Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Role Of Academia

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Abstract:

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the combination of the empathic approach & Intellectual capability that equips an organisation to include Public Interest into corporate decision making. This motto of CSR strongly gets fulfilled through the interventions of Academia. The role of Academia in CSR may get understood with the real time fact that Education has been on top priority for the society since ages. The society requires educated class to have a perfect base to dwell upon. The social responsibility factor today not just signifies the efforts of the Industry only, instead every human sector today is ignited to serve better in order to have a better society. This article attempts to highlight the role of academia in CSR while understanding the concept of CSR. The article further emphasizes on the aim of social responsibilities while highlighting linkage between the Academia & Industry. The secondary sources of data were considered for collating the thoughts & perspectives. The scope of discussion being the world of academia at large rather any specific region or sector for the study, hence this may lead to be the limitation for the study. The thoughts & perspectives gathered & presented through the article are indicative in nature. The role of Academia in CSR is a respectful theme with a huge scope of discussion & action.

Key words: CSR, Academia, Role of Academia in CSR

Introduction:

“Academic failure contributes to poverty and poor health and undermines workforce productivity in ways that harm the entire society.”

- Anthony Biglan, Author

Academia is the strongest motive for the society today. The expectation of society from the Education has risen and the only purpose behind this expectation is to witness the charm of Individuals with brains & boldness. In the words of Anthony Biglan, Academics have a straight link with the development of the society. Academia has a strong social inclination and massively that gets proved with the education to masses. Although the discussion on Role of Academia in CSR is a pretty recent phenomenon yet there have been traces of academia supporting society beyond just education. It has always been taken for granted that the Education sector is for the development of the society however the discussion has gone slightly ahead of just being an education provider to being a National buildup centre.

Today the Academic centers are taking societal projects, developing & mentoring societal schemes and actively supporting the Industry with societal consciousness. Once upon a time all such initiatives were under the ambit of Industries as part of their CSR but today Academia has developed its role to such an extent that it caters the society with education & beyond. There is strong linkage getting developed between the academia and the Industries. Both have turned up as complementary to each other. Academia provides the fuel to the Industry & in turn Industry ignites the Academia. The role of academia in CSR ranges right from Skills development to overall societal Upgradation. The aim of social responsibilities would be the development of Community, its socio-cultural environment and largely leading to economic development. Academia has a strong scope of supporting such mammoth aspirations.

Objectives of the study:
The Author has considered the following objectives for the article:

1. To gather understanding on the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
2. To study the Role of Academia in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

**Literature Review on CSR & Role of Academia in CSR:**

The Author has gathered the following understanding through the review of existing literature pertaining to the theme of the study:

**Corporate Social Responsibility:**

Corporate social responsibility is the integration of social and environmental consideration into business decisions and operations. **Azhar Kazmi** refers that, “CSR has become a Strategic Input for the Management. It is pertained as the best way to maintain CRM by the Organizations. “The study refers the **Triple bottom line** (TBL) phenomenon according to the Triple Bottom Line theory; the organizations have three types of responsibilities: At first it is the responsibility towards the society, second towards environment and third towards economy at large. **Corporate social responsibility (CSR) in India** by **Neelmani Jaysawal, Sudeshna Saha (2009)** wherein she talks about CSR that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept, which states that Private Corporation or public organization has a responsibility to society. It minimizes the cost as well as risks thereby, increasing the brand value and reputation of the company. **Smith, Richard (2011)** suggests that corporate social responsibility is a business system that enables the production and distribution of wealth for the betterment of its stakeholders through the implementation and integration of ethical systems and sustainable management practices.

**Role of Academia in CSR:**

The literature with respect to the role of Academia in CSR is limited and primarily because the academics have been taken for granted that it combines its intent with the society. Hence there have been studies pertaining to core CSR, leading to the understanding of more on social responsibilities. **Academia** has been a key influencer of society. Academia has been often at the receiving end as there has been investments in education to foresee better society. The social investors invest more onto Education that in turn provides a better human force to the society. The **csrtimes.com** states that education is the backbone of every society in this world. But what matters the most is the quality education- a dream for many. In India, out of the 229 million students enrolled for class I – XII, only few receive quality education with good teachers and teaching aids. According to **UNICEF** specialist, 40-50 per cent of the children from 15-18 years age group are dropping out of schools. These drop-outs become child-laborers denying themselves access to quality education and professional skills. Academics nurtures talent and equip the Individuals to demonstrate their worth. Role of academia in CSR is profound and impactful.

