

# CSR Governance Addressing Social Issues: A Critical Review

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Governments which are facing major social challenges have looked towards engaging businesses in addressing those challenges by encouraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a part of legislation over the years. The social issues faced by the developed, developing and Least-Developed Countries (LDC's) are different and thus what corporate undertakes as CSR also differs significantly. The paper identifies and elaborates the existence of the various social issues in developed, developing and LDCs. Secondary data has been used to explain governance of CSR across the countries studied, as well as the paper identifies the various social issues and highlights the CSR initiatives that can be undertaken to address the social issues. An attempt has also been made to share a case on impact of governing CSR in India. The paper discusses the role of structured CSR initiatives in addressing social issues with a special emphasis on health and education area. The paper provides background for future studies to statistically verify the constructs.

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**Key Words:** CSR governance, Developing countries, Least developed countries, Social issues, Health, Education

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## INTRODUCTION

We live in a world where we are surrounded by issues like climate change, dying species, financial instability, terrorism, unemployment, fatal diseases, water scarcities, malnutrition, and intractable poverty. These issues lie within the society and affect the present and the future generations. Some of these issues are beyond the ability of the nation alone to address it. Social issues tend to develop when negative consequences are neglected over a period. Some of the social issues arise due to the depraved actions of people and organizations and can be avoided or addressed. Thus, there lies an equal responsibility of people and organizations to address these social issues in some form.

Organizations by nature of their operations have both good and bad effects on the society as well as on the environment. These effects influence talent acquisition and

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engagement, land acquisition, certifications, recognition and market reputation of companies. Organizations have realized that they receive from society, a social sanction with an assurance that they, in return, should contribute to the society's growth and development. Long-term business success can only be achieved by organizations that recognize Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to be a part of their core values and create a competitive advantage. Global organizations by nature and vast expanse are expected to take up CSR activities addressing the social issues in its areas of operation irrespective of the boundaries.

Though companies are initiating CSR activities addressing social issues (Werner, 2009) yet, a large number of them are inspired by the benefits received due to the emphasis on CSR by the government (Carroll and Buchholtz, 2008). Mandating CSR through legislation has a cascading effect on companies in initiating the CSR drive (Holtzschneider, 2015). In spite of large acceptance and presence of CSR across the world, Levitt (1958) set up a base for the debate about the role of social responsibility in business and emphasized that "government's job is not business, and business's job is not government". That the mere existence of CSR was a signal of an agency problem within the firm was emphasized upon by Friedman (1970). Countries have debated that whether CSR should be mandated by introducing it as a part of legislation or not. CSR by its definition is interpreted to remain voluntary and market-driven whereas today the essence of CSR is revolutionizing from 'voluntary' to more 'obligatory' to companies.

Reich (1998) has explained that the Government should act as an arbiter of businesses' responsibility in society. This perspective has been reinforced by another point of view that sees government as helping business to achieve CSR using control, enforcement and regulation (Broberg, 1996). The concern of CSR being mandated may lead some individuals and interest groups being in a favorable position whereas others may not. The idea of governing company's CSR activities grabs away the essence of CSR and its successful implementation. There is a less possibility of raising standards through standardization, as this would remove the true spirits of undertaking CSR. There is a large possibility of CSR processes and practices leading to more corruption in such scenario.

Comparative studies on CSR have not been undertaken much, as compared to other related fields, such as those of corporate governance or corporate law. Research in CSR is still in its 'emergent' form (McWilliams, Siegel and Wright, 2006). Literature review reveals the lack of a consistent definition of CSR. This lack of consistency in defining CSR across studies makes it more debatable. Researches explain CSR in different dimensions making it more difficult to evaluate and compare the findings. On the other hand, several countries have employed the tools of legislation, regulation and taxation, for the government for promotion and protection of social objectives (Bichta, 2003). There is a lack of literature which measures the social impact of these tools used by the government. There are hardly any research studies which discuss the CSR governance and its impact.

In the backdrop of the above concern where there is no uniformity in defining and regulating CSR, an attempt has been made to study CSR from an international perspective and understand the role of Governments in governing CSR across developed, developing countries and Least Developed Countries (LDCs). An attempt has also been made to share a case on impact of governing CSR in India. Believing in the voluntary nature of CSR, a large number of countries have made reporting mandatory. The support extended from government or legislation in countries distinctly differs. The role of government is also very country specific, majorly being an enabling entity to more structured CSR implementation. It has been observed that the CSR initiatives in developing countries and LDC's are more oriented towards addressing social issues like poverty reduction, employment generation, education, health and environment (Hohnen, 2008). Whereas, the rest of the world considers CSR more as 'conservation of nature' related initiatives. A large difference exists in the kind of initiatives that are considered as CSR in developed, developing countries and LDC's.

It is in this context the paper intends to discuss the existence of social issues of countries. The paper also discusses the CSR approaches of developed, developing countries and LDC's with emphasis to health and education as an important CSR area. The paper attempts to answer whether Governing CSR address social issues.

The objectives of the paper are three folded:

- To elaborate the existence of social issues in developed, developing and LDCs.
- To discuss the government initiatives in encouraging corporate to undertake activities addressing the social issues.
- To discuss the role of government in addressing social issues by encouraging CSR.

#### NEED FOR THE STUDY

The paper discusses whether governing CSR is an attempt to address social issues of the country. Though government is expected to address varied social issues yet; in larger developing countries it alone cannot make a difference specially when there is a huge gap in awareness. Thus, governing CSR is a positive attempt in encouraging corporate to partner in synergizing the efforts by both supplementing and complementing the efforts of the government in addressing social issues. The paper efforts to make policy makers as well as practitioners think on the scope of governing CSR for initiating a collaborative effort in addressing social issues of countries across the globe.

