

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: A CASE STUDY OF ITC LTD.

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### ABSTRACT

*Social Responsibility is the moral and ethical responsibility of the every business organization because all resources such as: Human Resources, Physical Resources, Natural Resources etc are provided by the society to corporate. So, it refers to the obligation of business towards various parties of the society. The concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR), used particularly with reference to a company, emerged from the notion of sustainable development. It includes consideration of such issues as human rights, employee health, and educational, environmental and social welfare. At national level almost all the corporate sectors are engaged in CSR practice in the areas like education, health, development, women empowerment, agricultural development etc for sustainable development. This research paper highlight the brief idea of CSR and sustainable Development, Rules of CSR provided in section 135 of Indian Companies Act, 2013 and examine the initiative of ITC Ltd in CSR for sustainable development.*

**Keywords:** CSR, Sustainable Development, Social, Economic, Stakeholder.

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### Introduction

Business is established in society for the society and by the society. So, it is an important part of society. A Business Organization has economic as well as social objectives. Economic objective is an objective of business without which business cannot be thought of. The main objective of establishing any business organization is to earn profit. Just like the lender receives interest on the money he lends and landlord and landlord gets rent on the building rented, in the same manner a businessman should get profit for business activities he performs. Normally, no one in there to do a business in which he cannot makes profit. Business organizations are utilizing the resources from society like natural resources, human resources and financial resources. These social resources are converted into utility products and services and are being used by the society. In course of, using the social resources business organizations are also using the technology. Sometimes, these technology harms to the environment. In addition to economic objectives, business organization has a responsibility towards the society not only in terms of providing quality goods and services at fair price, creating employment, payment of taxes etc. they are also expected to participate in other social activities like spread of education, eradication of poverty, protection of environment, health services, emergency assistance, spread of sports, energy security, save drinking water etc for sustainable development. In this regard, the concept of CSR has emerged from the notion of sustainable development. The main dimensions of CSR are economic, legal, ethical, voluntarily and philanthropic. Ultimately CSR is behaving like a responsible corporate citizen for the community. Today most of the business organization aim at maximizing profit, but this notion of maximum profit is just a mathematical concept. It can measure the quantity of profit, but in a real and practical world there is constantly a possibility of higher performance. To, achieve higher performance, along with profit maximization, other aspects are also required. Other aspects include training to staff, reasonable salary to staff, no-misconduct concerning taxation, ethical environment etc. Probably, the axiom of "Minimizing cost or increasing sales with high prices will improve long term profit" is not always true and not even practical. In present, cut throat competition age, the business organizations cannot live without completing its social responsibility. This thought resulted the concept of CSR. At National level almost all the corporate are emerged in the CSR practice in areas like health, education, skill development and also for the empowerment of the weaker section of the society. The companies which have made remarkable efforts in CSR practice are Tata Group, Reliance Group, Hindustan Unilever Ltd., Infosys, ITC Ltd. etc.

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ITC Ltd. is one of the important private sector company in India has been contributing extensively towards a wide range of socio-culture health & sanitation, drinking water, eradication of poverty, education, vocational training, livestock development, women empowerment, environment sustainability, social forestry, soil & moisture conservation and agro development programmes to ensure sustainable development. This paper highlights the brief idea about CSR and sustainable development and finding the responsibility towards CSR activities fulfils by the ITC Ltd.

#### **Review of Literature**

**Das (2004)** made an attempt to analyze sustainable development through corporate social responsibility with special reference to Tata Group of steel company and concluded that Tata Group fulfils the sustainable development duty and responsibility towards the society through CSR practices.

**Singh & Sharma (2015)** studied corporate social responsibility for a sustainable change: A case of Hindustan Unilever Ltd. The analysis of the study revealed that effective implementation of corporate social responsibility requires participation of all stakeholders who are directly or indirectly associated with the company. The organization should maintain a record of all its CSR activities for the purpose of corrective and timely measures.

