Research Paper Management

Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives of it and ites Companies Towards Education

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KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION:
Corporate social responsibility (CSR), also called corporate conscience, corporate citizenship, social performance, or sustainable responsible business or responsible business is gaining momentum world over. Business across the globe have started to take a more focused approach in their corporate social responsibility initiatives and increasingly try to impact areas that have a correlation with their own business goals.

For many businesses, education is an important part of their plans, since the need exists in all geographic areas and across all subject areas. Educational outreach efforts have the potential to make a lasting difference for all players involved. Companies get involved in education for a variety of reasons like building a positive reputation, developing brand recognition, building a more educated work force, raising consumer awareness about a particular issue.

Educational initiatives lead to better quality of life among the future generations. Among the various sectors impacted by organizations to bring about social change, education is the most preferred sector for socially responsible activities. Apart from contributions in monetary form, companies also increasingly involve directly, with employees volunteering to dispense education related CSR activities by teaching to students, training teachers and conducting events. In the wake of recent amendments to Indian companies Act, which has necessitated Indian companies to undertake CSR initiative education is a preferred sector for any organization to discharge its Social responsibility. Supporting education at various levels from school to college and even higher levels and in various forms like technical education, soft skill education has been in the CSR agenda of many IT and ITES companies. This study is an attempt to explore the contribution made by IT and ITES Companies operating in India in the education sector.

THE EDUCATIONAL SCENE:
800 million people across the world lack the basic reading and writing skills needed to accomplish simple tasks such as reading a medicine label or filling out a job application, costing the global economy more than $ 1.19 trillion a year. Illiteracy costs India over $53 billion a year.

Literates constituted 74 per cent of the total population in India aged seven and above, and illiterates form 26 per cent, as per the provisional data of the 2011 census. About 270 million people aged 15 years and older still remain illiterate in India, despite the country making major progress in cutting down the number of school drop-outs over the years. Among the working youth, approximately one in four is illiterate, and fewer than one in five completes secondary education.

OBJECTIVES:
1. To Explore the CSR Initiatives in the Education Sector of Major IT and ITES Companies.
2. To understand the Role of these initiatives towards achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDG).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:
The points of intersection between a company and society has been identified as taking two forms according to Michael E. Porter and Mark R.Kramer (2006) the first being inside-out linkages and the second outside-in linkages. Integrating both these linkages into the business makes CSR a part of day to day activities. They proposed that each company can identify problems of society which it can resolve with the available resources and in that process gain competitive advantage.

A research by NASSCOM Foundation (2007-2008) focused on Corporate Social Responsibility within the IT/ITES industry and found that many IT/ITES companies in India have adopted education as a major area for their social programs. The initiatives undertaken by these companies' attempts to address issues related to access, retention and quality of education.

Anupam Sharma and Ravi Kiran (2012)
This study spotlights on CSR initiatives of major companies with main focus towards education, health and environment. They analyzed major companies in India .In this study most of the companies are involved and took initiatives in CSR activities mainly towards education. Some companies are organizing training programs, organizing education programs, working with educators, run firms schools and donating notebooks, computers etc. They concluded that the firms have been doing great effort for the achievement of business goals with social responsibility practices.

METHODOLOGY:
IT and ITES companies make a huge contribution to the GDP of India. The growth of these companies is in par with its counterparts in developed nations. The Indian IT and BPO industry provides direct employment to about 2.8 million, and indirectly employs 8.9 million people. A review of their contribution to the society and in turn impact on Millennium Development Goals is the focus of this study. This study on the educational CSR initiatives of IT and ITES companies has been done on a conceptual basis. The Companies included for the study have been selected based on their annual turnover and revenues. Information regarding the CSR initiatives of these companies has been collected from their websites and from sustainability reports.

EDUCATIONAL CSR INITIATIVES OF IT AND ITES COMPANIES
IT and ITES companies which have been include in the study are

1. Cognizant Technologies

2. Tata Consultancy Services
3. Infosys
4. Mahindra Satyam
5. Wipro

CASE: 1 COGNIZANT:
Cognizant is dedicated to helping prepare student for the future work. That makes certain skilled, knowledge based workforce that helps students to face challenging environment. Improving the effectiveness of educational programs, increasing access to academic opportunity and stimulating an interest in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) studies in the countries in which they operate.

They are also channeling the talents and energy of their associates into education. Through their outreach program, employee volunteering is involved in this program. In 2012, more than 28,000 outreach volunteers dedicated over 216600 hours and participated in over 7000 activities like teaching enrichment courses, building and equipping schools, and supporting extra-curricular activities. Today, outreach councils are operating not only in India, but also in Philippines, Singapore, and Australia. Hungary, Netherlands, U.K. and North America.

CASE -2 TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES
Adult Literacy Program
Literacy Camps imparted literacy through TCS' Computer Based Functional Literacy method to 11,141 people.

University Alliance Program
TCS connects with a number of academic institutions in India and in other countries to fund research in basic and applied sciences. This program is now in its fourth cycle, with over 80 PhD scholars enrolled from more than 26 institutions across the country.

