

CSR AND INDIAN MEDIA COMPANIES

Tilak, Geetali (Ph. D)
Professor, Department of Mass Communication
Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth,
India, Maharashtra
geetali.tilak@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In the present era of globalization corporate and media houses are no longer confined to the traditional boundaries of a nation. Corporate social responsibility is defined as the responsibility of any corporate towards the society which is not separable from its operations and strategy. The present paper attempts to study the active participation of few Indian media companies in developing CSR activities. As per Companies Act, 2013 under Section 135 Companies are required to spend a minimum of 2% of their net profit over the preceding three years as CSR. In the present paper the researcher tries to explain the concept of CSR and highlight various CSR activities conducted by Indian media companies. The researcher has selected a sample of all the different types of media such as print, broadcast, outdoor and internet mainly covering the CSR activities conducted by them post COVID situation. The findings will provide a picture of different CSR activities conducted by few Indian media companies and also try to bring out few best practices by these companies.

Keywords: CSR, Corporate social responsibility, media, India, print media, broadcast, internet media.

Introduction

Media is considered as a watchdog of democracy, freedom and independence. It is also popularly known as the fourth pillar of democracy. In the present era surrounded by multi-level media options different modes of communication and information are being adapted continuously. All this has led to changes in the methods of delivery of information by creating, consuming, learning and interacting with each other. Media plays a vital role in providing information and entertainment all over the world. Print media which plays a leading role in this process is supported by various other media forms such as broadcast media, electronic media and social media. The increase in use of digital communication has made it possible for media agencies to deliver the information through various channels at the same time.

Mass media in its different forms have influenced human life in the present century. They have primarily provided information and entertainment to people across countries. Print media, being the leader over a considerable period of time has now got competition from Television, which is reshaping many of the social responses.

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility was first introduced by Bowen, H who is known as father of CSR in his book "Social Responsibilities of the Businessman" In the present era of globalization the business houses are laying more emphasis on contributing towards better society and promoting green environment. CSR has been defined by many authors and in one of the studies on CSR by Dahlsrud (2006) he has identified and analyzed 37 definitions of this concept. A graphic representation in form of pyramid of CSR has been given by Carroll and it is considered as one of the most well known model of CSR. In this model CSR has been encompassed on four parameters namely economic, legal, ethical and discretionary. This pyramid has been depicted and described below:

Figure No. 1 CSR Pyramid by Carroll

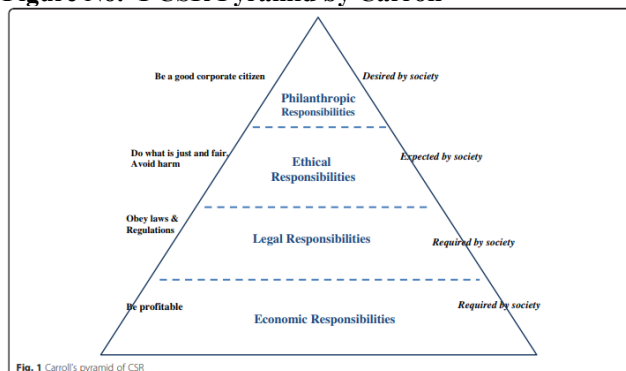


Fig. 1 Carroll's pyramid of CSR

(Source: file:///C:/Users/admin%20lib/Downloads/CSRPyramidTakingAnotherLook2016.pdf)

The economic responsibilities of an organization include various activities done to sustain in the global market in order to provide incentives to the shareholders and investors.

The legal responsibilities of an organization include the legal ways to be adopted by the business houses in their performance by complying with the laws laid down by the country. It also includes fulfilling all the legal obligations towards the society in general.

The ethical responsibilities of an organization include all those activities and norms which have not been legally codified but the organization is expected to abide and fulfill.

The discretionary responsibilities includes all those things which is expected from business by general public and are generally termed as social activities which are not mandatory by law.

In India, nearly all the leading business houses are involved in promoting corporate social responsibility activities related to education, health, rural development, women empowerment and upliftment of weaker sections of society. CSR activities are significantly rising in the society with active participation of business houses.

Media plays a pivotal role in communicating these activities to the society at large.

