

# Chapter 10

## Agriculture Livelihood Security: Industry CSR Initiative

**Sabyasachi Nayak**

*Confederation of Indian Industry, India*

### **ABSTRACT**

*This chapter describes how through the prism of CSR, industry can take a stride in evolving its relationship with the stakeholders. Agriculture continues to remain the mainstay of livelihood for chunk of the population. The sector is drawn with the dual daunting challenges of producing more simultaneously without depleting natural resources. A pilot study is instituted to gain an insight into the CSR-agriculture initiative of the industry. This conceptual chapter has not attempted to triangulate the primary data, focusing on similar issues from other studies. However, the proposed 3D approach: “Diverse Dynamic Dignified,” is an outcome of FGD which provides a framework to take a broader view for wider replication by customizing it to the local conditions. This chapter contributes to the existing literature and advocates that the industry should prioritize agriculture livelihood security in their CSR endeavors.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the contemporary context it is incumbent and even imperative for the business to manage their operations in a way which can bring about a positive impact on the society. As the social context of business is being redefined, corporates are gearing up to stand to the expectations of the society. Therefore, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is assuming a “Strategic approach” and as the DNA business operations is underpinning the commitment by industry to contribute to economic development, while improving the quality of life of the community and society at large. Going forward, CSR will be very important for the Indian industry in demonstrating the proactive role and seriousness in addressing the issues plaguing the development.

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## ***Agriculture Livelihood Security***

This chapter captures the endeavor of Indian industry in nurturing technically sound, economically feasible, environmentally non-degrading, and socially acceptable use of country's natural resources – land, water and genetic endowment to promote sustainable development of agriculture. It also demonstrates the imperativeness of rendering requisite support incorporating a farming centric approach in sustaining agriculture livelihood security.

The intent of the chapter is to blend the statesmanship of concerned stakeholder for exploring responsible, effective and sustainable actions in transforming the agriculture sector. This may lead to further studies on strategizing taking forward a CSR movement in the agriculture sector for the benefit of the society, and also provide fillip to Indian industry to embark on CSR-agriculture intervention.

## **BACKGROUND**

In recent years, increasing attention has been given to the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), defined in terms of the responsiveness of businesses to stakeholders' legal, ethical, social and environmental expectations. CSR has generally been a pragmatic response to consumer and civil society pressures. (United Nations Industrial Development Organization [UNIDO], 2017) Profitable companies make important contributions to society. They create jobs and help finance the general welfare of the population. But companies are not just operating in a market. They are also operating within a culture, a local community and a political system. The debate surrounding corporate social responsibility is concerned with the role companies play in this broader social context. (Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2009)

CSR can best be understood in terms of the changing relationship between business and society. It can be understood in terms of different stakeholders and the issues that they are concerned with. CSR therefore means balancing the interests of a wider group of stakeholders and strategically managing the interconnected social, environmental and economic impacts of business activities. (UNIDO, 2002). CSR refers to companies taking responsibility for their impact on society. It can bring benefits in terms of risk management, cost savings, access to capital, customer relationships, human resource management, and innovation capacity. (European Commission [EC], 2013). CSR undertakings are the voluntary actions that business can take, over and above compliance with minimum legal requirements, to address both its own competitive interests and the interests of wider society. The breadth of business CSR strategies and initiative has expanded dramatically over the last decade. Activities embraced under the rubric of CSR vary from one-off philanthropic contributions to measures more centrally integrated as part of core business performance. (World Bank (WB), 2006)

## **CSR INDIA**

In India, as in many other countries facing similarly large development challenges, the discourse around CSR is increasingly about the crucial role corporates can play in bringing about positive change in the area of human development and social inclusion. CSR is no longer seen as corporate social assistance or philanthropy, but as essential to a good business strategy, helping reduce investment risks and enhancing business profits by improving transparency and accountability. It is about working together - with

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