TCS IT Wiz
An annual event organized and executed by TCS associates to create IT awareness among school children. The event reaches out to over 200,000 school students from 5000 schools in 12 cities across India.

Insight
This program aims at providing an overview of the IT industry so as to encourage students to explore IT as a career. Insight reached 1352 students in 15 schools across India.

The TCS Employability Program
TCS provides training in English Speaking, soft skills and computer skills. Students who participate in the training and pass TCS standard of proficiency are then offered positions within the company. TCS trained 7828 candidates of which 717 were inducted into TCS.

Advanced Computer Training Centre
TCS has set up the Advanced Computer Training Centre to improve employability for visually impaired individuals. In less than 4 years 99 people have been trained and 66 employed.

CASE -3 INFOSYS:
Infosys employees actively participate in the welfare of the local community. Infosys Development Centers (DC) in India makes a difference through several corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Some of them are:

Campus Connect
CC helps align the needs of institutions, faculty and students, with those of the IT industry, to raise the employability of engineering students. During 2011-12, CC engaged with 474 engineering institutions to train 1,400 faculty members, who in turn trained over 31,000 students.

Project Genesis
This project helps in bridging the skill gap between industry requirements and non-engineering graduate education. The project enabled 16,762 students by training 365 academicians from 138 institutes.

Spark Rural Reach Program
This program aims at encouraging rural children from classes V to VII to pursue studies in science and math, basics of computers and related subjects and become part of the IT revolution. This program has benefitted over 212,929 children across the country this year.

Catch Them Young
This is a two-week program designed to expose bright urban youth to the IT world by conducting a summer vacation workshop at their campuses in India. Through this program, Infosys has reached out to nearly 466 children in the last 12 months.

Spark GURU
This is an initiative that helps teachers augment their knowledge and enhance their teaching skills with respect to the current industry needs and requirements. The program targets teachers from rural areas.

CASE -4 MAHINDRA SATYAM
Mentoring of students by Magnificent Seven Teams (M7):
Magnificent Seven (M7) teams regularly mentor school children during weekends in government schools/corporation schools. Volunteers teach basics of computers, Spoken English, Hygiene, Math, Science, Time Management and Career Guidance.

Kid's mart
Mahindra Satyam volunteers support these camps and ensure that the activities are implemented smoothly.

Notebook Distribution
Mahindra Satyam Foundation donates notebooks to underprivileged students

Computer Distribution / Literacy
More than 1,000 computers have been distributed to Government/IT/Corporation schools. Mahindra Satyam volunteers conduct Computer training classes for both teachers and students at these schools/institutes.

Motivational Tours
Mahindra Satyam Foundation organizes motivational tours for disadvantaged sections of the society to places of interest like Museums, Technology Centers, and Planetarium etc.

Inter-School Competitions/Celebrations
Awareness programs on issues like global warming, health and hygiene, activities such as essay writing, sports and games, painting competitions, fancy dress competitions, etc are organized.

CASE -5 WIPRO:
They are providing basic infrastructure at the school for a child to come regularly to the school and stay interested in school activities, it is necessary that the school is equipped with proper infrastructure.

Wipro 'Applying thought in school' program focuses on improving the quality of education in schools. Some activities under this are listed below

Wipro has built a partner network of 30 of India's foremost educational organizations - Wipro supports social organizations (supporting 12 partners in organization development through project support)

Wipro has worked with around 2000 schools and 10,500 educators across 17 states reaching around 800,000 students

Wipro has supported 10 people on Wipro Education Fellowship since 2007

Currently, Wipro is engaged in projects with around 700

schools across the country in collaboration with 22 partners

CASE 6- HCL TECHNOLOGIES

Library Drives:

Encouraging a love for reading HCLT Foundation conducted a book collection drive where employees were encouraged to donate storybooks and notebooks. While a library was established and inaugurated in one school, 1000+ books were distributed in another. Through this effort, 2000+ books were collected for 15,000 school children in rural Karnataka.

Teach at office:

Through this program support staffs are provided with a range of workshops on basic etiquette, financial management, expected professional behavior and awareness initiatives on health and hygiene. Staff are also taught basic computer skills and trained in conversational English.

FINDINGS

- The study has covered 6 major companies in the IT and ITES space even though there are other major players such as Accenture, Microsoft, Dell, Intel, and HP who also make significant contribution towards development of education in the country.
- A close look at the initiatives of these six companies reveals that they fall under any one of the following category: Computer Education, Business Education, Adult Literacy, STEM education and Vocational Education.
- The 6 major companies contribute towards different forms of education but association with primary education which is one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) is very minimal.

CONCULSION:

Several factors drive companies to engage in socially responsible behavior. Alignment with the core area of business is major driver of CSR. IT and ITES companies can be said to be directly associated with education that too primary education. In spite of the linkage of core area of business contribution of companies towards primary education which is one of the MDGs is in a nascent stage. This is because company resources are limited and many of the CSR activities are aimed at developing demand for the company's product or service rather than meeting the Millennium Development Goals. This trend needs a change in the light of latest amendment to the CSR Bill in the Indian Companies Act.

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