**Sengupta (1993)** examined how do the Indian Public companies approach social goals in terms of planning, central and appraisal of social obligation performance and also analyzed their involvement in major social action programme.

**Dey (2019)** in his research paper CSR policy statement and reporting practices by Indian Corporate Sector concluded that CSR spending will positively influence in solving social problems. It will also help in sustainable development of business and suggested that CSR policy should be mandatory for every company along with the economic objective.

#### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of the present study are:

- To highlight the brief idea of CSR and sustainable development.
- To introduce the CSR rules according to the Indian Companies Act, 2013.
- To study the role of CSR for sustainability.
- To examine the CSR Practices by ITC Ltd.
- To provide recommendations and suggestions for the same.

#### **Research Methodology**

The present study is basically a descriptive nature and is based on secondary data. The required secondary data collected from annual reports and websites of the selected company, various journals and newspapers.

#### **Corporate Social Responsibility**

Whereas it is the responsibility of every form of business enterprise- be it sole proprietorship, partnership, joint Hindu family, cooperative, or a company to act in a socially desirable manner. The concept of CSR, used particularly with reference to a company, has recently gained popularity. CSR in India has traditionally been seen as a philanthropic activity but, now a day the concept of CSR has changed, it has moved from philanthropy to sustainable development. The new concept of CSR has been introduced under section 135, of the Indian Companies Act, 2013 India is the first country in the world to introduce CSR in statutory form by passing Indian companies Act, 2013. CSR is a management tool containing commitment by corporate sector to contribute in socio-economic development at large. The World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) defines corporate social responsibility as "the commitment of the company to contribute to the sustained economic development by working with employees, their families, the local community and the entire society in order to improve life quality." Thus, Corporate Social Responsibility may be defined as the responsibility of corporate for their impact on society. In this context the CSR voluntary guidelines 2009, published by the MCA, Government of India, brings to the fore six important aspects – (a) care for all stakeholders (b) Ethical Functioning ( c) Respects for workers rights and welfare (d) Respect for Human Rights (e) Respect for Environment, and (f) Action for social and inclusive Development.

#### **Highlight of Section 135 of New Company Act, 2013**

- All Companies whose turnover of Rs 1000 Crore and more –or a net worth of Rs 500 crore and more or net profit of Rs 5 crore and more –will have to spend at least two percent of their three-year average net profit every year on CSR activities and /or report the reason for spending or non-expenditure Section 135(1).

- The activities regarding CSR may be completed with partnership of any types of registered NGO. However, the implementing partner should have three years track record.
- Nature of expenditure incurred in India will qualify as CSR expenditure.
- It is mandatory for companies to disclose their CSR policy, programs/ projects undertaken and amount spent in their report and the CSR Rules provide for separate format and report must be published on the Company's website for informational purposes.
- The activities which may be included by companies in their CSR policies according to schedule VII.

**Benefits for adopting CSR Practices by Corporate Sector**

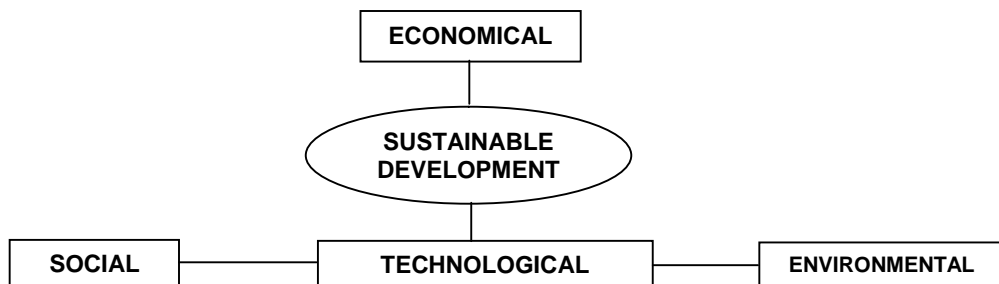
- It recognizes good image of the brand.
- It satisfies employees.
- It improves the gains in production.
- A company with good CSR will always be a confident company as compare to the other. It also increases the reputation of the company.
- It increases the reputation in the global market.
- It helps in attracting the green and ethical environment.
- CSR practices increases the profitability in the long run.
- It makes corporate more responsible towards the society.
- It enhances greater use of social resources and also integration of incremental management tools.
- It increases sales and customer loyalty.
- It improves the standard of living of the people.
- It reduces the regional imbalances
- It reduces the social imbalances.