#### SOCIAL ISSUES ACROSS COUNTRIES

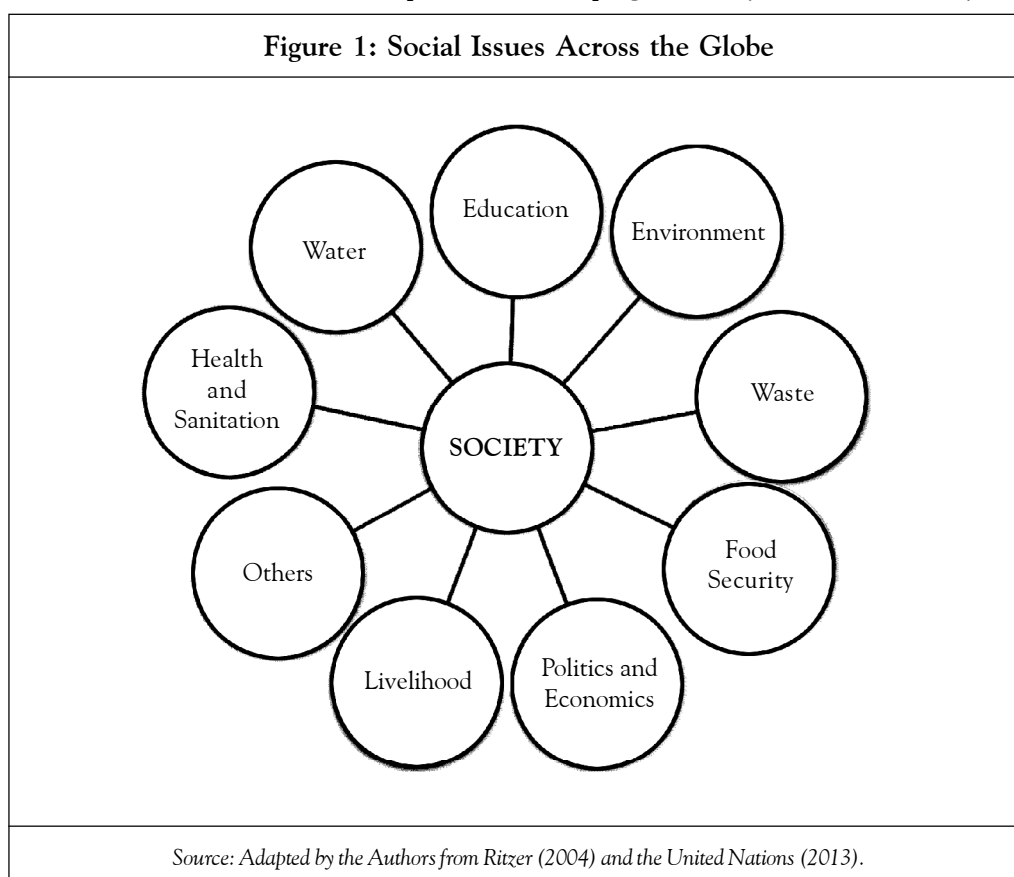
Defining social issues in a global perspective have been an incessant task yet; there are iconic works of McLendon (1953) wherein social issues have been explained as unsolved problems, unanswered questions in human affairs, and the situations of conflict

in society. Every society of the world has social issues unique to their society. Some of the countries suffer from extreme poverty where as the others are surrounded by issues of safety and security of women, rising industrial, etc. There are many countries which face issues related to water, education, health, waste management and food security. On the contrary, there are countries which are affected by the political and economical issues including social exclusions. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the year 2030 set by United Nations ranks eradicating poverty and hunger as the top two of its priorities.

Figure 1 shares the broad social issues across the world. The social issues that have been considered are based on the work of Ritzer (2004) and have been adapted from the United Nations' (2013) TST issue briefs on countries in special situation. The social issues considered are then interpreted in relation to the magnitude of the issues to the development status of the countries.

The existence of the social issues in the developed, developing and LDCs are as reflected in Table 1 and are based on the reports and data available on various UN websites. Patterson (1984), and Ward, Fox, Wilson and Zarsky (2008) discussed the social issues in context of developed and developing economy. There are hardly any

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researches in context of LDCs unlike research of Koirala (2013). The work of Visser and Tolhurst (2010) has also been referred to draft the Table 1. It is interesting to see that not all issues are high concern for the LDCs and there are a relative number of issues which are of high concern even to the developed nations. Identification of social issues provides an understanding of what can be initiated to prioritize and resolve these issues.

### ADDRESSING SOCIAL ISSUES – ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The effort towards undertaking CSR widely differs from country to country. ACSSR (2009) reveals that even though Australia is a developed country yet, CSR is not

Table 1: Social Issues Across Countries				
	Key Issue in the Area	Developed	Developing	Least Developed Countries
Health and sanitation	Accessibility to Health Infrastructure			
	Quality of the Health facilities			
	Cost of Health facilities			
	Malnutrition			
	Infant mortality			
	Existence of Communicable diseases			
	Geriatric care			
Water	Water conservation			
	Access to safe drinking water			
Education	Accessibility to Education Infrastructure including student teacher ratio			
	Quality of the Education facilities			
	Cost of Education			
	School Dropouts			
	Enrolment ratio			
	Literacy rate			
Environment	Effects on Bio-diversity			
	Climate change and global warming			
	Industrial Pollution and harmful emission			
	Deforestation			

Table 1 (Cont.)

