

**STRATEGIC INTEGRATION OF AUTHENTIC CSR,
SPIRITUALISM & INTEGRATED MARKETING
COMMUNICATION: FARSIGHTED FOUNDATION OF
EMERGING ECONOMY**

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Abstract

The paper intends to prepare a feasible strategy for marketing , CSR , business success and overall growth of shareholders and stakeholders in an emerging economy .It introduces a conceptual framework that provides an encompassing view of Marketing and CSR along with its prerequisites : ethics and spiritualism , and its outcomes : benefit to all. The businesses cannot hope to enjoy concrete benefits from either bare materialistic marketing or from mere CSR activities , unless these are strategically integrated and then intelligently communicated to relevant stakeholders. Further , the genuineness of these activities requires spiritual mind-set and awareness.consumers, today, go farther from the utility of products and services to welfare activities. The establishment of value based society is a great responsibility today . How can a business as well as a society that consists of human beings and that is meant for human beings, flourish, grow , prosper and survive without human concern ?Our article both identifies new insights and extends extant theory by building on previous research . The paper provides a platform for further research.

Objective : The paper intends to prepare a feasible strategy for marketing , CSR , business success and overall growth of shareholders and stakeholders in an emerging economy .It introduces a conceptual framework that provides an encompassing view of Marketing and CSR along with its prerequisites : ethics and spiritualism , and its outcomes : **benefit to all**. The businesses cannot hope to enjoy concrete benefits from either bare materialistic marketing or

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from mere CSR activities , unless these are strategically integrated and then intelligently communicated to relevant stakeholders. Further , the genuineness of these activities requires spiritual mind-set and awareness.

The objective is based on a string of questions :Can economy grow without successful business? Can business flourish without integrated marketing communication(IMC)?, Can IMC carry meaning beyond profit? Can CSR integrated with marketing communication help in getting an edge over rivals ?Is there a genuine commitment to corporate social responsibility or is it a mere superficial cause promotions and cause related marketing? Can genuine CSR exist without ethics and spiritualism? And finally can our strategic mode be useful in an emerging economy?

Key Words : CSR(corporate social responsibility),IMC(Integrated marketing communication), Spiritualism, Profit, genuine.

Methodology :The approach is qualitative and conceptual one .The secondary information available in the books, journals, magazines , newspapers and on the websites has been extensively used.

1. Introduction

In the fast changing Business Culture , environment and challenges,Marketers can leverage business and can create healthy and progressive society by expanding their focus beyond consumers and by focussing on Triple Bottom Line.Expectations of consumers, today, go farther from the utility of products and services to welfare activities. The establishment of value based society is a great responsibility today . No society can grow without values, environment and natural resources. The Recession 2008 , the increasing cases of scams and current Environment problem of Beizing are examples of these . How can a business as well as a society that consists of human beings and that is meant for human beings, flourish, grow , prosper and survive without human concern ?

Here it is important to mention that the paper is written mainly in Indian context.

2.CSR, Law and Need of Spiritualism

Indian government has ,under section 135 of The Companies Act 3013 , made minimum 2% CSR contribution mandatory. But can only law make it a success? We should not forget that despite various regulatory bodies there came recession , there have been several scams i.e. Satyam &Sahara, environmental problems are increasing day by day and shareholders and stakeholders are becoming victims of unethical activities. It is ironical that Several times CSR of a company on the one hand and corruption and scams on the other go simultaneously (later proved by Sahara case study).*Can any marketing strategy help any economy grow with these kinds of happenings?* Doesn't this compel us to consider that "The roots of ethical misconduct have gone so deep in the system that there is a need to find some lasting solution for ethical awareness supported by spiritualism (Xavier). The CSR requires genuine interest in providing value beyond the traditional bottom line, believing *that doing so will definitely contribute to their eventual profits - .Karma.*