**Stakeholders of CSR**

- Shareholders: Dividend and value creation.
- Investor: Return on investment.
- Suppliers: Prompt repayment of Debt.
- Community: drinking water facilities, adopting a village, free distribution of educational kits to students, rural electrification, open school and colleges etc.
- Environmentalists: Supporting for clean environment.
- Government: Prompt tax payment, helping government in policy making, free from corruption
- Quality goods and services at reasonable price, after sale services.

**Sustainable Development**

The United Nations (UN) defines sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Some important factors that must be taken into account when discussing sustainable development are the national use of natural resources and energy, population and climate change and development terms, sustainability terms means responsible growth-when social and environmental concerns are aligned with people's economic needs. There are four dimensions of sustainable development which are presented in following figure:



For achieving the sustainable development, these four dimensions economic, social, environmental and technological should be balanced and integrated in proper manner:

- **Social:** Generation of employment directly or indirectly is the social dimension of sustainable development.
- **Economical:** No doubt, business is an economic entity, Therefore, the primary responsibility of the business is economic. It should produce goods and services as per needs of the society and sell them at profit.
- **Environmental:** Use of modern technology for reducing the environmental impact in the region .
- **Technological:** Modern technology will help in enhancing the skill and knowledge base of the employees. This can help other projects in the country to acquire technology and encourage capacity building across the country.

#### **About ITC Limited**

ITC is one of the India's most admired private sector company dealing consumer product and agribusiness. It has over 3559 employees with a market capitalization of nearly US\$ 50 billion and a gross sales value of US\$ 10.8 billion (figures as on 31.03.2019). It is the country's leading FMCG marketer, the clear market leader is the Indian paperboard and packaging industry, a globally known company for empowerment of farmer through with its wide-reaching agro business, a pre-eminent hotel chain in India and specialized global digital solutions provider. Over the last decades, ITC's new consumer Goods business has established a vibrant portfolio of 25-world class Indian brands that create and retain value in India. ITC's world class FMCG including Ashirwad, Sunfeast, Yipee, Bingo, B Natural, Sunbean, Fiama, Engage, Vivel, Savlon, Classmate, Paperkraft, Mangaldeep, and others have garnered encouraging consumer franchise within a short span of time.

#### **CSR Initiatives of ITC**

The main objective of ITC's CSR initiative is to secure the livelihoods of all stakeholders not just for today but also for the future. For betterment target groups of society ITC adopted a comprehensive CSR policy in 2014-15 outlining programmes, projects and activities that company plans to undertake to create a significant positive impact on identified stakeholders. All these programmes fall within the purview of Schedule VII and section 135 of the Indian Companies Act, 2013 and the companies (Corporate Social Responsibility) Rules, 2014.

"Nation First: Sab Saath Badhein" is the slogan of ITC. As a company deeply rooted in Indian soil, ITC is inspired by the opportunity to save larger national properties. A global exemplar in sustainability, ITC is the only enterprise in the world of comparable dimensions to be carbon-positive, water positive and solid waste recycling positive for over a decade now. ITC has created over 6 million sustainable livelihoods. The company's large scale social investment programmes has a transformational impact on rural India, winning national and global recognition. Together with farmers and local communities, ITC has implemented large scale intervention in climate-smart and sustainable agriculture that make a meaningful contribution to the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of doubling farmer incomes. Towards this, ITC has launched an integrated programme titled 'Baarah Mahine Hariyali' to give a new dimension to the complex task of multiplying farmer incomes. ITC is collaborating with NITI Aayog to progressive build capacity of 2 million farmers in 29 aspirational districts to help enhance rural incomes. ITC is investing in India's future by building world-class consumer goods factories and iconic hospitality assets that will contribute to the country's competitive capacity. These investment projects underpin the company's support to the government's "Make in India" vision.