Literature Review

Crowther, Aras (2008) in their book Corporate Social Responsibility have covered various aspects of CSR such as the concept along with the principles, issues concerning stakeholders, ethics and corporate behavior and performance evaluation and reporting etc. Juneja (nd) wherein the role media plays in campaigning the CSR activities was taken undertaken. It considers various ways such as use of media in seeking volunteers from the society, constantly reminding the big corporations to give back to the society and look beyond profits internationally also taking up a critical view of the various CSR programs which the organizations claim they have conducted can be done periodically. This will help to keep an eye on various CSR activities and whether they are really being conducted.

Gautam, Singh (2010) examines the views of top 500 Indian Companies and the CSR activities conducted by them. It also identifies the key practices and tries to maps these against the initiatives of Global Reporting standards. Senthil, Raju (2015) conducted a study on CSR of Pharmaceutical companies. The study concluded by the findings that the tie up of pharmaceutical companies with NGOs and Government will help in faster social development of the country. Kumar, Ruhela, (2021) to investigate the attitude of future Indian business leaders towards Corporate Social responsibility. It also discusses the issues and challenges faced by the corporate social responsibility activities in India. Murthy (nd), has discussed in detail about the various aspects, principles and strategies of CSR. He has also highlighted various models of CSR.

Ingenhoff, Koelling (2017) shows that no studies were conducted of media organizations which would evaluate the communication of media governance and their CSR activities. The study revealed that public service media organizations felt more accountable to the general public than the private media. Sandoval (2013) in his research paper has stated that Microsoft is most CSR responsible company which is followed by Google and Walt Disney. He has conducted a critical study of CSR in media and communication industry.

Samantara, Dhawan (2020) have discussed the issues and challenges of CSR and they have stressed the need to create awareness about CSR among the general public. They have also mentioned that CSR should be a part of academic curriculum. Sharma, Kumar (2021) have conducted a theoretical study on CSR activities of Top 5 Indian companies. They have pointed out that the CSR is still in its initial phase in India and the combined efforts of Government and people will help in maximizing the full potential of CSR.

Subramani, .Shareena (2021) have conducted a study on trends of CSR in Indian Companies in which they have covered the entire CSR grant in India from the beginning to the current trends in the initiatives of Indian companies. Yakovleva. (2020) has explained the concept of corporate social responsibility along with its different approaches. The researcher has also presented the future agenda of CSR.

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Research Methodology

Descriptive method of research has been used in the present paper. The researcher has studied various websites of media companies and the CSR activities conducted by them. The researcher has tried to pick out the best five listed of Indian media companies each covering print media, broadcast media, outdoor media and internet media. The research work tries to trace the first five listed CSR practices of these Companies. The researcher has also tried to bring out few best practices in the field of CSR which can be adopted by the media companies.

Objectives of the study

- To study the concept of corporate social responsibility.
- To study the different activities undertaken by media companies with reference to corporate social responsibility.
- To highlight few best practices carried out by these Indian media Companies.

Secondary data Analysis

Corporate Social Responsibility An overview

Corporate Social responsibility can be defined as an obligation of any organisation carrying out business to take suitable actions to protect or enhance the welfare of the society as a whole along with its own interest. In brief it includes all the policies to be framed and actions to be taken to protect the interest of society. On 1st April 2014 India became the first country to legally mandate the CSR law. The Section 135 of Companies Act has made it mandatory for companies over a turnover of 500 crores or more during the immediate preceding financial year to spend 2% of their net average profit on CSR activities. These Companies have to constitute a Corporate Social Responsibility Committee which consist three or more directors and one of them must be an independent director. Thus, it can be seen that CSR forms a very important part of any Indian company.

The constituent features of CSR include:

- Identify the potential risks involved in the operating business unit.
- Develop a strategy with commitment from top management to perform the operations in socially responsible manner.
- To develop suitable programs and execute action plans in a systematic way to create sustainable development practices in the existing business unit.
- To enhance the quality of life of the society in which these business units carry on their business.
- To assess and measure the performance of business units with reference to the initiatives undertaken in the field of social responsibility.
- To develop a mechanism for reporting the performance of various social responsibility initiatives to the stakeholders.
- To encourage the involvement of various constituents in adopting socially responsible practices.

