

EMPOWERMENT OF PWDS WITH THE CSR ACTIVITIES – A LADDER APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the role of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities in empowering Persons with Disabilities (PwD), focusing on the activities undertaken by Dr. Reddy's Laboratory each year. Using a convenient sampling method, primary data was collected and a neural network was applied to examine the impact of CSR activities on PwD empowerment. The study found that assessing the potential of PwD, providing quality vocational training, and offering financial assistance are important CSR activities to promote social inclusion and improve the quality of life for PwD. The statistical method of EFA was used to identify measures that businesses can undertake to empower PwD, including identifying employment opportunities, developing customized training programs, using technology, monitoring training effectiveness, partnering with NGOs and private sector, and providing financial assistance. The findings of this study can guide businesses in developing effective CSR strategies to empower PwD and promote a more inclusive society.

Keywords: CSR activities, Dr. Reddy's activities, Effectiveness, Empowerment Factors, PwDs

INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to the business practices and initiatives that companies undertake to benefit society and the environment. One important aspect of CSR is the empowerment of persons with disabilities. Persons with disabilities face significant barriers to full participation in society, including discrimination, lack of access to education, employment, and public services. The empowerment of persons with disabilities through CSR activities can help to address these challenges and promote social inclusion. CSR activities can take many forms, such as providing employment opportunities, accessible infrastructure, or education and training programs.

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories is a pharmaceutical company that has made corporate social responsibility (CSR) a core part of its business strategy. In particular, the company has been actively involved in promoting inclusion and supporting persons with disabilities through its CSR initiatives. Dr. Reddy's has established a range of programs and activities aimed at improving the lives of people with disabilities, including providing education and training, creating employment opportunities, and supporting access to healthcare. Through its commitment to CSR, Dr. Reddy's is working to promote a more inclusive society and create a better future for all.

Empowering persons with disabilities through CSR activities also has benefits for businesses. It can lead to increased customer loyalty, a positive reputation, and improved employee morale and productivity. It can also help businesses to comply with legal requirements and promote diversity and inclusion in their workforce. Overall, the empowerment of persons with disabilities through CSR activities is a vital component of building a more inclusive and equitable society. It not only benefits persons with disabilities but also contributes to the sustainability and success of businesses and the broader community.

CSR, or corporate social responsibility, is an approach to business that encourages companies to be socially responsible to their employees, customers, and the community at large. Companies may be aware of the economic, social, and environmental impacts they have on society as a whole by engaging in corporate social responsibility (also known as corporate citizenship). To practise corporate social responsibility (CSR) implies that a firm is doing business in a manner that contributes positively to society and the environment rather than adversely. It's important to note that the definition of "corporate social responsibility" may vary widely from one business and one sector to another. Corporations may improve their public image and do good for the community via corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, charitable giving, and community service. Being accountable to one's own organisation and its shareholders is the first step towards social

responsibility. Businesses who participate in CSR initiatives often have reached a level of success where they are in a position to give back to the community. Thus, corporate social responsibility is a tactic most often used by multinational firms. After all, a company has an obligation to lead by example when it comes to ethical conduct if it wants to be followed by its competitors and industry peers.

Every day, disabled people in India are subjected to prejudice and exclusion. Due to a lack of infrastructure and convenient access, they are unable to go to where they need to go or get what they need. As they are unable to work and bring in any money for the family, they are perceived as a financial drain, particularly in low-income families that must also cover the costs of their medical care.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Prutina and Sehic (2016) investigated how workers evaluate the actions of their employer in relation to important stakeholders and to what degree these actions are seen as respectable, bearing in mind the company's reputation. The data was acquired using a mixed-methods strategy, using questionnaires, interviews, and content analysis, and the sample size was 196. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, one business has gained notoriety for its commitment to social responsibility, and this research sought to get insight into the perspectives of its workers. The findings revealed that workers saw their firm as socially responsible; nevertheless, attitudes varied by stakeholder group, highlighting the relevance of the national business structure and culture in CSR assessment.

Specifically, Kelman et al. (2016) looked at how people in Norway and Russia's Arctic petroleum business see CSR. Information was gathered through one-on-one chats, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews. The research found that although support for petroleum activity was high in general, it was highest among individuals who benefited directly from the business and did not directly suffer negative repercussions. According to the findings, 'insiders,' or those with more direct experience with the petroleum business or its advantages, are more likely to have a favourable impression than those on the outside.

