"Employees' Perception And Awareness Towards Corporate Social Responsibility Practices: A Case Study of Private Telecom Company".

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Abstract

Purpose: This research is based on the study of CSR Practices in Vodafone Idea Limited, the company engaged in the Telecommunications Industry. To discover the extent to which executives and managers represent their awareness and their perceptions of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Based on the quantitative analysis, the paper provides evidence that while a great proportion of managers express a highly positive attitude.

Methodology: A case study questionnaire was administered to 100 respondents dealing with Vodafone Idea Limited Company operating in Mumbai (Maharashtra), Shimla (H.P) area India, with results from Likert scales analysis using descriptive analysis. This was descriptive research design using a survey research & purposive sampling technique. Data was collected from both primary & secondary sources to meet the objectives of the research.

Results: The findings of this study have implications for company-wide efforts to find ways to enhance CSR perceptions by helping top management and mid-level managers understand that enhancement of positive employees' perceptions of CSR activities is the first priority for resolving ethical conflicts among employees, owing to the pressure of goal attainment and the company's social performance. The result of this research can be used in shaping management policy and educating about CSR to their employees

Recommendations: (1) Vodafone Idea Limited Company should continually improve to achieve a high level of social responsibility as well as achieve greater loyalty from their employees. (2) The company should do what is necessary to raise the employee awareness level of social responsibility. (3) The company should consider that the perceptions of employees who actually perform CSR activities are more important than anything else.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Engagement in CSR, Perception, Awareness, Telecom industry

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Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility:-

Corporate social responsibility (CSR), also known as social responsibility of business, is not an unfamiliar term to the corporate world.

The CSR mandate in the Indian "Companies Act 2013" has ushered in a new era of responsibility among corporate. CSR is not a new concept in India – Indians companies have a rich inheritance of engaging in community welfare initiatives around areas of operation for several decades. However, the new CSR Act, first of its kind anywhere in the world, has brought in many encouraging changes...

- Higher involvement of the Top management & Executive Leadership of organizations.
- New thinking around analyzing the impact of CSR activities.
- The opportunity of having progressive partnership models between corporate & other stakeholders including non profits, government, Community organizations & the ecosystem'.

The Act provides a broad framework & guidelines for corporate to look into CSR for the first time or join, strengthen & expand their existing programmes & activities. The reporting of CSR deals primarily with proper budget utilization & fulfilment to the basic provisions of the law.

CSR is titled to help an organization's mission as well as serve as a guide to what the company represents for its consumers.

Carroll 1991 extended corporate social responsibility from the traditional economic and legal responsibility to ethical and philanthropic responsibility, in response to the rising concerns on ethical issues in businesses, [Wikipedia]. Carroll demonstrates that CSR is made up of four responsibilities and it cannot be achieved without meeting the four responsibilities all together, namely economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic responsibilities. Similarly, *Business Dictionary* defines CSR as

"A company's sense of responsibility towards the community and environment (both ecological and social) in which it operates". Companies express this citizenship:-

(1) Through their waste and pollution reduction processes
(2) By their contribution in educational and social programs
(3) By earning satisfactory returns on the employed resources.

Corporate social initiatives

Corporate social responsibility includes six types of corporate social initiatives:

- Corporate philanthropy: company donations to charity, sometimes via a corporate foundation
- Cause-related marketing: donations to charity based on product sales
- Corporate social marketing: company-funded behaviour-change campaigns
- Community volunteering: company-organized volunteer activities.
- Socially-responsible business practices: ethically produced products.
- Cause promotions: company-funded advocacy campaigns

All six of the corporate initiatives are forms of corporate citizenship. However, companies generally do not have a profit motive when participating in corporate philanthropy and community volunteering but on the other hand, the remaining corporate social initiatives can be examples of cause marketing, in which there is

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both a community interest and profit intention.

CSR Practices adopted by Vodafone Idea Limited

Vodafone Idea Limited is India's largest telecom operator with head quarter based in Mumbai, Maharashtra. Vodafone Idea is a pan-India integrated GSM operator offering mobile services under two brands named Vodafone and Idea. On 31 August 2018, Vodafone India merged with Idea Cellular, and was renamed as Vodafone Idea Limited. However, the merged entity continues using both the Idea and Vodafone brand.

1.3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility Policy: "In accordance with the notification issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs dated 27th February 2014 under Section 135 of the Companies Act 2013, the Company's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is enunciated. Our Corporate Social Responsibility policy also conforms to the National Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Environment and Economic Responsibilities of Business released by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India in collaboration with FICCI Aditya Birla Centre for Excellence (July 2011). The Company CSR policy was outlined in 2010 in the Companies' Annual Reports and on its website."