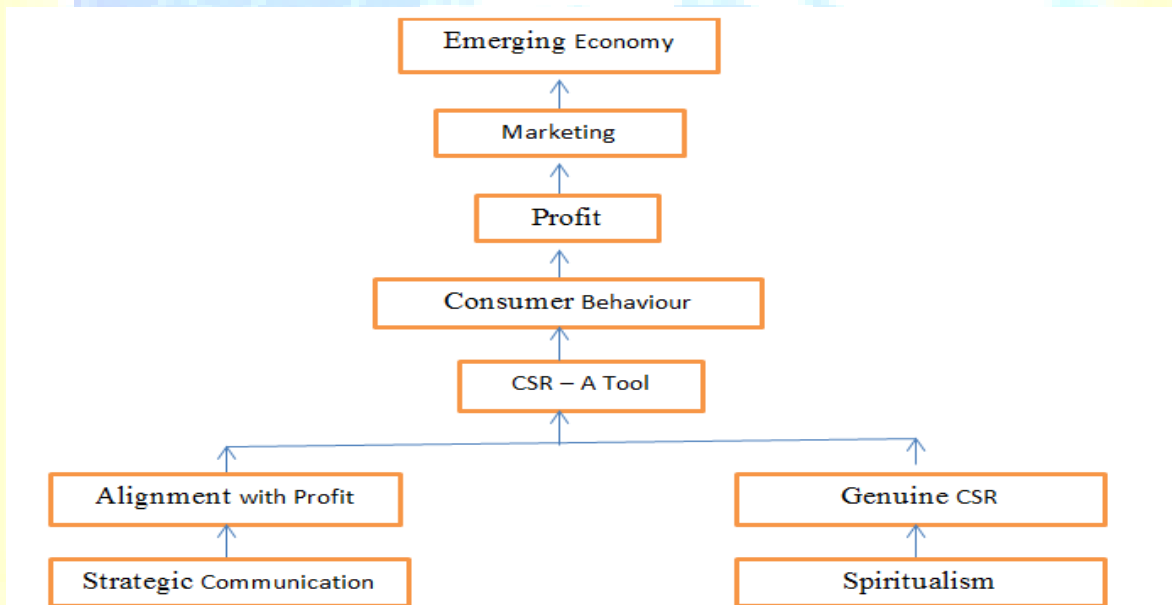


Figure 1: Proposed Model

Thus, a strategic integrated model : Marketing, Communication ,CSR, Ethics and Spiritualism with alignment to profit for both shareholders and stakeholders can help flourish any emerging economy

3.CSR :A strategic tool to brings in new revenues

To prove the utility of this alignment, we have taken two different types of case studies in short :

- i) Hindustan Uniliver Limited's (HUL) CSR initiative and positive consequences at Doom Dooma in Assam (Vikalp) to prove alignment among strategic CSR, profitability and communication by transparent doing .
- ii) Sahara Scam of Sahara Group ,where I found discrepancies between its CSR activities and Scam,to prove the need of ethical values and spiritualism.

3.A.Doom Dooma(Vikalpa, P.69 to P.79):

Hindustan UniliverLtd. set up multifarious personal care product manufacturing units at DoomDooma in Assam, between 2000 and 2004. At that time Doom Dooma was the hub of significant militant activities of ULFA. The earlier companies in the zone, like Tata Tea and Williamson Magor& Co. Ltd. paid ransom for smooth running of their factories (Times News Network, EconomicTimes, 2003, Dec. 31 cited in Vikalp).The HUL strategically used CSR as a tool to face the situation. The Co. after making a survey of the local needs and expectations, finalized the CSR activities – Sanjivani ,a mobile medical facility and Ankur-an educational facility in the vicinity region. But the task was not easy. In September 2003, it received an extortion note from the militant group,ULFA which later on attacked the residential officers' colony by a Rocket Propelled Grenade (RPG) device.The Co.could handle the situation by implementing “ strategic value creation approach ofCSR based on the needs & expectations of its various stakeholders”.The result was HUL successfully got “the acceptance, legitimacy, and cooperation to carry out sustainable business operations” even in the conflict zone . There was a continuous increase in the production volume, as also in the variety of personal care products produced in the factory..Thismeans “ that the CSR (CR) initiatives undertaken by thecompany, contributed in no small measure, to its legitimacy within the local community and continued smooth operations, which in turn, provided it a competitive advantage. The plant started first phase in January 2001, second phase in September 2001and third expansion in 2003.The company's rapid growth is “a testimony to the profitability” through CSR. **From the case study of HUL's CSR in Doom Dooma,the benefit to all: the benefits in terms of value enhancement and resulting revenue generation to HUL as also to the local community in DoomDoomaand to government through revenue and**

growth of a backward conflict zone ,are evident .Thus, “significant investment in CSR operations, based on a carefully designed need-expectations analysis in such conflict zones, not only makes business possible, but also profitable.”(Vikalp, P.69 to P.79.)

