

A Study of Impact of CSR Practices in Media Industry

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Abstract: Aristotle said, “Media is the means of catharsis and is must for normal living”. Media is considered as "mirror" of the modern society. In fact it is the media which shapes our lives, rules our thoughts even our opinions and judgments are drawn and decided by media. On one hand where media is busy getting into our nerves, playing with our minds by setting our opinions on some major issues, the question arises here is whether media itself follow any norms? Does it consider any of its responsibility towards the society? Media communicates the several CSR practices of corporate, highlighting their achievements, show off their lack backs but is media itself having any sense of social responsibility or it has just constrained itself on others ‘yet to be done’, list? In this study we will try to answer all these questions about the media industry. Our study will be based on 3 different television media channels and on their CSR efforts.

Keywords: CSR, Media, Sony, Zee, Star Plus.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Social media is transforming the face of CSR, as citizens worldwide have unprecedented access to information – via websites, blogs and apps – about corporate behavior.” (2013 Cone Communications/Echo GLOBAL CSR STUDY)

The Role of Social Media in Corporate Social Responsibility

I. Fundamentals of Social Media:

Target Audience - Your target audience may not necessarily be your customers though it may lead to some conversion. They may be the people who influence your customers of their buying decision. These stake holders may be the family members of your customers, which will lead to group buying. Whoever they are, understand where you can find them on social media, how do they network and share their opinion.

Authenticity- It’s time to be personable as a company and open yourselves up to transparency. Be seen in the same places as your customers would. Study where the crowd and signals are. Explore and experiment new platforms not only to reach out to Gen Y but Baby boomers who are beginning to go onto the social media. Develop your own standard operating procedure and usage guidelines so that entire company is aligned.

Honest- You may get as many negative comments as good or neutral comments. Turning a negative comment into a persuasive pitch is the real art of communication on social media. You’ll get a good chance to explain yourself further with every misguided remark. Customers or key stake holders may not be looking for an answer but feel satisfied as long as there is a channel of feedback.

Your Story- Tell your own story. Do not duplicate what others have already started doing. Look around you and embrace what your organization is most concern about, like-

Marketplace:

- The impact on society of your core products and services
- Ethical trading
- Ethical advertising

- Treatment of, and vetting of, suppliers

Environment:

- Contribution to greenhouse gas emissions through energy use and other parts of your process
- Use of raw materials, both nonrenewable resources which by definition are not sustainable in the long term, and as importantly renewable resources which are produced in a fashion which is not currently sustainable.
- Potential for environmental accidents - releases of pollutants into air, water or land.

Workplace:

- Work-life balance of your employees
- Managing diversity in the workforce
- Training, development and life-long learning
- Eradicating abusive or bullying behavior

Community:

- Social problems
- Increasing income gap

Share, Not Sell- It is a myth to say that by sharing all your knowledge on social media, you are giving your expertise away for free. You share knowledge and insights; you sell your solutions offline. Understand that every business is eventually a service business.

II. How can companies leverage on Social Media for CSR?

Commit and Lead - Decide on your key message and roll out a posting schedule, assign the right people with the right emotional quotient to manage the social media platforms in your company. Such staffs are always the internal brand ambassadors for your corporate social responsibility journey. Devote resources and re-write job description to lead the company into the social media culture in order to communicate your CSR mission effectively on social spaces.

Share and Listen - Sharing isn't a culture in Asia, we like to sell rather than share. We must learn to share our knowledge and sell only our expertise. Listening is an active engagement exercise. It means knowing what is the language and lingo used by the people we serve. What are they talking about us? What do they know and how much do they really understand? Is someone speaking on our behalf? Do we have brand ambassadors out there who constantly creating awareness which we are not aware of? Ultimately, listen to the real and current social issues to be addressed and re-align your strategy if you have to.

Innovate - Most companies are already being creative in their CSR, now it's time to be innovative. It's isn't enough to give time off for staff to be volunteerism, create a friendly competition among your staff and make the results known in your intranet.

Communicate - In this modern day and age, it is not a matter of how good you are doing what you are doing, but rather how many people out there know you are good at what you are doing.

