. We facilitate construction of individual household toilets, laying of sewer lines along with solid and liquid waste management, among others, in these villages.

We are undertaking development activities in 24 adopted villages across Gurgaon, Manesar, Rohtak (Haryana) and Hansalpur (Gujarat) to transform them into model villages. We work closely with the village Sarpanch and other key influencers to understand their needs and collaborate with them to plan and prioritise community development efforts. Till date, sewer lines have been laid in six villages, and 2,607 individual household toilets have been constructed in Manesar, Rohtak, Gujarat and Bangalore.



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We consider the local community as the direct stakeholder group and thus, we are devoted to the cause of improving their quality of life. Under this initiative, we provide must-have basic amenities to enhance the quality of life in villages

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Testimonial

“Imagine a newly-wedded bride being escorted to the fields by the groom; or a pregnant woman with her frequent need to urinate having to beg someone in the family to accompany her; or a woman who has just delivered a baby, braving the stitches and discomfort, dragging herself to what could be a half to one kilometre walk each way. Every day is an ordeal for these

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This first of its kind residential driving training camp focuses on tribal youth, between 18-32 years of age, to increase employability. Admission is free. The Institute has so far trained over 11,000 tribal youth in over 100 batches

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women. Many more girls and women in the village have their share of toilet stories to tell, till the time Maruti Suzuki came and constructed household toilets helping restore dignity and pride to these women,” says Rekha Devi, mother of a one year old in Bas Hariya village, Manesar, Haryana.

Earlier this year, during one of their need-assessment analysis at Bas Hariya village in Manesar, availability of



clean drinking water and sanitation was recognised as one of the biggest challenges faced by the residents of the village. To bridge this gap, Maruti Suzuki partnered with WaterLife India to set up a Water ATM in the village. The Water ATM has the capacity to generate 1000 litres of pure water per hour.

The 10 stage UV filtration technology by Waterlife ensures the water meets WHO and ISO 10500 standards and retains essential minerals. The technology also helps in minimal water rejection – only 1/4th of the conventional water purification facilities - making most of the input water consumable. This minimal wastage of water enables lower costs per litre. In total, the Company has set up five Water ATMs, and so far, around 10 lakh litres of water has been dispensed, benefitting over 8000 households.

Recently, a delegation from the United Nations visited Bas Hariya village in Manesar to witness the CSR efforts undertaken by us.

Road Safety

We remain deeply committed to improving safety on Indian roads by imparting quality driving training and education. We have strategically

reached out to key segments of society since 2000 by providing skills, knowledge and attitudinal inputs to both road users and road drivers.

We are also empowering the tribal belt in Gujarat with All Gujarat Institute of Driving, Technical Training and Research (AGIDTTR). This was taken up in association with Ministry of Tribal Development (Gujarat) under the Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana scheme in Waghodia, Vadodra in 2009. This area, on the eastern belt, has the largest concentrated tribal population in the State, forming 15 percent of Gujarat's population. This first of its kind residential driving training camp focuses on tribal youth, between 18-32 years of age, to increase employability. Admission is free.

The Institute has so far trained over 11,000 tribal youth in over 100 batches. It offers four types of courses: Light Motor Vehicle (LMV), LMV-Commercial, Heavy Motor Vehicle (HMV) and Forklift. The graduates are absorbed by top companies of the country like Vodafone, Lupin, JCB.

Testimonial

21 year old Jignesh Haresingh is from Waghodia Tehsil in Vadodara, Gujarat. He received Heavy Motor



Vehicle (HMV) driving training at AGIDTTR. He now works in a supervisory role at a dealer outlet, with a monthly salary of Rs. 20,000. The training has helped him qualify the driving test and other formalities at Regional Transport Office before finding a job. He is one of the many boys trained at AGIDTTR who have blossomed into smart, successful young men, and an example to their community. "Lessons on simulated driving, English speaking, etiquette training and working in a corporate environment helped me get a job and excelling in it, keeping my employers happy," says Jignesh, when asked about the impact the training has had on his life.

Maruti Suzuki is dedicated to educating the country's youth about safe driving, and as part of the campaigns designed to bring a change in the mindsets, it has established the Institute of Driving and Traffic Research (IDTR) in partnership with various State governments. As of today, we have set up six IDTRs,

including two in NCR and one each in Dehradun, Vadodara, Rohtak and Bahadurgarh. Through these IDTRs, we offer training to passenger and commercial vehicle drivers on scientifically designed driving tracks and simulators.

This year, the Institute introduced ARITRA Technology, a technology developed specifically for driving training. This camera-based image processing technology will help train 2,500 new car learners per annum at the Institute. It functions on motor vehicles fitted with cameras, Wi-Fi connectivity and underground fibre optic cables, which relays back to the control room, where the trainee's driving action is tracked on a real time basis. The specially prepared algorithm register actions such as kerb hits, unscheduled stops, parking methodology and deviations from ideal path compliance. Accompanying the software is a mobile application that is used by the instructor to halt the training and play back the driving lesson to the learner to correct

mistakes immediately. The application gives scope for review, discussion and going back to the formation through real time on the track while the control room data helps iron out undesired driving habits using data analytics.

In FY 2016-17, we have spent a total of Rs. 89.45 crore on our various CSR programmes. We have set aside a total of Rs.140 crore towards CSR spending for FY 2017 – 18. This year, with an aim to holistically develop the communities benefitting through our initiatives, we have added healthcare under our CSR umbrella.

With the number of works and beneficiaries growing every year in our focus areas like education, skills, road safety and healthcare, we at Maruti Suzuki, aim to create a positive impact in the overall well-being of the society.

Ranjit Singh

General Manager - CSR,
Maruti Suzuki India Ltd



Transforming Rural and Marginalised Communities

The Body Shop's Efforts at Combining Environmental Sustainability and Business Ethics



Shriti Malhotra

Founded in 1976 in Brighton, England by Dame Anita Roddick, The Body Shop is a global iconic beauty brand that pioneered the philosophy that business can be a force for good. Spanning 3000 retail locations in 66 countries, the brand seeks to make a positive difference in the world by offering high quality, naturally-inspired skin care, hair care and make-up, produced ethically and sustainably.

A firm believer in empowering marginalised communities, Dame Anita Roddick founded Community Trade as 'Trade Not Aid' in February 1987 as a way to give developing communities around the world a hand up, rather than a hand out. The Body Shop's first supplier was Teddy Exports in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, India. It has been supplying us with a wide variety of high quality gifts and accessories ever since. Thirty years on, Community Trade remains the strongest fair trade programme in the beauty industry, and by the end of 2017 will have 23 Community Trade ingredients plus accessories and gift products sourced from 30 supplier communities in 22 countries, with over 20,000 beneficiaries

from community projects.