3. B. Positive Attitude

The case advocates the positive relationship between CSR and Profitability. The narrow-minded profit orientation for the firm only, no doubt, deserves objection from a virtue ethical perspective. But if there are benefits to all the shareholders and stakeholders ,as is in the case, it cannot be immoral. In the above mentioned case the company, the community, the government ,the shareholders and the stakeholders all are directly benefitted .

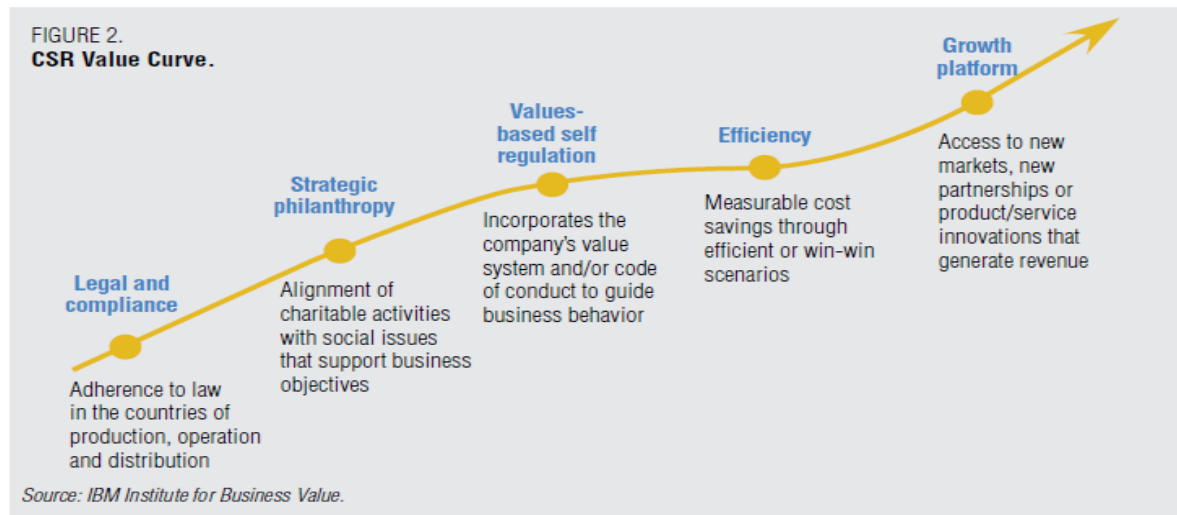
3.C. Strategic CSR

CSR is an evolutionary and transformational activity, with great assimilation power . CSR strategy development and implementation is a change process: moving from a present to a future (Georges & Jones, 1995). It is future oriented (Dawson, 2003).Strategic CSR identifies the co-existence of two concepts : social activities and the profit maximisation - the fundamental requirement of business (Porter& Kramer 2006) .

In the Doom Dooma case, the planned and strategic CSR activities ,based on the survey of local needs, efficaciously served the community through welfare activities and the company through expansion,which is a testimony to profit .Besides, IBM survey (Figure 2) also shows positive relations between CSR and growth.

3. D. Social Footing andBusiness Expansion

CSR can be helpful in setting up a new business as well as in business expansion. HUL in Doom Dooma initially faced several problems and even attacks from ULFA militants but gradually through ‘ strategic value approach of CSR, the company, with the support of local community, could successfully manage the situation. This helped HUL not only survive but also expand and flourish even in the conflict zone



As companies move from left to right on the value curve, greater returns are realized as CSR becomes more integrated into core business strategy.

