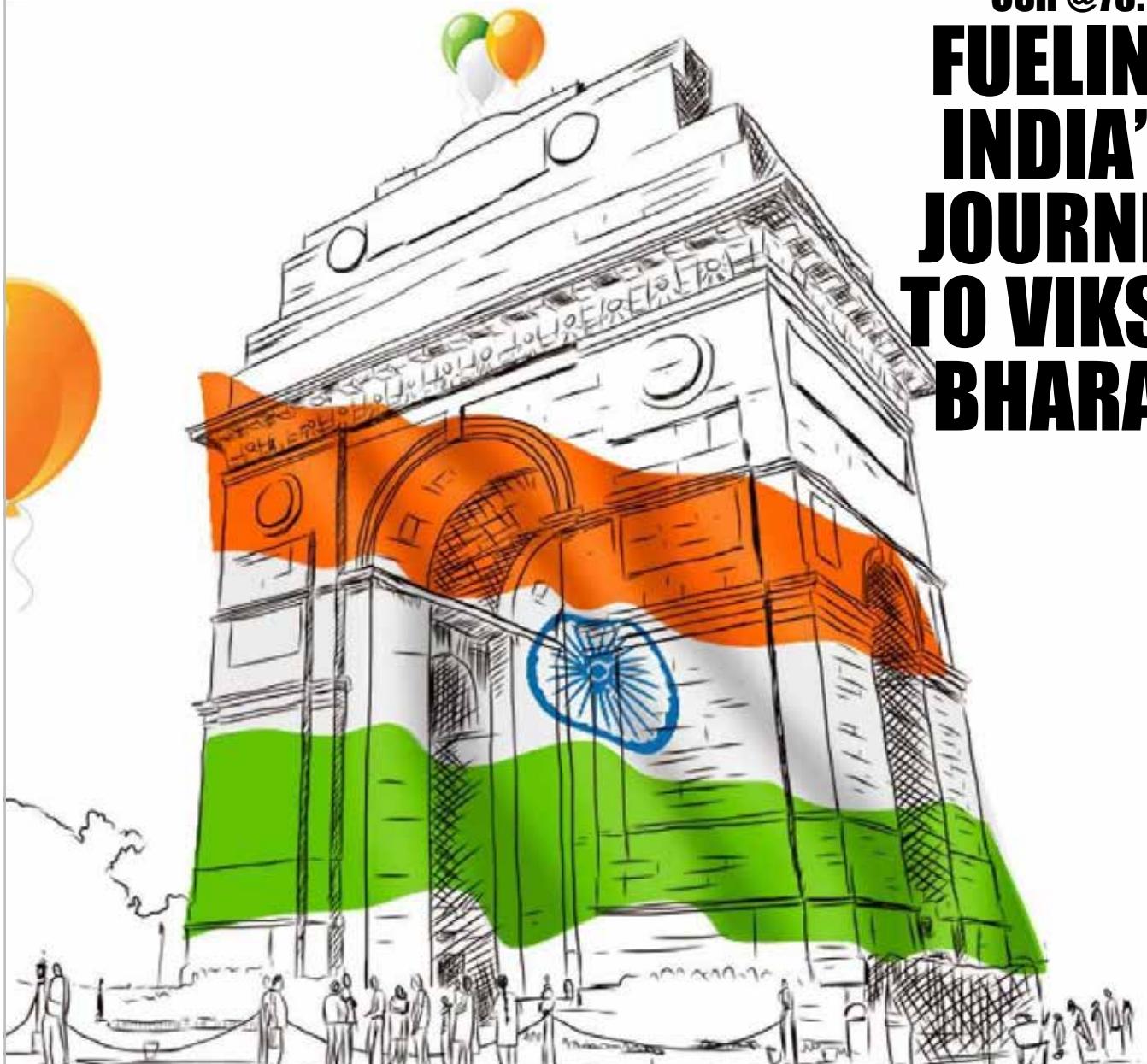


# CSR TIMES

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INDIA'S NO. 1 CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY MAGAZINE

**CSR @78:  
FUELING  
INDIA'S  
JOURNEY  
TO VIKSIT  
BHARAT**



**PLAY FOR PROGRESS:**  
CSR'S GAME-  
CHANGING ROLE IN  
INDIA'S SPORTING  
FUTURE



**WEAVING  
PROSPERITY:**  
CSR'S ROLE IN  
REVIVING INDIA'S  
HANDLOOM LEGACY



**GREEN INDIA,  
CLEAN INDIA:**  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
CSR SINCE  
INDEPENDENCE



# एनएचपीसी का हरित ऊर्जा नेतृत्व स्वर्ण जयंती वर्ष

**180 मेगावाट से 8247.18 मेगावाट तक की यात्रा :** अनेक चुनौतियों का सामना करते हुए 30 नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा पावर स्टेशनों के माध्यम से उल्लेखनीय प्रगति ।

**सुदृढ़ वित्तीय प्रदर्शन:** अपनी स्थापना के बाद से निरंतर सुदृढ़ परिणाम प्रदर्शित कर रही है ।

**16 सक्रिय परियोजनाएं :** संधारणीय भविष्य के लिए, लगभग 10,000 मेगावाट क्षमता का निर्माण कर रही है ।

**एनर्जी ट्रांजिशन को बढ़ावा देना:** वर्ष 2032 तक 23,000 मेगावाट और वर्ष 2047 तक 50,000 मेगावाट नवीकरणीय ऊर्जा का लक्ष्य ।

**भारत की दो सबसे बड़ी जलविद्युत परियोजनाओं का निर्माण:**  
 ➤ बिबांग बहुदेशीय परियोजना: 2,880 मेगावाट अरुणाचल प्रदेश में ।  
 ➤ सुबनसिरी लोअर परियोजना: 2,000 मेगावाट अरुणाचल प्रदेश और असम में ।

**नवरत्न का दर्जा:** कार्यनीतिक महत्व को मान्यता देते हुए 30 अगस्त, 2024 को प्रदान किया गया ।

**भविष्य के लिए विजय:** एनएचपीसी संधारणीय ऊर्जा और वर्ष 2047 तक विकसित भारत के विजय के प्रति समर्पित है ।



आइए,  
हम सब मिलकर हरित ऊर्जा में नेतृत्व की विदासत का उत्सव मनाएं !





PRASHANT DAS  
EDITOR

We spotlight the organizations that didn't just build profits but built possibilities. They've tackled poverty and illiteracy, empowered women, uplifted marginal communities, protected biodiversity, and invested in youth-led innovation. This isn't just about compliance—it's about conscience and co-creation.

## From Roots to Resolve: India's Evolving CSR Soul

As we celebrate 78 years of India's independence, it's an opportune moment to reflect on how far our nation has come—not only economically and socially, but in our collective commitment to purposeful development. CSR, once an invisible undercurrent, has now become a defining force in shaping inclusive growth and equitable progress.

The early expressions of corporate philanthropy—schools built in faraway villages, free health camps in underserved districts, funding of art and culture—stemmed not from legal obligation, but a moral one. Our industrial icons envisioned businesses as agents of societal upliftment. Their legacy laid the groundwork for a transformation that now powers national missions aligned with global goals.

This edition of CSR TIMES traces India's profound journey from struggle to sustainability. From the Trusteeship philosophy of Gandhi to the landmark CSR legislation of 2013 and the strategic alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals, CSR has evolved into a movement—intentional, measurable, and future-facing.

We spotlight the organizations that didn't just build profits but built possibilities. They've tackled poverty and illiteracy, empowered women, uplifted marginal communities, protected biodiversity, and invested in youth-led innovation. This isn't just about compliance—it's about conscience and co-creation.

As we advance toward Viksit Bharat by 2047, CSR will play a catalytic role in harmonizing corporate ambition with national aspiration. The road ahead calls for a shift—from transactional charity to transformational impact. From ticking boxes to weaving impact stories. And from isolated efforts to collaborative ecosystems.

This edition is not just a chronicle—it is an invitation. To business leaders, civil society, and citizens alike: let us recommit to shaping a future where prosperity is shared, sustainability is sacred, and progress leaves no one behind.

*"The journey from struggle to sustainability was paved by visionaries. The road to 2047 will be powered by partnerships."*

Together, let us craft a legacy worth passing on—not only for the nation, but for humanity.

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## PERSPECTIVE



India is well poised at the threshold of a historic transformation. The vision of *Viksit Bharat* – a developed, inclusive, and globally competitive nation by 2047 – is beginning to shape up in the not-so-distant horizon. What will be needed for its success though will encompass more than just economic growth; it will call for an integrated whole comprising alignment of government policy, corporate responsibility, and citizen participation.

During the past decade we have noted significant development in the areas of infrastructure at par with world class standards. Yet, the right impetus to this journey must be given by fueling it with both resources and resolve. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plays the crucial role of a catalyst in this transformational journey. CSR has moved beyond its initial role of compliance to shaping livelihoods, empowering rural economies and furthering innovation in diverse sectors such as education, environmental stewardship and healthcare.

The distinguishing factor of the *Viksit Bharat* vision is the emphasis that it lays on inclusive growth. This highlights the importance of uplifting the most vulnerable communities in a nation's development without which the entire process is incomplete. With its focus on adopting a people-first approach, every citizen can access quality education, healthcare, clean water, sanitation and dignified livelihoods. To bridge the existing gaps, and create scalable long-term impact it is imperative to harness the strength of public-private partnerships.

Nurturing the spirit of sustainability becomes equally crucial. We must ensure that our planet's health is not compromised at any cost, by adopting green technologies, renewable energy and climate conscious policies.

The path ahead is not a solitary journey; it demands resilience, innovation and shared accountability. If we take this up as a shared mission with active participation from the government, corporate, civil society and all citizens living up to their roles with integrity and determination, *Viksit Bharat* will no longer remain just a policy goal but will fast crystallize into a living reality.

At CSR Times, we will continue our endeavor of chronicling, celebrating, and amplifying these efforts. Together, let us fuel the journey of a stronger and brighter India!

**Dr Shabnam Asthana**  
Associate Editor

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CSR @78: FUELING INDIA'S JOURNEY TO VIKSIT BHARAT



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# BEYOND COMPLIANCE: INTERPRETING THE NEW CSR RULES 2025— EXPERT LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

SEEMA DAS, ADVOCATE

India's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) framework has come a long way since its inception under Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013. With the latest amendments notified in July 2025, CSR has entered a new phase—one that prioritizes transparency, account-

ability, and measurable impact. But what do these changes mean for companies and implementing agencies? Let's explore the legal perspective in simple terms.

The Companies (CSR Policy) Amendment Rules, 2025 introduce several important changes. One of the

most noticeable updates is the digitization of the CSR-1 form. NGOs and other entities seeking CSR funding must now register through a web-based platform. This shift promises faster approvals but also brings stricter scrutiny. Another significant change is the eligibility criteria for



implementing agencies. Only those with a minimum three-year track record in CSR activities can qualify, unless they are established by the government or a company itself.

Legal disclosures have also become more rigorous. Agencies must submit tax registrations such as 80G and 12A, along with PAN and digital signatures. Any false declaration can lead to penalties under Sections 448 and 449 of the Companies Act. Moreover, companies spending more than ₹1 crore on a single CSR project are now required to conduct a third-party impact assessment. This ensures that the funds are genuinely contributing to societal development.

At its core, the 2025 update signals a shift from CSR as a checkbox activity to CSR as a strategic, measurable contribution. Legal experts interpret this as a move toward real-time compliance. Companies must now assess their CSR applicability afresh every financial year. If a company meets any of the thresholds—₹500 crore net worth, ₹1,000 crore turnover, or ₹5 crore net profit—in the previous year, it is obligated to undertake CSR activities in the following year. For example, if Company A earned a net profit of ₹6 crore in FY 2024–25, it must spend on CSR in FY 2025–26, even if it didn't qualify in earlier years.

The transition to digital forms like CSR-1 and CSR-2 means there is little room for error. Companies and NGOs must ensure accurate and complete submissions. This allows the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to track data in real time, reducing misuse and improving fund allocation. For

instance, an NGO applying for CSR funds must now upload its tax exemption certificates, registration details, and even link to its parent company if applicable.

Due diligence is no longer optional. Companies must verify the credentials of their CSR partners. Legal experts caution that failure to do so could result in reputational damage or even legal consequences. It is essential to confirm that the implementing agency is registered under CSR-1 and holds the necessary tax approvals.

But compliance is just the beginning. The new rules encourage companies to think strategically about their CSR initiatives. Choosing credible partners with proven impact, documenting outcomes through impact assessments, and aligning projects with national priorities such as education, health, and sustainability are now essential practices. For example, a company funding a rural education initiative should not only track student enrollment but also measure learning outcomes through third-party evaluations.

In addition to these structural reforms, the 2025 amendments also emphasize the importance of **board-level accountability**. Companies are now required to disclose CSR committee decisions more transparently in their annual reports, including the rationale behind project selection and the metrics used to evaluate success. This pushes CSR out of the realm of symbolic gestures and into the domain of strategic governance. Board members must now engage more deeply with CSR planning, ensuring that ini-

tiatives are not only compliant but also aligned with the company's long-term social vision.

Another noteworthy inclusion is the **mandatory geo-tagging of CSR assets**. Whether it's a school built in a tribal belt or a water purification unit installed in a rural village, companies must now geo-tag physical infrastructure created through CSR funds. This allows for better monitoring, prevents duplication of efforts, and enables stakeholders—including government bodies and civil society—to visualize the impact footprint. It also opens the door for data-driven storytelling, where companies can showcase their contributions with greater credibility.

Furthermore, the new rules encourage **multi-year CSR planning**, especially for projects that require sustained engagement. Companies can now carry forward unspent CSR funds for up to three financial years, provided they earmark them for ongoing projects. This flexibility is particularly useful for initiatives in education, skilling, and healthcare, where long-term commitment is essential for meaningful change.

