

CSR Initiatives for Children Education – Exploring the Practices in Selected Corporate Companies in India

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ABSTRACT

India is the first country in the world to introduce statutory Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through the new companies Act 2013 (CA 2013). CSR was a new concept in India and can be traced with historical evidences. The concept of company cannot be separated from entity. However, for “company” a society is a place within which it operates and defines the number of stakeholders for which it is directly or indirectly responsible. Every business needs some place called “society” to operate and every society needs “business” for growth. Therefore CSR is a mutual benefit bridge between business and society. Nearly all leading organizations in India are involved in corporate social responsibility (CSR) programmes in areas like education, health, skill development and environmental protection and women empowerment of not just the weaker sections of the society but the society in large. **The present paper attempts to analyse the few notable firms sacrificing profits in the area of quality child education.**

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Children, India.

Different organizations have framed different definitions, although there is considerable common ground between them. According to **Peter Drucker** (1984) social responsibility as “the term used to assert or assign leadership responsibility of the businessman with respect to culture of the community” according to **Walton** (1967) defined CSR “as the intimacy of the relationships between the corporation and society”. **Carroll** (1991) explained CSR as “ a combination of economic responsibilities, legal responsibilities, ethical responsibilities, and philanthropic responsibilities metaphorically through a pyramidal shape” **Mallen Bekar**, CSR is about how companies manage the business processes to produce an overall positive impact on society. These domains of CSR have been utilized by numerous theorists (Wartick and Cochran 1985; Wood 1991) and empirical researchers (Aupperle et al. 1985; Smith et al. 2001; Strong and Meyer (1992). CSR is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society at large.

The Indian Context: the practice of CSR in India, though still within the traditional philanthropic space, has moved slowly from building the institution to developing the community through various projects. Also, with global influences and with active communities which are very demanding, there appears to be a discernible trend, that while CSR remains largely restricted to community development, it is getting more strategic in nature than philanthropic and majority of companies report the activities they undertake in this regard in their official websites, annual reports, sustainability reports and even to the extent of publishing CSR reports.

CSR and child Education – children are the future leaders of the country. In many situations, it's pathetic to notice that these future leaders are being deprived from education, food, shelter, exploited to hazardous labour, these problems turned as a serious threat to our country Quality.

Education is the most powerful tool for socio-economic transformation of a country. It not only eradicates poverty but also ensures equity among people. Therefore, ensuring access to quality education for all, in particular for underprivileged children from disadvantaged and marginalized communities, is of immense significance for overall development of India.

- With an estimated 12.6 million children engaged in hazardous occupations (2001 census of India) India has the largest number of child labourers under the age of 14 in the world.
- Education is being deprived from these children citing poverty as a reason and this in turn again leads to poverty as a reason and this in turn again leads to poverty and becomes a vicious circle. India's illiterate population largest in the world as per the UNESCO report.
- Vocational training and skill development are the missing keys in india from education to employment. Just 2 percent of Indian youth and only about 7 percent of the while working age population have received formal vocational training.

Children in India constitute one of the popular target groups to potentially benefit from CSR initiatives worldwide. Businesses interact with them directly or indirectly daily. But a global CEO study by Boston Consulting Group (**BCG**) revealed some disappointing facts. India has 472 million people under the age of 18. India is becoming younger and ranks high on Demographic Dividend. Because of lagging social services, we face greater obstacles to leveraging the advantages that can result from engaging a youthful, productive workforce.

Sample companies working for children education under the CSR activities

S.No	Name of the organization	Name of the programme
1.	Bharti Foundation	Satya Bharti School
2.	Mahindra & Mahindra	Nanhi Kali
3.	Dr. Reddy's Foundation	Kallam Anji Reddy Vidyalayam

Social Initiatives taken by Indian Companies for children.

1. Organization Overview: Bharti Enterprises Bharti Enterprises is one of India’s leading business groups with operations in over 21 countries across the globe. Founded in 1976, by Sunil Bharti Mittal, Bharti group has grown from being a manufacturer of bicycle parts to one of the largest and most respected business groups in India. With its entrepreneurial spirit and passion to undertake business projects that are transformational in nature, Bharti has created world-class businesses in telecom, financial services, retail, and foods.