Figure 2:CSR Based Growth

3.E. Gradually Changing purchasing behaviour

The customers' purchasing behaviours are fundamentally changing. More than half the consumers surveyed by Havas want to reward responsible companies by buying their products. 53% would even pay a 10% premium for those products (www.forbes.com). IBM research survey advances the view, "CSR is no longer viewed as just a regulatory or discretionary cost, but an investment that brings financial returns."(IBM) . How? CSR as a marketing tool may influence consumers leading to more sales and ultimately to profit. Their report says that "68 percent are now utilizing CSR as an opportunity and a platform for growth." (IBM - P2).

The Accenture survey also confirms this : Consumers ,these days are more faithful to those brands which prove themselves responsible, ethical .More than 50% of people worldwide – mounting to 78% in Latin America – are probably to be more dedicated to sustainable , responsible, ethical and brands . And they would actively recommend these brands to their friends, family and colleagues. "With the ever-increasing cost base and proliferation of marketing techniques and channels, this metric – a brand's consumers actively promoting its message – is potentially valuable to consumer-facing companies, providing what money can't buy to a brand's long term health (Accenture.P.13)."The following figures(Figure 3) show the Consumer consideration of sustainability factors in their purchasing decisions.

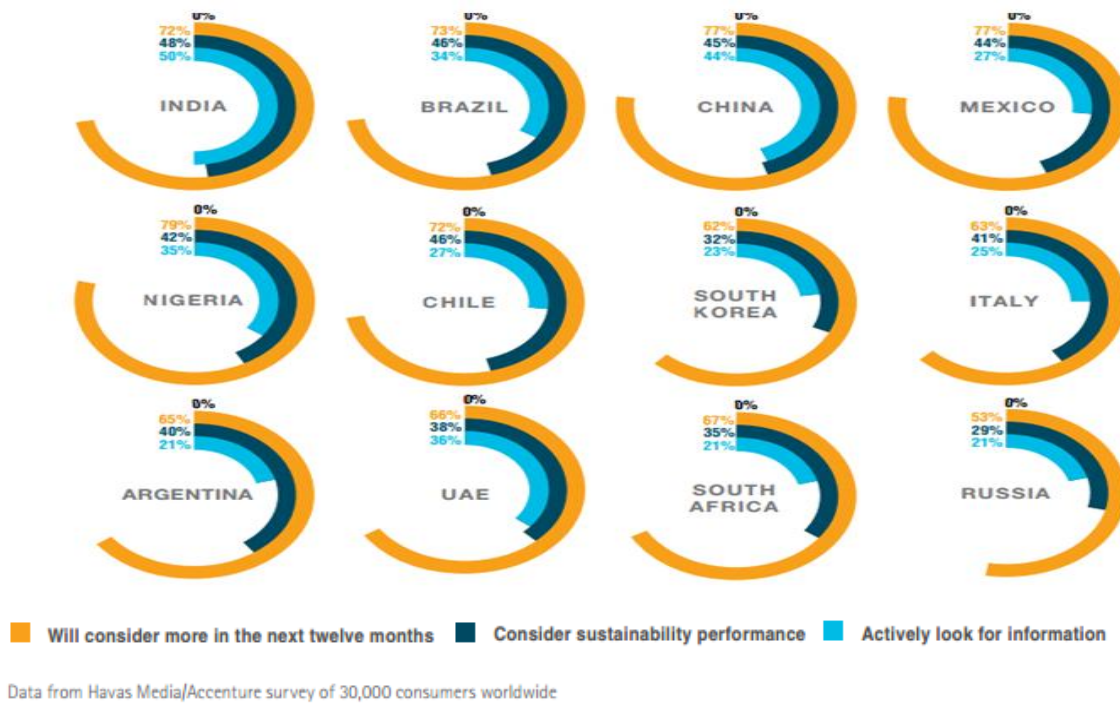


Figure 3: (Accenture,p.10)

3. F. Brand Differentiation

In current competitive environment the CSR marketing can fetch profits by helping corporates differentiate their brands .A large number of research done by various organisations prove that business can do well by doing good.“Companies like IBM, HP, and Texas Instruments topped the charts for transparency and reported results.These sector-leading companies have pushed hard to highlight their greater focus on enhanced sustainable design, manufacturing, distribution, use, and end-of-use management.

