

SCOPE OF CSR IN RURAL INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Corporate social responsibility initiatives for rural India, are of immense significance and contemporary relevance. This paper attempts to investigate CSR practices specifically in the context of rural development. Near about 70% of the total population of India reside in rural areas and depend on agriculture. Currently rural India is facing various issues like agriculture, infrastructural development, socio-economic conditions etc. it is required to improve infrastructural facilities like health, education, public utility services and informative networks. It is the right time to take imitative by corporates to make social investment in rural India in the form of corporate social responsibility.

Keywords: CSR, Rural Development, Infrastructural Facility.

Introduction

Due to global competition and some mandatory legal provision of Co. Act 2013 Sec. 135 Rules 2014 and schedule VII. Organizations have realized that they are a part of the society. They should contribute to social activities globally with a desire to improve the immediate where they work. The corporate which pays attention to the concept of social responsibilities are also favored by the public who prefer to consume their goods and services.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) can be defined as a self-regulating business model that helps a company be socially accountable to itself, its stakeholders, and the public.

The soul of India lives in villages. Its population is living in rural areas. People, in rural areas should have the same quality of life as is enjoyed by people living in urban areas but from many years, they are living under poverty, unemployment, poor and inadequate infrastructure. Hence Rural Development is concerned with economic growth, social justice, and improvement in the living standard of the rural people. Corporate 'Social Responsibility is thus considered very important as far as rural areas are concerned.

Literature Review

The literature on theory and practices on CSR in the developing countries remain scant. There are very few studies that looked at CSR practices in rural India after Globalization.

Objectives of the Study

The study has conducted with following objectives:

- To study the scope of CSR in Rural India.
- To study the major areas of concern for CSR initiatives.

Research Methodology

This paper is based on secondary data obtained from various data sources available, Author has used several published journals and records and web resources to draw the conclusion.

Rural India

Based on information obtained from secondary data, the **findings** are listed below:

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Problems of rural India in view of CSR

Mainly rural India has been facing following problems.

- **Illiteracy and Unawareness**

Education is backbone of development whereas illiteracy poses as a big hurdle in sound development of this backbone. Over one third of Indian population living in rural areas is illiterate even after 68 years of independence (according socio- economic and cost census). All India average of the rural population having below primary education is 13.97%. While those studies till middle level are 13.53%.

As of 2021, the literacy rate in rural India was around 73.5% and **rest** are illiterate. (According to IBEF Blog).

Hence, it can be inferred when the individuals are illiterate and unaware then they would experience barriers in even marketing their products. Hence when they are unable to get engaged in any occupation, due to illiteracy and unawareness then they ultimately experience poverty.

- **Poor Health Facilities**

Health facilities in rural areas are poor and needs a greater investment to boost better health facilities. Poor economic status and lack of awareness solely responsible for health issues in rural India.

- **Unemployment**

It is a major issue in rural India due to unemployability rural people are not able to generate a source of income and consequently they are facing poverty and are not able to meet their living requirements.

- **Conventional Agricultural System**

In rural India conventional agriculture method is being used in which use of indigenous knowledge, traditional equipment and tools like axe, hoe, stick and methods like slash and burn, natural resources, shifting cultivation, lack of accountability to the environment is included.

That's why poor impact of traditional agricultural system are depletion of nutrients, deforestation, soil erosion, poor yields and losses can be easily seen.

- **Poor Infrastructure**

Rural India has poor roads, communication, and educational facilities. Development and mobility are hindered because of lack of infrastructure. Due to lack of roads the rural are cut off from technological advances and emerging markets in urban areas.

- **Economic Issues**

Rural India is facing critical economic condition due to increase in population, illiteracy, conventional methods of agriculture, unemployment etc.

- **Other**

Child labor, Child marriage, migration to urban areas etc.

Scope of Corporate Social Responsibility in Rural India

- **Establishment of Fundamental Facilities for Rural People**

Companies that form part of India's public sector actively contribute towards corporate social responsibility initiatives. Most corporations set up townships around the plant, therefore can also establish a **school**, a **hospital**, and several other civic facilities for its employees and other people residing in that area.

- **Provide Employment Opportunities to Villagers**

One of the essential contributions for development of rural areas is to produce income generating opportunities to villagers. However, such initiatives will only be thriving when they are mutually benefitting to both the customers for whom the program is intended and also for the company.

- **Setting up Health Care Units**

Health camps can be organized for the regular check up and prevention of diseases by the companies in the rural areas as well as health care units can also be established as a form of investment.

- **Establishment of Knowledge Centers**

Social investments can be made by creation of knowledge centers for updating the knowledge of improved agricultural practices and cultivation of high value crops will enhance farm income and farm employment.

- **Setting up of Small-scale and Cottage Industries**

By investing in establishing of small- scale industries and village based industries the problem of unemployment in rural areas can be tackled. These industries can employ major rural population in both in seasons and non-season for generating the income.

- **Proper Enforcement of Govt. Policies**

In response to social investment, proper implementation of the existing government policies should be done and proper planning and framing of new legal policies should also be done by the means of company law.

- **ICT in Rural Areas**

It is also a vital scope for CSR, it is used in rural area for the growth of various field like education, agriculture, medical treatment and many others.

- **Community Development Awareness Programs**

These programs may also be done through corporation under CSR.

Conclusion

The social responsibility is regarded as a vital business model for Indian companies irrespective of size, sector, business goal, location of the company. It can be concluded that there is a vast scope for CSR in the development of rural India. Companies can play proactive role to lead the development of rural area. It can be done through right initiatives by the companies for the development of various dimensions of rural life viz social, economic and also living conditions

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