Invest - It's great to spend time and resources on social issues you are passionate about. It's even greater if you set up a fund and motivate other stake holders to do the same. Get the public involved by encouraging pooling of funds to serve a certain cause. Get social through your investment and you will reap mindshare and brand recognition.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

CSR is defined broadly as "including the concern for the impact of all of the corporation's activities on the total welfare of society" (Bowman and Haire 1976, p. 13). This assumes that the entity is influenced by and, in turn, has influence upon the society in which it operates (Deegan 2002; Farook and Lanis 2005). In that context, CSR disclosure is "the process of providing information designed to discharge social accountability. Typically this act would ... be undertaken by the accountable organization and thus might include information in the annual report, special publications or even socially oriented advertising" (Gray, Owen and Maunders 1987, p. 4). This indicates that CSR disclosure is a method by which management can interact with the broader society to "influence external perceptions about their organization" (Deegan 2002, p. 292).

According to Belch and Belch (2007), the media are “organization whose function is to provide information/entertainment to subscribers, viewers, or readers while offering marketers an environment for reaching audiences with print or broadcast messages”, for example, television stations, radio stations, magazines and newspapers. In providing print and/or broadcast messages, media organizations have been often criticized for unethical practices, including showing bias, misleading, deceptive or offensive program content. As media organization communicate to a large audience globally, there is concern on its effects on the more vulnerable sections of society, like children, elderly and low socioeconomic groups (Belch and Belch 2007). With such a large audience and potential effect on the community, it is important see how these organizations view their social responsibility.

3. METHODOLOGY

To discover what the leading media organizations are doing in terms of CSR activities, the annual reports and websites were observed for any type of CSR disclosure. The websites is independently reviewed for all CSR activities, which were then compared to ensure some degree of reliability. Few annual reports actually included CSR information, while others mentioned the existence of the company’s Code of Ethics. Therefore, the main focus of the results comes from information placed on the company’s websites. After looking at the annual reports for any comment on CSR, the website was searched for the existence of a social responsibility report, or pages with corporate, governance, ethics, community responsibility codes or guidelines. From these a number of observations were made.

4. THE STUDY

For the study of this research we are taking into account the 3 most watched and liked television channels. They are Sony, Star Plus and Zee Entertainment.

To start with-

Star plus:

Star plus had announced the launch of a path-breaking CSR initiative -'Aap Ki Kachehri-Aap Ke Dwaar' in 2009. This initiative was to train people in dispute resolution and work towards building a more peaceful and productive Indian society by training NGOs in dispute resolution and effective mediation. The initiative was supported by the Central Social Welfare board in addition to Navjyoti Foundation, National Commission for Women and Delhi Commission for Women. Each training program had 30 people, who have a few years experience in dispute resolution and mediation. These people were chosen from NGOs having high credibility and the ability to influence lives of the common people. , "Aap Ki Kachehri' show had a journey of resolving many cases which have been extremely challenging and difficult. Star plus had also raised funds for the rehabilitation work at Uttarakhand. Television network Star India decided to rope in some star power for its fundraising campaign.To start with this, a study was also done to assess the situation and gauge the funds required to rehabilitate at the afflicted areas with major NGOs working there. Supported by some eminent people from both the film n television world, star plus could managed a very successful show and which got them a sum of approx 30 cr.

Star plus declares that most of their shows are in itself a CSR policy and they work for the welfare of the society. Added to this league, another very successful and much appreciated show of star plus was launched named, ‘Satyamev Jayate’. Shankar who is the COE of starplus said that SMJ has had its impact on Indian society. “The sex ratio in India has been under pressure and declining. The gap between female and male kids has been rising. For the first time in 40 years, in the state of Maharashtra, where Mumbai is, it was reversed by a factor of 24 for each thousand. The state health minister publicly went and acknowledged that every single policy and intervention remained the same. The only external stimulus that had come in was SMJ’s episode on female foeticide and he said his officers felt that it was SMJ that gave women the confidence to resist abortion.”

Shankar also opined that the SMJ episode on drugs led to three or four governments passing legislations and orders to make sure government hospitals only supply generic drugs.

He also disclosed that four states have gone and set up fast track courts for rape victims following an episode which highlighted and demanded the need for this. "We wanted fast track courts," said Shankar, "because the Indian judicial system can sometimes be very slow and rape victims were struggling with the time it took to get justice. And we got a response from some state governments."

