

Chapter 14

Corporate Social Responsibility and Performance in the State of Qatar: Reality and Challenges

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter aims to examine the situation, facts, and challenges of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate social performance (CSP) in the State of Qatar. Some theories related to both constructs are presented and discussed. In addition, the chapter analyzes the role of different formal and informal CSR organizations' initiatives in raising the awareness about the importance of managing the social side of the business. Highlighting some active efforts to improve CSR in the country, the study concludes that the idea of managing the social side of business is still in its formation stage. Some more initiatives are needed to bring it up to the level that serve the realization of the national vision of the country 2030. The chapter concludes with some discussion on how managers perceive CSR and whether it aligns well with business objectives or no. Some guidelines to future studies and research in the field of CSR and CSP are also presented in the study.

INTRODUCTION

Arab countries share three things in common, namely, religion, language and history. As an Arabic country, the culture of the State of Qatar is shaped by the traditions, norms and values of Islam and Arabic culture. The idea of social responsibility is deeply rooted in the Arab culture, heritage and practiced in different ways such as gift giving, helping needy people, cleaning roads and sponsoring orphans/students (Suliman & Thomas, 2014 & 2018). However, these longstanding cultural traditions and morals

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that supports social responsibility not always reflect the Western understanding and practices of social responsibility (Jamali, 2014). According to Turker (2016, p. 133) "... these spiritual approaches must be backed up with a sound institutional mechanism in order to strengthen CSR within the business community in Muslim countries".

Similar to other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Arab countries, the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in its modern form and practice is not well developed in the State of Qatar. According to Kirat (2015), the management of social responsibility and social performance of work organizations in Qatar is still in its embryonic stage.

In this context, Suliman (2010, p. 1) argued that organizations based in the GCC need to understand the concept better in order to act as good citizens. In his words:

Organizations attempt to stay within the law but do not attempt social responsibility beyond what is needed by law. It seems to be the idea of CSR at its infancy stage and not yet mature as a concept and as a practice...Although organizations continually encounter demand from the different groups/entities of the community to devote some resources for the CSR, most companies are very much reluctant in taking serious steps towards managing CSR.

Probably this inactivity in the field of CSR that the Qatar-based organizations show is what encouraged the government to impose a law to govern it. In year 2008, the Law No 13 of the CSR came to effect in Qatar. According to this law, all organizations based in the State of Qatar are required to contribute 2.5% of their net profit to the social activities.

This study aims to study the current situation of social responsibility and social performance of work organizations in the State of Qatar. Following this introduction, the chapter examines the different theories of CSR, Corporate Social Performance (CSP), multifaceted nature of CSR and the antecedents and consequences of CSR. Subsequently, the study addresses the realities and challenges of CSR/CSP in Qatar and concludes with some remarks.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

Corporate Social Responsibility is defined as the business principles that guide managerial decision making and emphasize obligation and accountability to society (Carroll and Buchholtz, 2003). This definition implies that CSR is a multidimensional construct that aims to meet the interests and claims of stakeholders that focuses not only on the economic outcomes but also on social issues, which affect the quality of life for people. The term corporate social responsibility (CSR) emerged originally from the tendency to relate organizations to the natural resources/environment. More specifically, the CSR can be traced to Bowen's (1953, p.6) study that viewed CSR as "an obligation of organizations to pursue the policies and make the decisions that are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of society".

Though there is a general agreement in the literature regarding the multifaceted nature of the CSR construct, numerous other definitions have emerged to conceptualise it. For example, Carroll (1979) defines it as the social responsibility of business encompasses the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time. Whereas McWilliams and Siegel (2001) describes it as actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law. Waldman et al. (2006) specify CSR as actions on the part of the firm that

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