

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: A STUDY OF CEMENT INDUSTRY IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

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Abstract

The socially responsible organisations take into consideration the welfare aspect of the society in which they are running their business. The cement industry treated as most polluting industry in the world and also taken as the major employment generator. It acts as a main pillar of economic development of a nation. The present study has been undertaken to compare the corporate social responsibility activities initiated in various fields by different cement organisations namely ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited, Barmana; Ambuja Cements Limited, Darlaghat; and Cement Corporation of India, Rajban respectively in the state of Himachal Pradesh. The data for the study has been collected by using self designed questionnaire and a sample of 200 respondents for each organisation was selected. The data collected can be analysed by using the statistical method i.e. mean value has been calculated. The comparison between these three companies has been done on the basis of mean value calculated. The results of the study reveals that Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) is ranked first whereas Cement Corporation of India, Rajban ranked second and ACC-Gagal Cement Works ranked third respectively for initiating all these activities of corporate social responsibility for the welfare, growth and development of the people of the community, where these organisations are working.

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Corporate Social Responsibility Activities, Cement Industry, Himachal Pradesh, ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited, Barmana; Ambuja Cements Limited, Darlaghat;*

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Introduction

Corporate Social responsibility (CSR) refers to all duties and obligations of business directed towards the welfare of society. These duties can be part of routine functions of carrying on business activity or they, may be an additional function carrying out welfare and rehabilitation activities. The people engage in business to earn profit and profit making is not the sole function of the business. It performs a number of social functions, as it is a part of the society. It takes care of those who are instrumental in securing its existence and survival of owners, investors, employees, consumers, and governments in particular and the society and community in general.

Every business must ensure a satisfactory rate of return to investors, provide good salary, security and proper working condition to its employees, make available quality products at reasonable price to its customers, maintain the environment properly etc. Social Responsibility implies that businessmen should not do anything harmful to the society in course of his business activities.

According to **European Union Commission**, “.....corporate social responsibility is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis.”

The idea of corporate social responsibility is neither new nor radical. The core principle that the corporation has responsibilities to society beyond the profit maximization objectives has long historical roots.

In recent years corporate social responsibility has become a fundamental business practices and has gained much attention from chief executives, chairman, board of directors, and executive management teams of larger national and international companies. They understand that a strong corporate social responsibility program is an essential element in achieving good business practices and effective leadership.

Thus, the Companies have determined that their impact on the economic, social, and environmental landscape directly affects their relationships with stakeholders, in particular investors, employees, customers, business partners, governments and communities.

Review of Literature

Kaushal (2017) in the research, “Corporate Social Responsibility: A Survey of Cement Corporation of India, Rajban, Sirmaur” revealed that the company has undertaken various CSR initiatives for the welfare of the society. The initiatives includes immediate attention on the deadly disease like HIV/AIDS, cancer and microbial infections etc., women upliftment, charitable activities, generating employment and others. These initiatives help in creating and establishing a relationship of loyalty and trust with customers and community in which business exists.

Kaushal (2017) in his study, “Corporate Social Responsibility: A Study of ACC-Gagal Cement works Limited”, found that the company has been undertaking various corporate social responsibility initiatives in the field of education, health and safety, infrastructural development, employment generation and women upliftment and others for the welfare, growth and development of the people of the local community. The researcher also revealed that there has been certain corporate social responsibility initiatives on which company is emphasizing more in order to help the people of local community. But there have been other initiatives too on which company should focus so that the local affected people may avail maximum benefits of those initiatives.

Kaushal and Kumar (2016) in their case study, “Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives undertaken by Jay Pee Himachal Cement Plant at Bagha, Solan District of Himachal Pradesh” revealed that the awareness level of people regarding the CSR initiatives undertaken by the company is very high except in case of honouring human rights and ethics. The company is undertaking various initiatives for the welfare and development of the people of local community and doing well for all these. The company

should promote CSR activities so that all members of society get benefits of these activities.

