

MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF CSR INTERVENTIONS : A STUDY OF CSR PROGRAMS IN GMR INDUSTRIES RAJAM SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) can provide unique information about the performance of organizations' policies, programs and projects. It endows with the information about the performance of managers and their staff. In the present epoch, the monitoring and evaluation had become fundamental for any organization: be it service or business. M&E can be useful in many ways in Corporate Social interventions. It helps the business houses to understand the ground realities and beneficiaries role in the CSR interventions and analyze and review performance about business houses. Moreover, the M&E can direct the management to reduce the gaps and corrupt practices at different levels. Through administration the M&E significant changes in the lives of the stakeholders can be found. Monitoring and evaluation systems can be applied to both individual projects and multi-component interventions being implemented by the industries or corporations.

The present study is taken up to find out the nature, type and the process of implementation of CSR projects and to analyze the levels of people's engagement, besides its impact. The data were collected from a quota sample of 50 each from four operational villages of GMR foundation, which comprises of 200 respondents, and 50 sample from employees of GMR Sugar Industry and 10 professionals of GMR Varalakshmi Foundation.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of developmental activities provide business houses or corporate, with a better means of learning from past experiences, improvising the service delivery system, systematic planning and optimizing resource allocation and demonstration of results as part of accountability to the key stakeholders. The business houses are geared towards result oriented performance and improve their profits. The quality of life of the vulnerable people is "impacted" through the activities of Corporate Social Responsibility which are linked with the profits. Hence, a continuous process of monitoring and evaluation system

yields good results in enhancement of the socially responsible activities. The first typical understanding of CSR is that it involves a balance between economic and social aspects of the stakeholders.

The primary role of any corporate or business houses is to maximize profits with minimum resources. In the similar way the business houses should also evolve strategies for the betterment of neighboring communities. Planned interventions by the corporate in tune with the needs of people and implementation of the programmes with active citizenship enhance the quality of monitoring

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and evaluation. The part and parcel of the corporate prior to the interventions, among other things, it designing sound systems of monitoring and evaluation result in best results interns of the transformation of the lives of the poverty groups for a more realistic perspective (Mosse et al., 1998). This strengthens awareness levels and builds ownership of the corporates, communities and citizens as well. As business is viewed in terms of commercial activity and very often welfare has become a misconstrued concept (Walter, 1998.).

The most important concern of the CSR may be empowerment of its stakeholders. Empowerment is a critical process whereby individuals and communities gain confidence and self-esteem, besides capacity building so as to articulate and address their concerns (Schuftan, C. (1996).). This can only happen when there is continuous monitoring and evaluation system.

M&E can also be a tool to enhance the ability to consult coordinate and engage with a wide variety of stakeholders. These two are essentially inseparable partnerships, and very important instruments for corporate citizenship interventions to enhance the quality and sustainability. It is largely recognised that stakeholders are those who are impacted by corporate citizenship interventions but also can in turn impact the corporate. The diversified monitoring and evaluation process leads to identification of relevant issues in a timely manner which in turn provides the ability to address the issues through proper indicators and helps the corporate management for further consultation (Appleton and Booth, 2001).

Monitoring and evaluation gives an understanding of the administrative system from the perspective of the vast majority of people in the society for whom the very institutional/administrative system is being promoted and legitimized. According to Secchi, (2005) Social accountability, Auditing

and Reporting (SAAR), are strictly related to social performance contributions through monitoring and evaluation procedures. Drucker (1993) stated that corporate citizenship means active commitment, responsibility and making a difference in one's community, society, and country. This can happen only with the stringent monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Monitoring and evaluation process facilitates the impact assessment, so that potential obstacles can be anticipated and avoided and benefits can be optimized (Warhurst, 2000b). In CSR measurement process the basic elements of monitoring and evaluation paves the way for effective corporate interventions.