CSR Initiatives: Bharti Enterprises believes in giving back to the society and there is strong belief in quality education being the most important tool for social and economic development in India. Thus, Bharti Foundation was set up in 2000 as the philanthropic wing of the Bharti Group of Companies.

Bharti Foundation: Bharti Foundation implements education programs in primary, secondary and technical education “to help underprivileged children and youth of our country realize their potential”. Various programs of Bharti Foundation are mentioned in the following figure.



The primary school program aims to provide quality education as well as holistic development of underprivileged children in the rural parts of India. It is designed to empower students to explore, question, reason and communicate effectively. It also encourages them

to connect with their community and stay rooted to their local culture. The senior school program aims to train students in vocational skills as well to help them emerge as educated employable citizens and contribute to country's development. The Foundation reaches out to over 30,000 underprivileged children across India through its Satya Bharti School Program.

Program overview: Satya Bharti School Program, aims to provide free quality education to underprivileged children in rural India, with a special focus on the girl child. It aims to transform the children into educated, confident, responsible and self reliant citizens with a deep sense of commitment to the society. The goal is to establish 500 Primary and 50 Senior Secondary Schools, reaching out to over 200,000 children. Through this Bharti Foundation aims to create replicable and scalable models of quality school education.

Features of a Satya Bharti Primary school							
Classes		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single sections • Classes preprimary to class V 					
Students		pupil to teacher ration 1:35					
Services provided to free of cost		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Mid day meal • Stationary, text books and note books etc • Uniforms 					
School infrastructure		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play equipment • Separate toilet boys & girls • Class room 					
Curriculum		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State board • Satya Bharathi school teaching philosophy and methodology 					
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS							
State	Schools (No.)	Students (No.)	Girls (%)	SC/ ST/ OBC (%)	Teachers (No.)	Female Teachers (%)	SC/ST/ OBC Teachers (%)
Punjab	95	16,929	46%	74%	707	89%	28%
Rajasthan	78	12,358	49%	79%	479	35%	73%
Haryana	46	4596	45	78	255	56	54
Uttar Pradesh	16	3173	59	67	83	40	24
Tamil Nadu	10	1297	46	100	51	88	61
West Bengal	09	1763	56	31	44	41	23
Total	254	40,676**	49%	75%	1619*	64%	46% *

Data as of 31st March 2016 In addition there are 16 more teachers at two schools run by Pardada Pardadi Education Society (PPES) in Uttar Pradesh **Student Enrolment for new academic session stands at 43,776 as of 31st August 2016

2. “Nanhi Kali Programme” by Mahindra & Mahindra group

Organization Overview: : The Mahindra group is a US \$7.1 billion Indian multinational. It employs over 1,00,000 people across the globe and enjoys a leadership position in utility vehicles, tractors and information technology, with a significant and growing presence in financial services, tourism, infrastructure development, trade and logistics. The Group today is an embodiment of global excellence and enjoys a strong corporate brand image.

CSR Initiatives: The Mahindra Group defines Corporate Social Responsibility as making socially responsible products, engaging in socially responsible employee relations and making a commitment to the community around it. The educational CSR initiatives in the group are managed by the associated trust K C Mahindra Education Trust.

The K. C. Mahindra Education Trust (KCMET) was founded by the late Mr. K. C. Mahindra in the year 1953, with an objective of promoting literacy and higher learning in the country. It is registered as a public Charitable Trust under the Bombay Public Trusts Act, 1950. Over the years, K.C. Mahindra Education Trust has undertaken a number of education initiatives, which make a difference in the lives of deserving and needy students. The trust has provided more than Rs. 432 million (\$8.64 million) in the form of grants, scholarships and loans.

Major initiatives by the KCMET are:

- ♦ **Grants and scholarships** Since its inception the trust has promoted education mainly by way of scholarships and grants to deserving and needy students.
- ♦ **Mahindra Pride School** Mahindra Pride School in Pune was established in response to the Government of India’s call for affirmative action. The school provides livelihood training to youth from socially disadvantaged sections of society and ensures that the children graduating from these vocational schools are appropriately placed based on the skills learned. Appropriate job placements with salaries ranging from Rs.45,000 to Rs.150,000 per annum have been provided to 95 per cent of the graduating students, while the balance 5 per cent have opted for further studies.
- ♦ **Nanhi Kali Programme:-** Project Nanhi Kali, the flagship programme of KCMET, was incepted in 1996 with the aim of providing primary education to underprivileged girl children in India. The initiative is being jointly managed by the KC Mahindra Education Trust and Naandi Foundation. Nanhi Kali is a national sponsorship programme implemented in Government/Aided schools, where individuals can support the education of a girl child in India.