Accordingly Social Investment Programme (SIP) is designed by the company to build stakeholders capacities and promote sustainable livelihoods. The aims of this programme are to transform the lives of even the most marginalized amongst its stakeholders groups. The footprint of company's projects is spread over 27 states/union territories covering 235 districts. Over the years, its initiatives have encompassed provision of social forestry, soil and moisture conservation, Bio-diversity conservation, sustainable agriculture, Livestock Development, Women Empowerment, Education, skilling and vocational training, Health & sanitation, solid waste management and environment. For better implementation of CSR activities, Company do work with partnerships of globally renowned NGOs such as SEWA Bharat outreach, ITC rural development Trust etc. Recently, ITC has provided a contingency fund of Rs 150 crore for fighting the Covid-19 epidemic. This fund will be utilized primarily to provide relief to the weaker sections of the society.

#### **Social Forestry**

By the social forestry programme ITC greened about 33,982 acres land during the year. Till 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2019 the farm and Social Forestry programmes together have greened over 7.33 lakh acres, generating 135 million persons-days of employment.

### Sustainable Agriculture

The programme is closely aligned to the 'National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)', which aims to make agriculture productive, sustainable, and remunerative and climate resilient. The ITC E-Choupal's are designed to deliver enhanced value to all participants in the value chain, including farmers by leveraging the power of Information Technology. ITC e-choupal is the largest initiative among interest-based interventions in rural India. Its services reach out to more than 4 million farmers in over 35,000 villages through the 6,100 kiosks spread over 12 states. 1243 Choupals Pradarshan Khets (CPKs) complemented the E-Choupals to disseminate appropriate agro practices to 65,000 farmers covering 1.48 lakh acres. Farmers in these villages are conducting e- business through E- Choupal.

### Water Stewardship

ITC aims to achieve water security for all stakeholders by progressing towards positive water balance through interventions in supply and demand side management. Keeping in view, water stewardship programme has launched by ITC for all stakeholders. The programme is closely connected to the 'Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana', which is being implemented in mission mode by the government. The Water Stewardship programme covered over 1.37 lakh acres in 2018-19, taking the total area to over 10.12 lakh areas spread over 15 states. Cumulatively, 15086 water harvesting structures have been constructed, creating fresh water harvesting potential of 34.64 million KI details are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Water Stewardship**

Activities	2017-18	2018-19	Cum to 2018-19
Water-harvesting structure (No.)	2341	2646	15086
Total Watershed Areas (acres)	98180	1,37,105	1,011,601
Water Storage Capacity (Million KI.)	2.93	3.39	34.64
Direct Beneficiaries (Nos.)	32,705	25744	3,10,435
Employees-person days (lakhs)	1.46	1.62	58.60

Source: Sustainability Report of ITC Ltd.-2019.

### Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development

The animal husbandry programme provides an opportunity to farmers to diversify their livelihood portfolio from primary dependency on agriculture by enhancing productivity of milk animals. About 70% of Indian people living in rural areas and depends on agriculture and allied activities. ITC's Livestock Development Programme aims at assisting cattle owners to upgrade their productivity of livestock and milk. The programme provides extension services; including breed improvement through doorstep artificial insemination (AI), fodder propagation and training of farmers to increase their incomes by enhancing milk yield of cattle in 21 districts of 6 states. During the year, 1.46 lakh AIs were carried out leading to the birth of 0.62 lakh high yielding progenies. In addition, 1.29 lakh cattle of over 55,000 dairy farmers of 426 villages in 6 districts of Bihar were supported through 317 training programmes on milk production and mastitis control.