	<b>Key Issue in the Area</b>	<b>Developed</b>	<b>Developing</b>	<b>Least Developed Countries</b>
	Water pollution and availability			
	Natural Disasters			
Waste	Waste Accumulation			
	Waste Disposal			
Food security	Sustainable agriculture and forestry			
Economical and Political issues	Economic, financial, and trade issues.			
	Government, politics, and international relations			
	Law and law enforcement issues			
	Rights issues			
	War and military issues			
Livelihood	Skill development			
	Sustainable income generation			
	Entrepreneurship opportunities			
	Technology innovations for development			
	Women Empowerment			
Other issues	Crime and Violence			
	Cultural preservation and ethnic heritage			
	Labor and employment issues			
	Science and technology issues.			
Interpretations:				
Not an existing issue		Existing issue with low concern		Existing issue with high concern
<i>Source: Authors</i>				

mainstreamed and reducing the environmental impacts stands as the close second priority. Data of US (BSR, 2009) reveals that climate change was one of the top two issue and other priority issues were job creation, human rights. The BCCCC (2009) survey reveals that reputation was a driver to corporate citizenship in US.

UNDP (2006) data reveals that the developing countries are where the social and environmental crises are usually most acutely felt in the world (WRI, 2005). Visser (2008) stated that "CSR in developing countries is seen as a way to the fill the

'governance gaps' left by weak, corrupt, or under-resourced governments that fail to adequately provide various social services like housing, roads, electricity, healthcare, education, etc." Consejo Empresario para el Desarrollo Sostenible (CEADS) has more than 50 corporate members in Argentina to promote sustainable development (CEADS, n.d.). The priority issues of Bangladesh are corruption and governance followed by poverty, population and working conditions. Alam (2010) points out that Bangladesh government has announced tax benefits for CSR based activities in late 2008.

Addressing social issues is very crucial for government and thus government is primarily expected to create an enabling environment for raising awareness and stimulating public debate for the existing social challenges and issues. The government alone cannot make a difference to the society and thus is expected to include more actors in society for defining policies addressing social issues also encouraging business responsibility in dealing with the social issues. The government is also expected to build capacities of businesses, civil societies and public authorities; fund research studies related to social development and engage in Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for larger social impacts. Social issues can be addressed by initiating structured and sustainable efforts in the form of CSR and the government can act as a facilitator to undertake strategic, structured and impact-oriented CSR.

### GOVERNANCE OF CSR: THE EVOLUTIONARY PERSPECTIVE

Lepoutre, Dentchev and Heene (2006) have explained that though CSR is beyond legal compliance, yet there is an increasing popularity of public policies known as 'New Governance' policies. This New Governance concept envisions the Government to engage in a horizontal inter-organizational network of societal actors. Through this network the government is expected to frame and execute public policies by the interacting and in accordance with the voluntary efforts from the different stakeholders involved rather than through a hierarchical command-and-control mode of public administration (Kooiman, 1993).

History has witnessed the evolving journey of legislation supporting social agendas. According to Dossing (2003), there are three generations of CSR, the first being focused on "short-term corporate interests and motives"; the second emphasizing on "long-term success strategies". The present third generation is aimed at the role of businesses in addressing more imperative issues like poverty, exclusion, and environmental degradation. The era of 1970s witnessed the changes in legislations and policies addressing social issues such as health and safety of employees, education, consumer protection rights, and environmental protection.

### THE DEVELOPED COUNTRY PERSPECTIVE

Bichta (2003), elaborates that European member states during the earlier twentieth century had developed legislations related to health and safety at work, the firm and

employee relations, environmental concerns, discrimination and equal opportunities at the workplace, etc. Research studies also reveal that the objective of the private sector companies in Europe was more of profit compared to both commercial and social objectives of the European state-owned companies.

Enloe (1975) discussed the new laws that were introduced in Britain and United States and shares that these countries also introduced new agencies like the Department of Environment and Environmental Protection Agency to protect the concerns of environment and society. There was a positive response to the new legislation by corporations. In UK, the first real law of CSR is based on 'Disclose'. Sec 172 - Companies Act, 2006 UK emphasizes on environment, social, and economical focus by redefining the duties of the director. Even though the Act does not make spending or implementing CSR activities mandatory, yet the duties of a director to promote the company's success are based on Triple Bottom Line (Sec 172 - Companies Act, 2006).

Sweden is known for the efforts it has taken towards encouraging CSR. There is no specific regulation system in place concerning CSR of companies in the country. There are however accounting practices that affect CSR to some extent. Irrespective of no specific regulation concerning CSR in 2013, Sweden topped the Robeco SAM country sustainability ranking with its revolutionary focus on demanding sustainability reports from its state-owned enterprises. Reporting in compliance with Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) guidelines has been further emphasized. GRI has now gained a greater importance worldwide and reports from PWC (2010) clarifies that about half of all the private companies that report on sustainability use the GRI as a way of communicating CSR efforts.

Reporting has become a buzz work from corporate to stock exchanges. The Socially Responsible Investing (SRI) index was introduced by the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in 2004 (Maguire, 2011). Countries like Brazil, India, China and South Africa have initiated higher involvement in CSR related activities through CSR reporting, mainly indicated to promote the listed companies' credibility, transparency, and endurance. Though the government in these countries have a vision for implementation of CSR initiatives, the research by Petkoski and Twose (2003) reveals that Governments of developing countries are viewing CSR activities as a means for enhancing sustainable development strategies; as a part of their national competitiveness strategies in attracting foreign direct investment and improving exports; and to progress on delivering poverty-focused public policy goals.