How did the educated public view CSR initiatives taken by corporations, as examined by Narwal and Sharma (2016)? Respondents were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with 17 statements representing the variables on a 5-point Likert scale. A total of 187 respondents (91 female and 96 male) from the Ambala, Kurukshetra, Karnal, and Jind districts of North Haryana were used to compile the statistics (a state in North India). The research showed that the public no longer sees business as a means to a goal (profit maximisation). The public applauded their efforts and now looks to them for examples of responsible, ethical conduct. The process of integrating society and business has started, and now it is up to businesses to build on the good momentum and restore public trust.

Financial results were analysed to see how CSR Disclosure policies affected them by Singh and Dangwal (2018). This article uses secondary data from the top 20 chemical businesses included in the BSE index between 2014 and 2016 to make some inferences about the industry as a whole. The data was analysed using content analysis, and the models were tested using multiple regression. The results show that the environment and the community positively affect ROA and ROE.

The market capitalization-performance link of Bursa Malaysian listed enterprises was studied by Razali et al., (2018). We have gathered the 2014-2016 annual reports from 324 publicly traded firms. The results demonstrate a favourable and statistically significant correlation between CSR reporting and financial outcomes like return on assets and return on equity. The findings also demonstrate contradictory effects of the control factors on the firm's performance.

The effect of CSR on bottom line results was studied by Basit and Hassan (2018). The sample spans the years 2011-2015 and comprises of 36 manufacturing and production firms trading on the London Stock Exchange (LSE). This investigation used an explanatory research strategy, and it relies on secondary data examined using E-views software to provide descriptive and regression statistics. The

results reveal that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Employee Safety, and Waste Reduction initiatives have no appreciable effect on financial results.

The influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) ratings on sell-side analysts' predictions of companies' financial success was investigated by Ioannou and Serafeim (2018). The study spanned 15 years and drew from a huge sample size of 3,580 publicly listed American companies. According to the findings, the relationship between CSR ratings and investment suggestion optimism shifted first among more seasoned analysts and analysts at more prestigious brokerage firms. According to the paper's findings, there is no correlation between businesses' CSR ratings and analysts' prediction mistakes, suggesting that learning is not likely to account for the observed variations in recommendations.

Using an Indian case study, Kumar and Kumar (2018) looked at how CSR relates to financial success for businesses. NIFTY 50 companies' 2016 annual reports have been analysed to compile this data. Information has been coded using content analysis, and the data's dependability has been examined using descriptive statistics. Regression research reveals no positive or negative correlation between CSR and profitability for businesses.

Using CSR-related data generated from disclosure analysis of annual reports of the selected banks, Platonova et al. (2018) investigated the connection between CSR and financial performance for Islamic banks in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) area over the years 2000-2014. The sample spans 15 years and 24 GCC-based banks' annual reports. Except for 'mission and vision' and 'products and services,' the findings show that none of the individual components of the CSR disclosure index correlate with the present financial success metric. Similarly, only the 'mission and vision' component shows a positive significant connection with the future financial success of the analysed institutions, as determined by the empirical data. Dr. Naveen Prasadula looked at the connection between CSR and bottom line results. The study relied on data gathered from a synthesis of previous studies conducted on the subject. This strategy included reading relevant academic papers and searching for relevant web resources. The research results demonstrate that CSR practises and financial outcomes for businesses in Iraq are strongly correlated.

RESEARCH GAP

Based on the above literature survey it is evident that majority of the studies have focused on the CSR practices of the organizations keeping in view of employees but very less review of literature have been found CSR activities with regard to Empowerment of PwDs. Therefore, the present study made an attempt to fill the research gap with the proposed title of “Empowerment of PwDs with the CSR activities – A Ladder Approach”

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study has framed the following objectives based on the research gap emerged through the literature survey,

1. To identify the Empowerment of PwD with the CSR activities of the companies
2. To Suggestive Measures to Empower the PwD by the CSR activities offered by the Companies.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study focused on the Empowerment of Persons with the Disabilities through the CSR activities. The study considered the Dr. Reddy's Laboratory, which implements the CSR practices in the aspects Persons with Disability. The study considered the empowerment actors and key measures to empower with the CSR activities for the PwDs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study has adopted the exploratory and qualitative approach for the examination of the Empowerment Factors through the CSR activities for the differently abled persons and measures to empower the PwDs.