Need for CSR

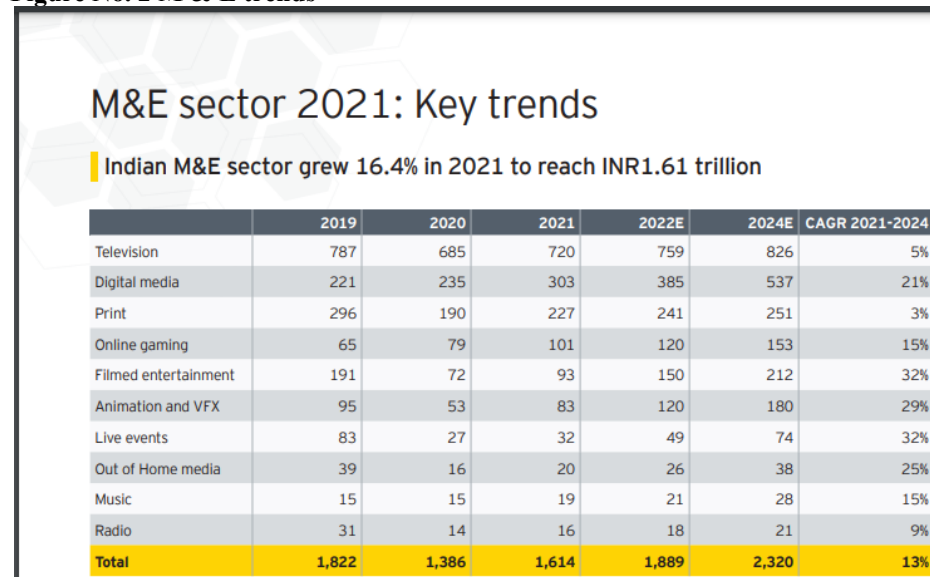
The CSR forms a very important part of any business unit and the need for CSR has been pointed below by Ghuman, Aswathappa (2010):

- Moral responsibility: Any business unit is depended on the resources available in the society for its development and growth and hence it can be said that the business is a part of society. The business units must have a moral responsibility to protect the environment and adopt such practices which will enhance the environment and not degrade it.
- Government laws: The business units need to be aware of the various laws passed by the Government to protect the environment and adopt environment friendly practices. If these laws are not obeyed by the business units they are forced to be closed down. Many companies have undertaken projects to reduce the greenhouse emission in its operations.
- Satisfaction of Employees: The employees derive satisfaction from various CSR policies such as education, insurance, accommodation etc.
- Retention of brand; The brand image of the business unit is retained in the eyes of the public and this helps it to earn goodwill and reputation.
- Consumer awareness: The consumers become more conscious about their rights and it creates awareness about the quality of product being offered to them.

Indian media An overview

The Indian media industry is growing at a faster pace over the last few years. The traditional media resources along with emergence of new media have opened up new avenues with a lot of opportunities in this field. With the use of electronic media the Indian media companies are looking towards better opportunities in the global world. The Indian media and entertainment industry is showing a growing trend and the below figure from FICCI shows that it grew by 16.4% in the year 2021 which reached 1.61 trillion.

Figure No. 2 M & E trends



(Fig. No. 1-Source: FICCI M & E report, March 2022)

For the purpose of research study the researcher has undertaken the below mentioned medias:

- Print Media (Newspapers, Magazines)
- Outdoor or Out of Home (OOH) Media.
- Broadcast Media (TV, Radio)

CSR activities and Indian media companies:

Print Media:

Indian Express Limited

This is an Indian news media publishing company which publishes many widely circulated newspapers in English and regional languages such as The Indian Express, The Financial Express, the Loksatta and the Jansatta along with weekly Indian film industry entertainment magazine namely Screen. This group also publishes surveys and reports in The Economist magazine.

The CSR activities of this group involve:

Healthcare and malnutrition is a major drawback in the development of the Indian society: This group actively participates in the activities involved in eradicating hunger, poverty and malnutrition. It also promotes healthcare facilities such as preventive health care and sanitation along with active contribution towards the Swach Bharat Kosh initiative of the Central Government for the promotion of sanitation and provision of potable drinking water:

Society cannot progress without education and hence this group actively promotes education which includes special education and employment enhancing vocational skills among children, women, elderly and the differently-abled groups. It also invests in livelihood enhancement projects;

It actively works for the socially and economically backward groups by reducing inequalities and promoting gender equality, women empowerment, setting up homes and hostels for women, orphans and day care centres. It also provides various facilities for senior citizens along with setting up old age homes.

This group actively participates in promotion of environmental sustainability and maintenance of ecological balance by protection of flora and fauna, animal welfare, agroforestry, conservation of natural resources and

maintaining quality of soil, air and water. It also contributes to the Clean Ganga Fund set up by the Central Government for rejuvenation of river Ganga.