The company's CSR Policy is "For every Company in the Aditya Birla Group, reaching out to underserved communities is part of our DNA. We believe in the trusteeship concept. This entails transcending business interests and grappling with the "quality of life" challenges that underserved communities face, and working towards making a meaningful difference to them."

The company's vision is - "to actively contribute to the social and economic development of the communities in which we operate. In so doing

build a better, sustainable way of life for the weaker and marginal sections of society and raise the country's human development index".

In Implementation process, the activities are in line with Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013 as indicated -

In Education, our endeavour is to spark the desire for learning and knowledge at every stage through Formal schools Balwadis Quality elementary education Aditya Bal Vidya Mandirs Girl child education Non formal education.

In Health care our goal is to render quality health care facilities to people living in the villages and elsewhere through our Hospitals. Primary health care centres Mother and Child care projects Immunization programmes with a thrust on polio eradication Programmes to address malnutrition Anganwadi Adolescent health Health care for visually impaired, and differently abled Preventive health care through awareness programmes, Non communicable diseases.

In Sustainable Livelihood our programmes aim at providing livelihood in a locally appropriate and environmentally sustainable manner through Formation of Self Help Groups for women empowerment Skill enhancement and Vocational training Partnership with Industrial Training Institutes Agriculture development and better farmer focus Animal husbandry Soil and water conservation Watershed development Agro forestry.

In Infrastructure Development we endeavour to set up essential services that form the foundation of sustainable development through Basic infrastructure facilities Housing facilities Safe drinking water Sanitation & hygiene Renewable sources of energy.

To bring about Social Change, we advocate and

support Dowry less marriage Widow re-marriage Awareness programmes on anti social issues De-addiction campaigns and programmes Espousing basic moral values Gender equality."

In compliance with the requirements of the Companies Act, 2013, the Company has constituted the Corporate Social Responsibility Committee.

All projects / programmes are placed before the CSR committee, specifying modalities of execution of such projects / programmes and the implementation schedules and their approval taken.

CSR Committee evaluates, reviews the ongoing CSR projects, provides suggestions and guidance on better implementation of the project and amount to be spent on CSR activities.

Review of literature

This section covers literature on the CSR concept, nature, and forms that it may take as well as the existing guidelines, definitions, and views of the different researchers on CSR practice, employee awareness and perception.

CSR is defined as managerial responsibility to take action that safeguard and improves both the welfare of society as a whole and the interests of the company (Certo & Certo, 2012). Some authors describe the concept as —going ahead of profit making (Robbins & Coulter, 2012). Glavas and Kelley (2014) studied the effect of CSR on employee attitude who concluded that social responsibility has additional effect on employee attitudes and behavior beyond environmental responsibility, in which they refer this reason for the relational component of social responsibility. Likewise, CSR represents a special opportunity to influence the employee's general impression of their company and affects employee's

relationship with their company (Bauman & Skitka, 2012). Moreover, the role of Human Resources Department has been identified as it plays a role in contribution to aware the employees and inspires the leadership with the responsibility the organization has towards CSR (Gond, et al, 2011).

Amaeshi (2006) explains CSR as an all year activity and responsibility that companies do for the environment around them, for the best working practices, for their engagement with society and for their brand recognition as brand names depend not only on quality, price and features but on how they interact with their workforce, society and environment".

Pham Duc Hieu (2011) examined that how employees from different Vietnamese companies represent their awareness and perceptions of corporate social responsibility (CSR).The study provides proof that a large part of employees show a highly positive attitude towards CSR, while consumers' perception is at worse side.

Yasmin et al.(2014) suggested that to create awareness about CSR among the community, CSR should be made compulsory as a subject in higher studies and to develop partnerships among all stakeholders, CSR activities should be extend to small, medium and large corporate houses. Also companies need to be understood that they must carry out socially responsible practices, which helps the companies in the long run with positive impact on society.

V.S. Palaniammal et al. (2016) give a broad review on the topic CSR that there is a need for awareness about CSR among the Stakeholders (including society) which will lead to rapid socio-environmental development in the country which forces the corporate towards CSR.

