



Corporate Sectors Support for the Empowerment of Socially Backward Classes- A Case Study with Tata Groups

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ABSTRACT

Ethics or simple honesty is the building blocks upon which our whole society is based, and business is a part of our society, and it's integral to the practice of being able to conduct business, that you have a set of honest standards".

- Kerry Stokes

In India is widely regarded as a country in which corporate social responsibility has long played an important role. It is commonly held that social justice is the government's responsibility. Affirmative action takes forward the industry's role in responsible corporate citizenship. In this paper I have taken a case study of Tata Consultancy Group and their initiatives for the empowerment of socially backward classes. The Tata Affirmative Action Programme commits Tata companies to exercising positive discrimination in employing personnel from historically disadvantaged communities and in engaging them as business partners, without sacrificing merit or quality.

KEYWORDS

Corporate social Responsibility, Affirmative Actions, Inequality, Empowerment, Socially Backward Classes

Introduction

Today the success of a company is in threefold say financial, environmental and social commitment. India has a good history, present and future in the area of corporate responsibility. The jury found Trent's example of recruitment from marginalised scheduled caste and tribe communities to be worthy of emulation. Currently, about 17 percent of their staff of 6,500 belongs to the SC or ST communities. Trent hopes to increase this ratio in the coming years.

Statement of the problem

Traditionally SC/STs constitute a bulk of Indian population who had to lie outside the vernacular system and had no chance of entry to the upper caste through change processes. At a global level, the indigenous population faces two major problems identified by United Nations, a) Poverty and b) social discrimination. The census shows that about 19 percent of them live in urban centres and most of them are still engaged in inhuman and vulnerable profession.

Focus of the study

This study is confined to the TATA Groups, India. Many of beneficiaries are working in unorganized sectors. Their earnings are dependent on the effective and efficient of their work on a daily wage basis. If under any circumstances or reason their work suffers, it affects the whole family. This study attempts to analyses the relationship between education and empowerment of the socially backward classes.

Objectives of the study

The main aim of the study is examine the ways and means to understand the empowerment of the socially backward sections through corporate social responsibility initiatives.

1. To study Constitutional provisions for protection and development of scheduled castes.
2. To analyze TATA Group policy on affirmative action and the Four E's of Tata Affirmative Action Programme (TAAP) in 2010 and 2011.
3. To provide some findings and suggestions for the empowerment of the socially backward sections.

Research Methodology

Research methods refer to particular strategies, which are used, by researches in the collection of evidence that is vital for building and eventual testing of the theories. For instance, we have got experiments which are commonly **used in exploratory research**.

Constitutional provisions for protection and development of scheduled castes

Table No.1: Showing the constitutional provisions for protection and development of scheduled castes (Source: Indian Constitution)

1.Social Safeguards	<p>Article 17 relates to abolition of untouchability being practiced in society. The Parliament enacted the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 to tackle the problem of untouchability, which is being practiced against Scheduled Castes.</p> <p>Article 23 prohibits traffic in human beings and 'beggar' and other similar forms of forced labour and provides that any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.</p> <p>Article 24 provides that no child below the age of 14 years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.</p> <p>Article 25(2)(b) provides that Hindu religious institutions of a public character shall be opened to all classes and sections of Hindus. The term Hindu includes persons professing Sikh, Jain and Buddhist religion.</p>
2.Economic Safeguards	<p>Articles 23, 24 and 46 form part of the economic safeguards for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The provisions of Articles 23 and 24 have already been discussed in earlier paragraphs.</p> <p>Article 46 provides, "The States shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation."</p>

3.Educational and Cultural Safeguards	Articles 15(4) empower the State to make special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally backward classes of citizens and for SCs. This provision has enabled the State to reserve seats for SCs in educational institutions in general and professional courses etc.
4.Political Safeguards	Article 243D assures the reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in every Panchayat according to the proportion of population. Such seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in a Panchayat. No less than one third of reserved seats should be allotted to women. Article 243T assures the reservation of seats in Municipality area. The rule is same. Article 330 assures reservation of seats for SCs and STs in the House of the People. The allotment of seats is based on the number of the seats and proportion of SCs and STs in the state or Union Territories. Article 332 assures reservation of seats in the state legislative assembly. The allotment of seats is based on the number of the seats and proportion of SCs and STs in the state or Union Territories.
5.Services Safeguard	The allotment of seats is based on the number of the seats and proportion of SCs and STs in the state or Union Territories. The effect of this amendment is that the SCs/STs promoted earlier than their counter-part in general category by virtue of reservation policy shall be senior to general category in the promoted scale/post.

India's Affirmative Measures

India has taken a number of affirmative measures for the upliftment of tribal people. It is important to see initiatives taken by India in her several five years plans for the benefit of her weaker section.

Five year plans and development initiatives for Scheduled Tribes

An analysis of five year plans show that the schemes under tribal development programmes have ranged from infrastructure building to empowerment.