Kaushal and Kumar (2015) in their paper, “Corporate Social Responsibility: A Historical Perspective”, concluded that CSR programs vary from company to company, but they do not avoid this because in countries like India, UK, Germany and US, the regulatory body i.e. the Government itself involved in pushing the regulations of CSR practices in order to create more harmonious relations between the corporations and the society at large. The concept of corporate social responsibility is not new and it becomes a serious academic discipline which is being taught in the various business schools throughout the world.

Kaushal and Kaushal (2014) in the survey, “A Survey of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) with special reference to Ambuja Cement Limited, Darlaghat, Solan (Himachal Pradesh)” concluded that the company has been initiating different community welfare programmes as a part of corporate social responsibility activities in the vicinity of the company, where it has been established.

Objectives:

The objectives of the study are as follows: -

- To study the concept of corporate social responsibility with special reference to Cement Industry of Himachal Pradesh.
- To compare the corporate social responsibility initiatives undertaken by the different cement companies in Himachal Pradesh.

Research Methodology

In order to meet the objectives of the study the primary data has been collected by using a well designed questionnaire from 600 respondents selected as a representative sample of local affected population of the community in the vicinity of the cement companies namely ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited, Barmana; Ambuja Cements Limited, Darlaghat; and Cement Corporation of India, Rajban respectively. As far as the secondary

data is concerned various journal, books, articles, magazines, thesis and dissertations has been cited.

The weighted average mean statistical measure has been used for analysis of the data collected from the respondents and on the basis of mean value comparison has been drawn.

Analysis and Interpretation

The following table reveals the comparison of corporate social activities undertaken by the cement companies in the areas, where these cement companies are working.

Table: Showing Weighted Average Mean Values of Cement Companies under the Study (N=600)

| Sr. No. | CSR Activities | ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited, Barmana | Ambuja Cements Limited, Darlaghat | Cement Corporation of India, Rajban |
|---------|--|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. | Company is paying immediate attention of deadly diseases like HIV/AIDS, Cancer and microbial infections etc. | 4.32 (1) | 4.27 (2) | 3.84 (3) |
| 2. | There is full transparency in working of company | 3.76 (2) | 3.98 (1) | 3.59 (3) |
| 3. | Company providing funds for the constructions and maintenance of buildings, parks and gardens etc | 3.40 (2) | 4.35 (1) | 3.14 (3) |
| 4. | Company providing Scholarships, books and mid-day meals facilities to the children from weaker sections of the | 3.40 (3) | 4.00 (1) | 3.77 (2) |

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| | society | | | |
| 5. | Company is having proper measures at the time of disasters | 3.40 (3) | 4.22 (1) | 3.58 (2) |
| 6. | Company is focusing on promoting use of recycled/renewable products/devices | 3.70 (3) | 4.04 (1) | 3.72 (2) |
| 7. | Company undertaking various measures to bring down the flow of effluents to reduce the wastage from the Plants | 3.71 (2) | 4.15 (1) | 3.70 (3) |
| 8. | Company emphasizing on anti-corruption programmes | 3.76 (2) | 3.98 (1) | 3.56 (3) |
| 9. | Company started various programmes/schemes for re-enrollment of dropouts in rural areas | 4.02 (2) | 4.36 (1) | 3.84 (3) |
| 10. | Company undertaking various charitable activities for the welfare and development of local affected community | 3.36 (3) | 4.44 (1) | 4.18 (2) |
| 11. | Company maintaining healthy labour by following the international labour laws and health standards to protect employees, workers as well as people of the community | 3.87 (3) | 4.38 (1) | 4.00 (2) |
| 12. | Company started various schemes and | 4.18 (2) | 4.37 (1) | 3.98 (3) |

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| | programmes for the women-upliftment through innovative income generating programmes | | | |
| 13. | Company providing various opportunities to generate employment to the local people | 3.98 (3) | 4.44 (1) | 4.01 (2) |
| 14. | Company makes tie-ups with other organizations to save species which are going to extinct | 3.89 (2) | 4.12 (1) | 3.78 (3) |
| 15. | Company organizes various training and development sessions for employees as well as people of community on safety measures | 4.05 (3) | 4.20 (2) | 4.22 (1) |
| 16. | Company undertakes various programmes and initiatives for the protection of environment via plantation of trees | 3.76 (3) | 4.22 (1) | 3.92 (2) |
| Total Weighted Average Mean of Cement Companies | | 60.56 | 67.52 | 60.83 |
| Average of Weighted Average Mean of Cement Companies | | 3.78 (3) | 4.22 (1) | 3.80 (2) |

Note: Figures in parenthesis shows the ranks of the cement companies

The above table reveals the comparison of corporate social responsibility activities done by all the cement companies in the areas, where these cement companies are working.