#### THE DEVELOPING COUNTRY PERSPECTIVE

China's policy vision during the mid -2000's was building 'a harmonious society' which was adopted as a policy mandate by the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 2006 (Sharma, 2013). This policy focused on the enactment of new environmental



and labor legislation, and also ensured the incorporation of CSR as a part of the revision to China's Company Law in 2006. The Article 5, Company Law of People's Republic of China (2013 revision) states that Chinese companies shall "comply with the laws and administrative regulations, social morality, business morality and also bear social responsibilities". Maguire (2011) highlights that the Shanghai and Shenzhen Stock Exchange of China also encouraged CSR reporting in its guidelines.

#### GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGING REPORTING

Studies have consistently found that reporting rates have been the highest in Europe, followed by Japan, with the United States (US) showing the lowest rates of reporting among comparable companies (Kolk, 2003; Welford, 2004; and KPMG, 2005). KPMG (2015) now shares that India has surpassed showing highest Corporate Responsibility (CR) reporting due to the combined effort of business sustainability reporting issued by Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and Sec 135 of Companies Act, 2013 by Government of India (GoI).

Okoye (2012) advised a contextual approach to identify CSR objectives and recognizes the need for frameworks which law can provide. Numerous studies have compared the CSR practices and have come up with a very significant difference in the approach to CSR across countries. Matten and Moon (2004) compared CSR in Europe and the US. CSR in the US is encouraged as a voluntary activity addressing social and economic issues. Companies in Europe and the UK, in contrast, are expected to undertake such issues as part of their legal responsibilities. Thus, they concluded that USA followed what is termed as 'explicit' and UK and Europe followed the 'implicit' form of CSR.

Maignan and Ralston (2002) reveal that UK firms were more performance driven compared to the US, based on the extension of their core company values. Dutch and French firms displayed a blend of all approaches including performance, value, and stakeholder-driven approach. Stakeholders' pressure on companies towards addressing social issues differs across countries. Maignan's (2001) studied the consumer attitudes and demands towards CSR and firms. Research by Maignan and Ralston (2002) revealed that CSR of companies in the UK are driven by communities and consumers while customers and regulators play a major role in France and Netherlands.

As several countries initiate governing CSR, it becomes inevitable for governments to measure the impact of CSR. It is essential to frame some metrics and measure the impact of CSR initiatives undertaken.

#### CROSS-COUNTRY VIEW ON IMPACT OF CSR

Studies have attempted to measure the effects of CSR activities, which include financial as well as non-financial measures such as brand image, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty, sales growth, market value, and talent attraction and management.

The literature studied has not been categorized into impact of CSR in developed, developing and LDCs as there are not many existing studies which classify financial and non-financial impact in country specific segment.

Hillman and Keim (2001) questioned company's attempts to address social issues irrespective of being economically viable. The research revealed that companies that attempt to address social issues that are not directly related to their primary stakeholders may not bring about similar value for their shareholders. Tang, Eirikur and Rotenberg (2012) in their meta-analysis of American enterprises with diversified profiles from 1995 to 2007 found that there was a positive impact of CSR on firm's financial performance: Return on Assets (ROA) and Return on Equity (ROE). The study of Aupperle, Carroll and Harfield (1985) reported no significant relationship between CSR efforts and short- or long-term financial performance and ROA. Kahneman, Knetsch and Thaler (1986) found a causal link between CSR and financial performance. Russo and Fouts (1997) and Lo and Sheu (2007) explained a positive relationship between social performance and financial performance of corporates. Financial performance of the companies would be measured differently in different research studies such as NPV ratio, profit margin, sales growth, share price increases, ROA, ROE, ROI, etc. Study of Bhattacharya, Korschun and Sen (2009) found that CSR-stakeholder relationship is imperative than the CSR-business performance linkage.

In context of developing countries, Johnson and Greening (1999) have reported a strong relationship between firms' ownership structure and CSR in developed countries, while in a Chinese study of Li and Zhang (2010) it was evident that there was a difference in the behavior of firms controlled by the state and those which were privately-owned, providing further clarity on the same. A study on Indian banks by Singh and Agarwal (2013) disclosed that CSR orientation of banks differed mainly due to the date of their incorporation, ownership, and number of employees. Salmones, Herrero and Rodryguez Del Bosque (2005) reported that the behavior of respecting environment and communities has a positive effect on brand image and building loyal stakeholders. The same is iterated by Manaktola and Jauhari (2007) and David, Kline and Dai (2005) with respect to consumption of natural resources, engaging in social causes and fair treatment to all employees.

Experimental study (Brown and Dacin, 1997; and Brown, 1998) highlighted that CSR affects either directly or indirectly, also influence customer-company identification (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001), customer donations to nonprofit organizations (Lichtenstein, Minette and Bridgette, 2004) and customer product attitude (Berens, Cees, van Riel and Gerrit, 2005).

Studies with respect to developed countries, Williams and Conley, (2005) shares that CSR affecting decisions of institutional investors is of low concern in the US than in the UK. CSR profiles can be handled by such investors as they act as competitive

advantage if managed well and also backfire if mismanaged (Solomon, Solomon and Suto, 2004). Ownership structure and number of employees also plays a significant role in successful implementation of CSR activities. In the Scandinavian (non-shareholder) model, the emphasis is on employee representation. This model is imposed as a result of state regulation encouraging the representation of stakeholders including consumers, employees, the environment, and local community members (Broberg, 1996).

