



BUSINESS & COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

CSR *Primer*
for Managers and Practitioners



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Preface

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is both an art and a science. It has an inner and an outer dimension to it. The spirit of compassion, giving and sharing is an intrinsic part of CSR, and it has to come from within core values of integrity & ethics. This notion of CSR should not be confused with 'Giving' and 'Sharing' as in philanthropy, since it really means empowerment, respect and value for everyone and every system, leading to benefit for all, where greed does not take away others' needs. If the spirit is missing, then CSR will seem to be a very futile and an unsustainable initiative. This is what makes it an art. The structure and framework within which it has to exist and function make the outer dimension a science.

CSR seems to be a yet evolving in the corporate world & practiced at a nascent stage in many countries. However, the notions of giving, sharing and 'dashansh' are ingrained in the multicultural context of many societies and have been practiced in formal and informal ways since time immemorial. The philosophical background in section I brings out how the concept of 'social good as part of business' is deep rooted in some countries. It also puts together the evolution of CSR in pre and post independent India as well as in the global context. The section enumerates the ambit of different theories and models available on CSR. The 'debate about CSR and its relevance' in section I present the case for and against CSR.

Section II outlines the plethora of CSR terminologies, jargons, definitions, typology available in public domain. Once the foundation or internal dimension of CSR is in place, the next critical step is to develop the external dimension or the science of CSR. The external dimension refers to the planning and management aspects. Section III, 'the business case for CSR' brings out the fact that CSR needs to be looked upon as a management tool and not as a cost centre. Section IV touches upon the efficacy of different actors, drivers, players, stakeholders – employees, community, consumers, environment, supply chain and

tri sector partnerships that together help to integrate CSR within the core of business and ensure its sustainability. Each actor is like a part of the orchestra that helps to create a perfect symphony.

Further within the realm of looking at CSR as science, section V looks at the implementation and management of CSR. The section gives an overview of the CSR tool box – guidelines, principles, frameworks, systems, methodology, policy, and structure etc. Section VI concludes with some future perspectives and reiterates that the underlying challenge for CSR is how to demonstrate a clear link between a company's own commercial objectives and the wider goals of society.

This Primer is a basic guide on (CSR). It outlines the philosophy, genesis, evolution, scope, framework, theories, models, standards, business case and drivers of CSR. This will serve as a ready reference and guide to students, managers and practitioners of CSR. It is also an effort to establish the criticality of the spirit of Trusteeship within CSR which really should form the part of the values, vision and mission of an enterprise. At the same time the vision needs to be intertwined with efficient and effective CSR management tools and practices & be responsive to the local context, its challenges, needs & opportunities.

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We hope this will be useful piece of work for all those working to mainstream responsible business practice.

Amita Joseph

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Contents

Section I: Evolution of CSR	3
Philosophical Background	4
Business Growth: Pre and Post Independent India	5
Models of CSR	7
Debate about CSR and its relevance	10
Section II: CSR Definition and Types	12
CSR Definitions	12
Corporate Responsibility: The Typology	14
Section III: The Business Case for CSR	16
Challenges of Business Today	16
The Drivers of the CSR Movement	17
The Business Case for CSR	18
Section IV: Actors and Drivers	19
CSR and Workplace	19
CSR and Community	21
CSR and Environment	22
CSR and Supply Chain	24
CSR and Consumers	25
Socially Responsible Investing	26
CSR and Partnerships	27
Section V: Managing CSR	29
Corporate Governance and CSR	30
CSR Tool Box	32
CSR Policy	37
Designing a CSR Structure	40
An ACTION Plan for Social Responsibility	42
CSR Communication	43
CSR Reporting	45
Section VI: Future perspectives and conclusions	49
Resources	54
Annexure - comparison of four CSR tools	55

About the Business & Community Foundation

The Business & Community Foundation (BCF) is a civil society organisation registered in 1998 under the Societies Registration Act 1860. BCF has been one of the pioneers in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility at the national level in India.

BCF is an independent civil society organization with a diverse Board, an interface with the private, public sectors and civil society organisations. BCF works to identify core development priorities in the country that concern the most vulnerable and works to address these issues within the framework of corporate responsibility & sustainability.

The activities of BCF presently include education, public discourses, training programmes in CSR issues, accompanying CSR projects on the ground in 9 states of India, award assessment and a flagship CSR MDP course with the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade. In addition it works with faculty and business schools to train future managers. BCF works in linking people with disabilities with markets in 11 states of India with a vibrant partnership with over 200 civil society organizations across the country and the Government.

www.bcfindia.org

About the Primer

The Primer is a basic guide on the subject of Corporate Social Responsibility. It outlines the philosophy, genesis, evolution, scope, framework, theories, models, standards, drivers of CSR, business case and future perspectives. The Primer will serve as a ready reference and guide for managers and practitioners of CSR.

The Primer focuses on the importance of the inner and outer dimension of CSR. The spirit of compassion, giving and sharing is an intrinsic part of CSR, which forms the internal dimension. Equally important is the outer dimension, the structure and framework within which CSR has to exist and function. CSR practice has to be context specific and be responsive to the developmental priorities and needs of the country. 'Do no harm' being the first premise, do well within with the planet, with people and all stakeholders.