1. **Immediate Attention of the Deadly Disease:** Table shows that this activity includes that paying attention on the health of the people of community because human being is the most valuable asset of a nation.

So, companies provide various forms of medical assistance to the families of its employees and also to all those living in surrounding areas. Regular medical camps are also organized to eradicate diseases, offer medical help, treatment and preventive care. Companies are committed to make good health accessible and affordable to the society and community at large. It strive access to basic infrastructure for health, sanitation and hygiene. The companies counsel, guide and motivate workers to undertake HIV test in the nearby ICTC centre and help them to live a stress free life. A proper record is kept of HIV positive persons and their treatment is regularly followed up by the medical staff. Health awareness programmes are organized time to time to make people aware about leading a healthy life.

The ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) is paying highest attention on this activity and ranked first followed by Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) ranked second. Third rank is given to Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) for this activity of corporate social responsibility.

2. **Transparency in Working:** This corporate social responsibility activity includes working fairly and ethically with employees, community, customers, vendors, suppliers, governments, non-governmental organizations, financial institutions, trade unions, truck unions etc. It establishes a bond of loyalty and trust of company with these parties which helps in the smooth functioning of business. It creates a goodwill and image of the company in the minds of the people, changes their attitude and forces them to act positively. The establishment of cordial relationship among these parties creates a humorous and harmonious relation in the industrial sector which reduces the circumstances of disputes.

The Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) focusing higher on this activity of corporate social responsibility and ranked first place followed by ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) is at second place and last rank is given to Cement Corporation of India, Rajban for doing this activity of corporate social responsibility.

- 3. Providing Funds for Construction and Maintenance:** This corporate social responsibility activity deals with the infrastructural development which includes constructing footpaths, culverts, small bridges, barbed-wire fences, drains, solar lights, parking lots, retaining walls, play way schools, school buildings, colleges, playgrounds, indoor stadiums, mahila mandal bhawans, panchayat building, dispensaries, hospitals, rain-shelters and bus stops, house for weaker sections of community, gardens, parks for children etc. The company also providing funds for the maintenance of the buildings, parks, gardens etc.

The Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) is stressing more on this activity of corporate social responsibility activity and placed at the top among all the companies followed by ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) at second place. Third place is given to Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) for doing this activity.

- 4. Scholarships, Books for Weaker Sections of Society:** This corporate social responsibility activity explains that the company has launched various programmes and schemes for the welfare and development of local affected community. It includes schemes such as scholarships for the meritorious students, free books, stationary, dress, and free mid-day meal facility for the children of weaker sections of the society. By doing this company helps the weaker section of the society to continue the education of their children without any obstacle.

The Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) is doing this corporate social responsibility activity more attentively as compared to other cement companies under the study and ranked at top followed by the Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) at second place. At third place ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) is ranked for doing this activity.

- 5. Disaster Management Measures:** The disaster management measure is a corporate social responsibility activity done by cement companies at the time of disasters or natural calamities such as earthquakes, floods, fires and accidents etc. The company undertakes this initiative to create a

sense of belongingness and humanity among the community in which it is operating.

The table makes it clear that Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) ranked first followed by Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) ranked second while ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) ranked third for the initiatives done for performing this activity.

6. **Promoting Use of Recyclable/Renewable Products/Devices:** This corporate social responsibility activity deals with that the company's cement plants are fully equipped with secondary and tertiary treatment facilities for waste water, so that most of the water can be recycled, making these units practically 'zero discharge' units. The company uses the fly ash generated from coal fired boilers as Pozzolanic material in the manufacturing of cement, ensuring no solid waste from captive power plants. Electronic wastes are disposed off through authorized vendors and bio-degradable wastes through the project canteen, colony are utilized for generating bio-gas. The company converted leaf litter to compost through vermin-composting and thereafter used it as manure in horticulture and plantation.