Muddassar Sarfraz et al. (2018), explores the link

between employees CSR perception, job satisfaction, and organizational citizenship behavior. Partial mediation takes place between employee perception of CSR and employees outcomes. CSR perceptions are highly significant to the employee outcomes. Constructing positive and pro-social spitting business image has a significant influence on the employee outcomes. The study establishes that CSR does not only improve a corporation reputation for potential employees, but also impacts on employee job performance.

Camelia-Daniela Hategan et al. (2018), put emphasis on that the companies which implement CSR activities in a greater extent are more profitable in economic terms. The research objective to identify how strong the correlation between CSR and profit is, and how companies act in the phase they have losses.

Past studies are basically lacking regarding the employee perception and awareness towards CSR especially in a Telecom company in India. While the most research deal with the effect of CSR on employee attitude, the environment. Little *research* attention is given to the *research* about *CSR* from employees' perspective. The relationship between CSR and profitability has been previously investigated by various scholars but this study focuses on telecom employee's perception about the driving factors of CSR and also their opinion on the relationship between CSR and profitability.

Objectives of the study

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1) To know the perception of the employees towards the CSR practices done by the organization.
2) To know the awareness among the employees regarding CSR practices.
3) To know how company has fulfilled its responsibility towards its stakeholders, what specific activities, programs & strategies it has set devised & implement for the same.
4) To find out employees opinion about the relationship between CSR and firm's profitability.

Research methodology

This was descriptive research design using a survey research & purposive sampling technique. The population was 100 employees of Vodafone Idea Limited Company in Mumbai (Maharashtra), Shimla (Himachal Pradesh) area India. Data was collected from both primary & secondary sources to meet the objectives of the research. To ensure the relevance and adequacy of the data collected, qualitative & quantitative data methods are used. Primary data were captured through the use of questionnaires administered to management of company. This method was adopted because it helped in securing detail information from a sample of respondents. The information received from the respondents is recorded on a form called "Questionnaire". Secondary data were collected using online journals, published books, expert literature reviews relevant to the topic. Moreover, data on the internet were located using the search engines. The target sampling unit of the study was made up of management and staff of company. The sample size is very crucial to any empirical research and one of its characteristics is that it must be representative of the entire population. Data analysis was conducted on the collected primary data by using statistical technique & data is presented with the help of tables, pie Charts, bar Charts.

Data analysis & interpretation

The results from the collected data that has been analyzed. Firstly, here are the demographics of the

research followed by the results needed to respond to our research question. Further, an analysis of each result will be presented.

Demographics analysis

A. As per table 1, researcher makes the analysis on the gender bases in the survey 92.5 % male respondents of the total survey have take part in the research and only 7.5 % female of the total survey have been participated in the research questionnaires. Therefore, employees who respond to this research dominated by male and the number of female respondents are also considerable.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Responses
Male	92.5%
Female	7.5%
Transgender	0%
Total	100.0%

Source: Primary data survey

B. Department of the respondents working in Idea.

Table 2: Distribution of responses by departments

Departments	Responses
Complaints & Services	2.61%
Estate Management	2.61%
Facilities & Administration	2.61%
Finance	12.8%
Human Resource	2.61%
Marketing	7.7%
Network	2.61%
Operations	7.73%
Retail	2.61%
Sales	28.2%
Service Delivery	2.61%
Business Solutions	5.12%

Source: Primary data survey

C. Designation of the respondents working in Idea.

Table 3: Designation of the respondents

Designation of employees	Responses
Assistant Manager	2.61%
Assistant General Manager	7.7%
Customer Care Executive	2.61%
Complaint Officer	2.61%
Deputy General Manager	7.7%
Deputy Manager	5.1%
Junior Telecom Officer	2.61%
Executive	2.61%
General Manager	5.1%
Head Technical Assistant	2.61%
Management Trainee	2.61%
Manager	5.1%
Marcom Executive	2.61%
Partner Account Manager	2.61%
Senior Manager	5.1%
Senior General Manager	2.61%
Team Leader	2.61%
Territory Sales Manager	5.1%
Zonal Manager	2.61%
Zonal Business Head	2.61%

Source: Primary data survey

D. Sample distribution according to the number of dealing years with the company. Respondents were having the different experiences toward their jobs in the different organizational background in the services sectors.

Table 4: Sample distribution according to job experience

Options	Responses
0-5 Years	50%
5-10 Years	30%
10-15 Years	17.50%
15 & above	2.5%
Total	100.0%

As per table 4, there are 50% respondents who are working in the organization from 0-5 years, 30% respondents from 5-10 years, 17.5% respondents from 10-15 years and 2.5% respondents from 15 & more years.