In essence, the July 2025 amendments mark a decisive shift in India's CSR landscape—from transactional giving to transformational impact. By tightening compliance, enhancing transparency, and promoting strategic alignment, the new framework ensures that CSR is not just a legal obligation but a powerful instrument for inclusive development. As India moves toward its centenary in 2047, these reforms position CSR as a cornerstone of the nation's growth story.

# INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN TRIBAL BELTS SINCE INDEPENDENCE: A JOURNEY OF HOPE AND IMPACT

TANMOY ROY



Since India's independence in 1947, the dream of inclusive education has slowly but steadily reached the tribal belts—regions often tucked away in forests, hills, and remote corners of the country. These communities, rich in culture and tradition, were historically left out of mainstream development. But over the decades, a combination of government schemes, philanthropic efforts, and grassroots initiatives has helped bring the light of education to millions of tribal children.

In the early years post-independence, tribal education was largely driven by government-run Ashram schools—residential schools set up in tribal areas to provide basic education. While these schools laid the foundation, challenges like language barriers, lack of trained teachers, and cultural disconnect made learning difficult. Many tribal children dropped out early or never enrolled at all.

One of the turning points came with the launch of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) in 2001, a nationwide

mission to achieve universal elementary education. SSA focused on building schools in remote areas, training teachers, and providing free textbooks and uniforms. For tribal belts, this meant more accessible education and a push toward inclusion.

But government efforts alone weren't enough. Philanthropists and civil society organizations stepped in to bridge the gaps.

Take the story of Padma Shri awardee Shantilal Muttha, who founded the Bharatiya Jain Sanghatana (BJS).

His organization set up schools in tribal regions of Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, focusing not just on academics but also on life skills and values. BJS introduced mobile schools—vans equipped with teaching materials—that traveled to remote villages where children couldn't reach formal schools.

In Odisha, the Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), founded by Dr. Achyuta Samanta, became a beacon of hope. Starting with just 125 tribal children in 1993, KISS now educates over 30,000 tribal students free of cost, offering food, accommodation, health-care, and education from kindergarten to postgraduate levels. Many of its alumni have gone on to become doctors, engineers, and civil servants.

Another inspiring example is the Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS), launched by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. These schools aim to provide quality education to tribal children from Class VI to XII in a residential setting. As of 2025, over 479 EMRS are operational across India, educating more than 1.38 lakh tribal students.

Key Milestones in Tribal Education		
Year	Initiative	Impact
1950s	Ashram Schools	First wave of tribal education access
2001	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan	Universal elementary education push
1993	KISS founded	Largest tribal residential school in the world
2018	EMRS Expansion	Over 1.38 lakh tribal students enrolled
2020s	Bilingual Textbooks	Bridging language gaps in tribal classrooms

NGOs like Pratham and Educate Girls have also made significant contributions. Pratham's "Read India" campaign helped improve reading and arithmetic skills among tribal children in states like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Educate Girls, working in tribal pockets of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, uses community volunteers to enroll girls in school and support their learning journey.

Anecdotes from the field show the real impact. In a small village in Bastar, Chhattisgarh, a tribal girl named Meena walked 5 kilometers daily to attend school. With support from a

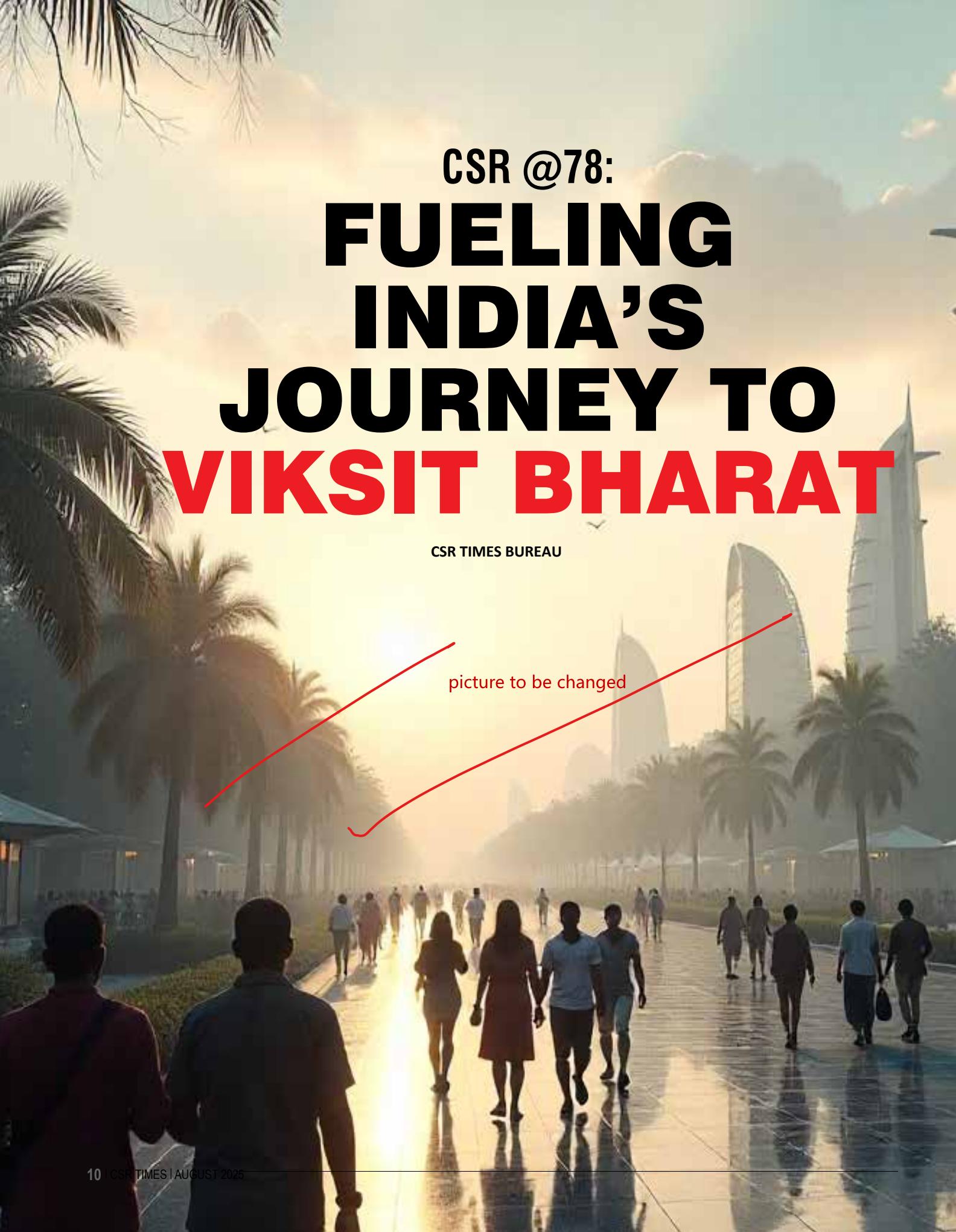
local NGO, she received a bicycle and tutoring. Today, Meena is pursuing a degree in social work and dreams of returning to her village as a teacher.

Despite progress, challenges remain. Many tribal children still face poverty, malnutrition, and social exclusion. Language continues to be a barrier, as most tribal communities speak dialects not used in mainstream education. However, recent efforts to develop bilingual textbooks and train teachers in tribal languages are helping bridge this gap.

The road ahead calls for deeper collaboration. Philanthropists, corporates under CSR mandates, and local communities must work together to ensure that every tribal child not only attends school but thrives in it. Education must be culturally sensitive, emotionally supportive, and practically relevant.

Inclusive education in tribal belts is not just about literacy—it's about dignity, opportunity, and empowerment. As India moves toward its Vision 2047 goals, the stories of Meena, KISS, and EMRS remind us that when education reaches the margins, the entire nation rises.





# CSR @78: **FUELING INDIA'S JOURNEY TO VIKSIT BHARAT**

CSR TIMES BUREAU

picture to be changed

## Birth of a Vision: Philanthropy in Independent India

In 1947, when India emerged from colonial rule, the idea of corporate social responsibility was deeply rooted in cultural values, yet unstructured. Mahatma Gandhi's "trusteeship" model planted the moral seed of businesses serving society. Industrial houses like Tata, Birla, and Bajaj embraced philanthropy—building schools, hospitals, and nurturing art and culture—not as compliance, but conscience.

This era was characterized by ad-hoc giving, personal philanthropy, and institution-building by visionaries who believed that profit must be paired with purpose. The lack of formal policy did not deter these pioneers; rather, their social investments became foundations for future government collaborations.

**"CSR is no longer a peripheral obligation—it is the pulse of responsible capitalism in India."**

## The Developmental Push: From Generosity to Strategy

India's planned economy in the 1950s–1970s saw business involvement largely through government-linked efforts. Public sector units (PSUs), especially in heavy industries, were mandated to support township models for employee welfare—embedding social support into operations.

**"Profit must be paired with purpose—India's earliest industrialists knew this by heart."**

## Landmark Legislation: The Birth of the CSR Act

With liberalization in 1991, a new paradigm emerged. Market competition and globalization reshaped corporate thinking. Companies began to frame social initiatives not just as goodwill but as strategic imperatives tied to stakeholder reputation, brand value, and ethical governance.



Yet, without a formal legal structure, CSR still relied on voluntary spirit and leadership commitment.

In 2013, India made history. Through the Companies Act, it became the first country to legally mandate CSR spending. This transformative shift required eligible companies to allocate 2% of their average net profit towards social development.

This move catalyzed a cultural and operational change:

- CSR Boards and Policies became essential.
- NGO Partnerships expanded rapidly.
- Thematic Areas were identified: education, healthcare, rural development, environmental sustainability, and gender equity.

The law turned “giving back” from informal benevolence into structured accountability, inspiring governance reforms and monitoring mechanisms.

**Year of Legislation:**  
**2013**

**Companies Covered:**  
**₹16,000**

**Total CSR Spend (2023):**  
**₹25,000+ crore**

tunity to dovetail corporate initiatives with national and global priorities. Indian businesses began recalibrating their CSR efforts:

- Goal 3 (Good Health): hospitals, mobile clinics, and vaccine awareness drives.
- Goal 4 (Quality Education): digital classrooms, scholarships, and vocational training.
- Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation): mass sanitation programs and rainwater harvesting.
- Goal 13 (Climate Action): renewable energy pilots and plastic-free campaigns.

The government's frameworks—like NITI Aayog's SDG Index and Mission Viksit Bharat 2047—encouraged alignment between policy ambi-

## Aligning with Global Goals: India's CSR Meets SDGs

The 2015 adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offered India an oppor-

tions and corporate action. Corporates now view CSR not merely as charity but as impact investment in nation-building.

## Corporate Champions: Business Houses That Reshaped India

Over the years, several business houses have led the CSR narrative with scale, sincerity, and innovation.

### Tata Group

With a legacy dating back a century, Tata's CSR spans every thematic area—from cancer research to skill development. Their commitment to urban sanitation, tribal education, and climate resilience showcases their integrated model.

### Reliance Foundation

Focused on health, education, and sports for development, Reliance has built scalable interventions like hospital chains, rural health outreach, and India's largest grassroots sports platforms.

### ITC Limited

With 'Sustainability' as their guiding mantra, ITC leads in agro-forestry, water stewardship, and climate-adapted farming. Their CSR bridges economic empowerment with ecological restoration.

### Aditya Birla Group

From women's empowerment in rural India to mid-day meal programs, the group blends philanthropy and social enterprise with robust impact metrics.



"These champions didn't just give—they built lasting ecosystems."

National CSR Portal Snapshot:

- ₹29,987 crore spent in FY 2022–23
- Over 1.84 lakh crore spent cumulatively since 2014
- Focus areas: Education (38%), Healthcare (25%), Environment (15%)

Public Sector Champions:

- NTPC, ONGC, GAIL, and Coal India have led CSR in tribal education, solar electrification, and skill development.

Private Sector Leaders:

- Bisleri International: Water conservation and plastic recycling
- Jubilant Ingrevia: Women empowerment and STEM education
- Avery Dennison: Vocational training and community health

### The Road Ahead: Beyond Compliance to Co-Creation

India's CSR journey—from struggle to strategy—is now entering a co-creation era, where business, civil society, and government intersect to deliver systemic change.

Future success will hinge on:

- Impact Measurement: Going beyond outputs to outcomes.
- Collaborative Models: Cross-sector partnerships, innovation hubs, and CSR consortiums.
- Technology-Driven Inclusion: Using AI, data analytics, and digital

tal platforms to scale and monitor reach.

- Youth Engagement: Harnessing India's demographic dividend for volunteerism and entrepreneurship.

As India races toward Mission Viksit Bharat by 2047, CSR will remain a keystone in shaping an equitable, inclusive, and sustainable nation.

CSR is no longer a peripheral obligation—it is the pulse of responsible capitalism in India. As we look back on 78 years of transformation, we also step forward into a future where doing good is no longer a choice—but the essence of doing well.

# CSR GONE WILD - THE TALE OF THE PHILANTHROPIC SPREADSHEET

SANJAY DEBNATH

In the labyrinthine depths of a boardroom somewhere in Gurgaon, a peculiar creature was born—no, not another startup founder with a messiah complex, but a spreadsheet. It began modestly: three columns, a noble purpose—“CSR Budget Allocation.” But ambition, like outsourced optimism, knows no bounds. Soon, it ballooned into forty-seven tabs, each teeming with formulas so convoluted they required a PhD in interpretive numerology.

Every project, from building sustainable yoga platforms in Ladakh to sponsoring underwater book clubs in Andaman, received enthusiastic funding—based solely on how photogenic the beneficiaries looked in press kits. Actual impact? That was left to the “Monitoring & Evaluation” tab—locked, and last accessed in 2021.

The spreadsheet developed taste. It refused to entertain “non-visible” initiatives. Toilets were fine, as long as they had golden handrails. Skill development worked best when accompanied by drone-shot graduation ceremonies and hashtags like #EmpowerThroughExcel.