This table reveals that Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) ranked first for initiating this corporate social responsibility activity followed by Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) is at second place. The last place is given to ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) for initiation of this corporate social responsibility activity.

7. **Bring Down the Flow of Effluents to Reduce the Wastage from Plants:** This corporate social responsibility activity is related to the company initiating measures regarding bring down the flow of effluents to reduce the wastage from plants.

It is found from table that Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) focusing more on this corporate social responsibility activity and ranked first for this initiative followed by ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) is at second place. Third rank is given to and Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) for doing this activity.

8. **Emphasis on Anti-Corruption Programmes:** This corporate social responsibility activity deals with company strongly emphasizing to reduce or stop corruption such as bribe, unlawful acts and unethical practices while dealing with employees, customers, dealers, vendors, distributors, members of community as well as other parties connected with the company.

It makes clear that Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) is emphasizing more on this activity of corporate social responsibility and at the top while ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) is at second place. Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) is ranked third for doing this activity of corporate social responsibility.

9. **Programmes for Re-enrollment of Dropouts in Rural Areas:** This corporate social responsibility activity includes starting various programmes and schemes to provide academic, professional, technical and vocational education to the people of rural community who are economically backward. This initiative undertaken by the company to make people self-dependent and economically strong and aware about their rights.

From the table it is found that Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) is stressing more on this corporate social responsibility activity and gets the first position for doing this activity followed by ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) and at third place is Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) in this race.

10. **Charitable Activities:** This corporate social responsibility activity includes initiatives such as donations, relief camps, health camps, blood donation camps, scholarships for the meritorious students; financial help for the people who belong to weaker sections of society for their welfare and development.

It is interpreted that Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) ranked at top for initiating this activity followed by Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) is at second place whereas ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited

(Barmana) is ranked last for doing this activity of corporate social responsibility.

11. Maintaining Healthy Labour Standards: This corporate social responsibility deals with maintain labour standards as per the provisions prescribed in the international labour laws and health standards for the protection of employees as well as people of the affected community. Form the data tabulated in the table, it is found that Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) is focusing more on this corporate social responsibility activity and top rank is given to this company which is followed by Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) at second position. The third position is given to ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) for doing this activity of corporate social responsibility.

12. Women Upliftment: The corporate social responsibility activity of women upliftment deals with the welfare and development of women through innovative income generation programmes and schemes which includes establishment of self help groups who provide opportunities of income generation through various activities like mushroom cultivation, knitting and weaving, organizing training programmes on hosiery, training programmes in self-employment trades including spice-making, embroidery, stitching and beautician courses. Company also started various awareness campaigns relating to women foeticide, legal rights, domestic violence, family planning and self protection for the women of economically backward section of the community. These are the certain initiatives done by the companies for women upliftment.

The Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) is ranked first for initiating this activity followed by ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) at second place whereas Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) is ranked last for undertaking this activity of corporate social responsibility.

13. Generating Employment Opportunities: This corporate social responsibility activity relating to the various employment opportunities generated by the company to the local affected people of community. It includes direct and indirect employment opportunities generated by

company such as formation of truck unions as company needed trucks to bring in raw-material and to ship out the cement consignments. The other employment opportunities such as opening of dhabas, tea shops, grocery stores, vegetable shops, repair and puncture shops, mechanic shops, daily needs shops and so on by the local residents. The direct employment opportunities the jobs in the company at various levels like machine operator, machine helper, computer operator, security guards, clerks, ground level workers, various managerial jobs etc. for the people of local community according to their qualification and as per the memorandum of understanding signed by the company with the government of Himachal Pradesh State.

From the table it is found that Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) is providing highest employment opportunities for the local people of the affected community and ranked first followed by Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) at second position. ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) is at third position for doing this activity of corporate social responsibility.