**RESEARCH DESIGN:**

**CSR: Role of Academia** is a conceptual study conducted with the help of Secondary Data. The article aims at understanding the Role of Academia in CSR. The indicative article encompasses understanding of theory through secondary sources and presenting the thoughts as recommendations with respect to the theme of the article. The world of Academics and its involvement in CSR in Indian context has been considered as the scope of the study. The understanding gathered through the article shall be indicative in nature and may not be exhaustive. The article represents the entire academic world & its CSR connect, rather a specific region for the study or specific stream of academics, hence this results as a limitation for the article. The literature provided through the article shall benefit the society at large with specific reference to the world of Academics.
CSR: Concept & Significance

“Businesses cannot be successful when the society around them fails”.

- Jamie Lawrence, Editor, HR Zone

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to business practices involving initiatives that benefit society. A business's CSR can encompass a wide variety of tactics, from giving away a portion of a company's proceeds to charity, to implementing "greener" business operations. The concept of CSR encompasses the following factors Environmental impact, Philanthropy, volunteering & ROI. The scope of social responsibility is wide & could be considered in terms of different factors. Some people consider social responsibility in terms of claimants or stakeholders: the insiders & outsiders.

CSR on one hand is the commitment of the company towards the society, however on the other hand becomes a useful tool in the smooth functioning of the business. Right from recruitment till promotion of the brand, CSR plays a helping hand to the organization. CSR is the commitment of the organization towards social needs & expectancy of the society. CSR is mainly driven out of the concerns from the following sections of the society: Consumers, Employees, Natural Environment and Community. Emergence of CSR has been very helpful to the organisations and the society at large. Right from the big business houses to the scaling Education houses, all have obligations towards the society. The Education houses are massively involving themselves into imparting education and simultaneously they have engaged themselves into Nation building.

Chart No. 1 - Self developed model based on conceptual understanding pertaining to the aim of Social responsibility

The aim of Social responsibility is development of society and the same is achieved by the three core medium i.e., Community Development, Economic Development and Socio-Cultural development. Chart No. 1 above states the respective ways to achieve societal development. Although these factors are indicative in nature yet it creates a lot of confidence towards societal wellbeing.
Role of Academia in CSR- Significance

Investments in academically sound human capital shall lead to formation of mature Industrial & Human society. Academic Institutions largely support the NGOs that bring in change in society. There have been societal changes with immense contribution from the Academics. The society is constituted by people and the educated class has the larger impact on the society. In the process of executing social services these matured & educated individuals have extended their immense support. It has been witnessed that the leading NGOs in the Nations have been constituted largely by the educated people. The era of social work has transformed from just community welfare to community development. The scope of social work has transformed from just being environment conscious to being People conscious that includes Medical & Health wellbeing, skills development etc. The role of academia in CSR can be better understood by understanding the linkages of Academia. The Industrial world today can not run on just emotions & enthusiasm. It requires a rationale to continue with the business. This rationale is brain child of active individuals and these individuals to a large extent are resultant of true academia culture in the Nation. The academia shares massive linkage with the Industry. Their mutual effort supports the society to further strengthen especially in the economic front and gradually in overall Societal development. Chart No. 2 below highlights the Academia & Industry connect.

Academia and Industry Connect:

Chart No. 2- Self developed model based on conceptual understanding upon Industry Academic Linkage

The Academia links itself with the Industry by providing a platform for the Industries to nurture the youth talent. The academia acts as Incubators for the Industry. The skilled force hired by the Industry from academia decides the future of the industrial economy. Academia supplies youth to the Industry with their fresh & structured thoughts & ideas. Also Academia becomes a platform for the research orientation that supports the Industrial function to a large extent. In the similar sense the Industry is linked with the Academia by providing employment & internship to the students and providing Industry exposure. The Industry as part of the CSR extends financial support to the Academia in the form of scholarships to students, development funds to Institutes etc.
Selected Sections of Academia and their respective social connection

The world of academia may get divided largely into professional & non professional courses. All these have relevance to societal development. Education as a whole can be considered as the best social responsibility of academia. Education has several streams and many of these have straight connection with the society. Some of these education streams are as following:

✓ **Agricultural Education:** The Institutions imparting Agriculture Education have a close connect with the crop fields. Testing of Soil, testing fertilizers & other chemicals, irrigation try out, all these & many more experiments happen live on the fields benefitting the farmers and society at large. The social responsibility of the Institutions can be gauged with the fact that with all these experiments they aim at innovations and results that are positive in nature benefits all in the process.