The group also promotes towards protection of national heritage, art and culture which includes restoration of buildings and sites of historical importance and works of art; setting up public libraries; promotion and development of traditional and handicrafts.

Kesari Newspaper:

This is a Marathi newspaper which laid a strong platform for the freedom struggle. This newspaper was started on 4th January 1881 by great freedom fighter Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. This is one of the oldest newspapers which continue to be published since its inception till date. The CSR activities of this newspaper include donations for natural calamities like Earthquakes, floods, Corona etc. Donations are given to various NGOs on annual days.

Amar Ujala; newspaper

Amar Ujala a Hindi language daily newspaper published in India which was founded in 1948. This newspaper has twenty-one editions and is published in six states and two union territories covering about 180 districts. Along with daily news this newspaper also covers various sub topics including careers, lifestyle, entertainment and women.

The CSR activity of this newspaper is carried under Amar Ujala Foundation (AUF) with a basic aim of creation of a better future through overall empowerment. The foundation had initiated a series of field activities which enable the less advantaged sections of the society to live their life with dignity and pride. The CSR activities also focus on empowerment of girl child. Various activities include protecting environment.

The elderly sections of the society are also served at large.

Apart from this the foundation tries to identify unsung heroes from all walks of life and helps them to strive for excellence.

Malayala Manorama

Malayala Manorama is a daily newspaper published in Malayalam language with an online edition. It was first published in 1888 by Malayala Manorama Company Limited from Kottayam as a weekly newspaper. As per the record of World Association of Newspapers, 2016 it was the fourteenth most circulated newspaper in the world. According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations, 2013 it is the third largest circulating newspaper in India and the largest circulating newspaper in Kerala.

The CSR activities of the Malayala Manorama Company include a unique campaign known as School harvest in which Manorama invited participating schools to venture into cultivation of vegetables in the school compound. About 1500 schools registered for the 'School Harvest' project. With the support of the Government agency, the Vegetable and Fruits promotion council of Kerala (VFCK), Manorama arranged free distribution of seeds and saplings of various vegetables to be distributed to the participating schools. Manorama also gave directions and guidelines on farming through expert columns in Print and Online editions. The other CSR activities include fight against hunger, poverty and malnutrition, promotion of health care facilities including rehabilitation. It has also tried to enhance vocational skills by promoting education specially among women, children and differently-abled persons. The company has also tried to facilitate development programs in rural and slum areas.

Navbharat Times:

Navbharat Times (NBT) is a Hindi newspaper which has a largest circulation in Delhi, Mumbai and Lucknow. It is one of the oldest newspapers of the Bennett, Coleman & Co. which publishes other dailies such as Times of India, Economic Times and Maharashtra Times along with other film magazines such as Filmfare and Femina. The CSR activities of this newspaper cover:

The company has focussed its activities and contributed towards development of rural India through construction of road for Ranibania village. The company has worked immensely in Paloncha by building a toilet at Tahsildar office, gas cremation unit and Women Empowerment Centre. The Company has contributed towards sanitation activities and development of slum areas. The company has also contributed towards maintenance and operation of skill development Centre.

Dainik Bhaskar

Subah Savere a Hindi language daily newspaper was launched in 1948 in Bhopal and an English newspaper Good Morning India in Gwalior. In 1957, the newspaper was renamed Bhaskar Samachar. Later on in 1958, the newspaper was renamed Dainik Bhaskar. Dainik Bhaskar is one of the largest Hindi daily newspapers in India

which is owned by the Dainik Bhaskar Group. Dainik Bhaskar Group exists in 12 different states of India and has 65 editions in Hindi, Marathi and Gujarati languages. The CSR activities of this newspaper include: Ek Ped Ek Zindagi campaign launched on World Environment Day which is being run for past seven years. Another initiative to save water is Abeer gulal ke saath holi which promotes dry holi celebration. Environment protection is one more initiatives which includes wherein the Company launched Mitti ke ganesh. The objective of this campaign was to encourage people to use clay idols instead of idols made of Plaster of Paris and immerse them at home. This water and soil could be used to plant a sapling. During the hot summer season an initiative Save the birds was started. In this activity group distributed free earthen pots to its readers and encouraged them to keep water and grains in the pots and put them near windows for birds. Another initiative Sarthak deepawali was started to help the underprivileged sections of society. In this campaign people were appealed to share Diwali gifts and confectionaries with underprivileged sections of society.