Sampling Method:

To acquire primary data from employees, the study utilised a convenience sample strategy utilising a structured questionnaire (respondents). Convenience sampling is a sort of sampling in which the first accessible main data source is used without further investigation. To put it another way, this sampling strategy comprises finding people wherever they are, which the most convenient area is generally.

Sample Size: Responses are collected from 135 employees working in Dr. Reddy's, who are associated with the Corporate Social responsibility.

Sampling Unit:

The study considered the Dr. Reddy's of Hyderabad unit as a sample unit for the study. The Dr. Reddy's is initiating the CSR activities for the differently abled persons every year regularly.

Source of Data: The present study has considered the primary data through the drafted questionnaire for the examination of proposed objectives.

Questionnaire: The questionnaire consists of two broader segments, which focus on empowerment factors for the PwD through the CSR activities. The study also focused on the suggestive measures to empower the PwDs with the CSR activities. The study collects the opinion from the Dr. Reddy's employees associated with the CSR department. The opinions are collected through the 5-Point Likert scale from the respondents. The statistical tools used in the study were using SPSS Statistics software. The tools used in the study are Neural Network and Exploratory Factor Analysis.

Neural Network: The study applied the Neural Network method to identify the empowerment factors role, which are getting implemented through the CSR activities. The higher the importance level will reflect the higher the role for empowerment of PwD.

Exploratory Factor Analysis: The EFA has been applied to devise the measures to empower the PwDs with the CSR activities. The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) is a statistical method that may be utilised to ascertain the underlying structure of a large number of variables. The high-loading elements that have an effect on the variable that is most dependent on the model are singled out and removed from the list of variables in this approach. This technique processes the input and provides the result in the form of a component matrix that is populated with highly loaded variables.

Reliability of Primary Data

The basic data for the study were gathered by asking structured questions based on a Likert scale. The study was divided into two parts. The Cronbach's Alpha technique was utilised for the investigation. The conclusion that may be drawn from this is as follows.

Table -1
Reliability Test Results

| Segment Head | Cronbach's Alpha Value |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Empowerment Factors of CSR | 0.915 |
| Measures to Empower | 0.916 |
| Average | 0.915 |