Programme overview:

Project Nanhi Kali (which means a little bud in Hindi) was incepted by K. C. Mahindra Education Trust in 1996. The programme helps economically and socially marginalised girl

children to complete 10 years of quality education. The Nanhi Kali project was initially piloted amongst the urban poor in Mumbai and Delhi. The initiative was welcomed and readily accepted by the stakeholders –parents, teachers and community. It had a positive impact on the enrolment and retention of girl children in public schools. Considering its positive impact, it was decided to take the project to scale and replicate it in the rural and tribal areas. Therefore, in 2005, KCMET entered into a partnership with Nandi Foundation to jointly manage the project. The scope of the Nanhi Kali project was broadened to assist marginalized and underprivileged girl children of not only urban poor but also rural and tribal families living in remote areas. By the end of the October 2010, the project has reached out to 60,788 underprivileged girls.

Type of support provided:

- ◆ **Material support** is given to the Nanhi Kalis once every year in the form of a kit consisting of uniforms, school bag, shoes, socks, undergarments, notebooks, textbooks and stationery.
- ◆ **Academic support** is extended throughout the year at Academic Support Centers (ASCs) two hours before or after school to ensure grade-specific learning competency amongst Nanhi Kalis.

Approach of the Programme:



Achievement of the Programme:-

Geography covered	No. of Beneficiaries	Target by 2028
9 states (Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharastra, Rajasthan, Tamilnadu.)	60,788	10,00,000

Source: CII report 2015. P. 11.

3. Dr. Reddy's Laboratories – KARV (Kallam Anji Reddy Vidyalayam)

The Kallam Anji Reddy Vidyalaya (KARV) at Chandanagar in Hyderabad, set up in 2001, has over 2040 students from kindergarten to grade X. The co-education school follows the state's SSC syllabus and offers instruction in both English and Telugu medium. More than 90% of the students here come from low-income groups and are first generation learners. Special "Remedial" classes ensure the weak students are able to keep pace with the rest of the class.

Elaborating further on our Founder's vision to make quality education accessible to all, the Kallam Anji Reddy Vidyalaya at Chandanagar (Hyderabad) was set up in 2001 and

has over 2040 students from kindergarten to grade X. The co-education school follows the state's SSC syllabus and offers instruction in both English and Telugu medium. The teaching methodology adopted at the school is activity-based and takes into account the specific needs of every student. Those who are lagging behind in academics are brought into the mainstream through special remedial programs.

The school also assists students who successfully clear the school leaving exams (Class X Board Examinations) to get admission in government / private junior colleges or vocational junior colleges. Those who have failed in the exams are given intensive coaching to help them to pass in subsequent attempts. We have 2040 children on our rolls and 650 have graduated from our schools.

Pudami Neighborhood Schools

The *Pudami* Neighborhood Schools was a novel initiative by Dr Reddy's Foundation to bring quality education to all children in the neighborhood. It was set up when government schools did not pay too much attention towards teaching English and children from disadvantaged backgrounds could not afford to pay for public schools.

There are four *Pudami* neighborhood schools and 20 *Pudami* English primary schools in Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy district. These schools are located in close proximity to where the children live and involve the neighborhood community and parents in mobilizing the children to attend school. The teachers are also mostly drawn from the neighborhood so that there is a greater sense of participation in the school's functioning.

There are **24** *Pudami* Schools with more than 8650 children from all walks of life coming together to learn and play. We have 8000 children on our rolls and 650 have graduated from our schools. The schools are assisted by the Education Resource Center in curriculum design, academic monitoring mechanisms and preparation of training material for the teachers in accordance with the national curricular framework.

Conclusion: the initiative of the government is no doubt appreciable, amid various practical difficulties which may have to be encountered at least in the initial phases of implementation of the new CSR provisions. The new provisions may be viewed as the result of the changing corporate philosophy in India and worldwide which entrusts the responsibilities on giant corporate towards social welfare of the population which comprise of their present or prospective employees, customers or other stakeholders in varied roles.

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