

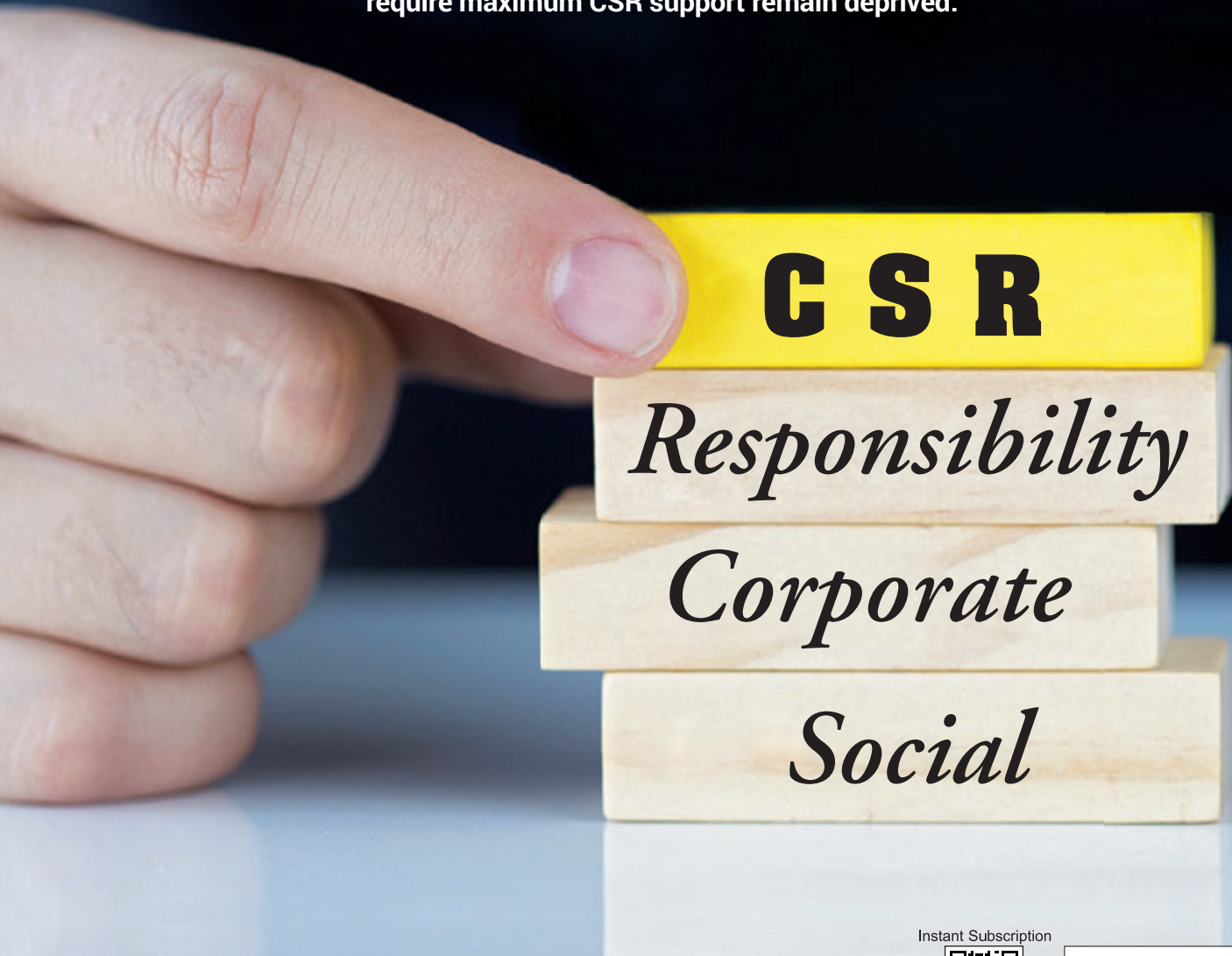
INDIAN CEMENT REVIEW®

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ASCENDING ALTRUISM

KPMG report found that companies are spending more than what has been prescribed. But the most backward districts of the country that require maximum CSR support remain deprived.



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“The vision of the company’s CSR is to strengthen community relationship”

- Vinita Singhania,

Vice Chairman and Managing Director, JK Lakshmi Cement



What are the activities you are involved under CSR commitment and how the government mandate is prescribing various benchmarks?