Outdoor Indian media companies:

Out-of-home (OOH) advertising popularly known as outdoor advertising includes advertising experienced outside the home. This type of advertising includes billboards, posters which can be seen while we are walking along the roadside or driving. These advertisements can be seen in shopping malls, parlours, multiplex, parks, cafes etc. Few Indian outdoor media companies selected for this study are:

MullenLowe Lintas Group

This is an Indian advertising marketing communications group. The company is a subsidiary of the Interpublic Group and is part of the multinational MullenLowe Group. Amer Jaleel is the chairman of the group and Virat Tandon is the CEO. The Company has 14 offices in eight cities of India.

The CSR activity of this company includes collaboration with Akshara Centre which has been working towards empowering women It helps them to live with dignity, free from violence and gender discrimination. The Company has also contributed towards Prime Minister Relief Fund. During the times of COVID pandemic the CEO of this group took a look at the vaccination drive from a behaviour change perspective as people were hesitant to get vaccinated or take drops. In this crucial period wherein economy suffered a downfall an initiative 'Rupaiyyah Hai Pahiya' was launched to encourage consumers to start spending which would create liquidity in the market and help to boost the Indian economy. This initiative was backed by the extensive network provided by Indian Newspaper Society. The first phase of this campaign is available in live in print media.

Laqshya Media group

This group was founded in 1997 and offers multiple advertising platforms. They have 22 offices and their list of accomplishments include first foot over escalators in Indore, private equity investment from UTI venture funds. The CSR activities of this group include:

- Escalating hunger, poverty and malnutrition, promoting health care
- Promoting education including special education and employment enhancing vocational skills
- Gender equality, empowering women, setting up homes and hostels for women and orphans.
- Environmental sustainability, ecological balance, protection of flora and fauna
- Protection of national heritage, art and culture.

Madison World

Madison World founded in 1988 is a diversified Communications Group. It has 24 business units and performs specialized functions related to advertising, media, business analytics entertainment, mobile, sports etc. This group has many offices across India. The CSR activities of this group include:

Madison world started its CSR journey through and NGO in the name of Madison Resource Foundation and have adopted Tanya Computer Centre which is exclusively dedicated to train visually impaired people of all ages in the field of use of computers.

HAVAS WORLDWIDE

Havas SA is a French multinational advertising and public relations company which has its headquarters in Paris, France. It operates in more than 100 countries and is one of the largest advertising and communications groups in the world. Havas consists of three main operational divisions. The Group offers a broad range of communications services, including digital, advertising, direct marketing, media planning and buying, corporate communications, sales promotion, design, human resources, sports marketing, multimedia interactive communications, public relations and innovation consulting

The CSR implemented by this company is with relation to Sustainable development goals to end poverty and protect the planet. Raise awareness of climate change by planting trees. Green eco-campaigns reduce hazardous waste and implement recycling methods. Many people with disabilities are working for HAVAS Group. To

create awareness among the employees as this will result in less use of electricity and promote the use of renewable energy resources.

Broadcast Media

ABP Network Private Limited

This is an Indian media and television channel. This Company provides digital services along with news and entertainment in different Indian languages. The CSR activities of this company include:

Under the partnership of Robinhood Army this company undertook many CSR activities like delivering essentials to millions of senior citizens, promotion of vaccination drive through their news channel during the tough times of COVID pandemic. Another initiative under this partnership Mission 30 million in 2020 under which 30 million meals were served to starving poor people across rural and urban areas. The other CSR activities include promotion of vocational skills, healthcare and sanitation, rural development projects, development of traditional arts etc.

Eros International Media Ltd

Eros International Media Ltd founded in 1977 by Arjun Lulla is an Indian motion picture production and distribution company. This company has more than 12000 films on various Indian languages in its library. The CSR activities of this company include:

Promotion of healthcare awareness programs through checkups and treatment of pre-natal and post-natal facilities. It also promotes awareness to prevent female foeticide and immunity building along with provision of food, nutrition, clothes, shelter etc to underprivileged sections of society. This Company also promotes sanitation and plantation drives in schools and rural areas. It works for eradication of poverty, hunger and malnutrition. To ensure sustainable environment and maintain ecological balance the company promotes protection of fauna and flora, agro forestry and conserving endangered plants. This company also works towards promotion of gender equality and women empowerment by providing hostels, day care centres, old age homes etc.