5.2 Data distribution analysis

A. Analyzing employees' awareness towards CSR.

Table 5: Employees awareness for CSR

Options	Responses
Yes	98.5%
No	1.5%

Source: Primary data survey

As per table 5, there are 98.5% respondents who are aware of CSR as a terminology and 1.5% respondents who are not aware of CSR as a terminology.

B. Understanding and maintaining corporate social responsibility is imperative. So table 6 shows how far CSR concept clears to employees.

Table 6: Understanding the concept of CSR

Options	Responses
Very Clear	70%
Somewhat Clear	25%
Not Clear	0%
Not Clear At All	5%

Source: Primary data survey

As per table 6, there are 70% respondents for whom meaning of CSR is very clear, 25% respondents for whom it is somewhat clear, 0% respondents for whom it is not clear and 5% respondents for whom it is not clear at all.

C. Analyzing the relationship between profitability & CSR.

Table 7: Relationship between profitability and CSR

Options	Responses
Yes	55%
No	22.5%
May be	22.5%

Source: Primary data survey

As per table 7, there are 55% respondents think CSR is a profit maximizing concept, 22.5% respondents thinks that there is no relationship between profitability and CSR and 22.5% respondents cannot say about the profitability power of CSR.

D. Respondents are asked to select driving factor of CSR. Table 8 reveals various driving factors of Corporate Social Responsibility practices by the

company in which the compliances of Companies Act 2013 with respect of CSR activities has been selected. Respondents are asked to select one or more CSR drivers.

Table 8: Driving Factors of Corporate Social Responsibility

S. No.	Driving factors of CSR	Responses
1	Increase in Profits	28.2%
2	Image Building	71.8%
3	Vision & Philosophy of the company	71.8%
4	Legal Compliance	41%
5	Rising International Standards	38.5%
6	Increasing Awareness	53.8%
7	Community Pressure	33.3%

Source: Primary data survey

As per table 8, Image building, vision and philosophy with 71.8 % are highest rated drivers and after that increasing awareness with 53.8% and legal compliance with 41% are important CSR drivers for employees of the company. While profits, international standard, and community pressure less influence CSR activities.

E.Table 9 shows, response rate for separate allocation of funds for CSR implementation in company.

Table 9: Separate allocation of funds for CSR implementation

Options	Responses
Yes	80%
No	5%
May be	15%

Source: Primary data survey

As per table 9, there are 80% respondents who agree that their organization have separate allocation of funds for CSR implementation, 5% respondents says no and rest 15% respondents are not aware of it.

F.The percentage of the net profit which is used by company for CSR activities is shown in table 10.

Table 10: Percent of net profit used for CSR activities.

Options	Responses
Not disclosed	65%
Between 1%-2%	30%
Between 2%-3%	5%
More than 3%	0%

Source: Primary data survey

As per table ,there are 65% respondents according to whom percentage of net profit used by the company for CSR activities are not disclosed, 30% respondents says it is between 1%-2%, 5% respondents says it is between 2%-3% and 0% respondents says that it is more than 3%.

G.Respondents are asked to tick one or more than one stakeholder/s to whom organization report CSR information.

Table 11: CSR information reported to which stakeholder

Stakeholders	Responses
Board of Directors	74.4%
Employees	71.8%
Customers	23.1%
Suppliers	15.4%
Government	43.6%
Investors	41%
Others	17.9%

Source: Primary data survey

As per table 11, there are 74.4% respondents according to whom organization report CSR information to Board Of Directors, for 71.8% respondents it's employees, for 23.1% respondents its customers, for 15.4% respondents it's suppliers, for 43.6% respondents it's government, for 41% respondents it's investors and for 17.9% respondents it's other options.

H.Company invested in which of the following elements as part of its community investment initiatives. Respondents are asked to select one or more.

Table 12: Respondents rate for elements of CSR initiatives

S.no.	Elements of CSR practices	Responses
1	Education	28.2%
2	Helping the under-privileged	74.4%
3	Local heritage	7.7%
4	Youth development	30.8%
5	Poverty alleviation	23.1%
6	Working for disability	46.2%
7	Conservation of nature	30.8%
8	Games & Sports	15.4%
9	Promotion of culture	20.5%
10	Infrastructure support to local community	33.3%
11	Others	12.8%

Source: Primary data survey

As per table 12, 74.4% respondents have selected area as part of its community investment initiatives is to help the under-privileged which is highest percentage, 7.7% respondents go for local heritage which is least.

I.Raising awareness within organization in relation to the CSR issues by the company (as shown in table 13) through following ways.