ZEE:

ZEE has always believed in inclusive growth where every human being is treated equally and thus helps in the development of the society as a whole. ZEE is of the school of thought that 'you aren't successful if you haven't given back to what you have got from'. The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy at ZEE propounds the belief that 'a business cannot succeed in a society that fails'.

ZEE CARE is an apex body created to manage the CSR Activities across Zee Entertainment Enterprises limited.

Function of the body is to adopt and manage CSR activities at the company level and to create cross channel synergies to encourage adoption of CSR by different product. Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited, India's leading Media and Entertainment Company has launch its Corporate Social Responsibility initiative under "ZEE Care". Through this initiative, ZEE shall endeavor to make a difference in the lives of underprivileged children through education.

CSR Focus Areas:

ZEE has identified Education and Women Empowerment as the focus area under corporate social responsibility initiatives. The other core CSR areas on which ZEE is working are listed below-

Literacy:

By collaborating with local communities and partner organization ZEE focuses to address literacy and Gender Equality in Education. This is a more sustainable program model, which could be extended to over 20 schools in 2014, which would approximately benefit 5000 children studying in rural government primary schools.

Girls Education:

ZEE has partnered with Room to Read, to support Girls Education in the district of Jodhpur. Through this program, ZEE provides educational support to 100 Girls in higher secondary school along with Life skill trainings.

As part of the initiative, ZEE Care in association with Room to Read, is supporting construction of fully equipped 10 libraries in district of Ajmer in Rajasthan and 10 libraries in district of Haridwar in Uttrakhand. ZEE care will ensure that the libraries are not just created by the teachers but also are trained on how to manage the libraries, the books are maintained and the students encouraged exploring more and more books and expanding their knowledge horizon. Each of the libraries will have local language and English books designed specifically for children. A minimum of 400 books, depending on the strength of the school were provided. This project would reach out to at least 4000 students directly and many more indirectly

Women Empowerment:

The Women's Empowerment Program aims to organize women, build their capabilities, increase their confidence, and initiate income-generating projects for creating supplementary livelihood in the community.

SONY:

Sony currently promotes CSR initiatives in line with its CSR agenda, which sets seven key areas of focus - corporate governance, compliance, human resources, responsible sourcing, quality and services, environment and community - with the aim of strengthening its operating foundation and continuously enhancing its corporate value. Sony's CSR section is tasked with monitoring the progress of initiatives and disclosing information about Sony's efforts by preparing CSR reports and promoting dialogue with stakeholders. Sony's materiality assessment reaffirmed the importance of the seven key areas of its CSR agenda in which continues to be in the areas that Sony shall promote its initiatives.

CSR Activities of SONY:

With this vision in mind, the Company proposes to carry out one or more of the following

Corporate Social Responsibility activities ("CSR Activities"/ "CSR Projects")

- i. Promoting education, including special education and employment enhancing vocational skills especially among children, women and the differently able including livelihood enhancement projects.
- ii. Promoting gender equality and thus empowering women.
- iii. Ensuring environmental sustainability, ecological balance, protection of flora and fauna and animal welfare.

- iv. Training to promote rural sports, nationally recognized sports, Paralympics sports as well as Olympic sports.
- v. Contributions to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund or any other fund set up by the Central Government as part of a project approved by CSRC for socio-economic development and relief and welfare of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes, minorities and women.
- vi. Protection of national heritage and promotion of arts and culture and
- vii. Rural development projects.

In November 2009, Sony announced a new set of climate change-related targets for fiscal year 2011 and beyond. These are to

- (a) Achieve an absolute reduction in greenhouse gas emissions—measured in CO2 emissions—from Sony Group sites of 30% from the fiscal year 2000 level by the end of fiscal year 2015;and
- (b) Achieve a reduction in power consumption per product of 30% from the fiscal year 2008 level by the end of fiscal year 2015. These targets were reviewed and approved by the WWF as revised targets for Sony under the Climate Savers Program.