The mission statement of the company unequivocally state to be a socially responsible corporate citizen. This commitment had given our organisation to adopt an effective CSR approach to implement multiple interventions in the surrounding regions of our business and plant locations, to bring transformational changes in the lives of the marginalised and vulnerable communities and groups. The CSR policy of the company strongly reflects the commitment towards inclusive growth and development. The vision of the company’s CSR is to strengthen community relationship and to bring sustainable change in quality of life of neighborhood community through innovative solutions in education, health, livelihoods and community development.

The company is undertaking multiple CSR projects like NayaSavera – a family integrated welfare programme, which focusses on reducing maternal and infant’s mortality; project Aarambh aimed at

bringing back drop-outs and never-been-to-school children to the school; Gyan Lakshmi; Arogya Lakshmi; Anna Lakshmi; support to “Savera School” for differently-abled children; VamaLakshmi for skilling of women and girls and various others projects in the thematic area of health, education, livelihoods; environmental conservation; water and sanitation and rural development.

Under thematic area of livelihoods and skills development, the company implements various activities for the purpose of creating employability for unemployed youths, women and girls, through training on stitching, beautician, embroidery and two-wheeler repairing. Income generation projects like stitching and embroidery, broom, paper plate/dona, phenyl making, pickle/papad making, cotton bags, sanitary napkins are being implemented for women for generating additional income. Apart from the vocational training, other key intervention has been to support small and marginal farmers with high yielding varieties seeds to increase production and income. The company also implements “Vidya Scholarship” project for the purpose of supporting education of children of masons and petty contractors.

The government CSR mandate has resulted into various companies taking up the social development projects around their business facilities which is creating a “win-win” for the business as well as various stakeholders. The companies are bringing business core competencies and learning to the solution of social issues and problems, and that is resulting into high level of social entrepreneurship and innovations. Business approach has replaced “not-for-profit and philanthropic” approach towards larger social and economic issues of health, education, livelihoods, skilling, affordable housing, water and sanitation and host of other challenges which the disadvantaged groups and communities are facing in our country. Last but not the least, the CSR mandate has also brought “Project Management benchmarks” to social and community development projects along with company’s financial commitment to them.

How are the actual and prescribed budgets for the last three years? Please give details of allocations for various activities. How long it will take for you to complete the mission you have undertaken in that particular region?

The actual and prescribed CSR budget for the company for last three is as below:

CSR spending - In Rs Lakhs

FY	Budget	Actual
2017-18	89.00	130.78
2018-19	83.48	122.48
2019-20	172.04	181.48

Details of allocations for various CSR activities for FY 2019-20 is tabulated below:

CSR expenses (2019-20)

Figures in Rs Lakh

Sl. No.	CSR activities	Amount spent
1	Health Care (NayaSavera Project, Aarogya Lakshmi, Ann Lakshmi, medical camps, COVID-19 relief activities)	53.44
2	Education (Project Aarambh, Project Saksham, Gyan Lakshmi, deployment of teachers, computer training, e-Learning, NIOS certification)	83.66
3	Water and sanitation	15.48
4	Vocational skills and livelihoods	17.1
5	Rural development	11.80
	Total	181.48

Almost all the CSR projects of the company are aimed at bringing transformational changes in the lives of the disadvantaged and marginalised communities located at remote and or under-served locations. The CSR projects are being implemented to address the issues of low maternal and child health status; lack of quality medical health services for the poor and marginalised communities; high incidence of out-of-school and school drop-out children; poor infrastructure of government schools; lack of skills among youths and women for self and job employment in the villages and communities across plant locations, which benefit the disadvantaged, vulnerable and economically marginalised communities like scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, below poverty line families, small and marginal farmers, landless groups, women-headed families, special children, person suffering with chronic diseases like MDR-TB, and youths with no skills for either employability or resources for small business.

The kind of exclusion and inter-generational deprivation and marginalisation which many of these community's face, require long-term sustained and multi-stakeholders, multi-dimensional efforts for their development. In this context, while various CSR projects aim at achieving time-bound targets, the company believes that achieving the mission will only happen over medium to long-term.

What has been the impact of various CSR activities in various geographies? What is the criterion adopted in choosing the target group or community for CSR initiatives?

The various CSR projects have been able to bring qualitative changes in the lives of the community around the plant location. The impact has been on various facets of life like improving the general health well-being including maternal and child health parameters; education and skills of women and girls; empowering women, girls and youths through skilling and promotion of various livelihoods leading to increase in their income level impacting positively their general familial and societal status. The company initiated project Aarambh with a focus to bring tribal children back to school in the Pindwara block of Sirohi district in Rajasthan. Since beginning number of tribal children—drop-outs and never-been-to-school—have been enrolled into various government schools.