The message is, our products are socially responsible across a broad spectrum of consumer needs, beginning with the benign impact they have on the world in which they’re used. In turn, that message rivets consumer attention on the products themselves and encourages the compelling supposition that responsibly manufactured products are simply better products. Numerous renowned companies like HUL, Arcelar Mittal, Tata and also several FMCG companies have already proved that welfare activities relating to society and environment can help a lot to differentiate brands and earn revenue. .“When aligned with business objectives,

companies are beginning to see that CSR can bring competitive differentiation, permission to enter new markets, and favourable positioning in the talent wars (IBM - P.3)". See Figure 2.

3.G. Remedial Innovation

The innovative remediation products that bring solution to various problems relating to environment, energy, or society at large not only save money but in the long run also generate considerable revenues. 'Jake Backus, customer sustainability director at Coca-Cola says, "We are integrating more plant-based plastic into our products ---This has some start-up costs but we believe our investment will eventually yield a more sustainable supply chain---.In 2009 we avoided the use of 85,000 tonnes of primary packaging resulting in estimated savings of \$100m (£60m). In the same year,our water efficiency improvement avoided \$19m in costs and our energy savings resulted in \$28m savings.

3.H. Increase in Stock Price

Aggressive involvement in CSR activities can definitely assist organisations in getting registered in the stock exchange. The benefits "extend to stock value as well, as suggested by Harvard Business School data confirming that this new species of socially responsible company gets more favourable ratings from securities analysts." The company's enhanced stock price will bring profit to shareholders.

3. I.Getting Shareholders

It helps get shareholders. With mounting figure of Initial Public Offers, and increasing number of companies struggling for making capital arrangements, the choice on the side of shareholders has unprecedentedly grown. Apart from looking up to the markets for profitable investment avenues they also feel it imperative to check the social footing of the companies in which they are going to invest their hard-earned incomes and savings.Good CSR standing can prove beneficial for the company here.

4. CSR & Integrated Market Communication

4. A. Marketing Tool

The objectives behind Integrated marketing communication process are to convey information, instruct the market, create brand awareness, and advance a positive image of the company. CSR has enough potential for marketing promotion along with other components of marketing mix and can prove an important step in the evolution of marketing in emerging economy. So far only seller centric and utility centric advertisements have been prevalent, Now, advertisements, with focus on human welfare may prove more effective. Global leaders such as Johnson & Johnson, HP, and Shell have publicly acknowledged their social and environmental responsibilities, informed stakeholders about CSR and generated good revenues. (Engardio, Capell, Carey, & Hall, 2007). However, in India as compared to developed economies, still Stakeholder awareness and maturity on understanding CR impacts and making informed decisions is relatively lower. The following figure (Figure 4) shows that efforts are required for stakeholder engagement.

