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Title

**A FEASIBILITY CASE STUDY OF IMPLEMENTING
CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FROM
EMPLOYEE PERSPECTIVE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO MARG PROPERTIES, CHENNAI**

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ABSTRACT:

This paper throws light on the essentials of corporate social responsibility (CSR), also known as corporate conscience; corporate citizenship, responsible business, sustainable responsible business (SRB), or corporate social performance, and above all how well it should be implemented for the benefit of the society in the organization. As a matter of fact, CSR is a form of corporate self-regulation integrated into a business model. CSR is all about how companies manage the business processes to produce an overall positive impact on society. Profits are necessary for any organization to exist, while recognizing this aspect all groups in society is striving to add value and make life better. Businesses rely on the society within which they operate and they could not exist or prosper in isolation (without the society). Society relies on value based things produced by the companies, which in turn need the infrastructure that the society provides, its source of employees, not to mention its consumer base. CSR adds value because it allows companies to better reflect the values of this important ingredient base that the company aims to serve. CSR covers all aspects of business from day to day operations. Whether as an employer, producer, buyer, supplier, or investment, the attractiveness and success of any company today is directly linked to the strength of its brand. CSR is an argument of economic self-interest for a business. In today's brand-driven markets, CSR means matching corporate operations with the stakeholder's values and demands at a time when these parameters can change rapidly. One example is a company's customers: CSR adds value because it allows companies to better reflect the values of this important constituent base that the company aims to serve. CSR covers all aspects of business day to day operations. Whether as an employer, producer, buyer, supplier, or investment, the attractiveness and success of a company today is directly linked to the strength of its brand.

NEED FOR THE STUDY:

This is the high time the corporate need to understand their responsible role towards society and societal well being. Profits are necessary for any organization to exist. But for the long term sustainability and growth, the companies should involve in socially responsible actions by which society is benefitted and in turn the companies are benefitted mutually. As a matter of fact, the goal of CSR is to embrace responsibility for the company's actions and encourage a positive

impact through its activities on the environment, consumers, employees, communities, stakeholders and all other members of the public sphere. Furthermore, CSR-focused businesses would proactively promote the public interest by encouraging community growth and development, and voluntarily eradicating practices that ruins the public sphere, regardless of legality. CSR is an important business strategy because, wherever possible, consumers want to buy products from companies they trust; suppliers want to form business partnership with companies they can rely; employees want to work for companies they respect; and NGOs increasingly, want to work together with companies seeking feasible solutions and innovations in areas of common concern. Satisfying each of these stakeholder groups allows companies to maximize their commitment to another important stakeholder group-their investors, who benefit most when the needs of these other stakeholder groups are being met. CSR as a strategy is becoming increasingly important for businesses today because of three identifiable trends:

1. Consumers and society in general expect more from the companies whose products they buy. This sense has increased in the light of recent corporate scandals, which reduced public trust of corporations, and reduced public confidence in the ability of regulatory bodies and organizations to control corporate excess.
2. This is true within developed nations, but also in comparison to developing nations. Affluent consumers can afford to pick and choose the products they buy. A society in need of work and inward investment is less likely to enforce strict regulations and penalize organizations that might take their business and money elsewhere.
3. The growing influence of the media sees any ‘mistakes’ by companies brought immediately to the attention of the public. In addition the Internet fuels communication among like-minded groups and consumers-empowering them to spread their message, while giving them the means to co-ordinate collective action (ie. a product boycott).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Implementing CSR activities is an imperative step in organizations for the benefit of society. Many organizations fail to implement CSR activities and thereby company reputations erode and ultimately society suffers drastically. Organizations like SATYAM, ENTRON have ruined the

organization's reputation just because of ethical turbidity. Considering such situations, implementing CSR activities in organizations is playing a vital role. With this objective, the research case study has been undertaken in MARG Properties, Chennai. CSR is an HR culture which has a rapid penetration into the society from the corporate world. CSR benefits both society and the organization in various levels. But the Society enjoys the major part of it. All the verticals in MARG are working with CSR activities and they try to understand how effective these activities are in their individual businesses. The CSR activities are initiated by the corporate sector of the organization to the commercial sectors like SEZ, EPC etc. CSR can help MARG Properties than other verticals because of its functions like undertaking residential projects for the society. Residential Projects function basically with a value called goodwill which can be earned from these activities. A structured questionnaire was constructed taking into account goals, policies, practices and effective implementation of CSR. The method employed was personal interview conducted from the employees of MARG property.

