

Strategic Partnerships: Leveraging CSR Efforts to Support the Implementation of NEP 2020

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Abstract: *The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 outlines a comprehensive framework for transforming the Indian education system to meet the demands of the 21st century. The policy emphasizes holistic assessment that takes into account various aspects of a student's development, including cognitive, social, emotional, and physical dimensions. It promotes the assessment of life skills, values, and attitudes alongside academic achievements. Holistic assessment recognizes the importance of a well - rounded education that nurtures the overall growth of learners. However, the successful implementation of NEP 2020 requires concerted efforts from various stakeholders, including government, educational institutions, civil society, and the private sector. This research paper examines the role of strategic partnerships in leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts to support the implementation of NEP 2020. By analyzing case studies, best practices, and theoretical frameworks, this paper explores how collaborative initiatives between businesses and educational stakeholders can enhance access, quality, and inclusivity in education, while also addressing societal challenges and contributing to sustainable development.*

Keywords: NEP 2020, CSR, Holistic Assessment, Life Skills

1. Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a pivotal concept in contemporary business discourse, reflecting a growing recognition of the role that corporations play in addressing societal challenges beyond their immediate economic objectives. At its core, CSR refers to the voluntary actions that businesses undertake to operate ethically and contribute positively to society, the environment, and stakeholders beyond their shareholders. The motivations behind CSR are manifold. While some companies engage in CSR out of a sense of moral obligation or altruism, others view it as a strategic investment that can enhance their reputation, mitigate risks, attract talent, and drive innovation. Moreover, in an era of heightened social and environmental awareness, consumers, investors, and other stakeholders are placing greater importance on the ethical and social dimensions of corporate behaviour, compelling companies to integrate CSR into their core business strategies.

The provisions of CSR apply to every company fulfilling any of the following conditions in the preceding financial year i. e. Net worth of more than Rs.500 crore or Turnover of more than Rs.1000 crore. Many companies allocate funds specifically for educational purposes, such as scholarships, grants, and funding for educational programs or infrastructure development. These contributions can help improve access to quality education, particularly for underprivileged communities or marginalized groups. In addition to monetary support, businesses may donate goods or services that are beneficial to educational institutions. This could include donating computers, textbooks, laboratory equipment, or other resources needed for teaching and learning. Businesses may also contribute to education by offering skill development programs, internships, or apprenticeships that provide students with hands - on experience and practical training in various fields. These initiatives help bridge the gap between academic learning

and real - world employment opportunities.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 marks a significant milestone in the educational landscape of India, representing a comprehensive reform aimed at transforming the country's education system to meet the needs of the 21st century. NEP 2020 recognizes the importance of multidisciplinary and holistic education, encouraging students to pursue a diverse range of subjects and fields of study that align with their interests, talents, and aspirations. It emphasizes the promotion of creativity, entrepreneurship, vocational skills, and digital literacy to equip learners with the competencies required to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. It advocates for the promotion of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education.

Companies can incorporate education - related initiatives into their CSR activities in alignment with the goals of NEP 2020. This could involve funding scholarships, supporting educational infrastructure development, or sponsoring programs aimed at enhancing educational access and quality, particularly for marginalized communities. NEP 2020 emphasizes the importance of skill development and vocational education to enhance employability. Companies can contribute to this objective by offering skill development programs, internships, apprenticeships, and job placements as part of their CSR initiatives. By aligning with NEP 2020's focus on preparing students for the workforce, companies can address societal needs while also meeting their own talent requirements. By supporting education - related initiatives, promoting skill development, leveraging technology, fostering community engagement, and promoting STEM education, companies can contribute to the realization of NEP 2020's vision while also fulfilling their CSR commitments and creating shared value for society.

The key initiative of New Education Policy is to Ensuring Universal Access at All Levels of schooling from pre -

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primary school to Grade 12. Ensuring quality early childhood care and education for all children between 3 - 6 years. New Curricular and Pedagogical Structure (5+3+3+4) corresponds to the age groups of 3 - 8, 8 - 11, 11 - 14, and 14 - 18 years respectively. NEP 2020 heralds a new era in the Indian education system, focusing on holistic development, multidisciplinary learning, flexibility, technology integration, teacher empowerment, and assessment reforms. The main concept of NEP 2020 towards higher education emphasis on creation of an extensive digital infrastructure for education while acknowledging the value of technology in education. It encourages colleges to offer online and blended learning courses in order to reach more students and advance educational access.

2. Literature Review

The literature review aims to explore the existing intersection of NEP 2020 and CSR, synthesizing insights, identifying gaps, and offering recommendations for future research and practice. This research paper is based on secondary sources of information including, governmental policy documents and reports on recommendations of educational committees and commissions and draft NEP 2020. The information is also collected from the recent online media articles and reports on the subject related to NEP 2020 and CSR activities taken by the organizations.

Darbar, Teena P., (2021) in her research paper entitled “Impact of National Education Policy 2020 on Higher Education” mentions that the new national education policy 2020 is a good policy as it aims at making the education system holistic flexible multi - disciplinary align to the needs of 21st century and the 2030 sustainable development goals. The NEP is a product of an extensive exercise that strives to achieve 100% gross enrolment ratio by 2030.

Dutta and Durgamohan (2008), concluded in a study of 27 Indian companies that organizations are increasingly realizing that CSR is no longer a collection of discreet practices or occasional gestures motivated by marketing or public relations. It is rather comprehensive set of practices and policies that should be integrated into the company procedures.