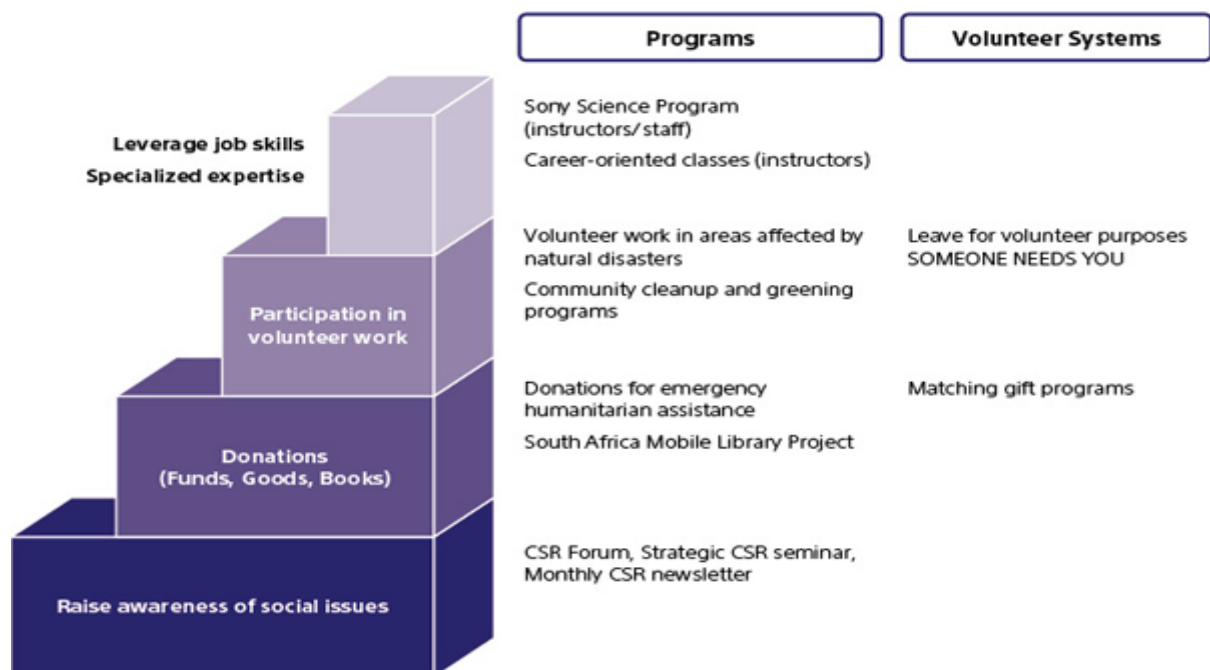
CSR Organizational Structure:

Sony has established an office for CSR that is responsible for formulating policies concerning Sony's social responsibilities, implementing these policies throughout the Group and communicating with third parties through, among others, the sharing of information.

CSR section also handles CSR-related disclosure, promotes dialogue with stakeholders, ensures feedback reaches management and any pertinent Sony department (e.g., legal & compliance, environment, product quality, procurement, human resources, marketing) as well as interdepartmental meetings, and is incorporated into management's actions. The relevant departments promote CSR activities throughout the Group by ensuring policies and initiatives thus incorporated are conveyed to Group companies.

Recognizing the importance of raising employee awareness with regard to the effective promotion of CSR, Sony offers a variety of educational programs based on a three-level approach, whereby employees are encouraged first to learn about CSR, second to participate in CSR activities and third to incorporate CSR into their day-to-day work.

For Sony, engaging and working together with various stakeholders is vital for pursuing CSR activities. Sony not only promotes engagement with stakeholders in implementing its CSR activities but also encourages the participation of multiple stakeholder groups in the planning of those activities, thereby contributing to the creation of a global framework.



Sony undertakes a wide range of activities with the aim of promoting CSR initiatives. One example was its role as joint chair of the working group on the formulation of the ISO 26000, international standard of social responsibility published in November 2010, on which Sony submitted reports in Japan through the Japanese Industrial Standards Committee (JISC).

5. CONCLUSION

As we have seen that all the three chosen media channels have done a quite noticeable job in the field of CSR. And with passing of time the CSR activities of all the channels are been growing. CSR and Social Media Corporate Strategy are made for each other. Social Media is a new way of corporate life, a new world of communication which is live and spontaneous. It requires commitment just like Corporate Social Responsibility.

The study clearly shows the media is very clear about its role for the society and it is progressively working on it.

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