OBJECTIVES:

- To analyze, validate and implement (suggestive) the proposed CSR activities at MARG Properties, Chennai
- To study the employee opinion on goals and policies of CSR
- To analyze the practices and effective implementation of CSR on employee perspective.
- To analyze the difference in the opinion of the various CSR measures on employee perspective.

HISTORY OF CSR:

A key relationship in the history of corporate social responsibility is the relative power between corporations and governments during particular economic periods. Although only in common usage since the 1960s, CSR has its roots in the Industrial Revolution – the birth of ‘big industry’ meant social structures; communities and ways of life were completely re-shaped over a relatively short period of time. In the late 18th century a Scottish philosopher and economist named Adam Smith wrote numerous articles on these subjects, his magnum opus being *The Wealth of Nations* in which he espoused the concepts of free trade and the free market on which

the classic market economy was based. Smith's principles were borne out. By the early 19th Century, new technology saw jobs being created and living standards improved. A few of these wealthy new industrialists were concerned about the wellbeing of their employees, society or the environment. By the start of the 20th century, powerful corporations suffered a backlash against their widespread exploitation. Labor unions were formed, giving a voice to the workers, and governments began to assume more responsibility for welfare and infrastructure, gradually introducing anti-trust legislation. In the 1950s, emerging 'consumer power' saw companies start taking a new interest in the social and human aspects of their markets – it was at about this time scientists and environmentalists started noticing some worrying changes to the environment. The 1960s saw a shift in attitudes towards government and business. In 1962 Professor Milton Friedman, Nobel Prize-winning economist, published his controversial *Capitalism and Freedom*. In it he makes the case for economic freedom as a precondition for political freedom. The 1980s and 1990s saw communism collapse, globalization emerge and the information revolution change the way the world did business. As globalization intensified, so did environmental awareness and the emergence of responsible business practice? Key developments include: the Brundtland Commission, the formation of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, and the United Nations Global Compact. CSR as an issue has been around since commerce began.. There has been a tradition of benevolent capitalism in the UK for over the 150 years. Quakers, such as Barleys and Cadbury, as well as socialists, such as Engels and Morris, experimented with socially responsible and values-based forms of business. And Victorian philanthropy could be said to be responsible for considerable portions of the urban landscape of older town centers today.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

Consideration of the social, economic and political context demonstrates how CSR forms part of a wider strategic direction being taken internationally with regard to state/market relations and the pursuit of a range of objectives and goals. The context is in part provided by concerns about the numerous examples of irresponsible behavior on the part of corporations, ranging from colluding with oppressive regimes and in the overthrowing of governments (Alston, 2005) to issues relating to working conditions and the impact of unethical marketing practices (Richter,

2001). Such examples have demonstrated the need for the worst excesses of business to be curbed. The globalised economy is understood to raise important issues for businesses and governments due to changes in patterns of production and consumption. In particular it is noted that the manufacturing of goods is "highly mobile" (Cassell, 2001:263) and that supply chains are often dispersed transnational, creating difficulties in terms of legislation and regulation. The relative power of large corporations compared to that of certain states is significant:

Economic policies have created a need for markets and business to self-regulate in order to continue to pursue an international free market economy, but also to ensure sustainability (of economic, human and other resources, and of the environment). CSR is seen as a solution to these problems of regulation. The private sector is increasingly seen as a key player in the achievement of many national and international strategic objectives for governments, which is also enabled by CSR. For example, in the UK, CSR is understood:

"to maximize the positive contribution that businesses can make to the UK's objectives on international sustainable development - including HR, trade and investment, poverty eradication, environmental protection and corruption - whilst at the same time effectively tackling adverse impacts" (Department for Trade and Industry, 2004: 2)

These objectives are related to a range of international agreements such as the Millennium Development Goals and targets agreed upon at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The European Multi stakeholder report identifies key texts to guide CSR development by business, including some key international texts and guidelines that were developed with and for business in particular, such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (MNEs) (1977, revised 2000), the UN Global Compact (2000) and the ILO Declaration of Principles concerning MNEs and social policy. The report also refers to a range of multilateral and regional agreements relating to human rights, environmental development, consumer protection and worker's rights, which are aimed at the state level, but which they envisage acting as an 'inspiration' to companies in developing CSR strategies. An overview of these various agreements and guidelines is provided below.

