

**Environmental Education - attentiveness - Preserving
surroundings for a enhanced Tomorrow**

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ABSTRACT

India is involved in Corporate Social Responsibility from past 20 years and it was ranked fourth in the list, according to social enterprise CSR Asia's Asian Sustainability Ranking (ASR), released in October 2009. But the initiatives that have been taken so far are not sustainably and responsibly focused towards balanced growth in India. Today CSR has become imperative management principle and more or less, nearly 90% of Companies are involved in CSR initiatives but benefit is not passing onto to the ground level where it is required in absolute terms. Looking at current economic condition of India, there is an immediate need of strategic CSR delivering value proposition to the masses. The paper focuses on the reasons to analyze the strategic gap between CSR implementation and CSR effectiveness and to identify the focused sectors where sustainable actions of strategic CSR are required to create synergies in India. The paper urges the Corporate not to look CSR as a non profit activity in fact in the long run, expenditure in CSR can help increase profitability.

Key words: Strategic CSR, Sustainable action, CSR effectiveness

Introduction

Global warming, deforestation and other environmental issues might be pushing the world towards its doomsday and haunting the green army, but we tend to care little about these as they don't have in your face impact.

The egocentric nature of the people and the tendency to put the issues on the backburners is doing the irreparable dent to the civilization, putting a question mark before its extension.

Though, environmental issues are of vital important, people have little knowledge about these and most of them are confused as how to work hard and preserve environment for a better tomorrow for the generations to come.

Talking about students' perse, what is really interesting is that their knowledge about environmental problems is far from concrete and is only at a superficial level. They have little idea of what to do to protect the natural ecology. When they hear examples of what the tragic things befalling the environment, they are shocked and begin showing interest.

As they learn about the problems human beings are faced with, they gradually become serious in their approach to this topic.

Objective: -

- To develop awareness of environmental problems and nurture a critical view of development as it has occurred so far and
- To discover what they can do as citizens to solve environmental problems.

India , like any other developing country is spread across in vast subcontinent and enveloped in diverse colors of community, culture and religion. We live in a rapidly changing developing world and nowhere, it more evident than in India. It is a country experiencing both an accelerating growth rates alongside unequal socio-economic development with new concerns of environmental conservation and protection emerging as vital issue. These issues are of immediate concerns as it has inevitable consequences in terms of environmental degradation felt particularly on socio-economically marginalized community.

It is amidst such a situation that India adopted a new paradigm of thinking and experience of development post-Stockholm Conference of 1972 called Sustainable Development (SD). Following which, India became a part of 187 countries agreeing on carrying out an important commitment towards SD by signing the Rio Declaration during 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. Since then the concept of sustainable development is adopted such that the country and society can meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and the level of growth rates is commensurate with social, economic and environment development.

A quote from the Bible: -

A big mistake when reading Revelation is to think that God expects us to be innocent bystanders while the angels and demons slug it out. Revelation is a message to engage in the struggle against the evil that is occurring, not to tune it out. Revelation 11:18 records the following: "the time has come for judging the dead and for rewarding your servants the prophets and your saints and those who reverence your name, both small and great – and for destroying those who destroy the earth." If you are part of the destruction of the environment, then God will judge you for it. The environmental disasters today are human – caused, not the result of angelic beings, and therefore humans will be held accountable. On the other hand if you show reverence for God's name by caring for the world he has made, then you will be rewarded for it. You will almost certainly need to leave a legacy to your children. Do you want to leave them with a huge rubbish tip that they will curse you for, or a beautiful planet that can reveal something of the Creators glory?

Where are we now? :-

Environmental consciousness deserves to be propagated at all levels. Students need to be made to understand that environmental conservation can be achieved if we all share a single thought, the thought of creating a better world to live in, the thought to give a better deal to everyone, human or otherwise, to the present as well as to the future generation who all have to share the Almighty's great gifts of clean environment and abundant natural resources on this planet earth. They should be taught that environmental protection encompasses not only pollution but also sustainable development and conservation of natural resources and the eco-system. The focus of mine revolves around examining the extent to which awareness about the environment has percolated into the students' consciousness, and making a frank appraisal of enforcement measures adopted so far in protecting the environment.

Today, the necessity of environmental awareness and enforcement is more demanding and urgent than ever before. Mentors and guardians of these students are fully aware of the consequences but are in no position to do much about it. Till date, they have been passing on the knowledge which they possess to these students but the question arises is that are they imparting the actual facts of what exactly is going on in around them and the measures that needs to be taken to sort out the big question in hand, i.e., to how to preserve our environment and its resources? Are case studies with respect to the concerned subject being dealt with, so that students get to know the real picture?

The subject of Environment Management is very vast such as – vehicular pollution, pollution by industries, depletion of forests, illegal felling of trees, dumping of hazardous waste, etc. The environmental problem of today whether it is air and water pollution, ozone depletion, land degradation, deforestation, destruction of ecosystem or mismanagement of waste, all damage our natural environment and life on earth. None can be complacent considering enormity of the problem and large area to cover. As citizens of this country, they need to understand that there is a real threat to forests and wildlife. There is tremendous pressure on forests and unsustainable removals and threat of massive destruction and wild life habitat. Every one and the institution they are part of, has to play the assigned role to the best of one's capability to save India's forests and

wild life. Apart from getting theoretical knowledge, are they given some live projects so that the students can have some practical experience?