## METHODOLOGY

An attempt has been made to study nine countries of which three developed, developing and LDC's (classification by OECD). Various legislations of select countries have been studied to make an understanding of the CSR perspective of the select legislations of these countries. Though the countries have been randomly chosen to enable a representative sample yet; the extent of missing information has been considered while short listing the least developed countries. The countries considered for the study are

*Developed Countries:* Australia, Canada and USA;

*Developing Countries:* Argentina, India and China; and

*Least Developed Countries:* Myanmar, Maldives and Bhutan.

Though there are several social issues like environment, gender equality, discrimination, fair wages, health, education, and empowerment yet, two major areas of concern for nation development are 'health' and 'education'. 'Good health and well being' and 'quality education' stands as the third and fourth goal of the 17 SDGs for the year 2030. The CSR intervention in health and education has been discussed to explain how CSR can address social issues of countries.

## GOVERNING CSR: ENCOURAGING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Government has a major role in enabling social responsibility of corporates. The government in various countries offers tax breaks to multinational companies for social investments in return. Bhave (2009) noted that the UK Government removed the upper limit for tax relief as an effort towards maximizing donations. It introduced a payroll giving grants scheme and a quality mark award to inspire small and medium-sized industries to join the agenda. Some countries have cultures traditionally based on philanthropy whereas others initiate CSR majorly due to the existence of regulatory laws or corporate governance related laws. Table 1 clarifies that most of the developed nations have two major concerns being 'environment' and 'fair labor practices'. On the other hand for both developing countries and LDC's, other social issues are invariably high. Thus, community development is a major agenda apart from others like health and workplace quality. An attempt has also been made to understand the CSR approaches of the countries. Jones, Felps and Bigley (2007) has explained four major approaches to CSR as: descriptive, instrumental, normative and strategic. The same is explained as given in Table 2.

	<b>Normative Approach</b>	<b>Instrumental Approach</b>	<b>Descriptive Approach</b>	<b>Strategic Approach</b>
Literature support	(Young and Thyl, 2008).	(Boesso, Kumar and Michelin, 2013).	Berman, Wicks, Kotha and Jones, 1999	(Garriga and Mele, 2004; and (Simmons, 2004)
Perspectives	Moral obligation and justification	Engage only those stakeholders who can influence corporate performance	Focuses on transparency	Promoting economic objectives
	Prescribes how stakeholders should be treated based on some underlying moral or philosophical principles	Create accountability relationships that help accomplishment of mutually important goals	Accountability on social, environmental, and financial performance	Manage responsibly an extended web of stakeholder interests across boundaries
			Advocating the sustainability and 'license-to-operate' views	

It is not essential that a country needs to have a separate legislation encouraging CSR. It is all about how the government encourages the sense of responsible behavior with its existing legislations. The important element of governing CSR is whether the government seeks shoulders and shares its vision of addressing social issues with the corporate.

Table 3 broadly reflects the legislations/programs encouraging CSR, thrust areas and CSR approach in each country.

It is evident from Table 3 that LDCs do not have much legislations or programs encouraging either social responsibility or responsible reporting. There is hardly any secondary data available regarding CSR governance in these countries. The developed and developing countries are encouraging CSR to address environmental, economical as well as social development. The CSR approach in these countries also differs as the governance of CSR varies conspicuously.

### **ADDRESSING SOCIAL ISSUES BY ENCOURAGING CSR**

As social issues differ across the world, listing all issues is a huge effort. Issues like biodiversity, climate change, coastal and marine management, forests and forestry, can be addressed through environment related initiatives. There are other issues which can be classified to water, energy, health and sanitation, education, etc. The social

**Table 3: Highlights the Domestic Legislation of Select Countries**

Name of the Country	Legislation/Programs with Regard to CSR	Source	Thrust Areas	Essentialities	Approach
Australia	The Australian Securities Exchange, 2014	www.asx.com.au	Environment and social sustainability	All listed companies	Descriptive
	Code of Conduct on ESG Reporting, 2015	ESG reporting guide for Australian companies www.asx.com.au	Environmental, sustainability, financial reporting, and market-related risks	All listed companies	
	Corporate Social Responsibility & Human Rights, 2008	www.humanrights.gov.au	Fair wages, non-discrimination, work conditions, harassment and other employee rights	All companies	
Canada	The Environmental Protection Act, 1999	www.laws-lois.justice.gc.ca	Prevention of pollution, Environment and Human health	All companies	Descriptive
	Inclusion of economic diplomacy to Bill C-300	www.openparliament.ca/bills/40-3/C-300/	Human rights and environmental record	Canadian Companies operating abroad	
	Corruption of Foreign Public Officials Act, 1999	www.laws-lois.justice.gc.ca	Corruption, Bribery and promoting good business practices	Canadian Companies	
USA	National Action Plan on Responsible Business Conduct.	www.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov	promote and incentivize responsible business conduct, implement the U.N. Guiding Principles	All companies	Descriptive
	Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know	www.epa.gov/epcra	Toxic chemical releases and waste management	All manufacturing companies	

Table 3 (Cont.)