Within the UK, legislation has placed a duty on nearly all corporations to report on their treatment of issues included under the umbrella of CSR. The Corporate Responsibility Bill (2002) outlined this duty and penalties for non-compliance, which range from fines to the

cessation of operations and imprisonment. Requirements to report the ways in which corporations give consideration to and deal with environmental, social and economic factors, are intended to promote transparency so that companies are able to be held accountable for their operating procedures by consumers and pressure groups. There are a number of incentives for CSR related activities, for example the Dow Jones Sustainability Index and FTSE4Good Index promote environmental reporting, and the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) gives awards for social and environmental reporting internationally (for example see the ACCA website). Reporting consequently has the capacity to add value to a particular brand or to contribute positively to corporate image. In particular, it is seen to enable investors and consumers to make informed choices. Evidence suggests that ethical consumerism is on the rise (**Involve, 2005**), with sales of ethically marketed goods rising significantly year on year (**New Economics Foundation, 2005**). In this sense, the power of the ethical consumer and/or investor to pressurize businesses into ethical behavior through the exercise of choice replaces regulation and legislation as a force for change.

THE ROLE AND NATURE OF CORPORATIONS:

One of the most widely cited and a strident opponent of the notion that corporations should be socially responsible is Milton Friedman (1970) who stated that: "The businessmen believe that they are defending free enterprise when they declaim that business is not concerned 'merely' with profit but also with promoting desirable 'social' ends; that business has a 'social conscience' and takes seriously its responsibilities for providing employment, eliminating discrimination, avoiding pollution and whatever else may be the catchwords of the contemporary crop of reformers...Businessmen who talk this way are unwitting puppets of the intellectual forces that have been undermining the basis of a free society these past decades" (Friedman, 1970). His position relies on the 'theory of the firm' where all activity is directed towards shareholder value (Hemingway, 2005). Carroll (1991) suggests that economic responsibility is the 'bottom line' "because without it the others become moot considerations" (Carroll, 1991: 41). Others acknowledge that ethics and economics might sometimes clash, and suggest that corporations must move beyond the notion that profit "can alone stand as a reason for studying the ethics of business" (Chryssides & Kaler, 2005: 34). "Business ethics appears to be essential because the

requirements of business life are often so intensely goal-directed that they blind individuals and organizations to the ethical aspects of what they do. Yet business ethics appears to be illegitimate because the market and our legal system place significant limitations on management discretion when it comes to decision-making criteria. Managers who appeal to ethical values, if they are not looked upon as questionably sincere, are often looked upon as going beyond their authority" (Goodpaster, p11, 2007). It is also perhaps important to consider what might be an ethical issue, and how the definition of such issues might change over time - for example environmental issues were not always seen as ethical in nature. This implies a need for managers to be aware of constantly evolving societal values and priorities, and to be responsive to these changing concerns. So there are a number of questions raised about business people as moral actors, about ways of developing appropriate skills and knowledge, and of ensuring they act in accordance with ethical norms. "While there is much reporting on 'community' often the community in question has not been clearly defined. Companies not only interact with the physical communities around their site, but also have any number of 'communities of interest' with whom building relationships and partnerships is important" (Bush, 2008: 25). "notions of the public, the community, or citizens are social constructions, formed out of a range of discourses that are mobilized in particular ways in specific historical and political contexts" (Barnes, Newman & Sullivan, p273, 2004).

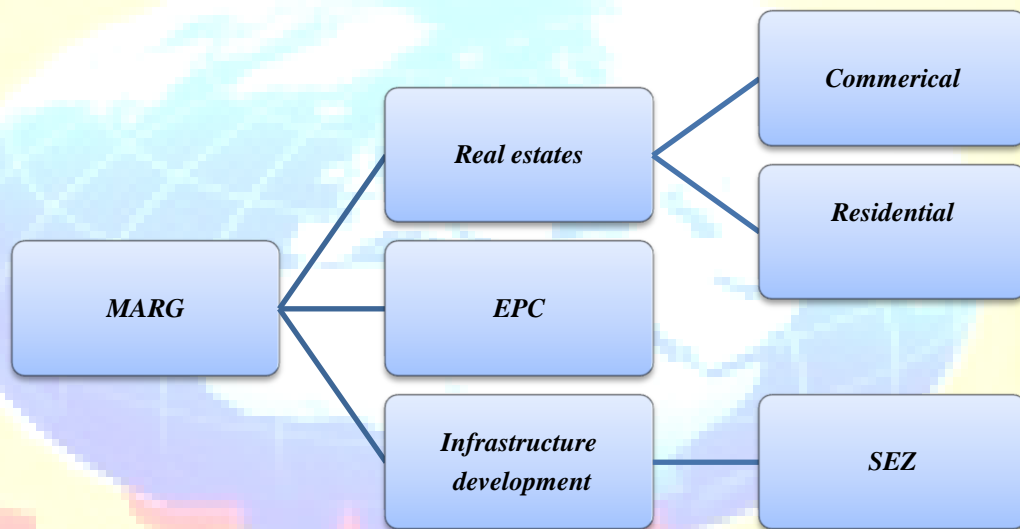
CASE STUDY ON IMPLEMENTATION CSR ACTIVITIES IN MARG PROPERTY IN CHENNAI:

MARG Limited is one of India's fastest growing EPC (Engineering and procurement construction) and Infrastructure development companies. Established in 1994 and headquartered in Chennai, MARG is promoted by Mr. G.R.K. Reddy; a first generation entrepreneur with over two decades of hands on experience in Financial and Infrastructure related businesses. The company's business roadmap encompasses development and construction of Ports, Logistics Parks, SEZs, Townships, Apartments, Malls, Hotels, IT Parks, Power Projects, Airports and Roads. MARG's businesses are centered on the concept of region development. The company focuses not on standalone projects but on those that provide opportunities to exploit the synergies of its infrastructure and real estate business capabilities. By triggering growth in a barren tract of

land through infrastructure creation, MARG is able to spark off economic activity those results in rapid region transformation. Co-creation is a key element of MARG's business model - the people in the impact region are involved in the region development process. Such an increase in economic activity creates demand for social infrastructure, housing, transportation, power, water and associated services. MARG, with its in-house expertise, is fully equipped to absorb a significant chunk of this demand .Over the last decade; the company has been continuously maximizing value for its stakeholders through innovation and adherence to quality & timelines in project delivery.

MARG'S VERTICALS:

CHART:

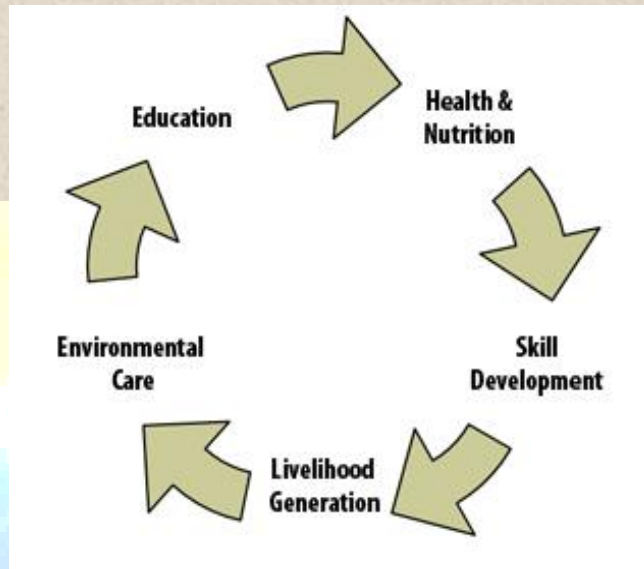


CSR ACTIVITIES IN MARG:

MARG Ltd is a corporate place where CSR is given a professional area to work with the society to outlook its value of business towards the society. Various CSR activities held at MARG and its other verticals:

As a progressive infrastructure development company, it believes in inclusive living and therefore continues to extend our best possible efforts to neighborhood rural masses and bring them into the fold of development. it collaborates with Government departments, Local Panchayats, NGOs and Industrial conglomeration as, it progress towards the objective of fostering Inclusive living, creating and Sharing progress.

MARG Parivarthan – ('Chain of Change') is the CSR brand of MARG. Parivarthan is not about Corporate Social Responsibility, but about transforming the society and the neighborhood in concerned areas of impact.



EDUCATION:

- a) The compound wall constructed by MARG marked the Seekinankuppam School a distinct entity
- b) Renovated and colorfully painted the Anganwadi is now much more a joyful place for children of Vellore village
- c) The tables and benches give students of Govt. High School Karapakkam the comfort to follow the classes
- d) Bicycles distributed as a token of appreciation and to motivate children to pursue Higher Secondary education
- e) Special programme organized to commemorate the Children Day 2009 at Seekinankuppam Govt. School
- f) Safe and timely school journey for 250 children through free school shuttle service
- g) Evening study center, Seekinankuppam

HEALTH:

- a) Comprehensive medical camp supported under Varummon Kaapom Thittam, Seekinankuppam

- b) General Medical Camp organized at K.Vanjore, Karaikal on 31st Jan'10

COMMUNITY:

Growth of a country largely depends on the standards of its social infrastructure. MARG as an infrastructure developer is aware of the fact that private sector involvement and investment is essential to supplement government's efforts. The evolving concept of Public – Private Partnership led MARG to collaborate with the state government programme "Namaku Namey Thittam" in building basic infrastructure at the villages surrounding concerned key projects.