Executives cooed over pie charts showing “Impact Distribution by Gender, Region, and Alignment with Zodiac Signs.” Meanwhile, the intern responsible for updating it had left in April, replaced by ChatGPT-3.5,



whose only KPI was “Produce optimism on tap.”

At year-end, the spreadsheet presented itself at the CSR awards gala, dressed in the finest pivot tables, flirting shamelessly with PDFs of glossy annual reports. It won “Most Innovatively Vague Initiative,” and celebrated with a PowerPoint toast.

In this age of metric-driven

benevolence, real lives are footnotes, and purpose is conditional formatting. Because in the gospel according to Column C, what’s measurable is meaningful—and what’s meaningful had better be printable in landscape mode.

So here’s to the spreadsheet that saved the world—cell by self-congratulatory cell.



#### **ELIGIBILITY**

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- Valid Form CSR-2

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- Selective Featured Stories & Interview Opportunities
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CSR TIMES is coming up with a **special edition** to rank the top **PSUs and Corporates** that are effectively deploying their CSR budgets. Objective is to appreciate their commitment to social responsibility and their contribution towards a 'Viksit Bharat'.

**SECURE  
YOUR SPOT**

**IN THE SPECIAL  
OCTOBER EDITION OF  
CSR TIMES**

Where we'll publish the rankings of 100 Top CSR Spenders in FY 2024-25 and highlight their commitment to social responsibility through strategic budget allocation, transparent utilization, and measurable impact on core sectors through innovative models, and geographical outreach that spans tribal belts, aspirational districts, underserved urban zones, and more.

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**25-09-2025**

# Play for Progress: CSR'S GAME-CHANGING ROLE IN INDIA'S SPORTING FUTURE

MAANISA DAS



As India commemorates National Sports Day on August 29, in honor of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand, the nation reflects not only on its glorious sporting past but also on the transformative potential of sports in shaping its future. From Olympic podiums to grassroots playgrounds, India's sporting journey is a testament to resilience, talent, and untapped opportunity. And in this journey, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a powerful ally.

## Sporting Achievements That Stirred the Nation

India's sporting landscape has evolved dramatically. From Neeraj Chopra's Olympic gold in javelin to the historic Thomas Cup win in badminton,

and the women's cricket team's rise to global prominence, individual and team achievements have ignited national pride. The success of para-athletes, wrestlers, boxers, and shooters has further diversified India's

sporting identity.

These victories are not just medals—they are milestones that inspire millions and signal the need for deeper investment in sports infrastructure, training, and accessibility.

## Infrastructure: The Foundation for Champions

India's sports infrastructure has seen notable growth, with initiatives like Khelo India, Fit India Movement, and Sansad Khel Mahakumbh promoting participation and fitness. Yet, challenges persist—especially in rural and tribal regions where talent often goes unnoticed due to lack of facilities.

This is where CSR steps in. According to Ministry of Corporate Affairs data, CSR funding for sports doubled to ₹526 crore in FY23, with over 1,200 companies contributing. Corporates like Reliance Industries, Tata Steel, Kotak Mahindra Bank, and JSW Sports have built academies, supported elite athletes, and developed grassroots programs.



## CSR as a Catalyst for Sporting Equity

CSR in sports is no longer limited to sponsorships. It now encompasses:

- Infrastructure development: Stadiums, training centers, and community playgrounds
- Talent identification and coaching: Programs for underprivileged youth
- Gender inclusion: Support for women's sports and para-athletes
- Health and nutrition: Athlete wellness and fitness education
- Cultural preservation: Revival of indigenous games like kho-kho and kabaddi

Projects like HCL Foundation's Sports for Change, Zinc Football by Hindustan Zinc, and Tata Archery Academy have nurtured thousands of young athletes, many of whom have gone on to represent India.

## Why Corporates Must Play Their Part

Investing in sports through CSR is not just altruism—it's strategic nation-building. Sports foster discipline, teamwork, and leadership. They reduce crime, improve health outcomes, and create employment. For corporates, it offers:

- Brand visibility and goodwill
- Employee engagement through sports volunteering
- Community trust and stakeholder alignment
- Alignment with SDGs, especially SDG 3 (Good Health), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 5 (Gender Equality)

Moreover, as India eyes hosting



the 2036 Olympics, corporate involvement in sports development is not optional—it's essential.

## A Win-Win Proposition

CSR spend on sports benefits both corporates and the nation. It creates a healthier workforce, builds social capital, and contributes to economic growth. It also helps corporates fulfill their mandated CSR obligations with measurable impact.

The government's push for sport adoption models, where each company supports a specific sport, ensures focused investment and accountability. This model, proposed by Sports Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, encourages corporates to go beyond cheque-writing and become active stakeholders in India's sporting ecosystem.

## The Road Ahead

To truly unlock India's sporting potential, CSR must:

- Expand to Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities
- Integrate with education and skilling programs

- Support athlete transition and post-career planning
- Promote inclusivity in sports for differently-abled individuals
- Leverage technology for training and talent scouting

India's youth, especially in rural and tribal belts, are brimming with talent. With the right support, they can become global champions. CSR can be the bridge between aspiration and achievement.

## Conclusion: Let the Nation Play

On this National Sports Day, let us remember that sports are not just games—they are instruments of change. They unite, uplift, and inspire. And CSR, when aligned with sporting development, becomes a force multiplier for national progress.

As Major Dhyan Chand once said, "The goal is not just to score, but to inspire." It's time for India Inc. to take that inspiration forward—one playground, one athlete, one dream at a time.

(National Handloom Day - Aug 7)

# WEAVING PROSPERITY: CSR'S ROLE IN REVIVING INDIA'S HANDLOOM LEGACY

RUDRANEEL DEY



Every year on August 7, India celebrates National Handloom Day to honor the legacy of the Swadeshi Movement and the enduring contributions of millions of weavers who form the backbone of one of the country's oldest and most culturally rich industries. As the world turns toward sustainable and ethical fashion, India's handloom sector stands tall—not just as a symbol of heritage, but as a beacon of inclusive growth. In this context, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) emerges as a powerful tool to uplift handloom clusters, empower rural artisans, and project India's cultural identity globally.

## A Tapestry of Tradition: Handloom Marvels Across India

India's handloom landscape is a mosa-

ic of regional brilliance. Each state offers a distinct weaving tradition, reflecting its history, climate, and cultural ethos:

**Uttar Pradesh:** Banarasi silk and Chikankari embroidery

**Tamil Nadu:** Kanjeevaram sarees, known for their lustrous silk and temple motifs

**Telangana:** Pochampally Ikat, a geometric marvel of resist dyeing

**Assam:** Muga and Eri silks, prized for their natural sheen and durability

**West Bengal:** Jamdani and Baluchari, celebrated for intricate storytelling through weave

**Punjab:** Phulkari, a vibrant embroidery tradition

**Karnataka:** Mysore silk, known for its elegance and purity

**Gujarat:** Bandhani tie-dye and Patola double Ikat

**Madhya Pradesh:** Chanderi and

Maheshwari fabrics, blending cotton and silk

**Jammu & Kashmir:** Pashmina shawls, globally revered for their softness and warmth

These textiles are not mere garments—they are cultural artefacts, each thread narrating stories of community, craftsmanship, and continuity.

## Global Demand and Export Potential

India produces over 95% of the world's handwoven fabric, with exports reaching over \$300 million annually before the pandemic. Key markets include the United States, Europe, Japan, and the Middle East, where handloom products are valued for their authenticity, eco-friendliness, and artisanal appeal.

Home décor items like rugs, mats, cushion covers, and bed linens from clusters in Panipat, Karur, Kannur, and Varanasi dominate exports. Fashion designers and luxury brands are increasingly incorporating Indian handlooms into global collections, redefining them as symbols of modern luxury and conscious consumption.

## Cultural Significance and Sustainable Value

Handloom weaving is more than an economic activity—it is a custodian of India's intangible heritage. It pre-

serves indigenous knowledge systems, promotes sustainable practices, and fosters community identity. With over 70% of weavers being women, the sector is a powerful engine for gender empowerment and rural livelihood.

Unlike mechanized production, handloom weaving has a minimal carbon footprint, uses natural fibers and dyes, and supports decentralized economies. In an age of fast fashion, handlooms offer a compelling alternative rooted in ethics, aesthetics, and ecology.

## CSR Opportunities: A Loom of Possibilities

Despite its strengths, the handloom sector faces challenges—low wages, lack of market access, competition from power looms, and dwindling interest among youth. This is where CSR can make a transformative impact.

### Corporates can channel their CSR budgets into:

#### 1. Cluster Development and Infrastructure

**Invest** in upgrading looms, lighting, workspaces, and common facility centers. Support housing, sanitation, and health services for weaver communities.

#### 2. Skill Development and Design Innovation

**Fund** training programs in contemporary design, digital literacy, and business skills. Partner with institutes like NIFT and IIHT to bridge tradition with modernity.

#### 3. Market Linkages and Branding

**Enable** access to domestic and global markets through e-commerce platforms, exhibitions, and



branding initiatives like the India Handloom Brand and GI tagging.

#### 4. Financial Inclusion and Social Security

**Support** microfinance, thrift funds, and insurance schemes. Collaborate with government programs like Weaver MUDRA Scheme, Nethanna Bhadratha, and Yarn Supply Scheme.

#### 5. Cultural Preservation and Storytelling

**Sponsor** documentation projects, coffee table books, and digital archives that celebrate the stories behind the weaves. Promote handloom in corporate gifting and employee engagement.

#### 6. Sustainability and ESG Integration

**Align** handloom support with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals. Highlight handloom's eco-friendly credentials in sustainability reports.

### Case Studies of Impact

Several corporates have already woven success stories:

- **TATA's Taneira** brand promotes handloom sarees while supporting artisan livelihoods.
- **Microsoft India** has backed tra-

ditional weaving clusters through digital empowerment.

- **HDFC Bank's Parivartan** initiative has supported skill development in handloom hubs.
- **Reliance Foundation** has worked with rural artisans to enhance income and market access.

These efforts demonstrate that CSR in handlooms is not just philanthropy—it's a strategic investment in India's cultural economy.

### Conclusion: Weaving the Future Together

On this National Handloom Day, let us recognize that every handwoven fabric is a thread in India's story—of resilience, creativity, and unity. By supporting handloom through CSR, corporates can help preserve heritage, empower artisans, and promote sustainable development.

In the loom of nation-building, CSR is the shuttle that binds tradition with transformation. It's time for India Inc. to embrace handloom not just as a legacy, but as a living opportunity—to weave prosperity, pride, and purpose into the fabric of our future.



# STRINGS OF CHANGE: HOW INDIA'S MUSIC INDUSTRY EVOLVED WITH CSR SUPPORT

DAS PRASHANT

Several CSR programs have recognized music's therapeutic value. Hospitals and rehabilitation centers now use music therapy—funded by CSR budgets—to support mental health, autism care, and elderly wellness.

Since independence, India's music industry has journeyed from the soulful strains of classical ragas to the digital beats of global fusion. It has not only reflected the nation's cultural heartbeat but also grown into a vibrant economic sector—thanks in part to the support of visionary organisations and corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives that have nurtured talent, preserved heritage, and democratized access to music education.

## From Tradition to Transformation

In the early decades post-independence, Indian music was largely rooted in classical traditions—Hindustani and Carnatic—alongside folk forms that varied across regions. Institutions like All India Radio played a pivotal role in popularizing classical and devotional music, while film music emerged as a unifying force across linguistic and cultural divides.

The 1980s and 1990s saw the rise of private music labels like HMV (now Saregama), T-Series, and Tips, which commercialized music distribution and gave rise to pop and indie genres. With the advent of digital platforms in the 2000s, the industry expanded rapidly, embracing streaming, global collaborations, and independent artists.

## CSR's Role in Music Education and Preservation

While the commercial side of music flourished, the preservation of India's rich musical heritage and the promotion of inclusive music education required sustained support. This is

where CSR stepped in.

Under the Companies Act 2013, many corporates began allocating CSR funds to cultural development.

Music, often under the umbrella of "arts and heritage," received targeted support through grants, scholarships, and infrastructure development.



- **Yamaha Music India**, for instance, has actively promoted music education through its CSR policy, focusing on skill development and cultural enrichment. Their programs include free music workshops, instrument donations, and training for underprivileged children.
- **Reliance Foundation** has supported classical music festivals and artist residencies, helping preserve endangered musical forms and providing platforms for rural and tribal musicians.
- **Infosys Foundation** has funded music schools and supported archival projects, including digitization of rare recordings and manuscripts.
- **HCL Foundation's 'Power of One' initiative** has partnered with NGOs to bring music education to government schools, integrating rhythm and melody into holistic learning.

## Empowering Grassroots Talent

CSR-backed initiatives have also empowered grassroots talent—especially in tribal and rural belts where music is deeply embedded in community life.

Projects like **India Music Village** and **Baul Fusion Collective** have received support from corporate foundations to document and promote folk traditions. These efforts not only preserve cultural identity but also generate livelihoods through performances, recordings, and tourism.

In Odisha, CSR funds from mining companies have supported tribal music festivals, showcasing instruments like the dhap and mahuri. In Rajasthan, folk artists from Kalbeliya and Manganiyar communities have been trained in digital production and marketing, thanks to CSR-linked skill development programs.

**India's music industry is now valued at over ₹2,000 crore, with streaming platforms like Gaana, JioSaavn, and Spotify India driving growth. CSR-backed music incubators and contests have helped launch careers of independent artists, many of whom now perform globally.**

## Music as Therapy and Inclusion

Several CSR programs have recognized music's therapeutic value. Hospitals and rehabilitation centers now use music therapy—funded by CSR budgets—to support mental health, autism care, and elderly wellness.

For example, **Tata Trusts** has sup-

ported music therapy programs for children with special needs, while **Mahindra Group** has funded inclusive music workshops for visually impaired students.