Governing Goals of Higher education and Sustainable Development

It is necessary to recognize that the present approach towards higher education is governed by the “National policy on Education” of 1986 and Program of Action of 1992. The 1986 policy and Action Plan of 1992 were based on the two landmark reports namely, the “University Education Commission” of 1948-49 (popularly known as Radhakrishnan Commission), and the “Education Commission” of 1964-66, (popularly known as Kothari Commission Report). These two landmark reports in fact laid down the basic framework for the National policy for higher education in the country. The University Education Report had set goals for development of higher education in the country.

Increasing Institutional Capacity

Table 1

Institutional capacity in Higher Education in India

Institutional capacity Indicator	1950	2011
Number of university Level Institutions, including 11 private Universities	25	431
Number of Colleges	700	20,677
Number of Teachers	15000	5.05lakhs
Number of Students Enrolled	1lakh	116.12lakhs

Source: - Ministry of Human Resource Development. Government of India (May 2011) “National Policy on Education –2011

The level of higher education is determined by the size of institutional Capacity of higher education system in country. The size of higher education system is determined by particular three indicators, namely the number of educational institutions- universities and colleges, number of teachers and number of students. Since independence, institutional capacity of higher education has increased in India. During 1950 and 2011, the number of universities has increased from 20 to about 431, colleges from 500 to 20,677 and the teachers from 15,000 to nearly 5.05 lakhs. Consequently, the enrolment of students has increased from a mere 1.00 lakh in 1950 to over 116.12 lakhs.

Table2*Type of Universities in India*

Type September	2011
Central Universities	25
State Universities	230
Deemed Universities	113
National Importance (State)	5
National Importance (Center)	33
Universities	28
Total	431

Source: - Ministry of Human Resource Development. Government of India (May 2011) “National Policy on Education –2011

The extent of higher education is generally measured by enrolment ratio in higher education. There are three alternative methods used to estimate the extend of access to higher education namely Gross Enrolment ratio (GER), Net enrolment ratio (NER) and Enrolment of Eligible (EER). The GER measure the access level by taking the ratio of persons in all age group enrolled in various programs to total population in age group of 18 to 23. The NER measures the level of enrolment for age specific groups namely those in age group of 18 to 23. While the EER measure the level of enrolment of those who completed higher secondary level education. These three concepts thus look at the access to higher education from three different angles. Three alternative sources namely Selected Education Statistics, (SES) National sample Survey (NSS) and Population Census (PC) provide data on number of student enrolment. Table 2 presents the GER based on the Selected Education Statistics (SES) for 2006/7, NSS Data for 2004/5(Ravi Srivastva’s study) and population Census Data for 2001.

What needs to happen? :-

What is needed most is commitment and dedication towards first understanding the problem in hand and towards the cause of protection, preservation and conservation of environment. While many of us recognize that environment pollution is an extremely urgent problem but when placed in the context of seemingly more immediate problems such as poverty, crime, corruption and religious and social conflicts, the environment often losses. Who suffers the most whether it is Bhopal Gas Tragedy or any other similar disaster? It is the poor and illiterate. It is the class which is exploited most – whether in case of illegal felling of trees or of killing of animals - vested interest mislead them – misguide them.

The students have to be educated about the need to protect environment for their self – preservation as well. It can be done by medium of Television, Radio and Print media. They can also be giving some live projects, show documentary movies with respect to the environmental problems and their possible solutions. Once fed with ample amount of information, they can be made to increase environmental awareness or even teach them how to help remedying environmental problems.

The emergence of the internet as a source of information, with its vast reach and accessibility, has been an extremely important development. The only drawback is the difficulty in ascertaining the reliability of source. Also this medium is available to only a limited population in our country. Most of our students who come from remote areas of country to cities to pursue higher education are unaware of such vital information. In the light of this, television and print media can play more important role. Further, the radio has a large audience in the rural areas and with the coming of FM channels; radio is regaining its popularity in towns and cities also.

Issues such as forestry, overall development, etc, could occupy a top slot on a regular basis. Audio – visual media could relay on various documentaries on the environmental abuses, and facilitate awareness by interviews with environmental activists. Moreover, the print media need to be more vigilant in exposing environmental issues. There could some special magazines focusing on environmental issues only and students should be asked to subscribe such issues. Apart from that colleges can organize seminars by inviting environmentalists to talk on respective subjects and simultaneously having interactive sessions with them.

Conclusion:-

There is a need to create consciousness of the environment which must permeate all ages and all sections of the society beginning with the child. Environmental consciousness should inform teaching in schools and colleges and should be integrated in the entire education process. It is said that early years of our independence were spent in pursuing a development oriented path at the cost of issues such as pollution control and ecologically sound industry. May be that was necessary at that stage. I need not comment on it. It is easier to criticize than act. All the same, it can be said that most of the development projects and industrial infrastructure in the past have been created with little environmental concern. This was mainly because knowledge of environmental impact and impact assessment technology was not fully developed at that time. But this situation is changing gradually.

It is necessary to emphasis that problem of environmental degradation can be tackled only by concerted efforts by every single individual in this world. We have to educate, spread awareness, involve and motivate every child, woman and man the country to conserve the local flora and fauna, soil and water resources and all other gifts of God which are national properties and belong to all and to none individually.

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