### Women Economic Empowerment

For economic empowerment of women ITC has launched a programme for poor women living in rural areas. ITC assist them to form Self Help Group (SHG) and micro credit so that they can build up small savings for self employment. This initiative of ITC is closely aligned to Support to Training and Employment Programme (STEP) for women development of the government, which aims to provide skills that employability to women. After launching this programme 72% of the graduate women till 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2019 have tripled their incomes, earnings more than Rs. 60,000 per annum. It presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: Distribution of Women by Current Income Size**

Income before Project (Rs./Month)	Income Post Project (Rs./Month)			Total Women
	3000-4999	5000-6999	>7000	
500-999	1856	3671	1678	7205
100-1500	1992	3354	1225	6571
1500	10	6	3	19
Women Members	3858	7031	2906	13795

Source: Sustainability Report of ITC Ltd.-2019.

### Primary Education

This programme is designed to provide education to children of weaker section of society. This programme is closely aligned to 'Sarva Siksha Abhiyan'. ITC has set up supplementary learning centres that provide additional coaching to children. This programme also provides infrastructure assistance to government schools such as books, teaching material, furniture, computer etc. The programme covered 1.15 lakh children in 2018-19 out of 24 districts of 14 states. 199 Primary schools/ anganwadis were provided with infrastructure support in 2018-19, taking the cumulative number till date to 1,802 schools.

### Vocational Training

The present society is an entrepreneurial society so technical and vocational education is necessary for developing entrepreneurial skills. The vocational training programme of ITC focuses on providing market relevant skills to make potential job seekers industry ready and employable. The programme is closely aligned to Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), which aims to enable a large number of Indian youth to take up industry relevant skill training that will help them in securing a better livelihood. The programme is being implemented around ITC's factories and agro businesses catchments in 32 districts of 17 states has covered 67,496 youth cumulatively. 36% of the youth were from the SC/ST Communities and 44% were female students in F.Y 2018-19. Table 3 highlights the details of students who are listed in this programme.

**Table 3: Vocational Training**

Activity	2017-18	2018-19	upto 2018-19
Students Enrolled	11,619	12172	67496
Students Trained	10,584	10,550	52303
Students Placed	7428	7315	33756

Source: Sustainability Report of ITC Ltd.-2019.

### Health and Sanitization Services

Healthcare of the community is one of the thrust areas of the Human Development Index. ITC continues health and sanitization services for improving public health and hygiene. To promote a hygienic environment and to reduce incidence of water born diseases, 4413 Individual Household Toilets (IHTs) were constructed in 26 districts of 15 states in collaboration with the respective state Governments/Districts sanitation department. With this, a total of 35,916 IHHTs have been constructed till 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. In addition 32 community toilets constructed/innovated in Bihar, West Bengal and New Delhi during the year, taking the cumulative to 62 till 31 March, 2019. Under this programme company also established water purifier plants in some districts of Andhra Pradesh. Company also organize health awareness camp and support to 'Swaksh India Mission' of government by audio-visual aids, games and practical training to encourage healthy hygiene habits.

### Solid Waste Management

ITC's waste recycling programme, 'WOW-Well being out of Waste' enables the creation of a clean and green environment and promotes sustainable livelihood for waste collectors. In addition to WOW programme, another programme on solid waste management which deals with both dry and wet waste has spread to 15 districts of 10 states covering 2.12 lakhs household and collected 12,608 tonnes of waste during the year. ITC Ltd. has taken target 2030 for mission 'SUNHARA KAL'. The mission 'SUNHERA KAL' is committed to participatory development ,inclusive growth, Behaviour change, Public Private Partnerships, Knowledge Partnerships and Implementation Partnerships for long term vision. Table 4 presents performance against target 2030 for mission 'SUNHARA KAL' programme.