We bring great, naturally-inspired products to our customers in line with the three main aims of the Community Trade programme today: transforming marginalised communities around the world, preserving traditional crops and farming methods, and promoting sustainability in farming that challenges the status quo, which can include high use of fertiliser or pesticide, low wages and non-sustainable practices that can lead to habitat loss and poor working conditions.

Many of our community trade suppliers employ women in rural areas and people in their community at risk of marginalisation. Earning an income

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Many of The Body Shop's community trade suppliers employ women in rural areas and people in their community at risk of marginalisation. Earning an income helps build their financial independence and social status

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“ Since 1987, Community Trade has helped Teddy Exports grow from just five employees to 600 crafts people from over 30 villages, giving vital employment to people at risk of marginalisation including women, disabled and HIV-positive members of the community. Teddy Exports also support training, education and health schemes which help to revitalise the whole community ”

helps build their financial independence and social status. For example, we source argan oil from Targanine in Morocco, a network of cooperatives with over 300 female Berbers (Descendants of the pre-Arab inhabitants of North Africa. They live in scattered communities across Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Mali, Niger, and Mauretania) from the Little Atlas Mountains. Traditionally, men enjoyed higher social status as they earned a higher income. Now these women are often the primary earners in the family, increasing their social status and financial independence.

We work with suppliers all over the world to establish trade relationships that benefit communities. At the heart of Community Trade, we have consistently initiated gender equality

and female empowerment. A part of this is championing women and girls – offering equal opportunities to all. Community Trade has helped support thousands of women and girls through education, and provided income for women around the world, as well as supporting fair and equal pay across the whole programme. Relationship with the Tungteiya Women's Shea Butter organisation in Ghana provided 528 women of the Association a fair price and also pay a premium for the women to invest in community projects, which have impacted a further 46,000 people.

Since 1987, Community Trade has helped Teddy Exports grow from just five employees to 600 crafts people from over 30 villages, giving vital employment to people at risk of marginalisation including women,

disabled and HIV-positive members of the community. Teddy Exports also support training, education and health schemes which help to revitalise the whole community. Over the past 20 years, with support from The Body Shop, the Cooperative has built eight schools, funded 30 water projects bringing clean drinking water to over 5000 people, supported environmental education and provided small loans to over 500 families each year.

Looking ahead, our Community Trade programme will evolve towards more specialist ingredients, including from biodiversity hotspots: with the bulk of our lead ingredients already covered, our opportunity is to extend this unique sourcing approach to new areas where our trade can make a difference – for communities and customers.

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The Body Shop
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force for good

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supplier, Native, is a member of the Union for Ethical BioTrade (UEBT) and created innovative, sustainable sugarcane cultivation and processing practices which help to protect the environment. At the São Francisco Mill where organic alcohol is produced, over one million trees have been planted in the last 30 years. The mill is also a certified carbon neutral company. It sells back excess energy to the local grid, enough to generate electricity for 300,000 people.

The Body Shop pioneered social activism before it became fashionable. It was built on a philosophy that business can be a force for good. Some key highlights of our campaigning history in terms of CSR initiatives include:

Save the Whale Campaign: The first major campaign that Anita Roddick and The Body Shop launched with Greenpeace in 1986 draws attention to the continued threat facing the great mammals. We were one of the first international beauty brands to use an

Community Trade has reached its milestone 30th birthday in 2017. The aim has been to deliver positive impact by empowering marginalised communities, preserving traditional crops and practices, and promoting sustainable production methods that challenge the status quo to be

replicated at scale. There are many successful examples of how this has worked effectively. Used in many of our fragrance products, the Community Trade organic alcohol is sourced near Sao Paolo, Brazil, one of the first areas in Brazil to start growing sugarcane using organic methods. Our

Testimonials



Amutha, aged 42 years, has been working at Teddy Exports since 2002 in the Quality Control Department. Only after joining Teddy Exports has she been able to eat regular, quality food. Being the sole earner of her family, Amutha, through Teddy Exports, has been able to send her son and daughter to school, which she feels, is her biggest achievement.



S.M. Lakshmi is 34 years old and has been working at the Printing Unit of Teddy Exports since 2002. Though she had no prior knowledge about the printing process, she quickly picked up the ropes and has become a professional in her job. She is grateful and happy for the opportunity which Teddy Exports has given her, thus changing her life for the better.



36 year old A. Parasakthi has also been working at Teddy Exports since 2002 in the Printing Unit. Her husband's income is based on agriculture; therefore is irregular. But with the regular income that Parasakthi has been receiving from her job, she has been able to become a major contributor in running her household which is a joint family comprising of six members.



J. Thenmozhi, aged 36 years, has been part of Teddy Exports Printing Unit since 2002. She has been happily working at Teddy Exports for the past 16 years. She plans to continue being a part of this family as it provides a safe working environment for women.



As part of the Quality Control Department, 34 year old Kartheeswari has also been working at Teddy Exports since 2002. Her income has been the mainstay in her family since her husband is not being able to contribute financially. But she is happy that her job has given her and her family security for the future.

alternative to sperm whale oil, pioneering the use of Jojoba oil as an alternative.

The Body Shop Foundation was established in 1990 and funds human rights and environmental protection groups around the world.

Against Animal Testing Campaign in UK (1996): This campaign led to a UK-wide ban on animal testing on cosmetic products and ingredients in November 1998 and the largest ever petition (four million signatures) being delivered to the European Commission.

Humane Cosmetics Standard (1997): We were first international cosmetics company to be recognised under the Humane Cosmetics Standard supported by leading international animal protection groups.

Home Campaign (2003): The Stop Violence in the Home campaign launched to raise money in support of victims of violence.

Sourcing Palm Oil (2007): We became



the first cosmetics company to source sustainably harvested palm oil.

Recycled Bottles: 100 percent post-consumer recycled PET bottles were introduced in 2008.

The Stop Trafficking of Children & Young People Campaign (2009): Along with ECPAT International, we

launched The Stop Trafficking of Children & Young People campaign. It inspired change on an unprecedented scale, gathering over seven million signatures from customers globally, resulting in over 20 countries across the world committing to adopting new legislation in response to our petitions. It became the largest campaign ever

Enrich Not Exploit

The Body Shop is committed to sourcing all its natural ingredients from traceable and sustainable sources by 2020. Benchmarked against industry best practice, our Sustainable Sourcing Charter sets the standard for sustainable production and is our guide for assessing supply chains and making improvements or changes where necessary.

