



WOMEN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY- THE ROLE OF INDIAN COMMERCIAL BANKS

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Abstract: *The issue of inclusive and sustainable growth is very decisive, considering the disproportionate allocation of wealth and widening gap between the prosperity of the rich and the plight of the poor. The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities have started since 1990s now has become a medium for most of Indian corporate to contribute to inclusive growth of Indian society. Besides the private sector, the government is also ensuring that the public sector companies participate actively in CSR initiatives by spending 2-5 per cent of their net profits. The new Companies Bill also made it compulsory to spend 2 per cent of net profit of the company towards CSR activities. Hence, the Indian Corporate needs to shift their focus beyond health and education schemes to the other areas including Electricity Generation, Environmental Issues, Biodiversity Protection, Employee Engagement, Gender Equality and many social-awareness programmes. The present paper focuses on how CSR extends beyond the traditional business to encompass new governmental and social drivers and emphasised on the gender content of CSR in banking sector for the inclusive growth since development and empowerment of women ultimately imperative for the inclusive growth of the nation. But it was found from the study that a very few banks have included women empowerment content as CSR major content. Hence it is suggested to increase the content towards women empowerment and gender equality so as to fulfil both CSR standards as well as inclusive growth. The study also emphasised on the comparison of CSR content among different ownership patterns of Indian Commercial Banks in the era of competitive globalisation towards inclusive growth.*

Key words: *CSR, Public Sector Banks, Private Sector Banks, Women Empowerment.*

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The issue of inclusive and sustainable growth is very decisive, considering the disproportionate allocation of wealth and widening gap between the prosperity of the rich and the plight of the poor. The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities have started since 1990s now has become a medium for most of Indian corporate to contribute to inclusive growth of Indian society. The growing role of the private sector in national and global governance systems has opened new sites for political representation and new possibilities for corporate accountability on social issues, which have not yet adequately been addressed by the gender equality. The key question is how best to ensure that business is encouraged to the gender equality in all areas of policy making. It aims to promote gender equity via women empowerment process that is both technical, involving tools and procedures that can be carried out 'by the actors normally involved in policy making' and also political, in that it includes women's participation in defining what gender equality means in different political arenas and contexts.

Women empowerment have taken account of a variety of different sites of political representation such as different organisations of the state, intergovernmental organisations, civil society and academia, they have only more recently begun to include reference to business and CSR. The significance of business as providing arenas for women's, or more broadly gendered, agendas is signalled. Firstly, by the numbers of women working in the private sector, example over half of Indian women workers are employed in the agriculture sector/ private sector. Secondly, CSR is emerging as a basis for a widening of corporate accountability to include social, including gender impacts. CSR has involved attempts by civil society and intergovernmental organisations to hold corporations as well as governments accountable for their social and environmental impacts.

Banks have the primary responsibility to promote women empowerment through CSR activities. Besides the private sector, the government is also ensuring that the public sector companies participate actively in CSR initiatives by spending 2-5 per cent of their net profits. The new Companies bill also made it compulsory to spend 2 per cent of net profit of the company towards CSR activities. Hence, the Indian Commercial Banks need to shift their focus beyond health and education schemes to the other areas including Electricity Generation, Environmental Issues, Biodiversity Protection, Employee Engagement, Women Empowerment and many Social-Awareness programmes.



Women empowerment has frequently involved a process of strategic framing to extend or bridge the gap between the gender equality agenda and various other mainstream agendas. CSR is not simply as a facet of a business case but as part and parcel of new systems of societal governance. The new drivers for CSR have arisen, including more socialised market drivers, governmental drivers and social drivers, which create a gender mainstreaming opportunity.

The examination of CSR and corporate accountability practices to date has led us to conclude that for this opportunity to be realised, gender issues must be further mainstreamed in the field of CSR itself. A greater focus by women's organisations on CSR agendas in the future could play a critical role in this process.

The women who succeed despite many barriers have positive influence in the executive suite. They often focus on shaping the policies within their corporations in a socially responsible manner, thereby taking into account the role their companies and their practices have on society at a global level. Perhaps this is because they pay more attention to the future, long-term impact rather than a short-term, purely profit-based perspective.

CSR extends beyond the traditional business to encompass new governmental and social drivers and emphasised on the gender content of CSR in banking sector for the inclusive growth since development and empowerment of women ultimately imperative for the inclusive growth of the nation. Hence it is imperative to study "Women Empowerment through Corporate Social Responsibility- The role of Indian Commercial Banks".

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To find out the core CSR activities of selected Public and Private sector banks and their ratings.
- 2) To find out the relationship between the Lady CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers of the banks and Women Empowerment as one of its core CSR activities.