Harbajan Bansal, Vinu Parida and Pankaj Kumar (2012) in their paper entitled “Emerging trends of CSR in India” analysed 30 companies of 11 sectors listed in the Bombay Stock Exchange with the help of their annual reports. Some of these sectors were Transport Equipment sector, Finance

and Metal Mining sector, IT & Power, Capital goods, Telecom, Housing, FMCG, Oil & Gas, Cipla etc. The study concluded that the companies today are working not only to earn profit but have also realized the importance of being social friendly. Social Responsibility today has started taking a turn in the new direction.

Jain, Priyanka, (2022) mentions in the article “NEP 2020 in Higher Education System of Indian Universities” that the timeline is by 2030 to make education multidisciplinary. The focus and emphasis in NEP 2020 is on credit - based courses of environmental education, value education and community engagement service.

Rani, R. (2020), in the article titled “National Education Policy - 2020: Issues and Challenges” opines that NEP2020 is an advanced regime that will facilitate value - based education and scientific learning. It will replace the older system of 'curriculum' which is rigid and unable to change with changing time dues. The NEP 2020 lays emphasis on making the education system holistic, flexible and aligned to the needs of 21st - century education. The mission is aspirational but the implementation roadmap will decide if this will truly foster an all - inclusive education that makes learners industry and future ready.

3. Objectives of the Study

Following objectives were framed for the study purpose:

- 1) Assess the current landscape of CSR activities in the education sector.
- 2) Identify the primary goals and priorities of NEP 2020 and analyze how CSR initiatives can complement and support these objectives.
- 3) Suggest the proper initiatives for using CSR funds in achieving the inclusive, equitable and quality education for all.



Source of Data:




The study is purely based on secondary data which has been collected through the brochures, websites and CSR reports of the selected companies.

Indian Companies Involved in CSR Funding:

Indian companies are increasingly leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds to address various social, environmental, and economic challenges. The Companies Act, 2013 made it mandatory for certain companies to spend a portion of their profits on CSR activities.

Selected Companies - Role of CSR in Education

Sr. No	Name of the Company	Funding Details	Location	Amount Spent in Cr.
1	 Reliance Ind. Ltd	Scholarships, Community Development, Initiatives Education – Partnerships, Education - at Manufacturing Locations.	Across India	215
2.	 Infosys Ltd	Helping hand to distant school, Nurturing higher education, Build better and learned India.	Across India	43.6

3.	 Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd.	Providing Quality Education to Underprivileged Childrens, providing infrastructure, allow hands on experience to undergraduate engineers in all aspects of automobile engineering.	Across India	33.41
4.	 Tata Steel Ltd	Two fellowships viz., the Jyoti Fellowship and Moodie Fellowship to over 2, 800 meritorious SC/ST Students from economically challenged families in Jharkhand and Odisha.	Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Chattisgarh	29.93
5.	 ITC Ltd.	Primary Education Program focused on retention and improving learning outcomes in govt. primary schools. Provided infrastructure comprising boundary walls, classrooms, sanitation units and furniture.	Across India	23.25

Source: https://csrbox.org/Impact/description/India_CSR_news_Top_10_companies_funding_education_CSR_projects_in_India_38

It can be seen clearly from the table that companies are providing education to the underprivileged students across the country through their CSR campaigns. Table also depicts that the companies are spending huge amount as CSR funding for promoting primary education, fellowships, nurturing higher education etc.

Companies and NGOs should be informed about the aims and features of NEP 2020 and highlight on how CSR can be one of the component in success of NEP 2020. They should also be provided with the information about how technology can reshape the education system by facilitating remote learning, personalized instruction, data - driven decision - making and innovative teaching methods, ensuring equitable access to quality education for all students through CSR.

Challenges and Considerations in Using Technology in Higher Education:

Due to the dynamic nature of technology and the distinctive mosaic of Indian diversity, addressing these challenges will remain a continual endeavor for both government authorities and educational institutions. The challenges in employing technology in higher education as per NEP 2020 encompass issues such as equitable access, quality content creation, faculty training, privacy concerns, infrastructure limitations, digital literacy gaps, financial considerations, pedagogical transformation, resistance to change, and effective assessment methodologies. Considerations in utilizing technology in higher education encompass issues of equitable access, content quality, digital literacy, privacy, infrastructure, cost, pedagogical transformation, resistance to change, and assessment.

4. Recommendations

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives can serve as a catalyst for positive change in higher education by fostering collaboration, innovation, and social impact in the integration of technology for teaching, learning, and research. CSR initiatives can play a significant role in addressing considerations in using technology in higher education as per NEP 2020 by:

- Providing financial support for the implementation of technology infrastructure, such as upgrading computer labs, providing internet connectivity, or purchasing

software and educational resources.

- Companies can sponsor initiatives aimed at bridging the digital divide by providing access to technology devices & internet connectivity for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Companies can collaborate with educational institutions to develop high - quality digital content, such as online courses, educational apps, or interactive multimedia materials, to enhance the learning experience.
- CSR funding should support research projects focused on exploring innovative uses of technology in higher education and addressing emerging challenges in the field.
- Companies should encourage CSR projects that promote inclusive education practices outlined in the NEP 2020, such as providing special education services, promoting multilingual education, and addressing learning gaps among disadvantaged groups.
- Prioritize CSR efforts that target rural and remote communities, aiming to improve infrastructure, access to educational resources, and community engagement to ensure equitable educational opportunities as outlined in the NEP.
- Encourage collaboration between government agencies, educational institutions, NGOs, and corporate entities to leverage resources, expertise, and networks for effective implementation of NEP 2020 goals through CSR initiatives.

"The integration of CSR initiatives in the implementation of NEP 2020 is crucial for fostering inclusive and quality education that empowers every learner to thrive"

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