Name of the Country	Legislation/Programs with Regard to CSR	Source	Thrust Areas	Essentialities	Approach
	Act (EPCRA), 1986 Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, 2008	www.e2es.org	Greenhouse Gas emissions (energy Conservation and Renewable energy)	Power plants	
Argentina	National Labor Law No. 25.877, regarding Social Balance, 2004.	Legist, (2013) Vol IX, issue 3, June	Labor practices	Companies with more than 300 workers	Descriptive
	CSR Law No. 8.488 *Provincial law, 2012	KPMG Report, (2013)	Economic, Environmental, Social, Human rights Fair labor practices	Companies with more than 300 workers	
India	Glacier Law, 2010	Legist, (2013) Vol IX, issue 3, June	Environment	Mining companies	Instrumental
	Environment & Climate Change Law, 2014	www.worldbank.org	Sustainable Development	All companies	
	Companies Act, 2013	www.mca.gov.in	Social development and Environmental issues	All companies who fulfill the specifications	
China	DPE CSR and Sustainability Guidelines, 2013	www.dpe.gov.in	Social development and Environmental issues	All Central Public Enterprises who fulfill the specifications	Instrumental
	Shenzhen Stock Exchange Social Responsibility Guidelines for Listed Companies, 2006	www.szse.cn	Social responsibility	All listed companies in SZSE 100 index (100 companies).	

Table 3 (Cont.)

Name of the Country	Legislation/Programs with Regard to CSR	Source	Thrust Areas	Essentialities	Approach
	Shanghai Stock Exchange, 2008	www.szse.cn	Protection of employee health and safety, quality control of the company products, and promoting a sustainable environment and ecosystem	Companies listed CGI Index and in both domestic and overseas markets and financial companies	
	The State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council (SASAC) Guidelines, 2008	www.en.sasac.gov.cn/	Social and environmental aspects of enterprises.	State-owned Enterprises Directly under the Central Government	
	Environmental, Social and Governance Reporting Guide, 2012	Highlights of the Revised HKEx Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Reporting Guide, KPMG	Social and environment: workplace quality, environmental protection, operating practices, and community involvement	Listed companies	
Myanmar	The Environmental Conservation Law, 2012	The Pyidaungsu Hluttaw Law No. 9 / 2012	Environment	For all. Especially oil and gas companies	Strategic
Maldives	The UN Anticorruption Convention, 2005	www.unodc.org	Anti corruption	All	Strategic
Bhutan	New industrial emission standards set up by the National Environmental Commission (NEC), 2013	www.nec.gov.bt/	Environment/climate change/community health	Factory	Strategic

Source: Compiled by Authors. Only select legislation has been considered

issues identified in Figure 1 have been considered for describing the CSR initiatives that can address the social issues. The CSR practices that have been shared as a part of Table 4 is broadly based on the understanding gained from CSR and sustainability reports of top companies across the world. CSR initiatives shared are not restricted to Table 4 and can be beyond the areas identified.

<b>Broad Area</b>	<b>Social Issues</b>	<b>CSR Initiatives</b>
Water	Water supply, Water resources management	Water conservation, Water harvesting, water infrastructure, access to safe clean and drinking water
Health and Sanitation	Health, nutrition, and population, Malaria, Safe motherhood, Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, sanitation	Accessibility to Health Infrastructure, Quality of the Health facilities, Cost of Health facilities, Geriatric care, Immunization, Health camps, Nutritional supplements, hygienic Sanitation awareness and infrastructure
Education	Education Infrastructure, student teacher ratio, quality education, Enrolment ratio, School Dropouts, Literacy rate	Augmenting educational infrastructure, encouraging quality education, awareness camps, girl child education, scholarships to the needy and meritorious students, promoting adult education, mainstreaming disabled children and drop-outs
Environment and Energy	Biodiversity, Climate change, Environment, Sustainable development, Protection of the ozone layer, Forests and forestry, Coastal and marine management, Fisheries and aquaculture, Natural resources management, Natural disasters. Energy crises: Renewable and rural energy,	Conservation of Natural resources and biodiversity, Disaster management, Waste management, Afforestation and plantation, awareness against pollution control and conserving biodiversity Energy conservation initiatives, Technology innovations.
Poverty	Poverty, Hunger, Labor and employment issues	Ensuring food availability, micro-financing, Sustainable agricultural support, Sustainable income generation, Skill development, capacity building, Livelihood generation
Livelihood	Improving opportunity for income generation,	Skill development initiative linked to local needs and opportunity, offering vocational courses. Initiating income generation opportunities,
Food security	Improving food availability for all, Quality and nutritious food accessibility.	Agriculture development support, educating farmers on newer technique to enhance yields, Improving livestock status



Table 4 (Cont.)

Broad Area	Social Issues	CSR Initiatives
Politics and Economics	Transparency, accountability of key officials and corporates, policies encouraging development and growth of the country.	Ensuring ethical practices aligned to the laws of the land. Setting accountability by establishing internal bodies and committees. Maintaining transparency to avoid implementation frauds and duplication of efforts.
Other issues	Conflict prevention and post conflict reconstruction, Terrorism, Corruption, Debt relief, trade issues, Law enforcement issues, War and military issues, Science and technology development, Crime and Violence, Rights issues.	Draft corporate policies encouraging anti-corruption, anti-terrorism, fair trade and equal rights, Establish science and technology incubators, Initiatives against crime and violence against women, Protect child rights.

*Source: Authors*

### CSR ADDRESSING HEALTH: A SOCIAL ISSUE

The living conditions of the country have a significant influence on the chances of its citizens enjoying a long and healthy life. Provisions for health vary across the world. Planning health provision is challenging for countries due to the costs as well as various social, cultural, political and economical influences.