METHODOLOGY

The present research paper is based on the secondary data. The data has been collected from Karmayog and other web sites of the selected banks. The data covered is from 2007-08 to 2010-11. All the banks rated by the Karmayog rating agency form the population of the study. Among the twelve public sector banks, four banks were conveniently selected



and remaining eight banks were randomly selected and all the private sector banks rated were taken for the study. The data is analysed using simple statistical tool like percentages. Table-1 portrays CSR rating of selected Indian Commercial Banks both Public and private from 2007-08 to 2010-11. The banks are rated at a six point scale i.e., from the lowest level (0) to highest level (5). Among the selected twelve public sector banks 3 (25.00%) were given level 3, 7 (58.33%) were given level 2 and 2 (16.66 %) were given level 1 while as among twelve private sector banks 6 (50.00%) were given level 3, 1 (8.33%) was given level 2 and remaining 5 (41.67%) were given level 1 in 2010-11. It clearly indicates more than 50 per cent of the Public Sector banks were at level 2 and exactly 50 per cent of Private Sector Banks were in level 3. But none of the banks either in Public or Private Sector Banks were in level 4 and 5 as on 2010-11.

Table-1

CSR Rating of Selected Indian Commercial Public and Private Sector Banks from 2007-08 to 2010-11

Levels	2007-08		2008-2009		2009-10		2010-11	
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
Level 5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Level 4	-	-	-	-	-	1 (8.33)	-	-
Level 3	2 (16.66)	1 (8.33)	2 (16.66)	2 (16.66)	5 (41.67)	4 (33.33)	3 (25.00)	6 (50.00)
Level 2	2 (16.66)	2 (16.66)	3 (25.00)	2 (16.66)	6 (50.00)	1 (8.33)	7 (58.33)	1 (8.33)
Level 1	-	3 (24.99)	3 (25.00)	2 (16.66)	-	4 (33.33)	2 (16.66)	5 (41.67)
Level 0	5 (41.67)	-	3 (25.00)	6 (50.00)	-	2 (16.66)	-	-
Not rated	3 (25.00)	6 (50.00)	1 (8.33)	-	1 (8.33)	-	-	-
Total	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12

Source:www.karmayog.org

Note: Figures in parenthesis indicate percentage to total.

Public Sector Banks have registered 50% increase in its level 3, 250% increase in level 2 and 200% increase in level 1 while as Private Sector Banks registered 500% increase in level 3, about 67% increase in level 1 and 100% decrease in level 2 from 2007-08 to 2010-11.



Table-2(A)

Core CSR Activities of Public Sector Banks

S.No	Core CSR Activities	Number of Banks
1	Rural Development	9
2	Vocational Training	6
3	Community Welfare	4
4	Poverty Eradication	4
5	Women Empowerment	4

Source:www.karmayog.org

Tables - 2(A) and 2(B) show that the core CSR activities of Public and Private Sector Banks. Among the core CSR activities taken up by Public Sector Banks, 75% of the banks took Rural development as a prime CSR activity followed by Vocational Training (50%) and Community Welfare (33.33%), Poverty eradication (33.33%) and Women Empowerment (33.33%). Whereas among the core CSR activities taken up by Private Sector Banks, 58.33% of the banks took Education as a prime CSR activity followed by Community Welfare (50%), Environment & Health Care (41.67%), Children (33.33%), Energy (25.00%) and Rural Development(16.67%).

Table-2(B)

Core CSR Activities of Private Sector Banks

S.No	Core CSR Activities	Number of Banks
1	Education	7
2	Community Welfare	6
3	Environment & Health Care	5
4	Children	4
5	Energy	3
6	Rural Development	2

Source:www.karmayog.org

Table-3(A)

Three Major CSR Areas of Public Sector Banks in India

S.No	Public Sector Banks	Three Major CSR areas
1	Bank of Baroda	Rural Development, Women Empowerment, Vocational Training
2	Bank of India	Credit Counselling, Vocational Training
3	Bank of Maharashtra	Rural Development, Livelihoods Training, Agriculture and Farming
4	Canara bank	Rural Development, Women Empowerment, Education and Employment
5	Corporation Bank	Rural Development, Health Care, Vocational Training



6	Dena Bank	Vocational Training and Education, Girl Child, Poverty Alleviation
7	IDBI Bank	Environment Protection, Rural Development, Community Welfare
8	Indian bank	Rural Development, Poverty Eradication, Sports
9	Indian Overseas Bank	Women, Rural Development, Poverty Alleviation
10	Oriental Bank of Commerce	Community Development, Rural Development, Vocational Training
11	Punjab National Bank	Community Welfare, Vocational Training, Poverty Eradication
12	United Bank of India	Rural Development, Women, Community welfare

Source:www.karmayog.org

Table-3(B)