Naya Savera—an integrated family welfare programme—with an aim to improve reproductive and child health, has significantly improved mother and child health among the marginalised schedule caste and tribal women living in very difficult terrain. The company has supported number of government schools with libraries; renovation of buildings; construction of toilets and classrooms; provision of additional support teachers; drinking water, etc. across its plant locations, which have improved learning environment and outcomes. More than 3,000 women and girls have attended company training programmes on tailoring; beautician; basic computer; mobile repairing; embroidery nearby its various plants in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, and Chhattisgarh. The company has also done impactful projects for water conservation; differently abled children and other vulnerable groups which have improved their lives.

The company as per its CSR policy, work in partnership with neighborhood communities around its cement plants locations for the purpose of CSR projects designing and implementation. This is the fundamental approach through which the beneficiary communities and areas are identified and selected. Another core principle and approach in terms of selection of the beneficiary is social and economic deprivation

and marginalisation of the groups and families.

Accordingly the company has identified the disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized stakeholders viz. scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, economically weaker groups including below poverty line families, small and marginal farmers, landless groups, women-headed families, special children, person suffering with chronic diseases like Multi Drug Resistant (MDR), youths with no skills for either employability or resources for small business – communities in the vicinity of the manufacturing plants and the contractual workers and their families working in the plant. The company also identifies vulnerable groups in the product supply chain like truck drivers, loaders, masons, and petty contractors and undertakes CSR projects for them.

Can you give us the best-case study that has yielded highest / best results?

Naya Savera was initiated by the company in 2004. The project was started with coverage of 10 revenue villages and with an approximate total population of 30,000. Currently the project is operational at 35 villages and 55 hamlets and with an approximate 80,000 population coverage of Tehsil Pindwara, District Sirohi, Rajasthan.

Objective of the programme is to reduce infants and maternal mortality and morbidities and improve spacing to significantly improve mother and child survival of the poor, marginalised schedule caste and tribal women living in very difficult terrain in Pindwara block, Sirohi district, Rajasthan. A cadre of trained community level health workers and the project team together provide end-to-end services and solutions to the targeted beneficiaries. Annually, they provide ANCs to approximately 1500 women, PNC to 1200 and follow-up more than 1000 children till complete immunisation.

The project has achieved high first trimester registration, full three ANC check-ups; institutional deliveries; and an estimated infant mortality rate below 39 per 1,000 live births. No maternal death was reported in the project area for several years now. There is an exhaustive database, a line- listing of pregnant woman, identification of those at-risk and targeted action for their protection.

What is the challenges the country is facing in the socio-economic sphere and CSR activities can contribute towards fulfilling these needs?

India still ranks low in terms of Human Development Index in the world. Also, country India must walk long in terms of achieving sustainable development goals. The country has a huge burden in terms of relatively

high maternal and infant mortality rate; low sex ratio; high drop-out of children particularly after primary school level; poor quality of learnings; high youth unemployment combined with their unemployability; low level of skills set to get jobs; low productivity in the agriculture sector combined with supply side bottleneck; Poor health infrastructure; low level of digital literacy particularly in the rural areas and among poor and disadvantaged communities; education – industry connect; water crisis and its conservation and promotion of renewable energy are among some of the critical challenges in which CSR can definitely play a breakthrough role.

CSR shall also focus on facilitating last mile connectivity for the disadvantaged and marginalised communities in terms of accessing various government schemes targeting them.

How do you think the CSR scenario will pan out in general in the next two to three years, in the wake of COVID-19 impact on business revenues and profitability?

In general, the COVID-19 has and will have an impact on the business revenue and profitability in the coming years. Various organisations including World Bank and IMF have forecasted falling GDP for our country. That means the business revenue and profitability of the companies will go down which would result in fall in availability of resources for CSR as per the 2 per cent mandate of the Law. This will impact scale of implementation and sustainability of various CSR projects at the level of pre-COVID-19. However, at our company we have been engaged in the community development projects since last 30 years, way before the CSR law came into force. We have been spending on key CSR projects in thrust areas of health, education, skills and livelihoods and rural development and we will continue with our commitment to bring transformational changes in the lives of the communities around our plant units.

Many of the CSR projects in the communities happen in group settings with high human interface and therefore, norms like social distancing, restrictions on gatherings, emphasis on contactless interactions and the likes may, most probably, increase the use of technology in the CSR domain. This will potentially change the content and methods of dissemination of various development and behavioral – change communications. Company's focus would also be on capacity building of our CSR team and higher use of technology to respond to emerging realities for better CSR outcomes.



- BS SRINIVASALU REDDY