

# CITIZENS *at* WORK

CSR PRACTICES IN INDIAN CORPORATIONS

Volume III



The world's local bank

# Citizens at work

## CSR practices in Indian corporations

**Volume III**



The Energy and Resources Institute

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## FOREWORD

In recent years, and all through the 20th century, several entities, whose position in driving economic progress was accepted without questioning, have gradually come under greater public scrutiny. This is true of scientists and academics, as much as it is of corporate organizations. The tolerance and acceptance that society displayed in its attitudes, and actions towards business organizations in the past probably resulted in the latter earning huge profits in several cases, while, at the same time, imposing heavy environmental costs through their industrial and business activities. However, this situation has changed significantly in recent years and companies are now under much more scrutiny and are, therefore, under a larger requirement to meet the expectations of society, perhaps even to a greater extent than their own shareholders. Of course, with society asking for much more responsible action on the part of business and corporate organizations, shareholders themselves have become more demanding of actions by business that target the interest of society at large and provide benefits to a wider set of stakeholders than shareholders alone. Indeed, what started as token actions by companies to signal their adherence to the philosophy of CSR (corporate social responsibility) has now become an integral part of business policy and actions. Lord John Browne, CEO of BP (British Petroleum), expressed this philosophy very clearly when he stated, 'I don't think that a business, which just generated money, would be a very good business. It wouldn't invest in the future for one thing; it wouldn't develop people, or ideas, or markets, or new products. Business is surely about the long term, and not just about tomorrow; nor is responsibility something to be added on as an afterthought, or as a PR gloss.'

Bjorn Stigson, President of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, puts it simply as the fact that business cannot succeed in a society that fails. Conversely, the success of any society also contributes substantially to the success of business that

operates therein. This is in some sense a very simple reality, because employees who work in an organization are also responsible members of society, and their dedication and sense of pride in an organization depend heavily on what the organization does for society at large. Also, it is now a widespread fact that even the stock market clearly places a premium on organizations that discharge their CSR seriously and diligently. The interests of the shareholder are, therefore, merging to a greater extent with the interests of society.

Businesses are required to carry out CSR not as an act of charity. They need to ensure that actions that they follow provide benefits not only to society, but also to those who have direct dealings with a business enterprise, such as the supply chain that feeds a particular business entity. For instance, a large company may be relying on a large number of small companies for supply of various inputs. Often these small enterprises have limited capacity or expertise to innovate. If the buyer company helps them in bringing about innovation and efficiency improvements, then the small enterprise benefits and a good part of benefits also accrue to the large entity that provides them with business. Today, there is a diverse set of examples of genuine practice of CSR and these need to be disseminated on a large scale for creating awareness, as well as informing and inspiring others towards similar action.

This volume represents outstanding case studies of individual initiatives taken by companies in India, which were short-listed for consideration as part of TERI's CSR awards. Undoubtedly, in any such system, it is only one or two organizations that would win the awards. Several others who would perhaps have done equally well deserve acclaim and recognition. That is what this publication attempts to do. Those who read these case studies would certainly be inspired and encouraged by the examples set by the organizations concerned. It would, therefore, be reasonable to expect that a publication of this nature can truly become a seed for spreading innovation and good practices, which would serve society well while leading to financial and economic success of corporate entities too.



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# Introduction

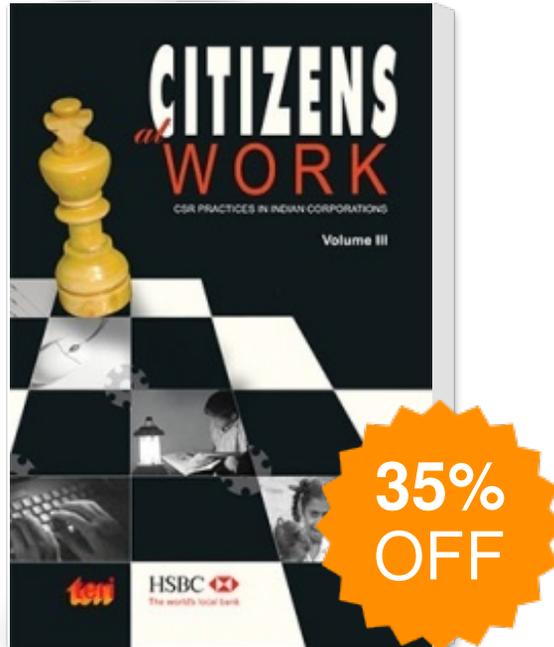
ANNAPURNA VANCHESWARAN

The changing dynamics of business environment is forcing companies to reflect on their current business processes and practices, and chart their CSR (corporate social responsibility) course beyond their immediate operating environment. Businesses are seeking new forms of cooperation and partnership to address the issue of rising public expectations.

At the top of the list of the changing dynamics is the growing scientific evidence of climate change and the associated risks to the globe, which have set in motion a political momentum to target reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. In 2005, the G8 leaders gathered at Gleneagles affirmed, 'The need to act now is to slow down and, as the science justifies, stop, and then reverse the growth of greenhouse gases.' However, the business community had already begun addressing this issue ahead of time. In 2002, under the aegis of WBCSD (World Business Council of Sustainable Development), 10 international cement companies, then representing collectively one-third of the world's (barring China) cement producers, signed the CSI (Cement Sustainability Initiative). The primary focus of the CSI is to reduce its footprint and be more eco-efficient. Today, the group has expanded and represents half of the world's total cement production. Early this year, as a foregoing event to the annual CEO Forum and the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit, TERI-BCSD, India – the regional network of the WBCSD – invited the Indian cement companies for a dialogue on 'building a sustainable future'. It was heartening to see CEOs of all major cement companies (approximately 80% of India's cement manufacturing capacity) present at the meeting and propose the setting up of a similar CSI-India initiative.

TERI's commitment to the principles of CSR – economically, socially, and environmentally responsible business – is reflected in its engagement with business, be it either through research or any action programme. To further the CSR movement in India and to encourage 'corporate citizenship', TERI instituted the TERI Corporate Award for Social Responsibility in 2002. In addition to the impact of climate change, another growing concern for the Indian business community has been the HIV/AIDS epidemic. The number of HIV/AIDS-affected

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