Table 13: Ways to educate employees for CSR

Options	Responses
Training & awareness programmes	55.3%
Internet communications	73.7%
Management briefings	31.6%
Others	18.4%

Source: Primary data survey

As per table 13,according to 55.3% respondents who have selected training & awareness programmes by which the organization raise awareness within the organization in relation to CSR issues, 73.7% respondents believe in internet communications, 31.6% respondents have selected management briefings and 18.4% respondents by others ways.

J.The impact of CSR on buying behaviour. Respondents are asked whether they will prefer to buy products/services of the companies which practice CSR or not.

Table 14: Consumer buying response for socially responsible firm products

Options	Responses
Yes	92.3%
No	7.7%

Source: Primary data survey

As per table 14, there are 92.3% respondents who prefer to buy products and services of the company which practice CSR and 7.7% respondents are those who don't prefer to buy it.

K.Employees' willingness to pay higher prices for products/services of the company which practices CSR activities.

Table 15: Consumer willingness to pay more for socially responsible firm products

Options	Responses
Yes	74.4%
No	25.6%

Source: Primary data survey

As per table 15, there are 74.4% respondents who have the willingness to pay and 25.6% respondents who don't have the willingness to pay higher price for products/services of the company which practices CSR activities.

L.Respondents are asked to rate their opinion about the following elements of CSR practices of a company that help to improve employee welfare & labour relations. Respondents can tick more than one element.

Table 16: Elements of CSR practices of a company that help to improve employee welfare & labour relations.

Options	Responses
Support System	63.9%
Stable Labour Relations	44.4%
Preserve Diversity Policy	52.8%
Prevent Discrimination	50%
Friendly Office Layout	47.2%
None of the above	2.8%

Source: Primary data survey

As per table 16, there are 63.9% respondents who thinks that to improve employee welfare & labour relations, the company should practice support system, 44.4% respondents agrees on stable labour relations, 52.8% respondents agrees on preserve diversity policy, 50% respondents agrees on prevent discrimination, 47.2% respondents agrees on friendly office layout and 2.8% respondents agrees on none of the above reasons.

FINDINGS

This study found that employees' enthusiasm and fortitude to drive successful CSR practice rely on the company's fair conduct and care as well as good approach toward the management's social responsibility. In addition found that the success factor of CSR is the management and board of directors who have to encourage CSR activities by integrating CSR into the vision and mission of the company. The management is also committed to engage employees into the company's CSR efforts. Further findings are:

The results indicate that image building, vision and philosophy of the company reflects the highest scores as compared to other driving factors of CSR.

- The study findings also revealed that companies that adopt CSR will have good and long-term relationship with their employees and customers.

- Most executives believe that CSR can improve profits. They understand that CSR can promote respect for their company in the marketplace which can result in higher sales, enhance employee loyalty

CONCLUSION

It is generally held that corporate social responsibility (CSR) could increase company profits and thus most large companies are actively engaged in it. As the results of the study and the research literature suggested that most employees believed that CSR can improve profits. Further, the findings of this study have implications for company-wide efforts to find ways to enhance CSR perceptions by helping top management and mid-level managers understand that enhancement of positive employees' perceptions of CSR activities is the first priority for resolving ethical conflicts among employees, owing to the pressure of goal attainment and the company's social performance.

- The concept of CSR is sometimes used as shorthand for businesses' contribution to sustainable development. A number of main development issues are already essential to the international CRS agenda.

- In order to widen the CSR concept there is a necessity to research more on the employees' perception, their awareness, their engagement, their motivational factors and their satisfaction towards the organization and society.

- It includes labour standards, human rights, education, health, child labour, poverty reduction, conflict and environmental impacts.

- CSR has even on occasion attracted criticism for being insensitive to local priorities and the basic livelihood needs of people in developing countries, particularly where CSR codes of conduct are perceived as barriers to market access for some producers.

- But the CSR agenda needs to be locally owned if it is to make a significant contribution to local development priorities – and it must be relevant to local enterprises, whether large or small.

- This means creating a space to explore the relationship between business and society at a regional, national or local level and finding the appropriate language for these discussions.

- Telecom companies should do necessary to raise the employee's awareness level of social responsibility through the different training programmes.

- Since, the study focuses on a small sample of employees of Vodafone Idea Company; the generalization of the research findings is restricted. These limitations provide a basis for further research, especially appropriately designed quantitative in combination with qualitative studies, to be conducted to verify the findings of this study.

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