## Economic Impact and Cultural Diplomacy

India's music industry is now valued at over ₹2,000 crore, with streaming platforms like Gaana, JioSaavn, and Spotify India driving growth. CSR-backed music incubators and contests have helped launch careers of independent artists, many of whom now perform globally.

Music has also become a tool of cultural diplomacy. Events like the **India Music Summit**, supported by corporate sponsors, bring together artists from across genres and geographies, showcasing India's soft power and creative diversity.

## Looking Ahead: Harmonizing CSR and Music

As India approaches its centenary in 2047, the music industry stands at a crossroads—where tradition meets technology, and culture meets commerce. CSR can play a transformative role by:

Supporting music education in underserved regions

- Funding preservation of endangered musical forms
- Creating platforms for emerging artists
- Promoting music as a tool for inclusion and wellness

In doing so, corporates not only fulfill their social responsibility but also contribute to a richer, more harmonious India.



# हम दे रहे हैं सपनों को उड़ान...



सतत कोयला खनन



उत्कृष्ट पर्यावरण प्रबंधन



सौर परियोजनाएं

• विश्व की सबसे बड़ी कोयला उत्पादक कंपनी • उत्कृष्टता की ओर बढ़ते कदम...

# DLF Foundation: GREENING CITIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE IMPACT



In the rapidly changing urban landscape, environment preservation and promotion have become an urgent priority. DLF Foundation, the CSR arm of DLF Group, shows that well-planned development and thriving natural ecosystems can co-exist. Through its environmental programme – Greening Cities, the Foundation focuses on integrating plantation, biodiversity, and climate resilience, creating green spaces in urban landscapes benefitting both present and future generations.

*“Thriving cities develop in harmony with integrating the environment and natural landscape within the urban footprint,” says Gayatri Paul, CEO, DLF Foundation. “Our mission is to show that urbanisation and ecological balance*

*can coexist and complement each other. The Greening Cities initiative is aimed at creating healthier neighbourhoods and protecting the environment for future generations.”*

Working with municipal authorities in Gurugram, Delhi, and

Hyderabad, DLF Foundation has adopted and maintained over 6.05 lakh square metres of green belts and parks, planting more than 16.33 lakh native trees and shrubs in FY 24-25. These green spaces have rainwater harvesting pits for recharging groundwater,





ensuring greenery persists through the hot summers. Ms Paul shares, "Our dedicated Horticulture Team ensures that the right species are planted and also undertakes regular maintenance, safety for year-round lush green cover."

DLF Foundation has also revitalised neighbourhood parks. In Greater Kailash-I, Delhi, two eight-acre public parks were adopted from the MCD, and redeveloped by integrating walking paths, open gyms, gazebos, and play areas. Energy-efficient lighting, integrated waste management, and rainwater harvesting make them models of sustainable urban recreation, which are a haven for the elderly, children and community members.

An innovative green project is the Shanti Sthaan, an eco-friendly crematorium in Gurugram's Sector 72A, developed in collaboration with Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP). The unique feature is that this crematorium combines tradition with sustainability, featuring a mix of CNG and Mokshda pyres. "It's architectural and engineering design, developed in partnership with leading design and planning consultants, uses sustainable technologies within a tranquil environment, with advanced systems that minimise smoke, reduce emissions, and support eco-conscious waste processing", says the CEO. This ethos is reflected in the use of natural, earthy building materials and private gathering areas



that ensure privacy and dignity during last rites. Large-scale landscaping, rainwater harvesting, and wheelchair accessibility are also incorporated, setting a new standard for green civic amenities in India.

The Foundation's environmental strategy also works in tandem with active community involvement. Through the DLF Engage Volunteering Programme, regular volunteering drives, including tree-plantation, seed-ball making, and tree-care volunteering, encourage citizens to

become long-term guardians of their environment. "Environmental transformation needs co-ownership. By involving residents, schools, and local organisations through our volunteering and advocacy initiatives, we are encouraging a cultural shift, where caring for our green spaces becomes a norm", says Tanish Maheshwari, Head – Communications & Advocacy, DLF Foundation.

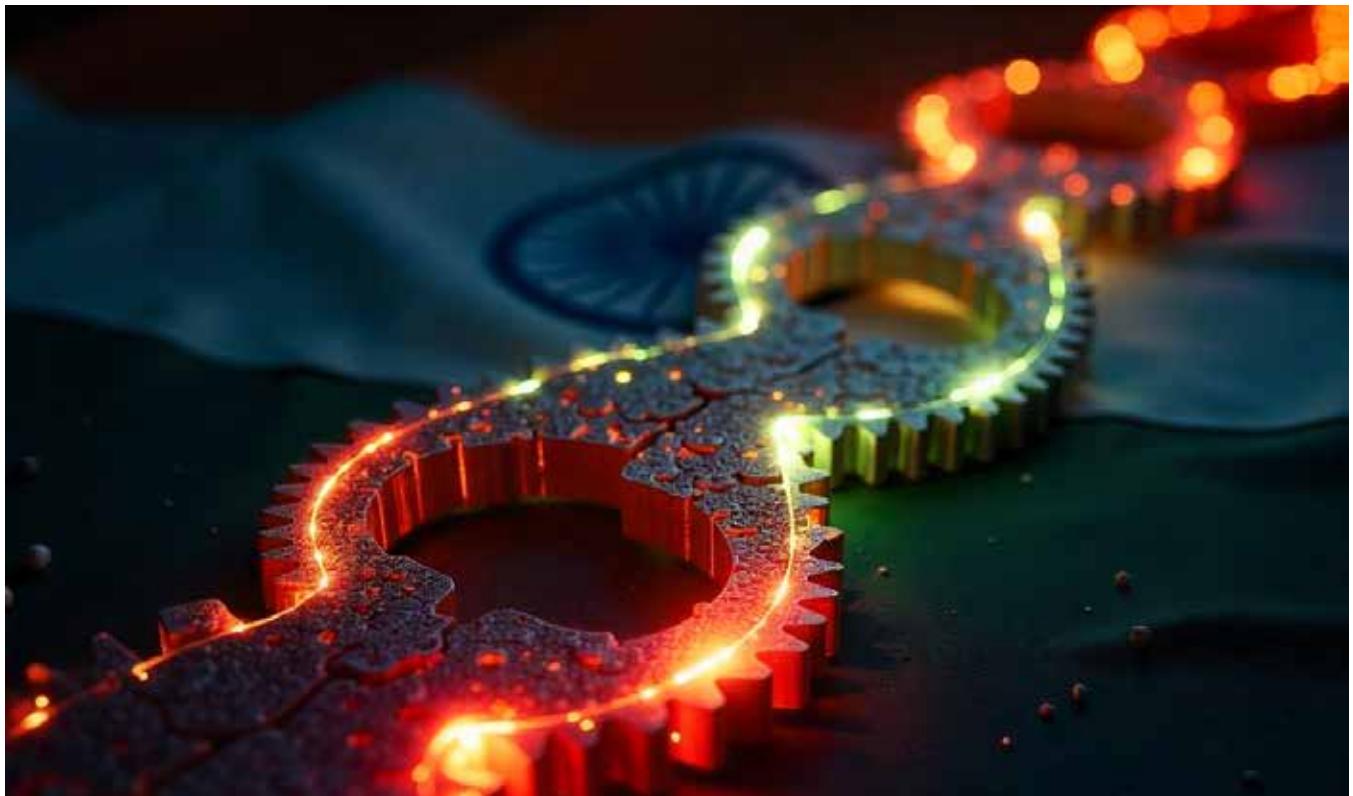
These efforts support several UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including Good Health and Well-being (SDG 3), Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11), Life on Land (SDG 15), and Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17), while advancing India's Green India Mission.

At DLF Foundation, "Greening Cities" is not just a Programme, it means creating spaces where nature and people thrive together. Every tree planted, every drop of water saved, and every green space restored is a step towards a healthier, greener, and resilient future.



# LEARNINGS AND THE ROAD AHEAD: A STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT FOR CSR IN INDIA

PRASHANT DAS



India's CSR journey since 1947 has been rich with experimentation, innovation, and impact. As the nation prepares for its centenary in 2047, the insights from decades of social engagement must now translate into a clear, future-ready plan of action. Below is a structured framework that builds on past learnings and charts a path forward for corporates, policymakers, and civil society.

## From Charity to Measurable Impact

One of the most significant learnings is the need to shift from charity-driven

models to measurable impact. CSR initiatives must be designed with clear key performance indicators, such as improvements in literacy rates, health outcomes, or employment generation. Corporates should adopt robust impact assessment tools like Social Return on Investment (SROI) and engage third-party audits to ensure credibility. Publishing annual CSR impact reports will further enhance transparency and build stakeholder trust.

**Learning:** CSR must move beyond tokenism and one-time donations to long-term, measurable outcomes.

## Plan of Action:

- Define clear KPIs for each CSR project (e.g., literacy rate improvement, health outcomes, employment generation).
- Adopt impact assessment tools such as Social Return on Investment (SROI) or third-party audits.
- Publish annual CSR impact reports to ensure transparency and stakeholder trust.

## Community-Centric Design

Another critical insight is the importance of community-centric design.

Projects are most effective when local communities are involved not just as beneficiaries but as co-creators. This requires conducting participatory rural appraisals before launching initiatives, forming local advisory committees to guide implementation, and training community members to serve as peer educators, health workers, or facilitators. Such approaches foster ownership and ensure long-term sustainability.

**Learning:** Projects thrive when communities are not just beneficiaries but co-creators.

### Plan of Action:

- Conduct Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) before launching initiatives.
- Form local advisory committees to guide implementation and feedback.
- Train community members as peer educators, health workers, or facilitators to ensure sustainability.

### Strategic Partnerships for Scale

Strategic partnerships have emerged as a powerful force multiplier. Collaborations between corporates, NGOs, and government bodies allow for greater scale and efficiency. Creating CSR consortiums for large-scale interventions—such as regional education hubs or climate resilience zones—can help pool resources and expertise. Platforms like the India CSR Exchange and the Darpan Portal offer valuable opportunities to identify credible partners and align efforts.



**Learning:** Collaboration multiplies impact and bridges resource gaps.

### Plan of Action:

- Forge tri-sector partnerships among corporates, NGOs, and government bodies.
- Create CSR consortiums for large-scale interventions such as regional education hubs or climate resilience zones.
- Leverage platforms like India CSR Exchange or the Darpan Portal to identify credible partners.

### Innovation and Technology Integration

Technology and innovation are indispensable in overcoming geographic and resource constraints. Corporates should leverage artificial intelligence and data analytics for beneficiary tracking and needs assessment. Deploying mobile health vans, e-learning modules, and solar microgrids can extend services to underserved regions. Supporting startups and social enterprises working on scalable solutions in education, healthcare, and agriculture

will further amplify impact.

**Learning:** Tech-enabled CSR can overcome geographic and resource constraints.

### Plan of Action:

- Use AI and data analytics for beneficiary tracking and need assessment.
- Deploy mobile health vans, e-learning modules, and solar microgrids in underserved areas.
- Support startups and social enterprises working on scalable solutions in education, health, and agriculture.

### Inclusive and Equitable Development

Inclusivity must be at the heart of CSR planning. Addressing social inequities related to gender, caste, disability, and geography is essential. Corporates should incorporate gender budgeting into their CSR strategies, ensuring that a significant portion of resources is allocated to women-centric programs. Infrastructure must adhere to accessibility standards to accommodate

differently-abled individuals. Special attention should be given to aspirational districts and tribal belts, where development gaps remain wide.

**Learning:** CSR must consciously address social inequities—gender, caste, disability, and geography.

### Plan of Action:

- Mandate gender budgeting in CSR projects, with at least 30% allocation for women-centric programs.
- Ensure accessibility standards in infrastructure for differently-abled individuals.
- Prioritize aspirational districts and tribal belts for targeted interventions.

### Alignment with National Missions and SDGs

Aligning CSR initiatives with national missions and global goals enhances relevance and effectiveness. Projects should be mapped to flagship programs such as Mission Viksit Bharat 2047, Gati Shakti, Jal Jeevan Mission, and Skill India. At the same time, alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) ensures global benchmarking and accountability. Participation in government-led CSR forums will help corporates stay informed about evolving policy priorities and thematic focus areas.

**Learning:** CSR is most effective when aligned with India's development goals and global commitments.

### Plan of Action:

- Map CSR initiatives to Mission Viksit Bharat 2047, Gati Shakti,

Jal Jeevan Mission, and Skill India.

- Align projects with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and report progress accordingly.
- Participate in government-led CSR forums to stay updated on policy shifts and thematic priorities.

ecosystem.

**Learning:** Strong internal governance ensures CSR is not sidelined during economic downturns.

### Plan of Action:

- Set up Board-level CSR committees with quarterly reviews.
- Integrate CSR into ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) frameworks for investor confidence.
- Use technology platforms for real-time tracking of fund utilization and beneficiary feedback.

### Final Thought: From Learnings to Leadership

Finally, institutionalizing CSR governance is essential to ensure continuity and resilience. Corporates should establish board-level CSR committees that conduct regular reviews and integrate CSR into broader Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) frameworks. This not only strengthens internal accountability but also enhances investor confidence. Technology platforms should be used for real-time tracking of fund utilization and beneficiary feedback, enabling agile decision-making and course correction.

India's CSR evolution is not merely a chronicle of giving—it is a blueprint for inclusive, participatory nation-building. The next phase calls for corporates to become developmental leaders, not just donors. By embedding these learnings into strategic action, CSR can become a cornerstone of India's rise as a global power—socially just, economically vibrant, and environmentally sustainable.

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Expanding into Green Mobility, Paints, B2B Ecommerce, Defence, Realty, Sports and more, we continue to embrace innovation and sustainability to shape a better, more inclusive future. Rooted in a philosophy of giving back, we remain committed to empowering communities and leaving a lasting legacy.

At JSW Group, being **#BetterEveryday** is more than a belief—it's how we create tomorrow.