✓ **Medical Sciences & Pharmaceutical:** Medical Sciences & Pharmacy Education is one of the prestigious academic wings in society. It will be hard to believe a world without medicines in this era. While the society may not aim to have any health disorders however that doesn’t stop them to think about the medicines & medicinal products. The world of medicines has a strong impact on the society. The Medical & Pharma world is huge and has extended its wings beyond just medical support. The support to various avenues like Poultry farms, Dairy business, Animal husbandry, Nursing Education, Bio Technology etc has been a tremendous support Academia to society.

✓ **Vocational Training centre:** The society has witnessed the fantastic success of the vocational training centre in the nation. The industries have been the real beneficiary of the same as the ready resources hit the floor with technical knowledge. These vocational training centers can be of various forms, one of the leading centers is the ITIs & Tailoring etc.

**Recommendations**

The article primarily aims at recognising the Role of academia in CSR. As part of recommendation, it’s a wonderfull approach to state functional attributes of the subject. The Role of Academia may be known to all but does that make concrete sense as we often find vague responses to societal requirements. This article through the recommendations section would like to highlight certain known facts on role of academia however the only aim is to structure the same and present as a concise approach. The Author has put forward the following Role of Academia in CSR:

**Chart No. 3 – Recommendary thoughts on Role of Academy in CS**
Academia is primarily responsible for spreading education in society and that’s the massive social responsibility it carries. Education to Masses equips the society with individuals possessing varied skills. Eventually Academia is potentially the only source to skill development in the society. Education as rightly said by several authors, “strengthens mind, nurtures talent”. This goes a big way to build Nations. Exclusively the Nation Building approach by the world of Education shall always be the prime focus in terms of social responsibilities. The students experiencing NSS / NCC at the Colleges develop skills to support society in adversities or even if no adversities we still experience at least a morally equipped society.

The world of education has developed its wings and caters varied opportunities. The society is a framework of different classes in it. Whether segregated on the basis of economic well being or classified on skills. Academia nurtures all. Most importantly Education has the power of uplifting society. Women in society have undergone several facets and still struggling in bits & parts. Late Prime Minister Hon’ble Shri. Jawaharlal Nehru once suggested that to know any Nation’s strength, check the status of Women in the Nation. The world of Academia has done this wonderfull contribution to the society by empowering women through education. Knowledge & skills together does wonders. Any Society is culmination of the People & the thoughts surrounding the people. Education nurtures those thoughts and upgrades the society in the long run.

Conclusion:
The study on Role of Academia in CSR is a conceptually significant exercise to link the societal upgradation to the Education. Since ages Education has been the priority to the society; however it has experienced its own share of challenges. Off late people have realised that societies can be developed through Education, and that’s not just a phrase, it has converted into an action.

The Author concludes that the role of academia in CSR is immense and to a large extent it complements the efforts of several sections of the society. The article highlights the linkage between the world of education and the society. Industries in the society play a massive role in executing the social responsibilities. The academia supports the Industry and in turn there is a reciprocal approach.

The article encapsulates the aim of social responsibilities in the form of Community, Economic & Socio-cultural development. All these attempts may well be achieved through the support of Academia.

The article also expresses potential strength of various academic avenues that creates a straight impact on society. The vocational training extending the support by making Industry ready individuals is a big way to support Industry. The several courses like Agriculture and Medical sciences have straight impact on the societal development.

The article further concludes with recommendation of prospective role of academia in CSR in the form of Skill Development, Education for masses, Nation Building (NSS / NCC), Nurturing: Classes of society, Women Empowerment & Societal Upgradation. Meeting these roles has been witnesed as the primary effort of academia.
Addendum

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References:


Jaysawal, Neelmani & Saha, Sudeshna. (2009). “Corporate social responsibility (CSR) in India”
