



Teach India Campaign – A Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative by the Times of India Group

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Social Responsibility, Corporate Social Responsibility, Teach India

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ABSTRACT *Corporate Social Responsibility is company's sense of responsibility towards community and environment in which it works. The roots of CSR can be trace more than 4000 years back. Since then it has taken up different forms and ways in which they get implemented. Though India has one of the oldest traditions of CSR, CSR practices are not done regularly or done only in namesake especially by regularly. However, much has been done in recent years to make Indian Entrepreneurs aware of social responsibility as an important segment of their business activity but CSR in India has yet to receive widespread recognition. This paper examines development of CSR in India through various stages and times. The Times of India Group, one of the prominent organizations has designed and implemented a lot many initiatives to disburse its social responsibility to various stakeholders. This paper provides an insight into its one of the most prestigious "Teach India" Campaign.*

Corporate Social Responsibility:

Corporate Social Responsibility is a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a business model. With some models, a firm's implementation of CSR goes beyond compliance and engages in "actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law.

Business dictionary defines CSR as "A company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates. Companies express this citizenship (1) through their waste and pollution reduction processes, (2) by contributing educational and social programs and (3) by earning adequate returns on the employed resources." [1]

Evolution of CSR:

There is an impressive history associated with the evolution of the concept and definition of corporate social responsibility. It started getting conceptualized in 1950s, which expanded further during the 1960s. The concept more proliferated during 1970s. In the 1980s, there were fewer new definitions, more empirical research and alternative themes begun to mature. These alternative themes included corporate social performance (CSP), stakeholder theory and business ethics theory. In the 1990s, CSR continued to serve as a core construct but yielded to or is transformed into alternative thematic frameworks [2].

The 21st century has been mostly more of the same, spawning a plethora of CSR guidelines, codes and standards (there are more than 100 listed in *The A to Z of Corporate Social Responsibility*), with industry sector and climate change variations on the theme. [3]

Four phases of development of CSR in India:

Parallel to India's historical development, CSR in India was developed through four phases which run and has resulted in different approaches towards CSR.

Phase 1 :In the first phase charity and philanthropy were the main drivers of CSR. The industrial families of the 19th century such as Tata, Godrej, Bajaj, Modi, Birla, Singhanian were strongly inclined towards economic as well as social considerations. [4]

Phase 2 :In the second phase, during the independence movement, there was increased stress on Indian industrialists to demonstrate their dedication towards the progress of the society.

Phase 3: The third phase of CSR (1960–80) had its relation to the element of "mixed economy", emergence of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and laws relating labor and environmental standards. In 1965 Indian academicians, politicians and businessmen set up a national workshop on CSR aimed at reconciliation.

Phase 4: In the fourth phase (1980 until the present) Indian companies started abandoning their traditional engagement with CSR and integrated it into a sustainable business strategy. But, it was realized that Indian companies which export and produce goods for the developed world still need to pay a close attention to compliance with the international standards [4]

Current Scenario: A growing number of corporate feel that CSR is not just another form of indirect expense but is important for protecting the goodwill and reputation, defending attacks and increasing business competitiveness. CSR programs range from community development to development in education, environment and healthcare etc. [5]

CSR has gone through many phases in India. Partnerships between companies, NGOs and the government are aimed to get facilitated so that a combination of their skills such as expertise, strategic thinking, manpower and money to initiate extensive social change will put the socio-economic development of India on a fast track [6].

The Times Group (also referred as **Bennett, Coleman and Co. Ltd.**) though does not need any recognition, can be introduced as the largest mass media company in India. The company remains a family-owned business as the descendants of Sahu Jain family controls majority stake in Times Group. The Times Group has over 11,000 employees and revenue exceeding \$1.5 billion [7]

Various campaigns by The Times Group:

The group has initiated a number of campaigns to ig-

nite the disposition of Corporate Social Responsibility to the stakeholders and the rest of the social world :

Lead India Campaign: Lead India is the sequel to the newspaper's earlier India Poised initiative launched in January 2007. Then based on it, a television initiative was telecast commencing from India's 60th Independence Day in search of a new bold leader for India.

Teach India Campaign: Teach India's was another campaign to train the people from the semi urban or rural areas with ultimate aim to bring about a lasting change in the social fabric about enabling youth for better employment prospects.

Aman ki Aasha : It a campaign jointly started by the two leading media houses The Jang Group in Pakistan and The Times of India in India

The Power of Ideas

This campaign is launched as a multi-media campaign to commence The Economic Times Power of Ideas initiative which encourages people to realize their entrepreneurial dreams.