# CSR THROUGH CONFLICT: NATION BUILDING DURING CRISES

## EDITORIAL DESK

India's post-independence journey has been shaped not only by its aspirations but also by its ability to withstand adversity. From Partition to pandemics, each crisis has tested the nation's resolve—and in these moments, **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** and

philanthropy have emerged as vital forces for resilience and recovery. As India marches toward **Mission Viksit Bharat by 2047**, the role of CSR in crisis management becomes central to sustaining development and building a more inclusive future.

## 1947 Partition: The Birth of Humanitarian CSR

The Partition of India in 1947 triggered one of the largest mass migrations in history, displacing over 14 million people. Amidst the chaos, industrialists like **G.D. Birla, Jamnalal Bajaj, and J.R.D. Tata** extended support



## Wars and National Emergencies: CSR in Defense of the Nation

India's wars with China (1962) and Pakistan (1965, 1971) brought the country to the brink of economic and social disruption. During these periods, corporates contributed to **war funds**, supported families of soldiers, and helped maintain essential services. The **Emergency of 1975–77**, though politically complex, also saw CSR efforts in public health and education as civil liberties were curtailed and institutions strained.

Companies like **Hindustan Unilever** and **Tata Steel** maintained employment and community programs, ensuring continuity in industrial towns. These efforts helped stabilize local economies and preserve social cohesion during national upheaval.

## Natural Disasters: CSR as a Lifeline

India's vulnerability to natural disas-

ters has prompted some of the most impactful CSR interventions. The **1993 Latur earthquake**, **2001 Gujarat earthquake**, and **2004 Indian Ocean tsunami** saw corporates mobilize resources for rescue, relief, and rehabilitation.

- **Infosys Foundation** and **Reliance Industries** built homes and schools in affected areas.
- **Godrej Group** and **Mahindra & Mahindra** provided logistics and machinery for debris clearance and reconstruction.
- **ITC** and **Cipla** supported health camps and sanitation drives.

These interventions went beyond charity—they were strategic investments in rebuilding lives and infrastructure, often aligned with **SDGs** and regional development plans.

## Economic Liberalization and Crises: CSR in Transition

The **1991 economic crisis** led to liberalization, privatization, and globalization. While this opened new markets,

for refugee rehabilitation, food distribution, and shelter. Their efforts laid the foundation for CSR as a tool for humanitarian aid. Relief camps, medical services, and employment initiatives were supported by business houses, often in collaboration with newly formed government agencies.

This early phase of CSR was deeply rooted in **Gandhian ethics**, emphasizing trusteeship and social responsibility. It demonstrated that corporate India could be a partner in nation-building, not just economic growth.



it also displaced workers and widened inequalities. CSR evolved to address these gaps:

- Corporates launched **skilling programs** to absorb displaced labor.
- **Microfinance initiatives** supported entrepreneurship among women and rural youth.
- **Public-private partnerships** emerged in education and healthcare.

This period marked a shift from reactive philanthropy to **strategic CSR**, with companies aligning social initiatives with business goals and national priorities.

## COVID-19 Pandemic: CSR at Scale

The **COVID-19 pandemic** was a watershed moment for CSR in India. With over 230 million people pushed into poverty, corporate India responded with unprecedented scale and speed:

- **Reliance, Tata, and Adani** set up COVID hospitals, oxygen plants, and vaccination centers.
- **Azim Premji Foundation** committed ₹1,000+ crore for pandemic relief.
- **Zomato Feeding India, Paytm, and Swiggy** launched food distribution drives.
- **Infosys, Tech Mahindra, and Wipro** supported digital education and mental health services.

According to the India CSR Outlook Report, CSR spending in FY 2020–21 rose significantly, with health and disaster relief becoming top priorities. This response showcased CSR's potential as a **pillar of national resilience**, not just development.



## Crisis Management as a Development Strategy

Crises often derail progress—but CSR can help restore momentum. Crisis-related CSR contributes to:

- **Rapid response infrastructure:** Mobile clinics, disaster shelters, and emergency supply chains
- **Livelihood restoration:** Skilling, microfinance, and entrepreneurship support
- **Education continuity:** Digital classrooms, device distribution, and teacher training
- **Healthcare reinforcement:** Telemedicine, sanitation, and maternal health programs
- **Community resilience:** Climate adaptation, water conservation, and mental health support

These efforts align with national missions like **Atmanirbhar Bharat**, **Digital India**, and **Skill India**, ensuring that development plans remain intact even during disruption.

## CSR and Mission **Viksit Bharat** by 2047

India's vision for 2047 is bold: a developed, inclusive, and sustain-

able nation. CSR is a critical enabler of this mission. By investing in crisis preparedness and recovery, corporates can:

- Bridge gaps in public service delivery
- Empower marginalized communities
- Foster innovation in social solutions
- Strengthen disaster preparedness and climate resilience
- Create employment and skilling ecosystems

The convergence of CSR with **Mission Viksit Bharat** ensures that corporate efforts are not isolated but integrated into India's developmental fabric.

## Conclusion: Building Back Better, Together

India's history of crises is also a history of resilience—and CSR has been a quiet architect of that resilience. From Partition to pandemics, corporate India has stepped up not only to provide relief but to rebuild lives and restore hope.

As we move toward **Viksit Bharat** @2047, CSR must evolve from reactive relief to proactive resilience. Crisis management is not a detour from development—it is a **critical pathway**. By investing in preparedness, recovery, and empowerment, corporates can ensure that India's growth story remains uninterrupted, inclusive, and future-ready.

In the loom of nation-building, crises may fray the fabric—but CSR is the thread that binds it back, stronger than before.

# Lord Swraj Paul

## The Bridge Between Two Worlds

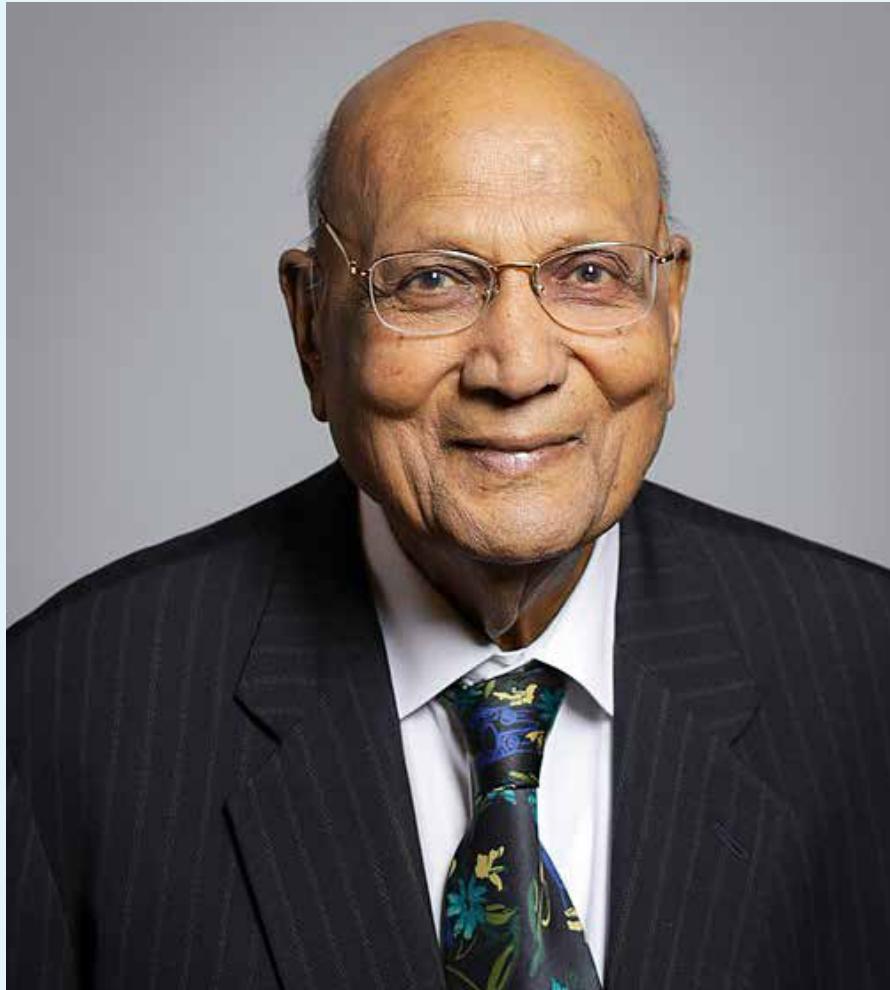
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**L**eading NRI industrialist Lord Swraj Paul, aged 94, passed away in London on Thursday evening, leaving behind a legacy in entrepreneurship and philanthropy.

Lord Paul was born on February 18, 1931, in Punjab's Jalandhar into an industrial family that ran the Apeejay Group. He graduated from Punjab University and later studied mechanical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the United States. Lord Paul, who was also chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton, was appointed a Labour life peer as Baron Paul of Marylebone, in 1996, cementing his place in British political history.

He ventured into the business world, backed with a degree in mechanical engineering, eventually taking over the Apeejay Group, his family's industrial venture. But his ambitions were never confined to balance sheets and boardrooms; his life became a mission to create opportunities, empower communities, and foster stronger ties between India and the UK. In 2008, he became the first person of Indian heritage to serve as Deputy Speaker in the House of Lords.

Beyond politics and business, Lord Paul's philanthropic spirit defined his legacy. As the Chancellor of the University of Wolverhampton, he championed education as a tool of empowerment. His contributions were globally acknowledged, with



accolades like the Padma Bhushan in 1983 and a place among The Sunday Times Rich List, marking him as one of the UK's most successful business figures. Throughout his life, Lord Paul tirelessly worked to strengthen India-UK relations, becoming a true "bridge between two worlds."

Tributes have poured in from leaders, business icons, and ordinary citizens alike. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, expressing his grief on X, said: "Saddened by the passing away

of Lord Swraj Paul Ji. He was an outstanding industrialist and philanthropist, making a mark globally. His work to strengthen India's ties with the UK will always be remembered."

At 94, Lord Swraj Paul leaves behind more than a legacy; he leaves a philosophy that success is measured not just by what we achieve but by what we give back. His life is an extraordinary journey of a man who refused to be defined by borders and instead chose to build bridges.



# CSR POWERS THE ROAD TO VIKSIT BHARAT

**I**n December 2023, the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi gave an ambitious clarion call for transforming the nation into a fully developed, globally influential country—Viksit Bharat - by 2047. Viksit Bharat 2047, which envisions inclusive development, sustainable progress, and effective governance, among others, is based on four pillars: *Yuva* (Youth), *Gareeb* (Poor), *Mahilayen* (Women) and *Annadata* (Farmers). These pillars also align with some of the key tenets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by nations across the world in September 2015, to tackle challenges related to global sustainable development and achieve a more sustainable future by 2030. In that context, the then UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had remarked that the private sector was required to partner with the Government to drive success. Helen Clark, the then chief of the UN Development Programme further added that “the new sustainable development agenda cannot be achieved without businesses”.

### CSR in India: Overview

In India, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), previously a peripheral philanthropic activity, has now become a strategic engine of national development. In 2013, the Companies Act mandated certain companies to make efforts to drive positive change and contribute to national development, thereby making the private sector a powerful partner in addressing India's developmental gaps. The rationale was to hold companies responsible toward the

society and work around the impact of their business operations at the same time, and effectively required a 2% spend of average net profits on CSR. Since then, corporates, in partnership with local NGOs and think tanks, have leveraged their considerable financial capabilities and managerial and professional expertise to solve some of India's persistent development challenges, making CSR a vital lever in India's development toolkit.

Public data shows that corporate spending on social programmes has risen substantially in recent years, registering sizeable year-on-year increases, with more companies moving from token spending to strategic, multi-year programmes. This also implies more investments in programmes that are longer in duration, system-oriented, and capable of delivering real impact on the ground - conditions necessary for building a Viksit Bharat.

### CSR and Viksit Bharat

The sectoral pattern of CSR spending highlights its potential to bolster core development outcomes. Especially across the four key focus pillars of youth, women, poor and farmers, a range of commendable work are being done by Indian corporates. For example, Project Nanhi Kali by the Mahindra Group sponsors 22,000 underprivileged girls to complete 10 years of schooling, significantly improving learning outcomes; Vodafone India's "e-Vidya for Brighter Futures supports 150 government schools and 13 community learning centres across multiple States reaching nearly 60,000 under-



privileged children; and the Malabar Group's 247 Hunger Free World Micro Learning Centres enrolled nearly 11,700 children in foundational learning, preparing them to join formal schools. Corporates such as Hindustan Uniliver (Prabhat program), Vedanta (Project Gram Nirman), and Tata Trusts (Kushal Kisan Abhiyaan) have been working to empower farmers, with a focus on sustainable agriculture and alternative livelihoods. On the other hand, ITC Limited and AU Small Finance Bank have been working closely with rural women and SHG groups for their economic empowerment. Reliance Foundation, through their Bharat India Jodo intervention, has undertaken poverty alleviation measures for nearly 14.6 million rural poor people across 350 districts. These targeted CSR interventions, implemented at scale and in collaboration with governments and civil society are complementing state capacity and accelerating development outcomes in hard-to-reach geographies. They also dovetail with the components of a Viksit Bharat in terms of ensuring equitable access to opportunity, human capital development, and sustained livelihoods.

Modern CSR is no longer limited to writing cheques. Public-private partnerships have led to blended financing models, co-design of interventions, and shared metrics for outcomes. Corporates often take up innovative pilot interventions for development and then scale them up through government partnerships, allowing innovation to move from islands of excellence to wide-scale public ben-



efit. Moreover, CSR interventions are now increasingly emphasizing robust M&E frameworks and data for outcome and impact evaluation, resulting in clearer evidence about what works, what does not, and the ability to iterate programmes for greater effectiveness. This evidence focus is crucial for leveraging and channeling limited CSR funds into interventions that genuinely accelerate the Viksit Bharat agenda.