On one hand countries are heading towards development, on the other hand, concerns like aging population, increasing epidemic diseases, rising alcoholism, and drugs, decreasing fertility rate, deteriorating health conditions of mother and child in several countries are becoming deep concerns. When discussing CSR, 'Health based initiatives' clearly stands out as a leader. Countries are spending a considerable part of GDP on improving health care quality and accessibility. The work of Brookings Institution (2013) reflects that corporate spending to global health is 16 times the spent on global education yet, there is a large gap in the required expenditure on health in both developing countries and LDC's.

Issues like plague, tuberculosis, malnutrition, infant and child mortality are major issues to LDCs. Health is not only an issue to developing and LDCs but also an equal concern to developed countries. Developed and wealthier countries are now facing the health crisis of more non-communicable diseases on the grand scale. World Health Science (2010) highlights that the western lifestyle is "characterized by a high-calorie diet, rich in fat and refined sugars and animal proteins". The technology-driven lifestyle with less physical activities and increased dietary issues leading to imbalance causing cancer, obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular diseases. As the health issues vary from developed, developing countries and least-developed nation, the approach to CSR in health also varies. CSR initiatives in LDCs and developing countries are majorly—operating mobile medical units

in rural areas, organizing health camps, immunization drive, providing nutritional supplements to pregnant and lactating mothers including infant and children, creating awareness on health and sanitation and building health infrastructure.

#### CSR ADDRESSING 'EDUCATION': A SOCIAL ISSUE

Poor education is arguably at the heart of many social problems. Lack of education leads to social issues like crime, poverty, unemployment, and sexual attitudes leading to unwanted or unexpected pregnancies. Education has the power to abolish early marriages and can make a difference to remove old cultural norms of gender discrimination and empower women. Education therefore has a large impact on the overall life of an individual as it shapes ones attitude.

Governments in every country set up the overall framework that shapes the education system and defines how it must operate, and also define the organization and structure of the system. Factors like years of compulsory education, students' age for entry in school, grade levels, courses offered, teachers' qualifications, provision of compulsory education (public and/or private actors), choices of schools, mechanism of financing education, standards by which education providers are held accountable play a major role in determining the accessibility and quality of access to education of the country. Governments spend on education reveals how valued is 'education' as a factor to the development of the country.

Fortune Global 500 companies are committed to spending at least 20% of their CSR budgets towards education initiatives, total education-related CSR spending has risen from \$US2.6 billion to US\$4 billion. A report of the Business Backs Education (2015) reveals the CSR spend of Fortune 500 companies as given in Table 5. The analysis also reveals that a large number of companies are spending a remarkable percentage on Education as CSR. Chinese Fortune 500 companies are leading the table in spending 97% of CSR spend on Education.

S. No.	Country Name	Average CSR Spend 2011-13 (In Million)	No. of Fortune Global 500 Companies who Conducted CSR in 'Education'	Spend on Education (In percent)
1.	Canada	235.6	4	31
2.	USA	10254	132	40
3.	UK	2647	26	24
4.	Australia	980	8	62
5.	China	253	95	97
6.	India	81	8	87

Source: \* Compiled by author on the basis of data from: Business Backs Education (2015)

Education is an important issue and Table 4 reveals the country status and expenditure on education. The developed countries are far better in the status of education yet; there are a large number of organizations which spends more on education as CSR. Comparatively, the LDCs do not have many corporate to support undertaking CSR activities leading to CSR country spend being poor, which further demeans the status of education in these countries. Access to quality education, maintaining student-teacher ratio, promoting skill based education are some of the areas which corporate focuses as CSR interventions in education.

#### LIMITATIONS AND SCOPE OF FURTHER RESEARCH

The study comprises of secondary data of only 9 countries. There is a large scope for undertaking research which considers larger sample of countries from each category of Developed, Developing, and LDCs. Further studies can be conducted on various other issues pertaining to the development of the country like gender equality, sanitation, climate change and environment could be dealt in depth to understand the scope of CSR activities in these areas.