Young Leaders ET launched India Inc's first ever initiative to recognize and acknowledge the leadership potential among young executives.

Times Foundation Times Foundation aims at promoting equity through leadership and innovative approaches which has the potential to impact people on the ground.

Teach India Campaign:

It is a Corporate Social Responsibility initiative by Bennett Coleman & Co Ltd. The main objective of the program is to improve the employability of youth from underprivileged backgrounds by training them in spoken English. The confidence to converse in English is fast becoming integral to step up in one's professional life. Spoken English is also a skill identified by the Indian Government.

The initiative is implemented through partner NGOs that are responsible for community outreach and managing the day to day affairs and classroom logistics with respect to the initiative. Teach India is currently operational in Delhi NCR and Mumbai[8]

Vision of the Teach India Campaign:



Teach India's ultimate aim is to bring about a lasting change in the social fabric about enabling youth for better employment prospects. Improved state in the employability quotient of young individuals that belong to underprivileged backgrounds is the driving force behind Teach India.

Three Pillars of Teach India

The British council Teach India brought The British Council on board to design the curriculum. Besides the learner

course, the British Council also designed the teacher training course to train the volunteer-teachers in the required pedagogical techniques to conduct modern learner-centered English classes. They are actively involved in monitoring the program impact as well.

Volunteer

The program is delivered on-ground by committed volunteers, without whose dedication, everything is futile. More than hundred volunteers are selected each cycle from the list of applicants and an NGO teaching batch is allotted to them. So far more than 2,000 volunteers have been involved in this initiative.

Everything is centered around the Learner

The average learner is between 18 to 32 years and has a monthly family income of under 10,000 rupees (approximately). He/ she has had a basic introduction to English but has never used it in daily life or in or out of the classroom. The team facilitates suitable employment opportunities for the learner after the completion of the course through holding job fairs In past four years, since its inception, Teach India has reached out to approximately 30,000 underprivileged youth.

NGOs

The initiative is implemented on the ground by partner NGOs, mostly working in underdeveloped urban sections. These partner NGOs have been carefully selected and the Times Group supports them on multiple fronts including training and not just financially. The Teach India initiative has reached out to its target beneficiaries with the help of its 200 NGO partners in Delhi/NCR and Mumbai.

Special initiatives by Teach India

Tihar Jail

Teach India had done a pilot course for inmates of the Tihar jail, Delhi. The candidates were shortlisted on the basis of their prison release dates which facilitated prison placements after the completion of the course. Upon success of the program, the initiative was also extended to selected Delhi Jail staff.

Industrial Training Institute

Teach India also ran a pilot with govt.-run Industrial Training Institute in March, 2012. ITI, under Directorate of Training and Technical Education, is one of the primary institutions working on skilling and vocational education. Teach India is now also the official training partner for spoken English training at 'World Class Skills Centre, an initiative by Directorate of Training and Technical Education, Government of Delhi.

Delhi Police

- Police HQ- Teach India is involved in training Delhi police personals, especially for those manning Helpline and control room calls and training the constables (100 helpline) in functional spoken English.

- Police Training College- After the success of the pilot at the Police HQ, Teach India also trained 419 Probationary Sub Inspectors for Delhi Police in police training college, Delhi. It is now a mandatory part of the PSI's course at PTC.

Job Fair

Teach India organizes the job fairs to kick start the career of its Learners. Job fairs are good places to meet many company representatives from corporations of all industries

and sizes during a short period of time.. Every year Teach India conducts three job fair in three zones of Delhi/NCR. South zone, East zone and North west zone.

Teach India's Impact:

Originally launched in 2008, Teach India soon grew into a national movement, reaching out to lakhs of volunteers and hundreds of NGOs. Teach India rebooted, re prioritized and sharpened its focus to teaching English for the main reason of making the youth job ready and subsequently a new Teach India emerged.

More than 40 companies have partnered with Teach India. Few of them are

- Big Bazaar
- Cafe Coffee Day
- KFC
- Kotak Mahindra
- Pizza hut
- Tech Mahindra

Conclusion

CSR policy functions as a self-regulatory mechanism where by a business monitors and ensures its active compliance with the spirit of the law, ethical standards and international norms. The Teach India Campaign has reached up to lakhs of people to implement its vision to bring about major change in the social fabric for enabling youth for better employment prospects. And this is not the end; but the beginning to implementing corrective education policy at the grass root level of the society.

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