## The Road Ahead

However, there is still scope for further improvement. Challenges that persist in CSR interventions include uneven geographic distribution of CSR spending, short project durations that limit long-term outcomes, lack of transparency, occasional misalignment between corporate priorities and local needs, and treating CSR as a compliance exercise. Addressing these challenges requires better governance, stronger community consultation, and more collaboration with local governments and NGOs.

To better realize the promise of CSR for a Viksit Bharat, the following strategies by corporates may prove to be more impactful:

- Taking up long-term interventions with multi-year commitments, along with clear metrics tied to national development indicators

(e.g. education learning outcomes, maternal and child health metrics, livelihood incomes) to measure their effectiveness and impact;

- Conscious investment of resources in backward regions (e.g. in aspirational districts) and in critical sectors such as rural infrastructure, climate resilience, skilling for emerging industries, which also aligns with Government priorities;
- Promoting blended finance, knowledge sharing, and co-implementation with public agencies so that successful pilots can scale up through government programmes.

Today, on the 78<sup>th</sup> year of independence, if India's development dream is to be realized, public policy and private purpose must go hand in hand. CSR has already shown that when corporates align their CSR strategy with the Viksit Bharat mission - anchored in inclusivity, innovation, and sustainability - they create a multiplier effect. By scaling best practices, deepening commitment to the most underserved regions, and embedding rigorous impact measurement, the Boardroom will become an equal partner with the Government in driving India's journey to a Viksit Bharat.



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# NLC India Limited

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- Reaching a Mining capacity of over 100 Million tonnes when Machhakata and Patrapara coal blocks come into operation.
- A major thrust to Renewable power projects - a 2000 MW capacity Solar project in Rajasthan and 1000 MW capacity Solar power project in Assam along with a pilot-scale Green Hydrogen project in Neyveli.
- Unwavering support through physical relief works at flood-affected cities / areas including de-watering inundated areas with high capacity industrial pumps and providing food packets to the needy during floods.
- Unflinching commitment to large-scale CSR initiatives in Education (construction of classrooms and provision of educational aids) to schools in and around Neyveli, conduct of Health camps in surrounding villages and distribution of Aid and assistive devices to the differently abled.
- Collaboration with NPTI to provide job oriented Post-Diploma and PG Diploma courses to Project Affected Persons (PAPs) of NLCIL, enabling them to get employment opportunities in premier companies.

NLC India Limited, a "Navratna" PSU with over 60 years in the energy sector, operates nationwide and is poised to play a large role in a "Viksit Bharat" with a targeted Mining Capacity of 104 MTPA and 10 GW of Thermal Power generation by 2030.

Being the first PSU to cross 1 GW of Renewable Energy generation, NLCIL also aims to reach 10.11GW renewable energy generation by 2030 with plans for Green Hydrogen and Floating solar projects.



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# Green India, Clean India: Environmental CSR Since Independence

VATIKA SINGH



Since India's independence in 1947, the country has faced the dual challenge of economic development and environmental preservation. While industrial growth surged, it brought with it deforestation, pollution, and resource depletion. Over time, however, the idea of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) evolved from charity to strategic sustainability. Today, environmental CSR stands as a pillar of India's development narrative, with corporates, public sector undertakings (PSUs), and NGOs playing a vital role in building a greener, cleaner India.

In the early decades post-inde-

pendence, environmental efforts were largely driven by government policies and community movements. The Chipko Movement in the 1970s, where villagers hugged trees to prevent deforestation, was a grassroots example of environmental activism. But it wasn't until the liberalization era of the 1990s that corporates began to engage more systematically with environmental causes.

The landmark Companies Act of 2013 made CSR mandatory for qualifying companies, and environmental sustainability was listed as a key area under Schedule VII. This legal framework catalyzed a wave of green initia-

tives across sectors.

Among the most notable contributors is Tata Group. Long before CSR became a legal obligation, Tata companies were investing in afforestation, water conservation, and biodiversity. Tata Power's "Act for Mahseer" campaign helped conserve the endangered Mahseer fish species in the Western Ghats. Tata Steel's efforts in reclaiming mined land and turning it into green zones in Jharkhand and Odisha are widely recognized.

Infosys, a pioneer in IT, has also led by example. Its campuses are designed with sustainability in mind—featuring rainwater harvest-

ing, solar power, and zero-waste systems. Infosys became one of the first Indian companies to achieve carbon neutrality across its operations, setting a benchmark for others in the sector.

Public sector undertakings have also made significant strides. NTPC, India's largest energy conglomerate, launched the "Green India, Clean India – Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign, encouraging tree plantation drives across its project sites. NTPC's CSR also includes solar installations, plastic-free awareness sessions, and biodiversity conservation efforts. Similarly, Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) commissioned organic waste composting machines at its plants, reducing landfill waste and promoting circular economy practices.

ONGC, another PSU giant, has invested in mangrove restoration along coastal belts and developed disaster management infrastructure in ecologically sensitive zones. Coal India Limited, often criticized for its environmental footprint, has taken steps to offset its impact by funding tribal education and afforestation projects under its CSR umbrella.

NGOs have been instrumental in amplifying corporate efforts and ensuring community participation. The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), founded by Anil Agarwal, has been a watchdog and advisor for sustainable practices. It has influenced policy and partnered with corporates to implement eco-friendly technologies.

Another standout is the Environmentalist Foundation of India

(EFI), which works with corporates and volunteers to clean and restore urban lakes and water bodies. Their model combines citizen engagement with scientific restoration, making it a replicable success story.

CSR partnerships have also led to innovative solutions. For instance, Hindustan Unilever collaborated with NGOs to promote waste segregation and recycling in urban slums. Their "Swachh Aadat, Swachh Bharat" campaign aligned with the national



Swachh Bharat Mission, blending hygiene education with environmental action.

Despite these successes, challenges remain. Many CSR projects still focus on short-term visibility rather than long-term impact. Tree plantation drives, while popular, often lack follow-up care. There's also a need for better monitoring and impact assessment of environmental CSR projects.

Looking ahead, the path to a truly green India lies in deeper collaboration. Corporates must move

beyond compliance and integrate sustainability into their core business strategy. PSUs should leverage their scale to drive systemic change, and NGOs must continue to act as bridges between policy and people.

Environmental CSR is no longer a side initiative—it is central to India's future. As climate change intensifies and natural resources dwindle, the role of responsible business becomes more critical than ever. From the forests of Jharkhand to the tech parks of Bengaluru, the seeds of a cleaner, greener India have been sown. Now, it's time to nurture them.

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# WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: CSR'S ROLE IN WOMEN'S RISE SINCE 1947

Since India's independence in 1947, the nation has made remarkable strides in social, economic, and political development. Yet, one of the most transformative—and ongoing—journeys has been the empowerment of women. From being largely confined to domestic roles to leading corporations, ministries, and movements, Indian women have steadily carved their space in leadership. A key enabler of this evolution has been Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), which has emerged as a strategic force in nurturing women's leadership across sectors.

## A Historical Perspective: From Philanthropy to Policy

In the early decades post-independence, women's empowerment was largely driven by social reformers and philanthropists. Industrialists like Jamnalal Bajaj, J.R.D. Tata, and G.D. Birla supported women's education and healthcare through charitable trusts. These efforts laid the groundwork for inclusive development, but lacked scale and structure.

The liberalization of the economy in the 1990s brought women into the workforce in greater numbers. However, leadership roles remained elusive due to systemic barriers. It wasn't until the Companies Act of 2013, which mandated CSR spending for eligible companies, that women's empowerment became a formal part



of corporate strategy. Today, CSR is not just about giving—it's about building capacity, breaking stereotypes, and creating pathways to leadership.

## Education: The First Step Toward Leadership

Education is the cornerstone of empowerment. CSR initiatives have played a pivotal role in promoting girls' education, especially in rural and marginalized communities. Programs like Mahindra's Nanhi Kali, Tata Trusts' Kalike, and Infosys Foundation's Samruddhi have helped thousands of girls complete school and pursue higher education.

Beyond basic literacy, CSR has supported women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), a field traditionally dominated by men. Companies like BNP Paribas, American Express, and Tech

Mahindra have partnered with NGOs to offer digital and technical training to women graduates, preparing them for leadership in the tech-driven economy.

## Skilling and Entrepreneurship: Leading from the Ground Up

Leadership isn't confined to boardrooms—it begins in communities. CSR programs have empowered women through skill development and entrepreneurship. Hindustan Unilever's Project Shakti has created thousands of rural women entrepreneurs, known as "Shakti Ammas," who distribute FMCG products and earn sustainable incomes.

Similarly, Tata Steel's Tejaswini project identifies and mentors women leaders in tribal regions, encouraging them to take on community leadership roles. Biocon Foundation supports women in healthcare and research,

offering scholarships and training to female scientists.

These initiatives not only boost economic independence but also instill confidence, decision-making ability, and leadership skills at the grassroots level.

## Health and Wellbeing: A Prerequisite for Leadership

Health is often overlooked in leadership discourse, yet it is foundational. CSR programs have addressed critical issues like maternal health, menstrual hygiene, and nutrition. Vedanta's Nand Ghar initiative, P&G's Whisper campaign, and Reliance Foundation's Health for All have improved access to healthcare and awareness among women.

Healthy women are more likely to participate in education, employment, and leadership. By removing health-related barriers, CSR enables women to pursue their ambitions without compromise.

## Advocacy and Mindset Change: Shaping the Culture of Leadership

True leadership development requires a shift in societal attitudes. CSR has played a vital role in challenging gender stereotypes and promoting inclusive values. Companies have launched mass awareness campaigns against child marriage, gender-based violence, and workplace discrimination.

Internally, corporates are fostering inclusive cultures through sensitization programs, mentorship networks, and leadership development tracks for women employees. Infosys, Wipro, and Tata Group have set benchmarks



in promoting gender diversity within their organizations.

By creating enabling environments, CSR ensures that women not only enter the workforce but also rise within it.

## Financial Inclusion: Power to Lead

Financial autonomy is a key driver of leadership. CSR initiatives have supported women's access to banking, credit, and financial literacy. Institutions like SEWA Bank, Mann Deshi Bank, and GrameenKoota have empowered women micro-entrepreneurs through tailored financial products.

Corporates have also provided seed funding and mentorship to women-led startups, especially in sustainability and social innovation. These efforts help women lead not just businesses, but movements for change.

## Toward Viksit Bharat: Women at the Helm

As India envisions becoming a developed nation by 2047 under Mission Viksit Bharat, women's leadership is not optional—it is essential. CSR can accelerate this mission by:

- Supporting women in governance and public leadership roles
- Promoting women-led innovation in climate action, education, and health
- Building networks of women leaders across sectors
- Ensuring representation in decision-making bodies

The convergence of CSR with national goals ensures that women's leadership is not just a social cause but a strategic imperative.

## Conclusion: Leading the Change

India's journey from 1947 to 2025 has seen women rise from the margins to the mainstream. CSR has been a quiet but powerful catalyst in this transformation—educating, empowering, and elevating women into leadership roles.

As we look ahead to 2047, the question is not whether women will lead, but how many more will be enabled to do so. With sustained CSR investment, corporate commitment, and societal support, India can become a global model for gender-inclusive leadership.

Because when women lead, nations thrive.

# Believe It or Not

## Bhutan is Carbon Negative

Bhutan absorbs more carbon dioxide than it emits. Its CSR and national policies prioritize environmental conservation so deeply that it's the only country in the world with a carbon-negative economy.

## Adidas Makes Shoes from Ocean Plastic

Adidas partnered with Parley for the Oceans to create running shoes made entirely from recycled marine plastic. Each pair prevents 11 plastic bottles from entering the ocean—aligning with SDG 14 (Life Below Water).

## Coca-Cola's 5by20 Program Empowered 5 Million Women

Coca-Cola pledged to economically empower 5 million women entrepreneurs by 2020 through training, mentoring, and access to finance. It surpassed the goal, impacting lives across 92 countries—advancing SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 8 (Decent Work).

## Singapore's "City in a Garden" Vision

Singapore's CSR-driven urban planning transformed it into one of the greenest cities globally. With over 300 parks and 4 nature reserves, it's a living example of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities).

## Unilever's Soap Saves Lives

Unilever's "Lifebuoy" CSR campaign teaches handwashing in rural areas, reducing child mortality. It's estimated to have reached over 1 billion people—a direct contribution to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).

## Africa's Great Green Wall

A CSR-supported initiative aims to plant 8,000 km of trees across the Sahel to combat desertification. It's one of the largest living infrastructure projects on Earth, supporting SDG 15 (Life on Land).

## Tesla's Gigafactories Are CSR in Action

Tesla's massive battery factories are designed to accelerate the world's transition to sustainable energy. Their scale and innovation contribute to SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, Infrastructure) and SDG 7 (Affordable Clean Energy).

## Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream with a Side of Activism

The company donates a portion of every sale to social justice causes, including refugee rights and climate action. Their CSR is deeply embedded in their brand, supporting SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

## Apple's Partnership with the Malala Fund

Apple helped develop an app that allows girls in remote areas to access education digitally. This CSR initiative supports SDG 4 (Quality Education) and has reached thousands of girls globally.

## Plastic Bank Turns Trash into Currency

In countries like Haiti and the Philippines, Plastic Bank lets people exchange collected plastic for money, goods, or services. It's a brilliant CSR model that tackles poverty and pollution—SDG 1 (No Poverty) and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption).

## SATIRE

# CSR in India: Where good intentions meet PowerPoint presentations

In India, CSR often stands for “Corporate Symbolic Ritual.” Companies rush to tick the CSR box like it’s a festive checklist—plant a tree, post a selfie, and vanish before the sapling wilts. Annual reports bloom with photos of CEOs holding shovels, while the actual impact hides behind jargon like “stakeholder synergy” and “transformative outreach.” NGOs scramble to meet “alignment criteria,” which mostly means knowing someone on the board. Meanwhile, a

school gets painted for the fifth time in five years—each coat sponsored by a different corporate giant. The new 2025 rules demand transparency, but some firms still believe “impact assessment” means counting likes on LinkedIn. CSR budgets are spent faster than they’re understood, and somewhere in a remote village, a water filter lies unused—because no one trained the locals. But hey, the ribbon-cutting ceremony had great snacks.