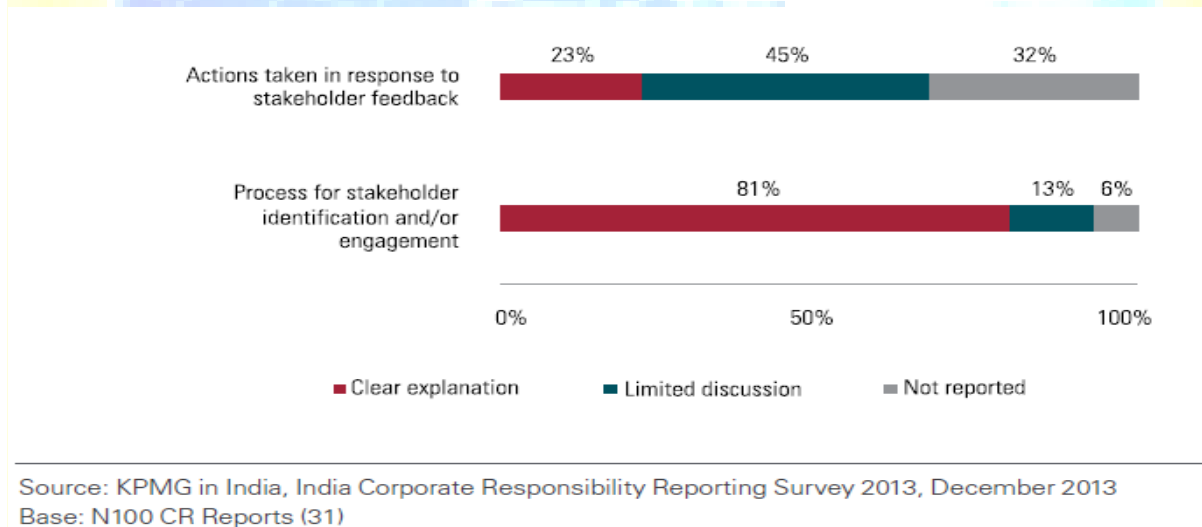


Figure 4: Stakeholder Engagement Process and Feedback

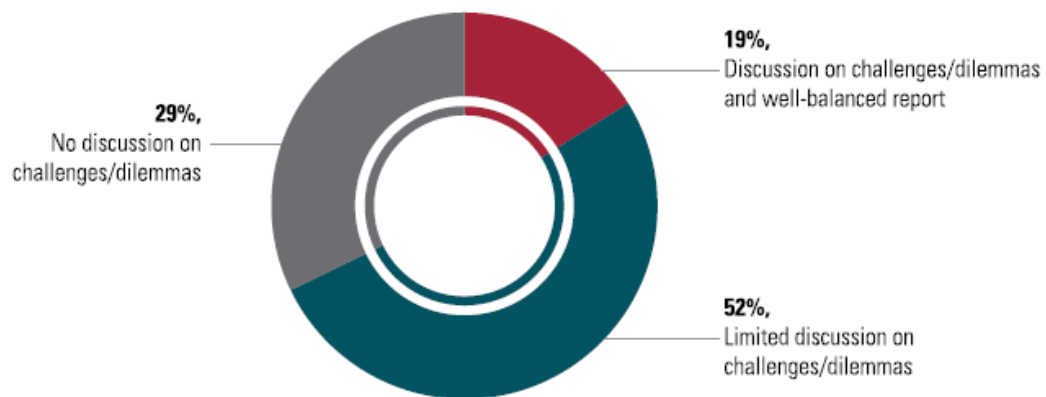
Thus, by creating awareness about CSR and by acquainting people with CSR initiatives of the organisation, marketing communication can help business grow.

4. B. Care to be Taken

4. B.1. Of course, The companies should not brag but the stakeholders should be informed. (Kotler, p340)

4. B.2. The commitment to corporate responsibility must be authentic.

4. B.3. The virtues of sincerity, accuracy, and transparency are very relevant for the CSR marketing communication. The following figure shows the need to encourage companies to make data on challenges and dilemmas and performance report year-on-year available to stakeholders. (see Our Figure :5)



Source: KPMG in India, India Corporate Responsibility Reporting Survey 2013, December 2013
Base: N100 CR Reports (31)

Figure 5: Discussion on Challenges and Dilemmas

4. C. The ethical objections against the marketing of CSR can be countered strongly :

The management has a duty to the shareholders to use company's resources to enhance the firm's competitiveness. Hence,

- CSR initiatives that generate no value for the corporation itself are morally challenging.
- If, these resources are used to enhance the firm's CSR performance, and contribute to the competitiveness of the corporation as well, the initiative deserves appreciation. (Porter and Kramer, 2002)

5.Spiritualism

The need of alignment of spiritualism with CSR and Marketing can be effectively illustrated with the Sahara Scam Case Study in short:

Sahara Case Study: This is an example to prove the discrepancy between CSR activities and scam. CSR if run as an act of greenwashing will do harm not only to concerned organisation, shareholders and stake holders only but to the economy as a whole.

We shall take two companies of Sahara group: Sahara India Real State Corporation Ltd.(SIRECL) & Sahara Housing Investment Corporation Ltd. (SHICL) for illustration. These companies belong to the great Indian conglomerate : Sahara India Pariwar , headquartered in Lucknow ,India. These companies collected subscription by issuing optionally fully convertible debenture (OFCD) to their investors between 25th April 2008 and 13th April 2011 and earned more than 24000 crore from about 3 million investors in the guise of a "Private Placement" without fulfilling the norms applicable to the public offerings of securities.