Our team and our sustainable sourcing partners establish relationships with our suppliers and travel the world to visit them, sourcing the most ethical and sustainable ingredients available. This is a collaborative effort to actively drive sustainability, provide know-how, and support the communities in achieving higher levels of empowerment, professionalisation, female participation, and fairer pay.

We also work with environmental organisations to source new ingredients from biodiversity hotspots, regions under threat from human activity. Trade can help preserve and increase biodiversity, giving reasons to protect species that might otherwise be seen as low value and cut down.

There are multiple methods the brand uses to measure its achievements. We have metrics to actively track our achievement against our targets (under our Enrich Not Exploit Commitment) and then we have internal quality processes to make sure that each Community Trade ingredient covers sustainability comprehensively.

As part of the motto of Enrich Not Exploit Commitment, year on year, a reduction is seen in the environmental footprint of all our product categories. This will include increasing biodegradability, the ingredients from renewable natural origin and from green chemistry and reducing water footprint.

The Body Shop aims to bring high quality, naturally-inspired products to the market in line with the three main aims of the programme:

- Transforming marginalised communities
- Preserving traditional crops and practices
- Promoting sustainable production methods that challenge the status quo



for The Body Shop.

Wood Positive (2012): We launched Wood Positive, offsetting all the wood-based paper and pulp that goes into its primary, secondary and transit packaging. In 2012, we focused on the Atlantic rainforest in Brazil, and the Southern Andes in Ecuador.

2013: After 20 years of relentless

campaigning, we celebrated a ban preventing the import and sale of animal-tested cosmetic products and ingredients in the EU.

Enrich Not Exploit: In 2016, we launched our commitment: Enrich Not Exploit™ It's in our hands.

Forever Against Animal Testing (FAAT) Campaign 2017: We were the

first global beauty brand to fight against animal testing. Over the last three decades, we have worked with our campaign partner - Cruelty Free International and our collective efforts helped lead to a European Union ban in 2013. But that is not enough. 80 percent of countries do not have laws against animal testing, including the US. Animals continue to be used in testing, and we want to end this practice everywhere, and forever. The campaign, conducted in partnership with Cruelty Free International, has till now, collected 2.3 million signatures globally.

We strongly believe in giving back to the society and operating hand in hand with the environment. Our constant efforts and endeavours have always helped us keep true to our founder's values, vision and mission. The brand will continue to act responsibly, even going forward. ■

Shriti Malhotra
COO, The Body Shop, India



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Finding Solutions to the Complexities of Hunger and Malnutrition



Manish Handa

Currently, there are 795 million hungry people in the world and India itself is home to the largest under-nourished and hungry population, with 195 million people going hungry every day. That is the plight of India with respect to malnutrition.

WHO defines malnutrition as “deficiencies, excesses or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients. The term ‘malnutrition’ covers two broad groups of conditions. One is ‘under nutrition’ which includes stunting (low height for age), wasting (low weight for height), underweight (low weight for age) and micronutrient deficiencies or insufficiencies (a lack of important vitamins and minerals). The other is overweight, obesity and

diet-related non-communicable diseases (such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer).” To put it simply, malnutrition refers to either an individual suffering from under nutrition or over nutrition, although we usually conceive malnutrition as only under nutrition. Over nutrition or obesity is as much of malnutrition as it still comes under the purview of having imbalanced intake of nutrients.



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Although we might have succeeded in saving our girl child, we have not yet succeeded in feeding them.

Data from Bihar and Madhya Pradesh shows that girls represent up to 68 percent of the children admitted to programmes for the severely malnourished. If this same vicious cycle continues, the struggle for a healthy India may get even harder and longer to combat

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So what exactly are the root causes of malnutrition and why has India been struggling with this evil for decades now? To begin with, gender bias can be

looked upon as one of the root causes of malnutrition in India. To validate this point, let us look at the fact that although women make up a little over half of the world's population, they account for 60 percent of the world's hungry. In India, nutrition of children is particularly worse because of the state of their mothers. 36 percent of Indian women are chronically under-nourished right from childhood. This can be attributed to the fact that girl children are less wanted in a patriarchal society like India; where men receive food before women. Even though we might have succeeded in saving our girl child, we have not yet succeeded in feeding them. Data from Bihar and Madhya Pradesh shows that girls represent up to 68 percent of the children admitted to programmes for the severely malnourished. If this same vicious cycle continues, the struggle for a healthy India may get even harder and longer to combat.

India is one of the largest democracies in the world. It has witnessed a surge in the business sector. Despite the economic boom, there are still many social evils prevailing in India, impacting the society and development of the nation as a whole. One of the biggest evils among these is malnutrition. Each year, many innocent children lose their life due to malnutrition as they do not only get enough food, and even when they do, it is of low quality. To add to this drawback, lack of health facilities, cleanliness and awareness are further aggravating the problem. This situation has grown so grave that at present it calls for immediate action. When looked upon closely, we will find that there is enough food to feed everyone in the world. India has enough food and resources that all her deprived children can be fed. However, despite phenomenal industrial and economic growth and while India produces sufficient food to feed its population, it is unable to provide access to food to a large

number of people, especially women and children. Despite availability of such abundant resources, data shows that each year, many children continue to die of malnutrition. On one hand we talk about development, while on the other, our children are not getting enough food. Let us take a look: where Gross Domestic Production has increased 4.5 times and per capita consumption has increased three times, similarly, food grain production has also increased almost two times.

India is hungry. Not just for economic development and social justice, but for grain, for vegetables, for fruit, for seed, for poultry, for milk. The most critical kind of hunger is the hunger of both the father and the child for survival. India has the highest number of children in the world suffering from malnutrition. This is a wake-up call for us. The government is now working towards the problem of malnutrition and has come up with a campaign 'Malnutrition Quit India', which was launched by the Ministry for Women and Child Development (MWDC), Government of India in November 2012. There are also many other programmes that have been initiated before this, having the same objective of feeding every child of India. Midday Meal Scheme by the Akshaya Patra Foundation, Integrated Child Development Scheme, National Rural

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Health Mission, Balwadi Nutrition Programme, are a few among these. India at present needs more initiations of these kinds. These initiatives can bear fruit but only with the sincere involvement of the people handling these campaigns. Every single grain should reach the neediest person instead of rotting in warehouses. There should be no corruption involved in such a noble cause.