#### INDIA ADDRESSING SOCIAL ISSUES BY GOVERNING CSR: A CASE

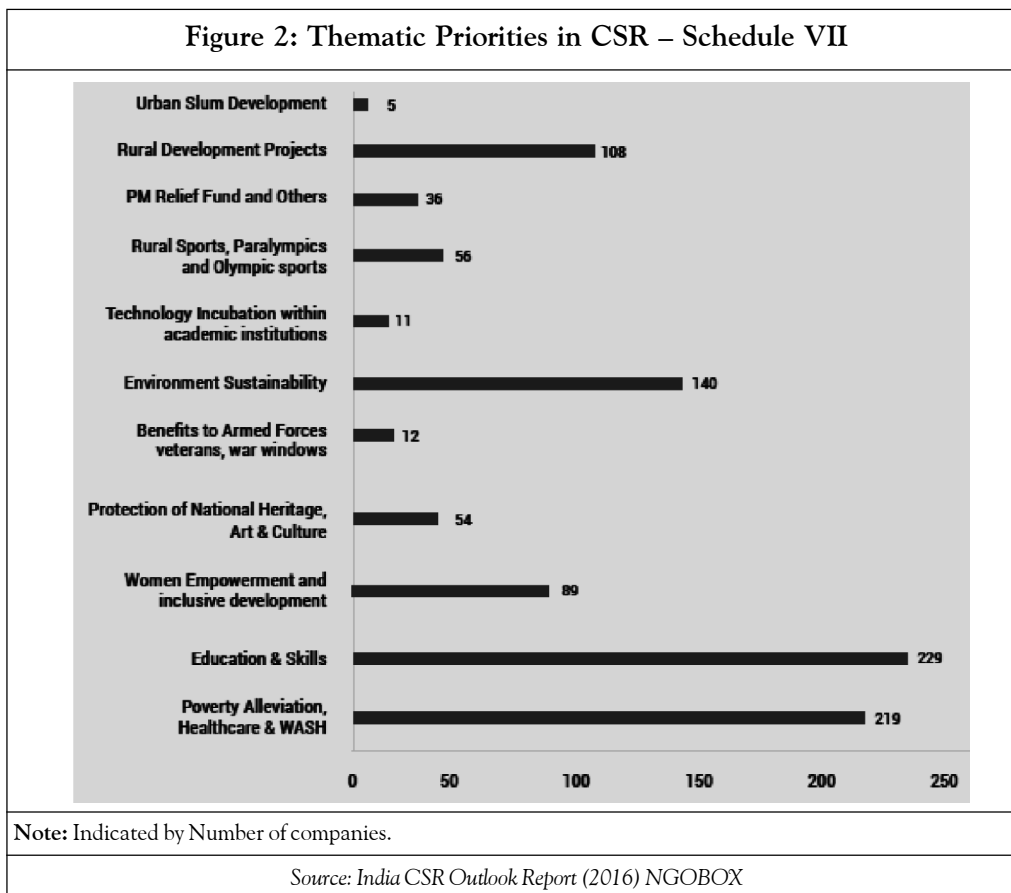
India has been facing a large number of social issues since ages. The case of a developing country like India is apt to discuss as it is one of the recent attempts in mandating CSR as well as it would provide an easy understanding of how governing CSR has attempted to address the social issues of India.

The GoI approached CSR through Section 135 of Companies Act, 2013. The Act necessitates CSR spending for companies with specified revenue and profit size. The Act is based on 'Comply or Explain mode' thus encouraging companies to improve CSR reporting. The Act also urges companies to leverage their business acumen and core competencies to address social issues using a project mode enabling them to measure the impact over a period of time. Schedule VII is a comprehensive list of areas identified by the GoI to undertake CSR initiatives. It is drafted to addresses wide range of both social and environmental issues of the country.

A report on CSR by Times of India (2016) reveals that India's total CSR reporting increased by 27% in 2015 as a result of the mandate. KPMG certified it as an iconic figure and reported it to be maximum among 45 countries. Out of the total outlay of ₹6,490 crore towards CSR in India for 2015, companies have spent ₹5,115 crore. The health sector accounts for 20% of the spending followed by education with 19%.

The data in Figure 2 reflects number of companies opted to initiate CSR projects under Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013. The report also reveals that ₹2073 crore was spent on theme of promoting Education and Skills. Poverty alleviation and healthcare was the top preferred with a spending of ₹2142 crore rupees. ₹559 crore rupees were spent on Environment Sustainability activities. The Rural Development

Figure 2: Thematic Priorities in CSR – Schedule VII



projects received ₹771 crore of spending. A whopping contribution of ₹162 crore was made to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund and others.

It is early to measure the impact of the CSR initiatives undertaken after the mandate applicable from April, 2014. Yet, it can be certainly concluded that there has been procedural changes in implementation of CSR projects in India as well as a large pool of money and other resources are noticeably attempting to address the social issues of India.

## CONCLUSION

CSR as a notion is firmly rooted on the global business agenda. The key challenges faced by business in order to move from theory to concrete action is the need for more impact driven progress in the field of CSR with a strategic perspective. The need for strategizing CSR to business growth and opportunity has become inevitable for corporate. Yet, the fact cannot be ignored that CSR is not just about the business recognition and growth but more about the holistic development of society, environment and nation. It is essential that companies understand the essence of true CSR as undertaking initiatives not just to fulfill the legal and ethical requirements.

The CSR spending of the corporate should address the socioeconomic priorities and institutional gaps in skills or infrastructure especially in developing countries and LDC's. The socioeconomic priorities of developed countries differ significantly from the developing and LDCs, thus the stakeholder engagement process involved in the CSR initiatives should vary accordingly. At present, many countries are not encouraging CSR in a collaborative form. Support of the local government and implementing agencies is needed to have socially driven, high impact CSR. Companies are not linking CSR to its business strategy, existing partnership models, performance and rewards system. Thus, there is a failure to integrate, diversify and scale CSR. Corporate must have metrics to measure reap of the efforts undertaken as CSR for social development.

### THE WAY FORWARD

Researchers can attempt a comparative study on the governmental spent and CSR spent on social agenda of the countries. Studies can also be focused to discussing the scope of governing CSR in developing countries and LDC's. There are very limited studies on LDC's thus there is huge scope for researchers to work on CSR in LDCs. Study can be initiated to compare the CSR efforts in the area of Health and Education specific to developed, developing and LDCs.

Government should encourage corporate to adopt a 'Project mode' for their CSR activities. A project mode of CSR would not only measure the organizational advantage but also gain a deeper insight of the outcomes and impact of the CSR initiatives. CSR initiatives qualify to a project mode when are based on baseline data enabling need-based CSR. Implementing project mode of CSR includes specifying duration including start date/end date of CSR project, budget, monitoring and documentation process, evaluation and impact of the CSR project undertaken.

The CSR activities should be undertaken in sync with national issues. A project mode of CSR is a step towards the cohesive effort of government and corporate to deal with the major issues of the country and is the need of the hour which will lead to the development of the country as a whole.

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