The 1st plan (1956 -61), IIInd plan (1956 – 61), IIIrd plan (1961 – 66), IVth plan (1969 – 1974), Vth plan (1974 – 78), VIth plan (1980 – 85), VIIth plan (1985 – 90), VIIIth plan (1992 – 97), IXth plan (1997 – 2002), Xth plan and XIth plan recognises the importance of creating an environment where STs can lead a life of self reliance and dignity. It puts emphasis on three vital components, viz. Social Empowerment, Economic Empowerment, and Social Justice.

TATA Group

The Tata group comprises over 100 operating companies in seven business sectors: communications and information technology, engineering, materials, services, energy, consumer products and chemicals. The group has operations in more than 80 countries across six continents, and its companies export products and services to 85 countries. Three Tata companies — Trent, Tata Power Delhi Distribution and Tata Consultancy Services — showcase their best practices in the 4Es (education, employment, employability and entrepreneurship) that form the backbone of the Tata Affirmative Action Programme.

The Four E's of TATA Affirmative Action Programme (TAAP) in 2010 and 2011

Table No.2: Showing the Four E's of Tata Affirmative Action Programme (TAAP) in 2010 and 2011

FOUR E's	Name of the Company and the Number of the Companies	Activities	% or No. of SC/ST Communities
Employment	i.47 Tata companies	-	i.9% of Employees
	ii.TCS	BPO operations (2011)	ii. 650 employed

Employability	i.26 Tata companies	i. (2011)	i. Close to 12,500 youth skilled
	ii.TCS	ii.BPO industry in proprietary programmes in 78 locations in nine states (2012)	ii. 2,109 SC/ST youth
	iii.TRL-Krosaki	iii.Rural Self Employment Training Institute, run in partnership with the SBI, at Belpahar, Jharsuguda district in Odisha.	iii. trained over 500 SC/ST youth
	iv. Tata Motors	iv. 'Kaushalya' scheme	iv.trained over 2,000
3.Entrepreneurship	i.8 Tata companies	i. In their value chain, giving business worth Rs14.5 crore in FY 2011	i.Close to 50 Vendors
	ii.Titan	ii. Outsourced Rs5 crore to kargars (craftsmen)	ii.325 SC/ST
	iii.Tata Motors	iii. Enlisted four Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce (DICC) members as second tier vendors	iii.Enlisted 4 Vendors
	iv.Tata Steel	iv. raised its target of business to be given to SC/ST entrepreneurs from Rs5 crore in FY 2011 to Rs30 crore in FY 2012	
	v. Tata Communications has partnered with the Entrepreneurship Development Institute, Ahmedabad	v. Entrepreneurship	400 SC/ST youth
4.Education	i.22 companies in FY 2011	i. Worth Rs1.18 crore were give	i.2,185 scholarships
	ii.Tata Power's partnership with Pratham	ii. To improve the math and language skills of over 3,500 primary school children in Maithon (Jharkhand)	ii.3,500 primary school children
	iii.Tata Power Delhi Distribution's partnership with 26 government schools in Delhi	iii. To assist and mentor students through their high school years	iii. 150 students
	iv.Tata Motors	iv. Vidyadham scheme to provide holistic education assistance to nearly in 20 schools around Pune (Maharashtra)	iv. 300 children
	v. 33 companies	Finance 100 scholarships worth Rs70 lakh per annum for college students in professional courses	v.100 scholarships p.a

Findings

- The Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (DIC-CI) is a very active body representing Dalit entrepreneurs.
- The Tata group has been actively involved in promoting DICCI initiatives. But the time has come for them to set some voluntary targets within the group.
- The notions of swaraj (self-government), sarvodaya (progress for all) and antyodaya (uplift of the poorest of the poor) can be seen as entrepreneurial paths to inclusive growth.

Suggestions

1. Existing social injustice has historical roots, at the heart of which is a hierarchical caste system. To break that structure, we need to exercise positive discrimination.
2. Positive discrimination can work for the community and for the company if it's undertaken with the aim of bolstering opportunities for disadvantaged groups and addressing social injustices.
3. Take up at least one major affirmative action initiative in each of the 4Es and do a deep-dive into every aspect of the initiative in order to obtain substantial, tangible benefits from each; make these benchmark programmes, setting standards not only within the group but also for Indian industry.
4. Establish group-level synergies across supply chain and vendor development.
5. Adopt at least one school catering to the marginalised communities.

Conclusion

A strong foundation for sustainable growth comes from a socially just environment. Social inequality has the potential to adversely impact the business climate if not addressed in a sustained manner. Employment, employee loyalty and interaction with local communities can help in creating a business environment. While inclusive growth is necessary for India, the affirmative action agenda must be nurtured carefully so that positive discrimination is implemented in the right spirit across all Tata companies.

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