A proper understanding and significance of the monitoring techniques and methodologies help the corporate for planning corporate approaches and if need be proactive approaches required for strategic management; to deal (Freeman, Reed; 1984) and also measure CSR activities (Wood 1991). In addition to monitoring and evaluation the corporate must integrate the day to day social audit process to improve the quality of CSR interventions. To create ownership on the CSR interventions the corporate must engage the citizens in the planning and implementation of the CSR process. The citizen engagement increases the quality and responsibility towards the sustainability process, thereby stimulating the democratic attitudes (Finkel, 2002). Vibrant citizen engagement promotes trust and cooperation as it can also promote the ownership in the system (Heller, 2000). This happens through participatory monitoring and evaluation process with the active citizen engagement which ensures quality at every stage of interventions. This process enhances corporate reputation and its commitment to social objectives. It further, affects positive organizational change and promotes sustainability and transparency in the primary and secondary stakeholders.

Need for the Study

The corporate sector is playing a pivotal role in the development of Indian economy. Since the corporatism is the part and parcel of the society it influences the human behavior and their development. CSR is a tool through which corporate entity establishes its commitment through developmental interventions for the betterment of the vulnerable and marginalized sections of society. The basic business values of CSR include support, social acceptance to operation, make risk management more efficient, facilitate access to capital and enhance corporate reputation. Besides this, it also enhances the financial capacities of the consumers and to protect their rights. The Indian understanding of CSR which shifted from traditional philanthropy to sustainable business, community development still plays a decisive role in the Indian CSR agenda. CSR is motivated by ethical, personal and cultural concerns and it is only driven to maintain or to increase the morale of its stakeholders as most of the CSR activities are met from profits of the industry.

The present study is carried out with the following objectives;

Objectives

1. To ascertain the socio-economic characteristics of CSR beneficiaries.
2. To find out the nature and type of CSR programs implemented in GMR Varalakshmi Foundation.
3. To analyze the processes and methods evolved in implementing the CSR projects.
4. To find out monitoring and evaluation procedures followed, and lastly,
5. To make suggestions, if any, for policy and practice.

Method and Sample

For the purpose of study, four villages of GMR Foundation operational areas i.e.

Buradapeta, Guruvam, M.R.Peta and Dosari were taken. From each village a quota sample of 50 beneficiaries were purposefully selected. As such the sample comprises of 200 respondents from four villages of GMR Foundation operational area, 50 employees from GMR Sugar industries and 10 CSR professionals from GMR Foundation. The data were collected with the help of a structured schedule. The interpretation was made using simple statistical tools. The study took four months i.e. july-oct-2010.

FINDINGS

I. Social Characteristics

The data revealed that a majority of the subjects (92.0 %) was male and the rest was female. A majority of the respondents i.e. 52.0 per cent was in the most productive age group between 25 and 35 years. A number of respondents (31.5%) were found in the age group of above 35. It was found that more than half of the respondents (58.0%) had completed high school education. On the other, a sizeable number of respondents (37.5%) were illiterate. As regards the religion and social background of the respondents, most of them belong to Hindu (99.0%) religion. All the respondents except one belonged to the rural area.

II. Details about CSR

This section deals with the awareness about CSR criteria followed and needs assessment.

a). Awareness about CSR

A majority of the respondents stated that they were aware of CSR programmes being implemented by GMR Foundation. The following table explains the nature of services implemented under CSR.

b). Criteria for selection as a beneficiary

A majority of the respondents (96.0%) stated that the GMR Varalakshmi foundation followed no criteria for selection of

beneficiaries and extended their services to all people in the community. The following table explains the needs assessment by the GMR Varalakshmi Foundation.

Table-1
Assessment of needs prior to the launching of CSR services

Assessment of needs prior to launching of the services	Per cent (n=200)
Yes	51.0
No	48.0
No idea	1.0
Methods evolved to assess the needs (n=102)	
Community Meetings	12.7
Group Discussion	26.5
Area wise survey	60.8

It can be ascertained from the data that more than half (51.0%) of the respondents expressed that there was proper assessment of needs prior to launching of CSR services and the rest stated that there was no such assessment. As regards the methods evolved to assess the needs, three-fifths of the respondents stated that the Foundation carried out an area wise survey (60.8%) and the rest informed that they conducted group discussions (26.5%) and Community meetings (12.7%).

c). CSR activities in tune with the needs of the people

A little over half of sampled respondents (52.0%) expressed that CSR activities were in tune with the needs of the people. The remaining (47.0%) stated that CSR activities were not in tune with the needs. Further, more than half of the respondents (54.0%) expressed that people were made to participate in the CSR activities and another 45.0 per cent of the respondents said there was no such participation of people in CSR activities. The following table describes the opinions of the respondents about CSR activities.