## WANT TO WRITE

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Send your submission directly to the Editor at [editor@csrtimes.org](mailto:editor@csrtimes.org)

Who knows? Your words might inspire hundreds of readers and make you part of India’s leading CSR conversation!

## NUTSHELL

By P.D.



# CABINET APPROVES BUDGETARY SUPPORT FOR MULTIDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IMPROVEMENT IN TECHNICAL EDUCATION (MERITE) SCHEME WITH AN OUTLAY OF RS.4200 CRORE

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the proposal for implementation of the 'Multidisciplinary Education and Research Improvement in Technical Education' (MERITE) Scheme in 275 technical institutions comprising 175 engineering institutions and 100 polytechnics. The objective of the scheme is to improve the quality, equity and governance in technical education covering all States/UTs by implementing interventions aligned with the National Educational Policy-2020 (NEP-2020).

It is a 'Central Sector Scheme' with total financial implication of Rs.4200 crore for a period from 2025-26 to 2029-30. Out of Rs.4200 crore, there will be an external assistance of Rs.2100 crore from World Bank as loan.

## Benefits:

An estimated 275 Government/Government-aided technical institutions are expected to be selected and supported under the scheme. This will include selected National Institutes of Technology (NITs), State Engineering Institutions, Polytechnics and Affiliating Technical Universities (ATUs). Apart from this, the State/ UT departments handling technical education sector will also be supported through MERITE scheme.

Further, About 7.5 Lakh Students will be benefitted from the Scheme.

## Impact, including employment generation:

- The major outputs/ outcomes expected from the scheme are:
- Digitalization strategies in participating States/ UTs,
- Development of guidelines for multidisciplinary programs among technical courses,
- Increase in learning and employability skills of students,
- Increase in transition rate of students across student groups,
- Strengthened research and innovation environment,
- Better quality assurance and governance mechanisms resulting in long term benefits,
- Increase in accreditation and better Technical Education Institution - level Quality Assurance,
- Relevant, labour market-aligned curriculums and blended courses developed and rolled out and
- Development of future academic administrators especially women faculty.

## Implementation strategy and targets

The scheme will be implemented in government engineering institutions and Polytechnics in all States/ UTs. The interventions are aligned

with NEP-2020 and are aimed at enhancing the quality, equity and governance of the participating institutions. It will be implemented as a Central Sector Scheme and will have the facility of funds transfer from the Central Government to participating entities through a Central Nodal Agency.

Eminent educational institutions like the IITs and IIMs and regulatory bodies in the higher education sector such as the AICTE, NBA etc. will also play a significant role in the scheme implementation.

## Employment Generation:

The initiative emphasizes enhancing students' skills to improve their employability through a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach. Key interventions include offering internship opportunities, updating curricula to align with industry requirements, organizing faculty development programs, and setting up research hubs. Additionally, support will be provided to incubation and innovation centers, skill and maker labs, and language workshops. These measures aim to boost the employability of fresh graduates, leading to higher placement rates and ultimately helping to reduce unemployment among engineering students in the States and Union Territories.

Source: PIB

# ENERGY LEADERSHIP TO FOSTER A SUSTAINABLE GROWTH FOR INDIA



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# PM MODI'S 79TH I-DAY ADDRESS: A VISION FOR A VIKSIT BHARAT 2047

On the 79th Independence Day, PM Modi delivered his longest and most decisive address from the Red Fort, lasting 103 minutes, charting a bold roadmap for a **Viksit Bharat by 2047**. With a sharp focus on self-reliance, innovation, and citizen empowerment, the Prime Minister highlighted India's journey from a nation dependent on others to a globally confident, technologically advanced, and economically resilient country.

**O**n the 79th Independence Day, PM Modi delivered his longest and most decisive address from the Red Fort, lasting **103 minutes**, charting a bold roadmap for a **Viksit Bharat by 2047**. With a sharp focus on **self-reliance, innovation, and citizen empowerment**, the Prime Minister highlighted India's journey from a nation dependent on others to a **globally confident, technologically advanced, and economically resilient country**.

## Key Highlights and Announcements:

- No Blackmail, No Compromise:

PM Modi hailed Operation Sindoora, conducted after the Pahalgam attack, as a demonstration of India's strategic autonomy. Using Made-in-India weapons, the operation dismantled terror networks and Pakistan-based infrastructure, signalling a new era where India will no longer accept nuclear blackmail or threats on foreign terms.

- On the issue of the Indus Waters Treaty, he made it unequivocally clear: "India has now decided, blood and water will not flow together. The people have realized

that the Indus Waters Treaty was unjust. Water from the Indus River system irrigated enemy lands while our farmers suffered."

- **Atmanirbhar Bharat, Strengthening Technology, Industry:** PM Modi said, "Dependence on others raises questions about a nation's independence. It is unfortunate when dependence becomes a habit, a dangerous one. That's why we must remain aware and committed to becoming self-reliant. Self-reliance is not just about exports, imports, the rupee, or the dollar.

It is about our capabilities, our strength to stand on our own."

- That is why he announced that India will roll out its first Made-in-India semiconductor chip by 2025 and is opening the nuclear sector to private players, creating unprecedented opportunities in energy and technology.
- He urged every citizen, especially the youth, to take part in nation-building by innovating and producing jet engines, social media platforms, fertilisers, and other critical technologies indigenously, forging a future where India stands self-reliant, powerful, and globally respected.
- PM Modi urged the nation to achieve self-reliance in medicines and innovation, highlighting India's strength as the "**pharmacy of the world**". He asked, "Shouldn't we be the ones providing the best and most affordable medicines for the welfare of humanity?"
- He emphasized India's growing prowess in domestic pharmaceutical innovation and the urgent need to develop new medicines, vaccines, and life-saving treatments entirely within India. Drawing inspiration from India's COVID-19 response, where indigenous vaccines and platforms like CoWin saved millions of lives globally, he called on the nation to expand this spirit of innovation.
- **Mission Sudarshan Chakra,**

**Enhancing Strategic Defence:** To strengthen India's offensive and deterrent capabilities, PM Modi launched **Mission Sudarshan Chakra**, drawing inspiration from India's rich cultural and mythological heritage. He said, "India is launching Mission Sudarshan Chakra to create a powerful weapon system to thwart any attempt by enemies to attack us."

• The initiative is designed to enhance **rapid, precise, and powerful defence responses**, reinforcing India's strategic autonomy. PM Modi added, "All public places will be covered by an expanded nationwide security shield by 2035," ensuring comprehensive protection for the nation while showcasing India's commitment to **self-reliant defence**.

**Next-generation Reforms:** PM Modi announced the formation of a Task Force for Next-Generation Economic Reforms, aimed at overhauling laws, rules, and procedures that govern economic activity.

• He highlighted that the government has already abolished over 40,000 unnecessary compliances and 1,500 outdated laws, and in the latest parliamentary session, over 280 provisions were removed. Looking ahead, Next-Generation GST reforms by Diwali will reduce taxes on daily essentials, ben-



efiting MSMEs, local vendors, and consumers, while simultaneously stimulating economic growth and creating a more efficient, citizen-friendly economy.

- **PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana, Empowering Youth:** To strengthen India's demographic dividend and ensure that the nation's youth play a central role in its growth, PM Modi launched the PM Viksit Bharat Rozgar Yojana, a ₹1 lakh crore employment scheme under which newly employed youth will receive ₹15,000, targeting 3 crore young Indians.
- **Energy and Nuclear Self-Reliance:** PM Modi also highlighted India's bold steps to secure resources critical for its future. Through the National Critical Minerals Mission, the country is exploring 1,200 sites to ensure access to minerals essential for energy, industry, and defence.
- He emphasized that controlling these minerals strengthens India's strategic autonomy, keeping its industrial and defence sectors truly self-reliant. Complementing this, the National Deepwater Exploration Mission will harness India's offshore energy resources, reducing dependence on foreign fuel imports and boosting energy self-reliance, marking another step toward a fully independent and powerful India.
- Highlighting India's remarkable achievements in clean energy, PM Modi noted that the country had already reached its 50% clean energy target in 2025, five years ahead of schedule.
- He also announced plans to increase India's nuclear power generation capacity tenfold by 2047, with 10 new nuclear reactors underway, ensuring energy security and sustainable growth. He added that if India were not dependent on energy imports, the money saved could be used for the welfare of farmers, further strengthening the backbone of the nation's prosperity.
- **Space Sector Independence, Pioneering Innovation:** PM Modi highlighted India's growing prowess in space science. Preparations for **India's own space station** are underway, building on the success of the Gaganyaan mission. Over **300 startups** are now innovating in satellite technology, space exploration, and cutting-edge research, demonstrating that India is not only participating in the global space arena but leading with indigenous solutions.
- **Farmers, Backbone of India's Prosperity:** PM Modi declared, "India will not compromise on their interests." He emphasized that he has stood as a wall for the farmers and livestock keepers against any detrimental policy, protecting their rights and livelihoods.
- He said that Agriculture remains a cornerstone of India's development, with India ranked No. 1 in milk, pulses, and jute, and No. 2 in rice, wheat, cotton, fruits, and vegetables. Agricultural exports have crossed ₹4 lakh crore, reflecting the nation's global competitiveness.
- To further empower farmers, he launched the PM Dhanya Dhanya Krishi Yojana for 100 backward farming districts, complementing ongoing support through PM-Kisan, irrigation schemes, and livestock protection programs, ensuring that India's backbone of prosperity remains strong and resilient.
- **High-Powered Demography Mission, Safeguarding National Integrity:** PM Modi also addressed the importance of safeguarding India's demographic integrity. He warned of challenges posed by illegal infiltration, stressing the need to protect border areas and citizens' livelihoods. To address these concerns, he announced the High-Powered Demography Mission, aimed at ensuring India's unity, integrity, and security, tackling both strategic and social challenges.

Looking ahead, PM Modi outlined his vision for a Viksit Bharat 2047, emphasizing that India's progress is built on self-reliance, innovation, and citizen empowerment.

He reminded citizens that India's strength lies in its people, innovation, and commitment to self-reliance, urging every Indian to contribute to nation-building, whether by buying India-made products or participating in scientific, technological, and entrepreneurial ventures to ensure a prosperous, powerful, and Viksit Bharat by the nation's centenary of independence.

*Source: PIB*

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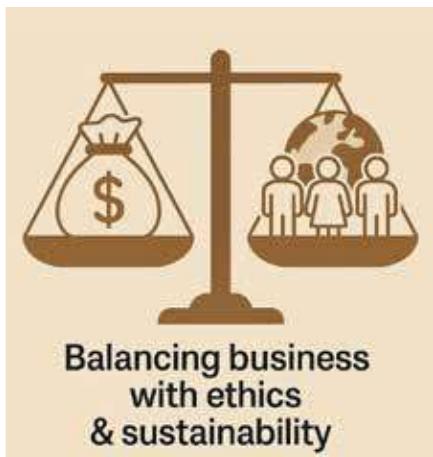
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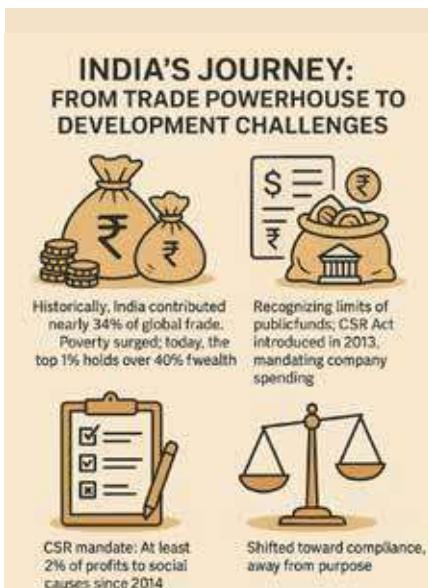
# CSR & CIVIL SOCIETY: FROM OBLIGATION TO OPPORTUNITY



It is a widely accepted business principle that companies must generate profit to sustain and grow. In 1981, economist Milton Friedman famously stated, "The business of business is business," emphasizing that a company's primary responsibility is to its shareholders. Yet, he also acknowledged that businesses must operate within legal and ethical boundaries. Today, profit generation must be balanced with compliance, sustainability, and social responsibility to ensure long-term success and societal acceptance.

## India's Journey: From Trade Powerhouse to Development Challenges

Historically, India contributed nearly 34% of global trade in the early 18th century. However, during colonial



rule, this share fell drastically to 1.4% by independence in 1947. Poverty surged to nearly 80%, creating deep inequalities that persist. A 2021 Oxfam report found that India's top 1% owns more than 40.5% of national wealth, while the bottom 50% holds just 3%. This divide worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the world's richest grew wealthier even as millions struggled.

Recognizing that eradicating poverty cannot rely solely on public funds, the government sought corporate participation. Companies hold substantial financial power—in the Union Budget 2025, 39% of government revenue came from direct taxes, including corporate tax. To leverage this, India became the only country

to mandate CSR spending through Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013.

## CSR Mandate: Balancing Compliance and Purpose

The law requires companies meeting certain thresholds to spend at least 2% of their average net profits on CSR activities, focusing on poverty alleviation, education, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. This was meant not only to reduce economic disparity but also to embed social responsibility into corporate strategy.

From 2014, CSR implementation began, and by 2021 penalties were introduced for non-compliance. This shifted CSR from a largely voluntary, value-driven approach to a compliance-heavy obligation. While it has improved accountability, some argue that the spirit of CSR is being diluted, reduced to tick-box exercises.

## Role of Civil Society: The Grassroots Connect

Corporates excel in wealth creation, but their direct engagement in grassroots development is often limited. Here, civil society—NGOs, social enterprises, and community organizations—plays a pivotal role. With their deep understanding of local contexts, they bridge gaps between

corporate resources and community needs.