TV18

TV18 is a joint collaboration between Network 18 and NBC Universal. It was founded in 1996 by Raghav Bahk, This online channel has 10 regional channels like ETV and Colors. The company also includes subsidiaries such as News Private Limited, Viacom 18, and IBN Lokmat. The CSR activities of this company include:

Initiative to meet the needs of underprivileged sections of the society by improving livelihood, eradication of poverty, providing vocational skills, promotion of healthcare facilities. Steps towards preservation and promotion of Indian art, culture and heritage. To ensure environment sustainability and maintain ecological balance by protection of flora and fauna, conduct activities to promote biodiversity.

Sony Pictures Network

Sony Pictures a subsidiary of Sony Corporation of America is one of the leading media and entertainment companies in India. This Company was founded on 18th September 1995. It provides entertainment to 130 countries all over the world. It specialises in television, games, mobile, movies, and entertainment. Its headquarters are based in Mumbai. In 1999 Sony Max channel was launched by SET India Pvt. Ltd. and in 2005 SET India brought SAB TV and rebranded it as Sony SAB. In 2006 SET India launched an English movie channel Sony Pix while in December 2007 SET India Private Limited was renamed as Multi Screen Media Private Limited. Finally in December 2015 this company was renamed as Sony Pictures Networks India. The CSR activities of this Company include:

Provision of infrastructural facilities for imparting quality education and thereby create conducive environment for learning. Initiatives for empowerment of the underprivileged and marginalised youth of our country through promotion of sports activities. As they broadcast through sports their long term vision is to improve the sports narrative in India. Ensuring a clean, green and pollution free environment through support for clean surroundings and environment sustainability.

RedFM

Suryan FM 93.5 was rebranded as RED FM on 14th August 2009. It is an Indian radio network with headquarters in Chennai. It is owned by the Sun Group. The network broadcasts its contents in various Indian regional languages. The CSR activities of this group include:

Promotion of healthcare facilities covering preventive healthcare and sanitation. Eradication of hunger, poverty and malnutrition of our country. It actively contributes to Swach Bharat Kosh an initiative by Central Government for promotion of sanitation facilities and provision of safe drinking water in the rural areas.

Best CSR Practices of media companies

It has been observed that many Indian media companies are actively promoting and participating in various CSR activities. Few best CSR practices adopted by these companies include:

- Promotion of healthcare facilities.
- Creation of green and pollution free environment.
- Promotion of sanitation facilities.
- Providing vocational education leading to skill development.
- Women empowerment programs
- Provision of safe drinking water.
- Promotion of sports activities for the youth of the country.
- Promotion of Indian art, culture and heritage.
- Improving livelihood by eradication of poverty.
- Green eco campaigns
- Train visually impaired people in computers and make them self sufficient.
- Hunger, poverty and malnutrition
- Clean Ganga project
- Propagandas to create market liquidity and boost Indian economy during COVID
- Serving meals to starving people in rural and urban areas

Findings in points

- The findings of the study reveal that the Indian Media Companies are working a lot in the direction of CSR activities.
- They are conducting various CSR activities to raise the livelihood of the deprived sections of the Indian society.
- Through their CSR activities not only these companies are helping the weaker sections but also conduct activities to boost the Indian economy.
- The rich Indian tradition of arts and culture is also covered under the CSR of many companies.
- Promotion of sports activities for youth of this country is also a very commendable work as only healthy youths can help to build up a strong nation.
- There is a need for more media companies to join this initiative voluntarily and work towards creating a better world.

Conclusion and directions for future research

The media plays a huge role in the modern society and the CSR activities conducted by these media companies will prove to be an inspiration and example which can be followed by others. The paper has tried to view the concept of corporate social responsibility along with the need of CSR. Various different CSR activities are undertaken by media companies such as providing free education, drinking water supply, free meals to the poor, tree plantation activities etc.

These media companies are not only carrying out various CSR activities for the benefit of the society and to boost the Indian economy but they also play an important role in propagating various CSR activities conducted by different Companies in India.

Thus it can be concluded that CSR is well established in most of the leading media companies and a similar trend can be expected from other companies which do not follow the CSR activities as it not only helps the society in general but also helps to build up a strong brand image of the company conducting the CSR activity.

More research studies can be conducted in this field such as comparative study of CSR activities of Indian and global media companies, CSR activities conducted by other companies, cross cultural study of various CSR activities undertaken by under developed, developing and developed countries etc.

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