**Table 4: Performance Against Target 2030 For Mission 'SUNHARA KAL' Programmes**

Initiatives	Unit	Target	Achieved till 2018-19	Balance to Achieve	Timeline (Years)
Social Forestry	Acres	6,30,000	3,29,047	300953	11
Sustainable Agriculture	Acres	3,00,0000	2,79,366	27,20,634	11
Watershed Development	Acres	22,00,000	10,11,601	11,88,399	11
Women Economic Empowerment	Nos.	1,50,000	64606	85395	11
Vocational Training	No. of Youths	2,82,000	67496	214504	11
Employees in Learning Outcomes	No. of Children	13,00000	6,90,882	6,09,118	11
Infrastructure support to Govt. School	Nos.	4000	1802	2198	11
Toilets Constructed	Nos.	40,000	35916	4084	11
Solid Waste Management	No. of Household	6,00,000	211826	388174	11

Source: Sustainability Report-2019, ITC Ltd.

Financial details of ITC Ltd. are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Financial Details of ITC Ltd.**

1	Paid up Capital (as on 31.03.2019)	1225.86 Crore
2	Gross Sales Value	75,309.36 Crore
3	Total Profit after Tax	12,464.32 Crore
4	Average Net Profit of Last three Financial Years	15327.74 Crore
5	Total Spending on CSR	2.64%
6	Total Spending amount on CSR	306.95 Crore

As per the Annual Report 2018-19 The total CSR expenditure for the financial year 2018-19 stood at Rs. 306.95 crores. Average Net Profit of the company for last three financial years Rs. 15327.74 crores, accordingly the prescribed CSR expenditure (two percent of the amount Rs. 15327.74 crores) stood Rs. 306.55 crores for FY 2018-19. Expenditure incurred under section 135 of the companies act, 2013 on CSR activities Rs. 306.95 crores (2018-290.98 crores) comprising employee benefits expenses of Rs. 8.69 crores (2018-Rs. 7.84 crores) and other expenses of Rs. 298.26 crores (2018-Rs. 283.14 crores) is accrued for payment as on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019. As these programmes fall within the purview of Schedule VII and section 135 of the Companies (CSR Policy) rules, 2014.

### Conclusion

A business organization has two objectives Social objectives as-well-as Economic objectives. Basically social objective and economic objective are complementary to each other. The present age is the age of liberalization, Privatisation, Globalisation and technological development. So, balanced achievements of economic and social goals by the business organizations are necessary. For achieving these goals many business organizations are now engaged in social welfare projects for sustainability of its stakeholders. The new concept of CSR has been introduced in section 135 of Indian Companies Act, 2013 which has been enforced from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 in India. All companies with a turnover of Rs 1,000 crore and more or net worth of Rs. 5 crore and more will have to spend at least two percent of their three year average net profit every year on CSR activities. ITC is one of the important private sector company in India which follow the companies (CSR Policy) rules, 2014. During the financial year 2018-19 the total CSR expenditure was Rs. 306.95 crore which was 2.64% of net profit. ITC Ltd. has gone a long way in fulfilling the duty of sustainable development through CSR activities. The main CSR activities are Health & Sanitation, Drinking Water, Education, Vocational Training, Women Empowerment, Eradication of Poverty, Livelihood Generation, Environment Sustainability, Social Forestry, and agro development. Thus, ITC Ltd. plays an important role in India for sustainable development through CSR Practices. For achieving economic, social, environmental and technological development, ITC Ltd are doing following works through CSR activities:

- It helps in increasing the direct or indirect employment opportunity.
- It works for reducing the pollution.
- It provides a better local environment for the employees and the surrounding community.
- It helps in enhancing the knowledge and skill of the farmer with new technology.
- It provides vocational training and education to needy people for betterment of his life.

Thus, ITC Ltd are fulfilling the responsibility towards the society and the nation through CSR activities. Recently, ITC has provided a contingency fund of Rs 150 crore for fighting the Covid-19 epidemic. This fund will be provided as relief to the needy sections of the society. The management of ITC Ltd suggested that maintain a good and cordial relationship with employees, customers, investors, suppliers, and public at large to success and achieve sustainability.

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