Despite all these programmes, millions of people in India are still living below the poverty line, are malnourished,



because the surplus food grains that we have is evidently not reaching to the ones who need it the most. This is a major ongoing problem and a battle that has to be won. The root cause for this can be attributed to corruption and mismanagement within committees, organisations and concerned individuals. The government has opened up subsidised food shops that get funds from the Public Distribution System (PDS) in various rural areas and villages. These shops are supposed to give out 35 kg of rice or grain a month to every family living below the officially declared poverty line, but most of the time, these shops lack supply to meet the demand.

Over time, observation helps us deduce that no single ministry or intervention has been able to lead to rapid reductions in under-nutrition burden; which simply implies that delivering a set of essential nutrition interventions from diverse sectors of India is essential to create environments that foster optimal child growth and better nutrition for all. Few countries like Bangladesh, Brazil, Senegal, Vietnam and Thailand have undertaken fitting interventions which have led to dramatic improvements.

This is exactly where CSR can step in



and make a difference, make each grain count. India is the only country in the world with a legislated CSR. The new law mandates that all companies, including foreign firms, which either has a net worth of Rs 500 crore or a turnover of Rs 1,000 Crore or net profit of Rs 5 Crore, needs to spend at least two percent of its average net profit for the immediate preceding three financial years on corporate social responsibility activities. Shining examples of such efficient CSR can be seen below:

I) Chennai: Save the Children launched Aaharam (an extension of the Mission Nutrition was launched by

its partner GlaxoSmithKline). This project raised awareness about malnutrition causes among mothers, families and communities. It was carried out across 20 notified slums of Chennai and 15 villages in the Tiruvallur district.

Activities included regular malnutrition screening of children (especially between ages 3-6); Community Case Management of undernourished children; nutrition education - with regard to feeding practices of young children; follow-up on malnutrition-afflicted children; improving community access to nutritious food through locally available food items.

ii) Maharashtra: Save the Children (in partnership with the Rajmata Jijau Mother - Child Health and Nutrition Mission of Government of Maharashtra) implemented its Village Child Development Centre (VCDC) model to treat malnourished children. This scheme works at 30 Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) centres with support from local Anganwadi workers in tribal areas in the Thane district to screen the young for malnutrition. The malnourished get regular meals, treatment for infections, as well as receive anti-parasitic and Vitamin A supplements.



iii) Stop Diarrhoea Initiative - WASH

Diarrhoea and malnutrition are closely linked to poor hygiene (infections trigger mineral depletion and loss of appetite and can lead to malnutrition) which is also India's two leading causes of under-five deaths.

Such examples can further motivate other companies to take up lawful CSR and make the most out of it - by investing money back into the society and touching millions.

While CSR can be one of the efficient and widespread ways of tackling this situation, other necessary measures can include immediate actions to change nutrition outcomes such as:

One, appointing a Nutrition Secretariat as part of the Prime Minister's Office. The Secretariat can help in ensuring that these priorities are met and are aligned with the overall development of our country. This would include both nutrition specific and nutrition-sensitive initiatives. Nutrition metrics can be

used to track the progress just like we track economic progress through economic metrics. We can identify such suitable indicators.

Two, create a nodal ministry accountable for revamping the ICDS, MDM, PDS with clear goals, timelines and resources. These can also be opened up for public-private partnerships and make these CSR-eligible by inviting corporate firms which will create a sustainable impact of CSR activities on the local communities.

Three, we can also consider extending large-scale food fortification beyond salt to other staples like flour, oil, dairy, etc., and establish mandatory standards by category.

Four, invest in information, awareness and education about good nutrition practices, extending from a diverse diet to de-worming, breastfeeding, hygiene and sanitation, etc. Nutrition can be complex and therefore it needs to be simplified in behavioural terms

for the public to understand and grasp.

India has a huge potential and it must convert its young population to a competitive advantage. This can be done only if nutrition and health are foundational to that outcome. While a lot of young people are taking up entrepreneurship, sensitising them to such issues and their possible contribution through CSR can go a long way in shaping India's future. According to data compiled by ratings agency Crisil, CSR spend has rose from Rs 2,500 crore to Rs 8,300 crore in fiscal 2016. This proves that the potential for CSR is huge in India, only if incorporated actively and judiciously. While we all make a living by what we get, it should be reinforced and remembered that we make a life by what we give. ■

Manish Handa

Director, Conexus Social
Responsibility Services Pvt. Ltd.



Combating the Malnutrition Menace

CRY Holistic Interventions To Safeguard And Provide The Underprivileged A Healthy Existence



Soha Moitra



It is important for us to listen to what children feel and want for their world

Rippan Kapur, CRY Founder

As in many regions worldwide, children in India are the most disadvantaged segment, given their overt dependence on adults for meeting all their needs. To ameliorate their condition and ensure them a better, brighter, healthier life, we at CRY (Child Rights and You) fund grassroots partners and works closely with them to deliver sustainable change for children. An indigenous Indian movement, CRY is working towards restoring basic rights - survival, protection, development and participation - to underprivileged Indian children.

The organisation was founded in Bombay in 1979 when 25 year old Rippan Kapur and six like-minded friends joined hands, backed by their core belief that every person possesses the potential and power to make a difference in the lives of children.

Independent and Effective Link

Unlike a grassroots-level organisation, we do not work directly with underprivileged children. Rather, we are the link between millions of Indians who can provide resources and thousands of dedicated people and organisations at the grassroots-level requiring resources to transform the lives of underprivileged children. This 'link' or enabling status has driven CRY's strategic choices at all times - from its fundraising methods to the nature of its relationship with its NGO partners.

Thirty-eight years later, CRY is India's premier child rights organisation with an established reputation for effectiveness and trust. We are now spread across 23 States in India, nurtured more than 600 grassroots organisations across the country, and through them, become a catalyst for change in the lives of nearly two million underprivileged Indian children. Identifying nascent grassroots initiatives, we nurture them through financial and non-financial support by

funding 'social entrepreneurs'.

To ensure lasting change, we use a rights-based approach guided by the Indian Constitution, the UN Child Rights Charter and the law of the land in each country we operate. Accordingly, children's issues are addressed in their entirety: education, health, child labour, discrimination, etc. We also examine the scope for direct interventions that will uphold children's rights as well as by mapping and working on macro issues of the community affecting children. Communities are mobilised for collective action ensuring children's rights are enabled, protected and nurtured, and they have a voice in matters affecting them.

Besides, networking and strategic alliance building is used to collectively influence policy towards being child sensitive at the national, state and local levels while working in changing mindsets and attitudes towards children's rights. Varied stakeholders with a role in bringing about lasting change are engaged: communities,

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Our programming approach for health and nutrition is focused on access to quality primary healthcare for all mothers and children as well as improved access to nutrition and development for children under five. This encompasses preventive and responsive aspects aimed at ensuring a significant reduction in infant and maternal mortality rates and reduction in malnourishment among children

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NGO partners, local governance structures, society at large, privileged individuals, institutions, the corporate sector, and the Government.