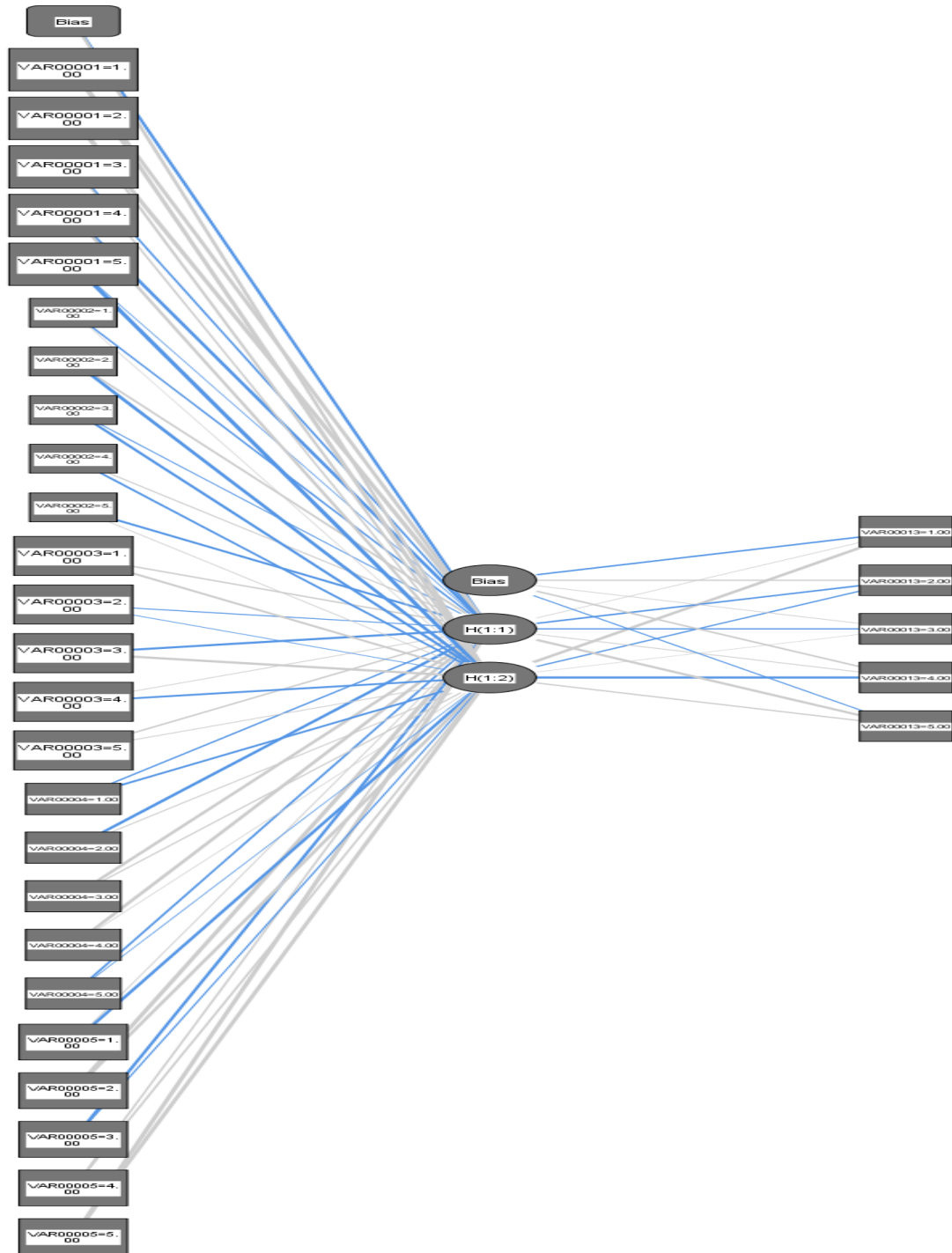
Source: Authors' Calculation

The conclusion drawn from the analysis of primary data was that the base value of 0.915 was more than 0.7. As a result, it has been determined that the main data that was obtained is suitable and reliable for the analysis. As a result, the research uses a variety of statistical approaches to analyse the primary data that was gathered in order to investigate the predetermined goals.

Objective – I: To identify the Empowerment of PwD with the CSR activities

The study examines empowerment of Persons with the Disability with the Corporate Social Responsibility activities. The study applied the neural network statistical method for the examination of framed objective.

— Synaptic Weight > 0
— Synaptic Weight < 0



Hidden layer activation function: Hyperbolic tangent
Output layer activation function: Softmax

The graph illustrates the network information in the form layers. In this graph, each input is linked to a hidden layer and this hidden layer help to generate the output layer that CSR practices to empower the PwD through the CSR activities.

Table No –2
Empowerment of PwD with the CSR activities

| | Importance | Normalized Importance | t | Sig. |
|--|------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|
| Assessment to Empower PwD | .283 | 100.0% | 3.364 | 0.001 |
| Training curriculum & methodology to Empower PwD | .120 | 42.3% | 2.314 | 0.010 |

| | | | | |
|---|------|-------|-------|-------|
| Quality Vocational Training to Empower PwD | .244 | 86.1% | 4.149 | 0.000 |
| Technology for Training and Monitoring to Empower PwD | .150 | 53.0% | 1.248 | 0.000 |
| Financial Assistance to empower PwD | .203 | 71.7% | 2.314 | 0.000 |

Source – Primary data

The table deals with the empowerment of PwD with the CSR activities as it shows the importance of CSR practices for PwD through the neural network analysis. The table reflects the relative importance of the five variables listed in order to determine which CSR practices encourage Persons with disabilities through CSR activities. The study results reveal that PwD have a higher perception on the practice of “Assessment to Empower PwD” (0.283) followed by “Quality Vocational Training to Empower PwD” (0.244). The lowest importance has the “Training curriculum & methodology to Empower PwD” (0.120). As a result, it is said that CSR practises create enough employment possibilities by providing vocational training and updating beneficiaries with numerous placement opportunities. As a result, CSR practises must concentrate more on the Process of PwD CSR practises in order to find the right individual getting right training for good CSR practices.

Objective – 2: To Suggestive Measures to Empower the PwD by the CSR activities offered by the Companies.

The study considered the measures to further empower the PwD by the CSR activities offered by the companies. The study applied the EFA to know the high loading factors. The high loading factors will be considered to be focused to empower the PwDs.