A 2018 Crisil Foundation survey showed that 74% of companies partnered with NGOs for CSR delivery. However, some corporations have created their own CSR arms or foundations to bypass compliance hurdles. When working with external NGOs, firms must ensure due diligence, registration under CSR-1, and compliance with fund utilization timelines. Many practitioners describe this process as "*Bahut Lafada Hai*" (a big hassle), reflecting the bureaucratic complexity involved.

## Case Examples: When Partnerships Work

Successful CSR projects often showcase effective corporate-civil society partnerships:

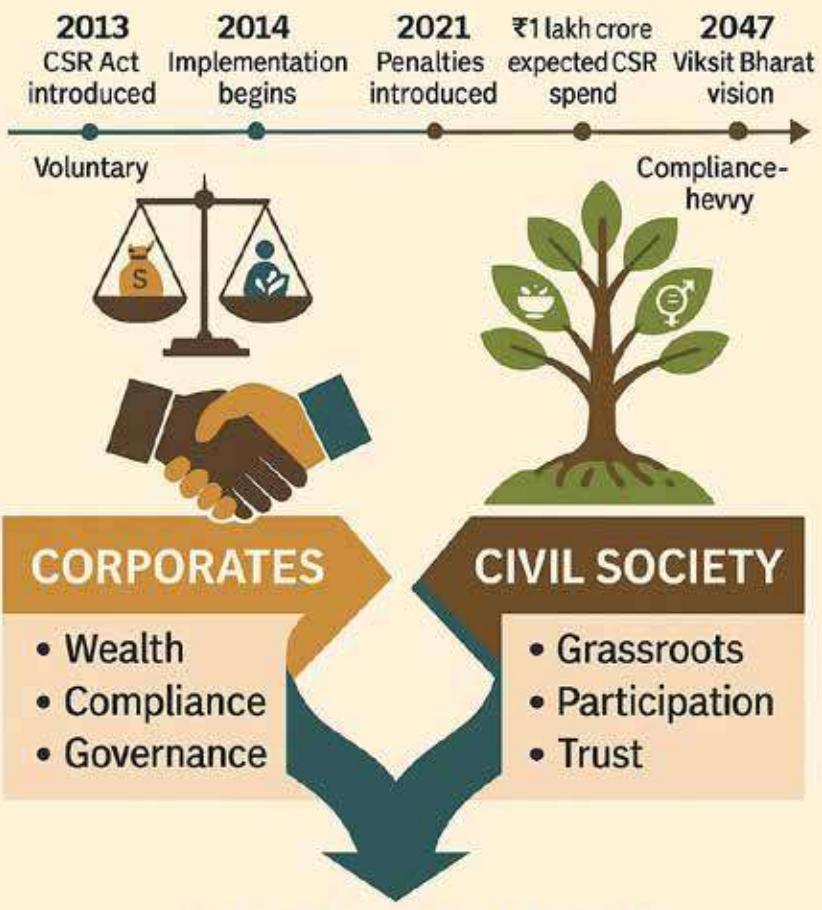
- **Tata Steel Foundation:** Empowering tribal communities through education and health interventions.
- **Mahindra's Nahi Kali:** Supporting education for underprivileged girls.
- **HCL Foundation:** Urban slum programs improving health, sanitation, and skill development.

Such initiatives highlight the power of collaboration in creating lasting social impact.

## The Way Forward: CSR as a Jan Andolan

Governments are increasingly guiding CSR funds toward specific causes, with state-level CSR authorities and local administrations influencing project choices. While this ensures

# CSR IN INDIA – FROM COMPLIANCE TO JAN ANDOLAN



alignment with regional priorities, the real transformation will come when CSR evolves into a *Jan Andolan* (People's Movement).

By 2030, CSR funds are projected to reach ₹1 lakh crore annually. If deployed effectively, they can accelerate India's journey to becoming a developed nation—*Viksit Bharat* by 2047. For this, businesses, civil society, and communities must co-create solutions, embrace technology for transparency, and invest in youth and academia as future CSR leaders.



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Birla Institute  
of Management  
Technology (BIMTECH)



# UN Global Compact Network India Convenes **ESG and Sustainability Leadership Summit** to Drive Responsible Business and Resilient Supply Chains

“Industry leaders, policymakers, and experts chart a bold path for embedding ESG into the DNA of Indian business”

The UN Global Compact Network India (UNGCI) successfully convened the *ESG and Sustainability Leadership Summit 2025* at PHD House, Delhi, bringing together industry leaders, policymakers, regulators, and sustainability experts to explore how Indian businesses can embed environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles into their strategic and operational core.

Supported by Carlsberg India, BSI, Bureau Veritas, PCI India, with PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry as Industry Partner, IILM University as Knowledge Partner, Shikhar –

Organization for social development as Memento Partner and CSR Times as Media Partner, the Summit focused on the theme **“Embedding ESG for Sustainable and Resilient Business and Supply Chains”**. Discussions spanned regulatory updates, digital innovation, water stewardship, public health, supply chain accountability, and leadership transformation.

## Inaugural Session – Setting the Agenda for ESG Transformation

Shri Ratnesh, Executive Director, UNGCI, welcomed participants

by underscoring that ESG should be viewed as a strategic imperative rather than a compliance requirement. He stressed integrating ESG across supply chains and aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). “True ESG integration is a cultural transformation—it must guide leadership decisions and shape business models that are not only profitable, but purposeful,” he said.

Shri Rishi Chawla, Vice President – Corporate Affairs, Carlsberg India, in his Opening Remarks, emphasized multi-stakeholder collaboration and the urgent need for action over aware-

ness. Reflecting on evolving societal expectations, he noted that ESG drives resilience, investor trust, and competitiveness. *“Sustainability is no longer optional—it’s the strategic imperative that will determine whether businesses lead with resilience or lag in relevance,”* he remarked.

**Dr. Jatinder Singh**, Deputy Secretary General, PHDCCI, in the Theme Address, called ESG the *“core operating philosophy”* for modern businesses. He pointed out that inclusive hiring, climate resilience, and ethical governance are now strategic differentiators. *“Success is not only measured in profit, but in the positive impact we leave—for our communities, our people, and our planet,”* he emphasized.

**Shri Indrajit Chaudhuri**, CEO & Country Director, PCI India, stressed governance as the enabling pillar of ESG. Warning against reducing ESG to branding exercises, he said, *“Governance is not just the ‘G’ in ESG—it is the enabler that turns commitments into credibility.”*

**Shri Amarendra Khatua**, IFS (Retd.), linked ESG to diplomacy and global positioning. He observed that sustainability is shaping international relations and trade legitimacy. *“Sustainability is now a form of soft power, shaping not only markets, but the way nations are respected and trusted,”* he noted.

**Shri Atul Garg**, Chairperson, CGIT & EPF Appellate Tribunal, spotlighted the social dimension of ESG—particularly labor rights and workplace equity. *“Sustainability must be lived in everyday workplace realities—rooted in fairness, inclusion, and human*

*dignity,”* he said.

**Shri C.V. Raghu**, President, GCAI, urged legal professionals to act as ESG enablers. *“General counsels must become ESG stewards—embedding it into governance charters, contracts, and compliance systems,”* he stated.

**Dr. K. Madan Gopal**, Advisor, NHSRC, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, emphasized health as a core ESG pillar and a determinant of workforce stability. *“A sustainable economy cannot exist without a healthy workforce and resilient communities,”* he said.

**Shri Santosh Shukla**, Chief General Manager, SEBI, explained the role of frameworks like BRSR Core in building transparency. *“Disclosures are only the beginning—the true goal is a mindset where ESG is a strategic lever for competitiveness and trust,”* he asserted.

**Ms. Anuradha Goel**, Chairperson, Family Welfare Foundation, PHDCCI, called for action-driven ESG adoption. *“Let us lead not just with policies, but with purpose—not just with ambition, but with action,”* she urged.

**Dr. Pravakar Mohanty**, Scientist-E & Director, Department of Science & Technology, linked ESG integration with national priorities such as the Paris Agreement and SDGs. *“ESG must evolve from being a corporate acronym into a national ethos—rooted in science, ambition, and ethics,”* he stated.

**Dr. Somnath Singh**, Deputy Director, UN GCNI, framed ESG as a fundamental pillar of sustainable development, not a passing trend. He emphasized that integrating ESG across supply chains, local ecosystems, and workforce cultures is essential to achieving the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). He highlighted partnerships—like the collaboration with PHDCCI, Carlsberg India, BSI, Bureau Veritas and PCI India—as critical enablers of transformation.

*He said “ESG today is not merely a trend or compliance exercise—it is the foundation upon which sustainable development and long-term business resilience will be built. This summit is a catalyst for moving from conversation to implementation.”*

## Thematic Plenary Sessions – From Compliance to Culture

### Plenary I “Driving ESG Compliance through Digital Innovation (AI) and Evolving Regulations”

Moderated by **Dr. Rajiv Chawla**, Chairman, IamSMEofIndia, this session featured **Shri Anand Pathak** (CEO & Founder, Fitsol), **Shri Amit Goswami** (Managing Director, ESG Global Partners Pvt. Ltd.), **Ms. Aditi Balbir** (CEO, EcoRatings), **Shri Naveen Kumar Shelar** (Legal Practitioner & ESG & Governance Expert), and **Shri Piyush Manocha** (Deputy Director – Law, Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission). Panelists highlighted AI, blockchain, and automated dashboards for real-time ESG tracking, stressing the need to shift ESG from annual reporting to live, traceable data management.

### Plenary II “Smart ESG Sustainable Water Management”

Moderated by **Shri Rishi Chawla**, Vice President – Corporate Affairs, Carlsberg India, with speakers **Shri Salahuddin Saiphy** (Principal Lead – Water Management, SM Sehgal Foundation), **Shri Depinder Kapur**

(Head – Climate Centre for Cities, NIUA), and **Shri Khurram Nayyab** (General Manager – CSR & Head of Governance, Vedanta/Cairn Oil & Gas). The discussion urged shared stewardship between corporates, government, and communities to address India's projected 50% water demand-supply gap by 2030.

### **Plenary III “Sustainability & Public Health – Strengthening Corporate Accountability”**

Moderated by **Dr. K. Madan Gopal**, Advisor, NHSRC, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, the session featured **Dr. Somnath Singh** (Deputy Director, UN GCNI), **Dr. Karan Thakur** (Group Lead – Sustainability & ESG, Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals), **Dr. Uma Nambiar** (CEO, IISC Medical School Foundation), and **Dr. Anuj Dandotia** (Associate Director & Project Lead – Health & Nutrition, PCI India). Panelists called for workplace well-being, community health partnerships, and health equity as non-negotiable ESG priorities, offering perspectives on institutional governance, cultural relevance, and equity-focused ESG indicators.

### **Plenary IV “Embedding ESG in Business DNA – The Road to Sustainable Excellence”**

Moderated by **Shri Paritosh Chauhan** (Partner – ESG & Sustainability Affairs, Lakshmikumaran & Sridharan Attorneys), with panelists **Ms. Shammi Singh** (Head of Social – ISA, BSI Group Assurance Ltd.), **Shri Sujit S Nair** (Chairman, Europe India Centre for Business and Industry), and **Dr. Shruti Sharma Rana** (Associate Professor, TERI School of Advanced Studies). The

session emphasized capacity building, internal KPIs, third-party assurance, and enhancing global trade competitiveness.

**The Fireside Chat – C-Suite in Action**, showcased how executive leadership is operationalizing ESG across value chains. The discussion underscored that ESG led from the top can transform organizational culture, risk management, and long-term competitiveness.

**Fireside Chat – “C-Suite in Action Leading ESG Across Value Chains”**, Moderated by **Shri Rupam Baruah** (Head of Sustainability – South Asia, Bureau Veritas), this conversation featured **Shri Nishant Anand** (Head – Business Operations, IAAS-India), **Ms. Raavi Birbal** (Legal Expert & Advocate on ESG Compliance), **Ms. Poonam Jindgar** (Vice President & Global Head – ESG & Sustainability, BirlaSoft), and **Ms. Arti Ahluwalia** (United Nations – Commons Cluster NGO Major Group). Speakers showcased how executive leadership is operationalizing ESG across value chains, underscoring that ESG led from the top can transform organizational culture, risk management, and long-term competitiveness.

**Valedictory Session – From Dialogue to Action**, Moderated by **Ms. Gagandeep Bhullar** (Founder & CEO, SuperHumanRace; Member, UN GCNI), the Valedictory Session brought together diverse perspectives on translating ESG commitments into tangible outcomes.

**Dr. Pallavi Negi** (Faculty Associate, IILM University) emphasized the importance of integrating ESG principles into education and

leadership training, ensuring future decision-makers are equipped to embed sustainability in their professional ethos.

**Mr. Sanjeev Verma** (Head – Environment, Health & Safety; Vice President – Western Region, UN GCNI) highlighted the need for clear operational KPIs and cross-functional accountability to ensure ESG objectives are firmly rooted in day-to-day business practices.

**Mr. Peter** (Advocacy Manager) underscored the centrality of supply chain transparency, stressing that a company's ESG maturity is defined not only by its strongest performers but also by its ability to uplift and engage its most vulnerable suppliers.

**Mr. Ajit Kumar** (Founder & Managing Director, Khushigram Foundation) called for inclusive ESG strategies that actively involve communities, small businesses, and grassroots stakeholders, framing sustainability as a collective, people-centred movement.

Together, the speakers reinforced that the next phase of ESG leadership must focus on implementation, measurable impact, and collaborative action.

**In the Closing Remarks**, **Dr. Somnath Singh** synthesized the Summit's outcomes, highlighting the urgent need to translate discussions into measurable change.

*He quoted “The conversations here must now translate into tangible, measurable action. ESG is no longer a matter of choice – it is the new baseline for building businesses that are future-ready, human-centric, and environmentally responsible.”*



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