Significantly, we remain transparent, accountable and independent – without any political, corporate or donor ideology and influence – thereby permitting us to go beyond philanthropy in being a credible voice for India's children in the realm of national policy.

Our programming approach for health and nutrition is focused on access to quality primary healthcare for all mothers and children as well as improved access to nutrition and development for children under five. This encompasses preventive and responsive aspects aimed at ensuring a significant reduction in infant and maternal mortality rates and reduction in malnourishment among children.

Damoh Case Study

We also promote innovative approaches towards ensuring the consumption of diverse nutritious

food in our intervention areas. Take the example of our intervention in the Damoh district of Madhya Pradesh.

Damoh comprises of seven development blocks, with Tendukheda Block being one of the most underdeveloped. The majority of tribal and Dalit households are either landless or possess so-called government forest land. The situation is one of abject poverty, landlessness, hunger, starvation and exploitation. Naturally, the nutritional status of children is very poor. Around 43 percent children aged 0-59 months are underweight and 17 percent are severely underweight. Water-borne diseases are one of the major killers.

In the operational area, services are not delivered as per prescribed norms. Children are not given breakfast and only one meal is served around 1:00 PM along with the school mid-day meal, which is quite late for children in the 3-6 years age group. Moreover, food served is not as per the menu and during summer vacations, no food is provided in the ICDS (Integrated

Child Development Services) centres. Thereby, children are deprived of accessing the complete benefits of ICDS programme.

With CRY intervention, knowledge building on local available nutritious foods in the village was ensured, knowledgeable selection of what to eat and skilled preparation practices, including training and capacity building. Food demonstration sessions were organised. As a result of these demonstrations, families with Severe Acute Malnourished and Moderate Acute Malnourished children began practising the new cooking habits. This eventually helped in the grade movement of around 35 malnourished children in 2017 (January to May).

Other Steps Included:

- Timely referral of malnourished children to the Nutrition Rehabilitation Centre.
- Generating community awareness for lactating mothers' access to adequate food and rest.
- Formation and strengthening of mother support groups to promote maternal and child nutrition inside villages.
- Initiation of kitchen garden facility for nutrition uptake of micro-nutrients in every household, especially in those having anaemic mothers.
- Multi-crop demo in two villages with community consensus for food productivity.
- Awareness building on water, sanitation and hygiene inside the villages for strengthening communities against social taboos and myths through community meeting and local strategy development.

Lal Kuan Case Study

We have witnessed transformational changes in communities when they are sensitised and empowered to take



responsibility for their children. An interesting example of the same is witnessed in the work of our partner organisation, Matri Sudha, which has been working towards improving the health and nutritional status of children from the project intervention area of Lal Kuan, near MB Road, Delhi. Extensive programming has been done to achieve the desired goal since 2014-15.

Take the case of Shakila, who lives in a joint family with her husband and three children in Lal Kuan. Upon monitoring her daughter's growth, she was found to be malnourished. A strict patriarchal set up and a strict mother-in-law restricted her movement even when she had to take her daughter to the primary health centre. When Anganwadi workers visited her home, they pointed the extreme health complications of her daughter. With the intervention and counselling of our partner - Matri Sudha, Shakila stood up against her in-laws and got her daughter admitted. Regular visits and continued treatment ensured her daughter was not undernourished anymore. Shakila now attends monthly meetings on nutrition with other community members and Anganwadi workers, encourages other mothers in the community to ensure regular growth monitoring of children, encourages good feeding and nutrition practices, and has become a role model for defying

societal norms to take responsibility for children.

Since 2015, the project has been working extensively towards mitigating urban malnutrition working with the ICDS Department. A study was conducted in the project intervention area. The findings revealed only 25 percent pregnant women knew that a child should be exclusively breastfed until six months, and 40 percent respondents still preferred visiting unqualified doctors in case of illness during pregnancy rather than the public health centre. Accordingly, in 2016, the project worked towards the issue of postnatal care, IYCF (Infant and Young Child Feeding) and community behaviour change on health-seeking behaviour.

Due to extensive work on malnutrition, the project reported a change in the overall status of malnutrition from 69 percent children in normal grade in January 2016 to 75 percent by June 2016. The percentage of severely underweight children also fell from 11 percent to

CRY continuously works with authorities to demand for basic health and nutrition services and Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres towards management of acute cases in our intervention areas. As part of system strengthening our programming, we also incorporate capacity building of service providers of primary health and nutrition services



6.6 percent during this period.

The Path Forward

Our programming adopts a life-cycle approach beginning with pregnant women, lactating mothers, children up to five years of age, and adolescents. We based it on five broad pillars:

1. Community Mobilisation

Good governance at all levels is important. To achieve this through community mobilisation and the empowerment process, the awareness of communities is being increased while also empowering them to hold service providers accountable and ensuring their rights. Tracking of pregnant and lactating women is undertaken to ensure they complete all ante-natal and post-natal check-ups and receive proper nutrition and adequate rest and care. Tracking helps understand who is dropping out of the regimen and why, thereby helping in tackling the problem. It also offers real-time data and helps in taking quick action.

2. Interim Services

Support of interim services is offered in catering to the immediate needs of vulnerable communities. This includes organising health camps and providing emergency medical and nutritional support, demonstration of therapeutic foods from locally available resources to parents and

children's groups, and promotion of the kitchen garden at home, schools and ICDS centres.

3. Advocacy and Networking

Assessments of health and nutrition services institutions are done on the basis of adequacy of staff, infrastructural facilities and quality of services offered vis-à-vis the prescribed provisions and norms and the demands and representations given to various officials and stakeholders. Evidence-based advocacy is a regular process to requisition higher authorities, demanding action and accountability. Constructive collaboration with service providers and district/state level officials is also undertaken, besides networking and aligning with like-minded organisations, networks and entities, as required.

4. Capacity Building

The programming approach focuses on enabling the service provider and supporting/empowering them to take positive action for the community. It includes making them more sensitive to the needs and the situation of women and children from underprivileged backgrounds.

5. Model Building

A community-based management of malnourishment is done and pilot projects are undertaken on an

experimental basis, creating a model for further replication in the State.

We continuously work with authorities to demand for basic health and nutrition services and Nutritional Rehabilitation Centres towards management of acute cases in our intervention areas. As part of system strengthening our programming, we also incorporate capacity building of service providers of primary health and nutrition services.