- 14. Tie-ups with other Organizations to Save Species which are going to Extinct:** This activity of corporate social responsibility deals with making tie-ups with such organizations which are working for saving those species of animals and plants which are likely to be extinct. Several projects have been started by the Government of India in association with such organizations for the protection and preservation of rare species. Wide range of zoological parks and botanical gardens has been established by the Government for the protection of endangered species like tigers, jujurana, monal and flora and fauna.

The table makes it clear that Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat) ranked first for doing this activity followed by ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) at second place. While at last place is Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) for doing this activity of corporate social responsibility.

- 15. Training Sessions for Employees as well as People of Community on Safety Measures:** It mentioned here that company is organizing various training sessions for employees as well as people of the community on safety issues. These training sessions are organised by the company to create awareness at the time of unforeseen circumstances such as earthquakes, floods, fires, war, religious clashes and accidents etc. at workplace or outside the premises of company.

From the data tabulated, it is observed that Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) is stressing more on this activity of corporate social responsibility as compared to the efforts of other cement companies and ranked first for doing this activity and at the second place is Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlaghat). The third place is assigned to ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) for undertaking this activity.

- 16. Protection of Environment through Plantation of Trees:** This activity of corporate social responsibility includes protecting local ecology through plantation of trees in the vicinity of Cement Company. The company has planted about one lakh of trees in order to achieve the objective of environmental protection and controlling pollution. The barren hills near to the plants become greener over the years now. The eco-forest parks have also been developed in collaboration with the forest department. For improving bio-diversity, these efforts have provided benefits to the surrounding areas in terms of clean, green environment and to the local villagers in terms of providing fuel wood. The Company has procured pine needle bailing machine, which compress the pine needles collected by villagers from the forest for burning them in the kiln. This initiative helps to prevent the forest fires in summer, generates employment for the locals and helps in safe disposal of pine needles, which in turn reduces fuel consumption. The waste water is treated naturally with the help of root zone technology and through this technology, the sewerage water is cleaned and then recycled and used for agricultural and irrigation purpose. The company organizes various environmental conservation events in schools and educational institutions.

The table makes it clear that focus of Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlghat) is the highest on this corporate social responsibility activity, therefore ranked first which is followed by Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) at second place, while ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana) ranked last for doing this activity of corporate social responsibility.

Findings

From the above discussion, it is concluded that among all cement companies under study namely Ambuja Cements Limited (Darlghat), Cement Corporation of India Limited (Rajban) and ACC-Gagal Cement Works Limited (Barmana), the main outcomes are as follows: -

- ❖ Ambuja Cement Limited (Darlghat) ranked first for its efforts towards corporate social responsibility activities done in the vicinity of Company.
- ❖ Out of four cement companies Cement Corporation of India (Rajban) placed second for its contribution in the corporate social responsibility activities.
- ❖ Lastly ranked cement company for its initiatives towards performing corporate social responsibility activities is ACC-Gagal Limited (Barmana).

Conclusion

Earlier, the prime aim of any business whether small or large is to earn profit and wealth. But now-a-days, with the aim of earning profits societal interest also taken into consideration by the business houses. Due to this reason companies are now diverting towards corporate social responsibility concept and undertaking different activities in this direction for the welfare and upliftment of the affected population in the modern era. These activities were done earlier by the companies but the form of corporate social responsibility was different at that time.

Companies are using corporate social responsibility activities as a weapon for making it as their competitive edge. Through this study, it can be

revealed that cement companies are doing various corporate social responsibility activities for the rehabilitation, welfare and development of the people of affected community who are the prime beneficiaries of these activities. Most of the people of the community are aware about the different corporate social responsibility activities done by these cement companies namely Ambuja Cement Limited (Darlaghat), Jay Pee Cements (Bagha), Cement Corporation of India (Rajban), and ACC-Gagal Limited (Barmana) respectively and their percentage level of awareness is very high in case of each cement company.

It is found in the study that most important corporate social responsibility activities done by cement companies are related to immediate attention on the deadly disease like HIV/AIDS, Cancer and microbial infections etc., women upliftment, training and development sessions for employees as well as people of the affected community, charitable activities, generating employment for local people of affected community, maintaining healthy labour standards, and promoting use of recycled and renewable products in the vicinity of cement companies. A prosperous business helps in developing a healthy society and safe environment.

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