- a) Concrete cement road at Madambakkam Village under Namaku Namey Thittam
- b) MARG has restored 3 bus stops at Karaikal which are aesthetically designed with seating facility

ENVIRONMENT:

The tree plantation drive across company operational areas at MARG Swarnabhoomi in Kancheepuram district and at MARG Karaikal Port is company commitment to Environment protection. It is company endeavor to constantly improve its immediate environment. As a next step, it has planned to extend this activity to the neighborhood villages involving the local schools.

CORPORATE CAUSE PROMOTION:

The MARG Chennai Marathon series was hosted by MARG in aid of Give Life Charity that supports the cause of underprivileged children for their Right to education and health. Around 1.75 Lac people from various walks of life across different cities participated in this run.

MARG, in co-ordination with the Gandhi Study Centre, organized a one-day programme for underprivileged children to celebrate Gandhi Jayanthi and 100 years of Sathyagraha.

AIDS awareness – Commemorating the World AIDS Day – December 1, 2006. The campaign was aimed at spreading awareness and changing the mindset of the society towards people living with HIV / AIDS. Accept, Act, and achieve was the message delivered

Employability 2006 - A job fair for specially-able people from across the country held on December 16 & 17, 2006 in Chennai. Aimed at 'looking beyond Disabilities and Breaking Barriers Together' the event saw several young job aspirants attending their first job interview.

Chennai Sangamam - Presented by Tamil Maiyam and the Department of Tourism and Culture, Government of Tamil Nadu. Chennai Sangamam is a unique attempt to showcase the best of Chennai.

MARG Swarnabhoomi Pudukai Marathon - On Feb 14th 2010 thousands of *Puducherrians* gathered, to run around town and showed their solidarity on global warming. The Pudukai Marathon 2010, organized jointly by MARG *Swarnabhoomi* and the Rotary Club of Pondicherry Charitable Trust received a whopping response, with around 8500 people "going green to save the earth."

PRESENT DAY PROJECTS:

MARG group's business verticals are broadly classified as Port & Logistics, Industrial Clusters, Commercial Infrastructure and Residential Projects. The Karaikal Port, being developed by Karaikal Port Private Limited (KPPL), a wholly owned subsidiary of MARG in association with the Pondicherry government was inaugurated on Apr 15 2009. The first cargo vessel 'M.V. Beluga Fanfare' containing two harbor mobile cranes was received on this day. The Company has signed a MOU for building a Private fishing harbour at Rajakamangalam Thurai, Kanyakumari District, The Private harbor is to be built and made operational by Oct 2010. The Foundation Stone Ceremony was held on May 25, 2008 at Rajakkamangalam Thurai Village. MARG has recently been awarded the contract for the development and operation of the Greenfield airport in Bijapur. The ground breaking ceremony was held on December 7, 2008. In October 2009, MARG announced its entry into the Sri Lankan market with an affordable

housing project. The project is being promoted by the Sri Lankan government with assistance from the Asia Development Bank and World Bank.

MARG SWARNABHOOMI

MARG Swarnabhoomi - is an integrated business city coming up on the East Coast Road connecting Chennai and Puducherry in the southern part of India. The city is developed and promoted by New Chennai Township Pvt. Limited (NCTPL), a wholly owned subsidiary of MARG Limited. Designed by HOK (Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum), Chicago, the city encompasses two special economic zones along with a residential area and support infrastructure. Recently it was announced that a music academy will be coming up at MARG Swarnabhoomi. For each of these projects, MARG offers a range of services including design and construction of structural framework including finishing & interior works and electro-mechanical services like: Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC), Fire Protection, Public Health Engineering, Surveillance and Security Systems, Telecommunication networks, Electrification, Water and Effluent management, Landscaping and Horticulture.

IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION:

It was concluded from the case analysis that, for effective implementation of the CSR activity, the following steps are lacking in MARG and the same should be implemented. Since the need for career counseling for the youngsters was felt exceedingly high, it is the right time for the organization to conduct career guidance campaign with the support of the employees as volunteers. The organization can play vital role in adapting rural schools and offer students the necessary educational support to eradicate the illiteracy. MARG believes that technology, when used appropriately has the power to actually turn around what looks very challenging for the society. It is believed that CSR activities based infrastructure development will help the organization to focus more on its goals. From the point of employees, corporate industries should involve in CSR during emergencies like natural calamities, even in peak working hours as well. Employees of MARG strongly believe that the company can start building Public Park for the society. The company can plan for building a rural library for teaching the rural kids during their

leisure hours and initiate decisions of planting sampling Campaign anywhere in city proclaiming as “green day”, making the CSR activity more meaningful.

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