We do not see one particular issue in isolation but believe in holistic interventions. For instance, if a child is not fed properly, it leads to growth issues, and will later drop out of school. And the causes leading to malnutrition are many, including early marriage, not adequate gap being kept between each child born.

Ultimately, to control the menace of malnutrition and improve infant and mortality rates, the other practices promoted are sensitisation of mothers/families so that institutional deliveries increase. The importance of immunisation is also being propagated among backward sections. Finally, in the war against malnutrition, we believe each step counts and every life saved is equally important. ■

Soha Moitra is Regional Director, North, Child Rights and You (CRY)



A Holistic Approach to Education

Encouraging Independent Thinking in Children Through Interactive Learning



Smitha BS

Careworks Foundation (CWF) is an NGO initiative of Qess Corp Limited (India's leading integrated business services provider) founded in 2014 by Ajit Isaac, CMD, Qess Corp Limited. Driven by a vision to actively contribute to the community, Careworks Foundation works at creating a positive impact in the lives of people, especially in the areas of health and education. In doing so, CWF aims to build a healthy and educated workforce and provide sustainable livelihood for the weaker sections of society.

In present day India, a person aged seven years and above, who can read and write with understanding in any language, is deemed as literate. The Adult Literacy Rate (14-24 years) has shown an upward trend for females as well as males having increased from 61 to 69.3 percent during the period 2001-2011.

The Government of India has undertaken many initiatives to make

education accessible for all children. It however faces challenges to mobilise and distribute investments in education efficiently to its school system. With this in mind, we are working towards supplementing the Government's efforts.

Through our flagship programme 'School Enhancement Programme', we are doing our bit in these existing set-ups to bring about a holistic change

so that children thrive in a positive environment and reach their creative best. We believe that our interventions can be much more impactful when we work in collaboration with the existing set-up. We therefore work at enhancing the overall environment in existing government schools so that children develop an interest to come, learn, experiment, grow and evolve here. Education is the single most



important factor to ensure gender equality and empowerment.

We are currently working with 30 schools, 6000 children and 300 teachers, both in urban and rural areas. Our objective is to give access to quality education to the underprivileged classes thereby empowering them to lead their life with dignity.

Health and education are the primary focus areas for our scope of work. There are several players in the CSR space today; we differ from the rest due to our holistic approach. We strive to strengthen the existing government initiative with our school enhancement programme. The key objective is to create a physical school infrastructure in a manner that enhances the attractiveness of the school to the child, encourages them to attend regularly and also enhances their learning levels; hence we strive to build schools that are safe, comfortable, attractive, child-friendly and accessible to all children.

The school enhancement programme is our umbrella project under which every minute element regarding making school a better place is looked at and worked upon. The programme

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Education is the single most important factor to ensure gender equality and empowerment. CWF's objective is to give access to quality education to the underprivileged classes thereby empowering them to lead their life with dignity

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consists of School Environment, Classroom Environment, Health and Hygiene, Teacher Learning Programme and Academic Support Programme.

An average student in Class II spends almost 800 hours a year in class. This is reason enough to ensure that a classroom be an attractive place that retains the interest of a child.

A positive classroom not only creates a vibrant environment but also encourages creativity.

A bright, colourful school premise is created by painting the school and classrooms. Safety grills, plumbing and proper electrification makes the place accident-free, allowing a child to feel free to explore. Suitable sanitation units are provided and handwash areas are created so that sanitation is maintained at the school and children do not have to go out of the school premises to find places to relieve themselves. The programme ensures learning is suitably supplemented by setting up a well-equipped library and computer room with the required infrastructure.

CWF works in Government schools to create a classroom environment that allows children to flourish. It encourages children to use their imagination and bring out the best within them. We work at providing some of the most basic infrastructure like benches, desks, tables, cupboards and blackboards, which are the bare essentials of a classroom. This is further supplemented by learning and sports materials to keep young minds engaged. We support the



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The Health and Hygiene Programme at CWF works at safeguarding the health of the children. Through its programme, it ensures children imbibe right habits of WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene)

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Government's Nali Kali initiative which is based on the concept of integrating playing with learning. Illustrative concepts of learning are used in the classrooms which help children think independently and encourage interactive learning. Techniques like these simplify concepts of science and maths and make them interesting subjects to learn.

A clean school supports a positive learning experience; it teaches respect for property and encourages good

hygiene practices. Access to safe drinking water and good sanitation promotes good health, and therefore, a better learning ability.

The Health and Hygiene Programme at CWF works at safeguarding the health of the children. Through its programme, it ensures children imbibe right habits of WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene). Children are given access to safe and pure drinking water through water purifiers. Their health is regularly monitored through health camps and any gaps found in a child's health is attended to and thoroughly dealt with necessary follow up.

A teacher plays a pivotal role in the life of a child. A teacher, when empowered with the right skills, can be a role model who inspires and encourages budding minds to see the best in themselves. A teacher can convert a classroom into an energetic and creative learning space.

Our Teacher's Learning Programme encourages teachers to be strong influencers who can mould young minds. The programme provides training to teachers on decision-making and leadership. New trends in interactive teaching methods and

concepts of using technology in teaching are introduced to equip them technologically. Classes on Computer Education, English Speaking and Innovative Teaching Skills to teach concepts of Maths and Science further boost the teachers' abilities to teach confidently in class. Most importantly, teachers are trained on how to impart life skills to their students.

Teaching is not just about curriculum and studying what is in the books. A classroom environment has to go much beyond that. Teachers need to understand the unique strengths of each student and allow the student to bloom, based on his or her interest. Our academic support programme recognises this and further provides academic support that brings out the best in each child.

We provide scholarships to academically-inclined students till they complete their higher education. These scholarships are not just given at intervening schools but also to eligible children in and around the area that we work.

Arts, craft and theatre sessions are organised to help children realise their potentials and interests. Events and fairs are held to showcase the skills



displayed by these young talents. Life skills sessions are conducted to prepare children to face non-academic related challenges and make them workforce ready. Children are taken outdoors for camps. Here, through trained facilitators, children are taught the importance of leadership qualities, working in teams, conflict management and problem solving. These camps have been a big success and are a great way of inculcating life skills amongst children.

At the conception stage of selecting the schools, the process begins with mapping each school to spot the challenges faced by each school. An assessment of the most critical issues are made and then addressed with the involvement of Principals, school teachers, students and parents. The group then get together to identify the most suitable solutions and work on it till it is resolved. We provide facilitation, resources, funds and connects the right people and corporates so that an effective solution is arrived at.

Careworks Foundation believe in bringing together various stakeholders so that the impact is strong.