Actually, in 2008, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) ,had got apprehensive of Sahara's unexplained and exponential growth . Investigations were made and irregularities were found.Sahara India Financial Corp. Ltd was ordered not to accept fresh deposits maturing beyond June 2011 . Now, the company wanted money out of the purview of RBI from the public to float its company. Hence, the group thought of getting money by issuing OFCD by creating two companies i.e. SIRECL & SHICL and it got all the clearance from the registrar of company without complying with the requirements applicable to the public offerings of securities Market regulator- Security and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The two kind of money was invested : the black money and the hard earned money. The poor and the middle class became victim i.e.“My wife had an accident some years back I don't have much savings, so I thought I'll be able to save some money by putting in a small amount every month,” said Chaudhary, an office helper at a construction company in Uttar Pradesh state.’

(*Reuters*. 2012.) Some of these poor investors who with lots of dreams for future had invested their hard earned money got suspicious and raised their voice against these companies. The case

came into light. The tussle between SEBI and Sahara started. The SC ordered Sahara to refund 24,000 crore to investors with 15 % interest . SEBI was asked to facilitate the refund. Mr K M Abraham, the whole time member of SEBI observed that the money raised through OFCDs was camouflaged as private placements and they did not have proper records of the identity of its investors. Then, How and to whom would they return the money? The group also failed to produce KYC details. Later on, the company , no doubt, refunded Rs. 5,120 crore but it failed to meet the deadline for further payments . After legal procedure finally the owner, Mr Subrota Roy was jailed. *but could it solve the suffering of middle class investors (black money investors aside)? Could it regain the faith of its consumers and customers.* If this is the condition of big business conglomerates , will it create the gap between rich and poor or will it add to economic growth?

Now, on the one hand there is this scam on the other Sahara CSR site(<http://www.sahara.in/csr.html>) displays multifarious CSR activities. I have taken only a few to prove my point.

An Emotional Commitment Towards Society :

Sahara site says that the group is engaged in social welfare projects, alleviating people's sufferings and bringing to them new rays of hope and a brighter tomorrow, but Number two investment aside, what about common people who invested hard earned money with a hope for brighter tomorrow? On the one hand the Sahara group has shown emotional commitment towards society and on the other hand they played with the emotions & life of 3 crore people by befooling them and taking their hard earned money from them .

Adoption of families of Kargil Martyrs & Financial Assistance to the victims of Dhantewadha Naxal Attack :

Sahara India Pariwar has adopted the families of Kargil Martyrs and has committed itself to provide emotional and economic support to all such families by allocating 50 crore (USD 10.65 million) approx. But what about returning 24000 crore to 3 million people? On the one hand they are showing that they are providing **financial assistance to the victims of**

DhantewadhaNaxal Attack and on the other hand they have to refund Rs.24,030 crore—collected in 2008 and 2009—along with 15% interest per year to Sebi within three months

It is with these kind of discrepancies between these two that ethical and spiritual concerns drag our attention. CSR refers to human concern, government concern and welfare and development of society as well as of the organisation; while scams and scandals go contrary to this and the reason behind these are greed, corruption unethical leadership and governance and avoidance of Responsibility, accountability and authority. Naturally, if the two things are happening simultaneously, the question arises whether it is genuine CSR or greenwashing sort of thing? **Hence, the need of alignment of CSR with ethics and spiritualism.**

5. A. Need

For genuine CSR activity and communication spiritual mindset is a must. CSR is basically about doing the right thing. It is the process of constructing a better world (Friedman & Miles, 2002) and create pressure to demonstrate good and accountable corporate responsibility (Pinkston & Carroll, 1994). This pressure, in India has increased since section 135 of The Companies Act 2013 made 2% CSR contribution mandatory. But can only this lead to genuine CSR? There are plethora of examples where irreparable harm is done to shareholders and stakeholders by corporate leaders. While their websites show the CSR activities –human welfare schemes.