Table-2
Opinions about Satisfaction of CSR activities

Satisfaction of CSR activities	Percent (n=200)
Satisfied	67.0
Dissatisfied	33.0
Reasons for dissatisfaction (n= 66)	
Limited services	30.0
Did not consult people	1.0
No information	1.0
No proper identification of people	1.0

As can be seen from the above table that more than half of the respondents (67.0%) were satisfied with the CSR programs. The rest (33.0%) expressed dissatisfaction, however. Further, the respondents (30.0%) stated that the GMR foundation implemented limited services for the welfare of the community.

d). Reach of the benefits to the needy.

More than three-fourths (85.5%) of the respondents stated that the benefits were reaching the needy people in the community and a few (13.5%) expressed that benefits did not reach the community due to limited services (12.5%) provided by the foundation.

e). Regularity of CSR services

Table-3
Regularity of CSR services

Variable	Per cent (n=200)
CSR services	
Regular	92.5
Irregular	6.5
No response	1.0
Reasons for irregularity (n=13)	
Poor communication	7.7
Poor participation by the poor people.	53.8
No community ownership	38.5

The data reveal that a large majority of the respondents (92.5%) expressed that the CSR services were regular. Some attributed the irregularity of service due to poor participation of people and lack of community ownership.

III. Employees perspective

The data show that more than half of the employees (54.0%) stated that the management was transparent in its decisions with regard to the implementation of CSR projects. The rest (30.0%) stated that the management was not transparent. The latter category felt that they were never consulted while taking decisions or involved in implementation.

IV CSR Professionals perspective

Mode of selection of village

The data shows that all the CSR Professionals (100%) stated that, the mode of selection of village was based on permanent adoption, temporary adoption, and need based respectively. The following table discusses the monitoring and evaluation systems evolved.

Table-4
Monitoring and Evaluation System Evolved

Monitoring And Evaluation System	Percent (n=10)
Yes	90.0
No idea	10.0
If Yes Specify * (n = 8)	
Field visits	80.0
Review reports	30.0
Review meetings	10.0
Activity Based Monitoring and Evaluation	40.0

*Multiple Responses

As can be seen from the data, a majority of the CSR Professionals (90.0%) stated that the foundation evolved a system of monitoring and evaluation. As regards the methods, the CSR Professionals expressed that field visits

(80.0%), Activity Based Monitoring and Evaluation (40.0%) and review reports (30.0%) were used as methods to monitor and evaluate the programs respectively. The data also further revealed that 80.0 per cent of the CSR Professionals were aware that industry publishes annual report and the rest stated that they have no such idea. As regards the interventions with stakeholders, mostly CSR professionals stated that they meet stakeholders very often.

CONCLUSIONS

The study evidently brought rural characteristics of the people. Lower levels of literacy, agricultural based labour with marginalized earnings and inadequacy of resources have featured in this study. The GMR Foundation launched series of CSR projects in the surrounding villages affected by the GMR Sugar Industries. Interestingly, it did not follow any specific criteria to select the beneficiaries, though mostly people from below poverty line were considered. The respondents shared their mixed feelings that the GMR has conducted assessment of needs before launching of the CSR interventions. A majority of the respondents stated that they were satisfied with the implementation of the CSR interventions on a regular basis and a few were dissatisfied as the services were limited. Further, half of the respondents stated that CSR interventions were in tune with the needs of the people and the services were reaching to the needy. A majority of the respondents stated that there was poor participation of people in identification of needs, selection of beneficiaries and implementation of services. As regards the monitoring and evaluation tools evolved for CSR interventions to improve the quality, most of the CSR professionals stated that they had made several field visits to have first hand information besides monitoring the services in each activity. Field reports and review meetings were part of evaluation mechanisms evolved by the CSR professionals.

They publish annual report to aware about the CSR activities to its stakeholder besides meeting them very often to improve the quality of the CSR interventions. Finally the data have revealed that the monitoring and evolution mechanisms were found to be adequate in the GMR Varalakshmi Foundation.

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