According to a Gallup's report which studied how likely individuals would

“ Numerically, our work might not be as impressive as other organisations, but we focus and lay more stress on the improvement in quality of life of the children as well as the school environment. This, we believe, is something that goes far beyond numerical impact ”

donate their time and assistance to others, India's Civic Engagement Index Score is an abysmal 28 as compared to the United States' 60, Australia's 59, and even Sri Lanka's 51. At Quess, we encourage our employees to actively participate in several CSR initiatives with opportunities like volunteering for eye-camps, teaching opportunities at the schools we support, to name a few. We also encourage our employees to

support our initiatives in whatever way is possible. This not only help strengthen our own efforts but also give our employees a sense of having contributed to the society's well-being. We engage with employees through platforms like the Joy of Giving, annual days and other such events, encouraging them to volunteer their time, money or efforts to support our programmes.

Over the years of having worked with schools, we have steadily been reaching out to more and more children, bringing long-lasting change in their lives. Numerically, our work might not be as impressive as other organisations, but we focus and lay more stress on the improvement in quality of life of the children as well as the school environment. This, we believe, is something that goes far beyond numerical impact. ■

Smitha BS is Head - CSR of Careworks Foundation. A seasoned corporate social responsibility professional with 16 years of experience, she is responsible for the overall functioning of the Foundation. She holds a Master's Degree in MSW from Mangalore University and is a qualified Research Fellow from the Sathi-Ratan Tata Trust.



Autism Centre for Excellence

Unlocking Unlimited Potentials for Autistic Children



Autism, a development disorder which affects at least one among 68 children in the world, has been one of the least understood problems. It is the third most common developmental disorder. In India, at least 18 million people are affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder. Lack of awareness and absence of early intervention, compounded by poverty, illiteracy and low income, have made the situation worse.

The Special Child Trust launched the Autism Centre for Excellence in 2014 to create a programme for children on the Autism Spectrum from ages ranging from 3 to 15 years. The programme is data-driven and is based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). Some children, unaware of the fact that they have developmental disorder have managed to find their path to happiness and success in their life. This has been possible because ACE believes, and quite justifiably, that individuals of varying abilities can be taught functional skills and communication to lead independent, productive, and rewarding lives as adults. ACE utilises research and standardised educational practices to improve the outcome for children with moderate-to-severe autism. **Dr. Archana Nayar, Director, Autism Centre for Excellence**, in conversation with **Archana Sinha**, reveals the facts about autism and what can be done to integrate these children into mainstream society.

Autism is a behavioural problem in which the affected person suffers from various behavioural issues and is unable to make meaningful, social connect. However, it is very less understood. Can you tell us something about autism and why it affects a child?

A development disorder, autism affects language, communication and socialisation, with symptoms such as lack of eye contact and communicative babbling; with its first symptoms after the age of six months. It is also referred to as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), wherein the 'spectrum' refers to a range of conditions that are characterised by various permutations or combinations of behavioural and communicative challenges. Thus, there are varying degrees of autism that can affect an individual. Other syndromes such as Asperger's, Pervasive Developmental Disorder and Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, also fall on the autism spectrum.

Why it affects an individual is still somewhat of a mystery. It could be due to a number of reasons rather than just one, including environmental, biological and genetic factors.

There is very little intervention for these children in India. How can the country cope with numerous children requiring to be brought under the social system, but cannot, due to lack of adequate institutions, support system and very high monetary requirement, which only a few parents can afford?

The key to controlling autism in individuals is early intervention, and for this, awareness is key. Parents need to know what symptoms to watch out for, and the earlier caught, the better.

Unfortunately, there are not enough affordable institutions available to educate these children. I was personally frustrated with the lack of facilities available, which is one of the main reasons why ACE came about. It was set up in Gurgaon in February 2014 with three classrooms, eight children in each class and 20 teachers on board.

One of the most difficult parts of such initiatives is recruitment. Despite the prevalent talent and inclination towards doing something honourable, there is a desire to lead a comfortable life, which means that there has to be money. We have tried to create a structure where our teachers will be paid for their work.

There are, however, certain habits that one can ensure at home to make life easier for these children and their families. Consistency, for example, is always a major help. For these families, again, I stress on the importance of autism awareness.

How many children are you catering in one academic session and how much have you been able to bring into the mainstream?

We are currently catering to thirty students, and eventually hope to expand while maintaining our core principle of personalised attention.

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Mainstreaming them into society is not purely academic, as far as children with autism are concerned. It has to be done on multiple levels, i.e., socially, which would involve autistic individuals being able to participate in everyday activities. They should be able to go to the mall, to airports, attend functions without any difficulty or judgments. On an academic level, we strive to hone their communication and vocational skills to make them as sustainable as possible on their own.

What are the remedies undertaken for those suffering from extreme cases of autism?

It must be understood that there is no concrete cure for autism; what we try to do is reverse the inability to



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To get somewhere in helping these children, we need to work towards making our society more inclusive. Here, inclusion does not mean kindness or sympathy, but rather equal treatment for disabled children and mainstream children. Whether it is love and affection, or scolding and reprimanding, treatment should be the same. The same opportunities must be provided for both

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communicate and acclimatise the individual to their surroundings, which accordingly affects their social behaviour. Therapy improves speech, language and communication, and

helps an autistic individual adjust to his/her surroundings. The earlier the treatment starts, the higher are its chances of success.

How do you help these children connect with mainstream society?

To get somewhere in helping these children, we need to work towards making our society more inclusive. Here, inclusion does not mean kindness or sympathy, but rather equal treatment for disabled children and mainstream children. Whether it is love and affection, or scolding and reprimanding, treatment should be the same. The same opportunities must be provided for both.

For this inclusion to become a reality, I believe we need to increase the community's awareness about autism. This is what we at ACE try to take initiatives through unique and engaging ways.

What kind of guidance do you offer to the parents?

One of the most important forms of support that we are able to give parents is a sense of community in the entire student-parent body and security in an education programme that is entirely focused towards the needs and capacity of children with autism. Our unique 1:1 teacher-student ratio allows for individualised attention, tailor-made to each child's unique requirements

which allows us to understand where his or her strengths lie.

We also train parents to work with autistic children in home settings, direct them towards various therapies available that could be beneficial for them and their children. More importantly, we also encourage them to reach out to other parents who are facing the same challenges, giving them a sense of community.

Please share some details about your training centre for teachers.

It is a graduate programme that we offer in partnership with a local Indian university and affiliated with an American university. The training we offer teachers equips them with specialised skills in this field which will go on to help them academically, professionally and financially. It is an important incentive that we offer our recruits in an already difficult hiring scenario. Thus, while they are making an impact in the lives of our students and garnering practical experience in doing so, we are also giving them the benefit of a strong theoretical and academic background.