Three Major CSR Areas of Private Sector Banks in India

S.No	Pivater Sector Banks	Three Major CSR areas
1	Axis Bank Ltd	Education, Community Welfare, Children
2	Federal Bank Ltd	Credit Counselling, Community Welfare, Children
3	ICICI Bank Ltd	Education, Community Welfare,, Poverty Eradication
4	Indus Ind Bank Ltd	Environment, Energy, Children
5	INGVysya Bank Ltd	Children, Education, Community Welfare
6	Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd	Environment, Health Care, Education
7	Karnataka Bank Ltd	Community Welfare, Disaster Relief
8	KarurVysya Bank Ltd	Health Care, Disaster Relief, Education
9	Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd	Health Care, Energy, Poverty Eradication
10	South Indian Bank Ltd	Rural Development, Education, Environment
11	Vijaya Bank Ltd	Rural Development, Community Welfare, Health Care
12	Yes Bank Ltd	Responsible Banking, Community Welfare, Environment

Source:www.karmayog.org

Table-4(A)

Number of Lady CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers in Public Sector Banks

S.No	Public Sector Bank	Number of Lady CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers
1	Bank of Baroda	Nil
2	Bank of India	01
3	Bank of Maharashtra	01
4	Canara bank	01
5	Corporation Bank	Nil
6	Dena Bank	Nil
7	IDBI Bank	01
8	Indian bank	Nil
9	Indian Overseas Bank	Nil



10	Oriental Bank of Commerce	03
11	Punjab National Bank	01
12	United Bank of India	01

Source: websites of various public sector banks

Table-4(B)

Number of Lady CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers in Private Sector Banks

S.No	Private Sector Bank	Number of Lady CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers
1	Axis Bank Ltd	Nil
2	Federal Bank Ltd	Nil
3	ICICI Bank Ltd	02
4	Indus Ind Bank Ltd	01
5	INGVysya Bank Ltd	Nil
6	Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd	Nil
7	Karnataka Bank Ltd	Nil
8	KarurVysya Bank Ltd	Nil
9	Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd	Nil
10	South Indian Bank Ltd	Nil
11	Vijaya Bank Ltd	01
12	Yes Bank Ltd	Nil

Source: websites of various public sector banks.

From the Tables – 3(A), 3(B), 4(A) and 4(B), it is found that among twelve selected Private Sector Banks, only three banks i.e., ICICI, Indus Ind and Vijaya Banks had Lady CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers but none of these banks have taken women empowerment content as one of their major CSR activities. Interestingly these banks have chosen Education, Community Welfare, Poverty Eradication; Environment, Energy, Children and Rural Development, Community Welfare and Health Care as the major CSR activities respectively. Whereas among 12 selected Public Sector Banks, majority of the banks (7 Banks among 12) viz., Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra, Canara Bank, IDBI, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Punjab National Bank, and United Bank of India had Lady CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers, among these banks 28.57 % had chosen Women Empowerment as one of their core CSR activities. It is interesting to see though Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra, IDBI, Oriental Bank of Commerce, and Punjab National Bank had Lady CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers, but do not taken up Women Empowerment or Women Welfare as one of the core CSR activities.



Among the four Public Sector Banks which have taken up Women Empowerment/ Women Welfare as a CSR activity, two of them viz., Bank of Baroda, and Indian Overseas Bank do not have a Lady CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers and two banks viz., Canara Bank and United Bank had Lady CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers. Hence it is inferred that there is no significant role of women as a CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers on the banks to take up Women Empowerment/ Women Welfare activities as their core CSR activities.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

More than 50 per cent of the Public Sector banks were at level 2 and exactly 50 per cent of Private Sector Banks were in level 3 and none of the banks either in Public or Private Sector were rated in level 4 and 5 as on 2010-11 in CSR activities by Karmayog rating agency. 75% of the Public Sector Banks took Rural development as a prime CSR activity followed by Vocational Training (50%) and Community Welfare (33.33%), Poverty eradication (33.33%) and Women Empowerment (33.33%). Whereas among the core CSR activities taken up by Private Sector Banks, 58.33% of the banks took Education as a prime CSR activity followed by Community Welfare (50%) , Environment & Health Care (41.67%), Children (33.33%) , Energy (25.00%) and Rural Development(16.67%). It is hard to digest the fact that none of the selected Private Sector Banks had taken up the Women Empowerment as one of the major three CSR activities in the study period even though three of these banks i.e., ICICI, Indus Ind and Vijaya Banks had Lady CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers.

Among the Public sector banks which had Lady CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers 28.57 % had chosen Women Empowerment as one of their core CSR activities. It is interesting to see though Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra, IDBI, Oriental Bank of Commerce, and Punjab National Bank had Lady CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers, but they had not taken up Women Empowerment or Women Welfare as one of the core CSR activities.

Therefore the role of women as a CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers of banks to take up Women Empowerment/ Women Welfare activities as one of the core CSR activities is insignificant. It is disappointed to see that none of the Private Sector Banks had taken up Women Empowerment/Women Welfare as one of the their core CSR activities irrespective of the gender of the CEOs/M.Ds/Directors/ Chief Managers of these banks in the study period.



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