5. B.Philosophy

The foundation of ethics and spiritualism lies in philosophy. Man commits different kinds of sins for the gross body but he forgets that the parts of gross body are subject to Karmas “Karmanisancitam.” (Paingla,11/2,p.908)In Indian philosophy there is a very close link between Karma (action) and Dharma (duty). Because Dharma (action) can be performed through Karma only So one should pay attention to one’s Karmas. Any kind of action done with the realisation that ‘salvation is attained by the purification of the heart resulting from the performance of works done with the notion that these are all for the sake of the Lord and dedicated to Him” (Isa, /1/2,(p569) will definitely help develop a happy, contented and progressive society. There should be proper synchronisation between personal benefits and social benefits. Today, most of the problems rotate round ‘shreyas’ (good- gradual but stable

progress) and ‘preyas’ (pleasant- short-term profits) as mentioned in the Upanishads. Preyas refers to— apparently pleasant though actually harmful and Shreyas is used for the truly beneficial, though often apparently repelling. When confused between the two, the Upanishad’s advice may be helpful: “ Different is the good, and different, indeed, is the pleasant .These two, with different purposes, bind a man. Of these two, it is well for him who takes hold of the good; but he who chooses the pleasant, fails of his aim.” (Katha,1/2/1/,p. 607) .

5. C. Faith in God : Lead by Values

To develop this kind of value based mindset transformation of society : shift from mere dazzling materialistic attractions to ethics and spiritualism is need of the time. CSR can not be solely driven by external pressures but can be better championed by personal morality, inspired by managers or employees’ own socially oriented personal values (Hemingway, 2005; Hemingway &Maclagan, 2004). It adds the concept “lead by values” to the concept “manage by objectives.” Values and ethics are derived from spiritualism and can be sustained with the help of spiritualism, because “ Rationalist ethics may provide knowledge about virtuous behaviour. But Moral empowerment comes from a relationship with God. ”

(Rom: 7:19-20 cited by Xavier) . The 2007 Pew Global Attitudes Project which surveys 45,000 people in 47 countries found that there is a widespread agreement that faith in God is a prerequisite to being moral and to have good values.(survey by Gallup p.69. ramaswamy, Yeung, au). because “mere reason unassisted by faith cannot lead to illumination.”(Katha, 1/2/9, 611). Thus, the integration of ,spiritualism ,CSR and business management is essential

Suggestions :

- Create awareness about spiritualism for value based society
- Align sustainable growth with business goals and its impact on business – from cost to growth.
- Select a cause or issue that has a high fit with its core values and competencies, and that also fits with the corporate reputation.
- Determine proper communication strategies. The information should shift from visibility to transparent tangibility.

- Give holistic information, education and training to shareholders and stakeholders
- Be very careful to avoid the impression that the company is only in it for the money
- Honour the virtues and corresponding duties of truthfulness ,accuracy and credibility.
- Accuracy is needed to ensure that the content of what we say is true.
- There should not be a gap between promise and performance .

Conclusion

Thus, The paradigm integrating CSR, IMC and spiritualism can help achieve the end goal of marketing : Profit ; can play active role in the welfare of society ; and can help an emerging economy grow. If everyone believes that life in this world is not the end rather it is an unending cycle rotating round the philosophy of Karma (good or bad), that wealth is not the ultimate goal of life, a great deal of good can be done to all. The more profit the more CSR and the more CSR the more profit seem to be the two sides of the same coin, provided proper care and precaution are taken in implementation.

This means on the one hand CSR activities can not be performed without profit and on the other hand in the contemporary competitive environment profit earning requires new strategies and tools. CSR is of great help here. If profit is earned through CSR, this will be a motivation for more CSR activities. On the other hand, A company's most valuable asset is its ability to convert brand power into customer buying decisions and CSR can help do this.

Our article both identifies new insights and extends extant theory by building on previous research .The paper supports positive link between the model and increased profits. Our analysis, though not conclusive, does suggest that CSR backed by spiritualism and motivated by profits can be more productive .Thus, the paper provides a platform for further research.

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Note : The Sahara case study is based on the material available on various newspapers and websites.