Do you also assist these children find meaningful occupation and become engaged in economically-productive activities?

Most people with autism require structure and consistency. Autistic individuals often have a good long-



ACE aims to create long-term intervention strategies in a child's life from the early years into adulthood so as to understand each child's strengths and capabilities. It also seeks to maximise learning by providing a consistent and safe environment. The programme has been created as a seamless environment between teachers, parents, and care givers so that skills can be rapidly learnt and applied in real life.

ACE is a standardised model of teaching and intervention for autism, which, over time, can be replicated across schools and communities in India.

ACE has been conceptualised in collaboration with Boston-based New England Center for Children (www.necc.org), which has four decades of experience in transforming the lives of children with autism through education, research, and technology. The programme at ACE, a first of its kind in India, is completely data driven and based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), with an approach of a 1:1 student-teacher ratio.

While verbal communication may be problematic for children affected by autism, they do communicate via sign language and picture exchange. While such methods may not allow them to express completely, the little results arising from such methods are far better than no communication or expression at all. I have found through personal experience that some autistic individuals are very eloquent in their picture exchanges.

What advice would you like to share to make people more aware and sensitive towards these mentally challenged children?

The one thing that can increase awareness and sensitivity is increased exposure of the society to individuals affected by autism, and vice-versa. This exposure is imperative and accounts for shifting consciousness. Though a subtle change, it is this shifting consciousness that makes society more welcoming towards these children.

Our efforts cater to a small group, but I am hoping that soon there will be more people coming forward to open units in their areas, cities and villages to offer these children individualised education in the direction of self reliance and independence so that they can live life well. ■

term working memory. They find regularity in repetitive and conducive tasks, and can be trained in these tasks to sustain themselves economically. It is important for the job or task at hand to have a well-defined endpoint. We have in fact set up a café where our students can be trained. We are hopeful that one day, it will be operated by our alumnus.

Some of these children are born in nuclear families where they have to fend for themselves. How do you prepare a child towards that since they are extremely vulnerable to social and economic abuse and can fall prey to anti-social elements in the society?

I would recommend an adult residential programme where individuals affected by autism reside in a group home overseen by a therapist. While we do train our students towards independence and honing their vocational and life skills in the hopes of making them as sustainable as possible, the sad reality is that they might always need some sort of experienced adult supervision.

Some of these children are non-verbal thereby unable to express their feelings if some unpleasant thing is being carried out against them. How do you help them protect themselves or express their fear, anxiety, etc?





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Mormugao Port is a major contributor to the development of the State's economy through promotion of maritime trade. As an important port-of-call on the West coast of India, it plays a crucial role in facilitating international trade, as well as coastal movement of goods.

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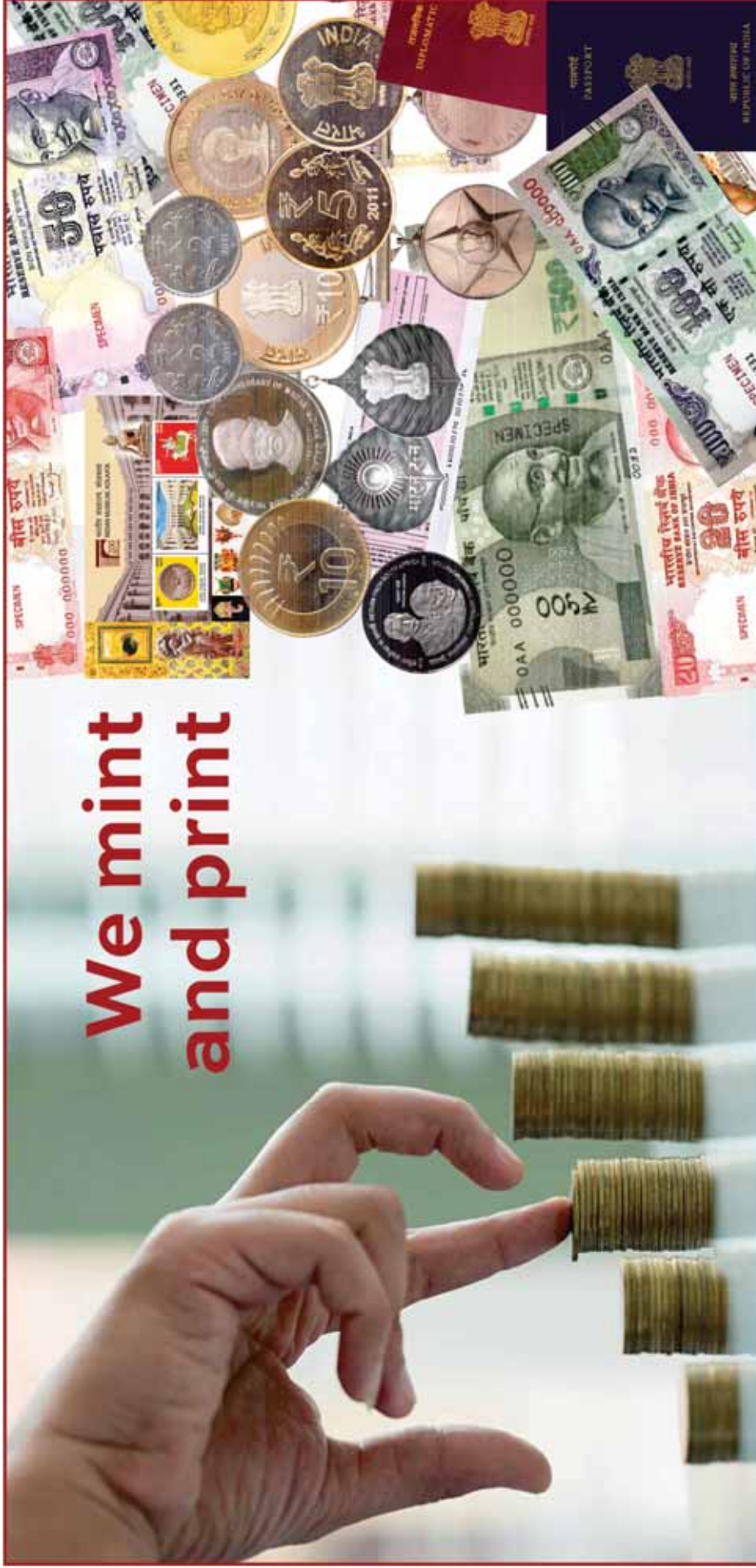
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