Table - 3 Sample Adequacy Test

| | | |
|--|--------------------|--------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | .906 |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 24.359 |
| | Df | 21 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

Source: Primary Data

The above table represents the KMO test for Suggestive Measures to Empower the PwD by the CSR activities offered by the Companies. KMO and Bartlett’s test is used to determine the sample adequacy of data and remove certain redundancy between the variable that gives the significant data. Here, it was reported KMO test calculated value as 0.906 that is above the recommend level 0.70 which signifies adequate of sampling data. Further, Bartlett’s test of sphericity indicates the chi square calculated value 44.359 that is greater than the Critical value (32.671) which indicates that data is significant. Thereby confirming that, factors taken for the study are valid for factor analysis.

Table -4
Measures to empower the PwD with the CSR activities

| | Component | | |
|--|-----------|------|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Assessment of PWDs’ potentials, | .691 | | |
| Assessment: identification of available employment opportunities, | .313 | | |
| Define training curriculum & methodology for PwD post-assessment inputs so the right person with getting the right training. | .574 | | |
| CSR team use latest technology in training, content generation | | .660 | |
| Monitoring of training for PwD so it will be very effective and reach to last mile. | | .537 | |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|------|
| Skill development of PwD partnership is required with NGOs and Private sector. | | | .173 |
| CSR Team will provide financial assistance to PwD for education and training fees. | | | .571 |

Source: Primary Data

The table represents the factor analysis for Suggestive Measures to Empower the PwD by the CSR activities offered by the Companies. With results it is evident that every factor has contributed above 50% which are used to formulate loaded factors except “identification of available employment opportunities”, “Skill development of PwD partnership is required with NGOs and Private sector”. The “Assessment of PwD’s potentials” had contributed high with 69.1% followed by all other factors. Whereas the factor to contribute the below 50% is “Skill development of PwD partnership is required with NGOs and Private sector.”

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1. According to the table, the assessment of PwD to empower them has the highest normalized importance score of .283, indicating that it is the most important CSR activity for empowering PwD. This finding underscores the importance of identifying and assessing the needs and abilities of PwD to provide effective support and empowerment.
2. The second most important CSR activity is quality vocational training, with a normalized importance score of .244. This finding highlights the importance of providing PwD with vocational skills and training to enhance their employability and independence.
3. Financial assistance for empowering PwD has a normalized importance score of .203, indicating that financial support is also critical for empowering PwD. This finding suggests that providing financial assistance, such as grants or loans, can help PwD overcome financial barriers to education, employment, and other opportunities.
4. The training curriculum and methodology, as well as the technology for training and monitoring, have relatively lower normalized importance scores of .120 and .150, respectively. However, these activities are still significant for empowering PwD, as they can help to ensure that training and support are delivered effectively and efficiently.
5. The first component highlighted in the table is the assessment of PwD's potentials, which has the highest score of .691. This finding emphasizes the importance of identifying and assessing the abilities and potential of PwD to ensure that they receive appropriate support and training.
6. The third component is the definition of training curriculum and methodology for PwD post-assessment inputs, with a score of .574. This finding highlights the importance of developing customized training programs that meet the specific needs and abilities of PwD.
7. The use of the latest technology in training and content generation has a score of .660, indicating that technology can play a significant role in empowering PwD. Technology can improve the accessibility and effectiveness of training programs, as well as support remote learning opportunities.
8. Monitoring of training for PwD to ensure that it is effective and reaches the last mile has a score of .537. This finding highlights the importance of monitoring and evaluation in ensuring that training programs are successful and have a meaningful impact.

CONCLUSION OF THE STUDY

The study focused to know the role of CSR activities to empower the Persons with the Disabilities. The study considered the Dr. Reddy’s, which is focusing every year on the persons with the disability with the effective CSR activities. The study considered the convenient sampling method and collected the primary data. The study applied the neural network and examined the role of empowerment of PwDs with the CSR activities. The importance of various CSR activities for empowering persons with disabilities and observed that to promote social inclusion and improve the quality of life for PwD, businesses should prioritize activities such as assessing PwD, providing quality vocational training, and offering financial assistance. These findings can guide businesses in

developing effective CSR strategies to empower PwD and promote a more inclusive society. The statistical method of EFA indicated that measures that businesses can undertake to empower PwD through effective CSR activities. By assessing the potential of PwD, identifying employment opportunities, developing customized training programs, using technology, monitoring training effectiveness, partnering with NGOs and private sector, and providing financial assistance, businesses can promote the inclusion and empowerment of PwD in society.

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