

CSR Activities Initiatives by ISKON Creating Better Society for Future

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Abstract: *The purpose of this research paper is to understand the corporate social responsibility of ISKCON i.e The International Society for Krishna Consciousness. The initiatives that they have taken towards social good. This paper examines impact that has been made by ISKCON in Bhiwandi region of Thane district. This research is based on secondary and qualitative data which has been created the impact on CSR activity carried out with ISKCON. Overall, the findings of the research are that various appreciating drives that has been initiated by ISKCON has made significant difference in the lives of underprivileged section of the society in research area. The main focus of this paper is to highlight the initiative activity taken from ISKCON towards the society. The major factor and significant impact has been examined during the study. It also study the various factors on the basis of spirituality and complement development contribution towards the society development bring towards ISKCON.*

Keywords: CSR, ISKCON, Society development

I. INTRODUCTION

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a growing concern nowadays, which has been undertaken by several industries whether it be Information Technology, Automobile, FMCG companies or Infrastructure companies. If we understand the concept in a simplest way so, it explains responsibility of the companies towards society. It can be Environmental, Ethical, Philanthropic (Charitable) and Economic.

ISKCON is a religious organization that stands for International Society for Krishna Consciousness which is also known as Hare Krishna Movement. It is aspired to self-realization, understanding of spirituality, peace and unity. It believes in Lord Krishna and teaching of Vedas. They are achieving this vision through 400+ temples, 40+ Eco-villages, ISKCON schools, Centers in more than 16 countries.

Basically, Acharya Srila Prabhupada founder of ISKCON; stated that "No one within boundaries of 10 miles of ISKCON temple should go hungry." Since then all the devotees of ISKCON worldwide, are serving nutritious and healthy food to lakhs of underprivileged people in temple premises and also through mobile vans and community development programs. ISKCON Bhiwandi temple was established in the year of 2010. It has always been at the frontline of the social welfare through their various initiative towards society since pandemic in 2020. These initiatives containing food distribution, green initiative, specially designed webinars for mental and spiritual health and well-being of people during and post-pandemic period, Imparting value education through Value education contest throughout the nation. Providing solution to the issue of food scarcity in deprived sections is their most appreciated initiative.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tilt, C. A. (2016) ; There has, in recent times, been an increasing interest in understanding corporate social (and environmental) responsibility (CSR) and, in particular, CSR reporting in developing countries. However, many of these studies fail to investigate fully the contextual factors that influence CSR and reporting in those countries, preferring to rely on theories and hypotheses developed from studies undertaken in the West, particularly the US, UK and Australasia.

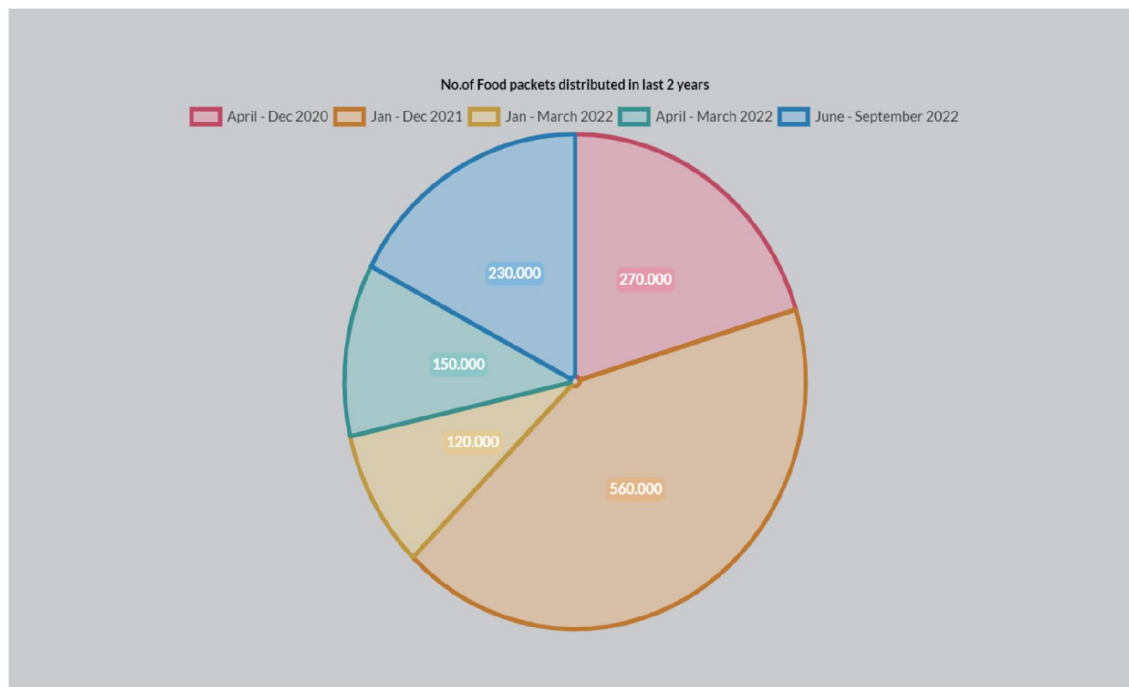
Gorski, H., Fuciu, M., & Croitor, N. (2014). The main purpose of this paper is to investigate the level of awareness of corporate social responsibility (CSR) concept and to identify how CSR activities are planned and organised in Romania – Centre Development Region. Presented results are based on a complex research conducted in order to get information of whether the CSR practice has been implemented in organisations. This data, collected by questionnaire based survey, were organized and analyzed in SPSS. Results have shown that in the surveyed organizations CSR practices are not enough understood and used. Taking into account the research results, we provide some recommendations

Kadam, D. V. R. (2021). The aim of this Bill is to make the companies discharge their social commitment towards their stakeholders like customers, government and mainly the community at large. Alongside enhance the economic development of the company. This research paper seeks to explain the importance of corporate social responsibility in today's global era.

Khatun, A., & Dar, S. N. (2022). It is the corporate sector that can play a bigger role in the development of the society through its CSR initiatives. This chapter attempts to study corporate social responsibility, its role and issues in a developing country with special reference to India. The findings show that lack of understanding, inadequately trained personnel, lack of proper policy making, lack of participation of the local people, and so on affects the reach and effectiveness of CSR programs in India.

III. FINDINGS OF STUDY

Currently ISKCON Bhiwandi has been working in three major sectors i.e Food distribution (Annadan), Green Initiative and Value education. As Bhiwandi is a town where till the date major population is working on a daily wage basis who belong to below poverty line. The important reason behind free meal distribution is that, if they get one meal everyday from any other sources, so that they can save their daily earnings for other several reasons such medical expenses or emergencies. Under their "FOOD FOR LIFE" initiative 1000-1500 meals are distributed on daily basis to the underprivileged, migrant workers, daily wage labours. Also the helping hand is given by various sponsors and donators. They have potential of distributing 10 lakh and 12 lakh meals in years of 2023 and 2024 respectively. For which they have kitchen set up and also a team of dedicated devotees who cook the meals. In this initiative various partners like deccan chemicals pvt.ltd, Mazgaon dock shipbuilders ltd. Chalet Hotels, Mitsubishi electrics, future general total Insurance solutions, Dynamic prestress, Kruger, Rama cylinder and few more corporate firms has been giving a helping hand to ISKON.

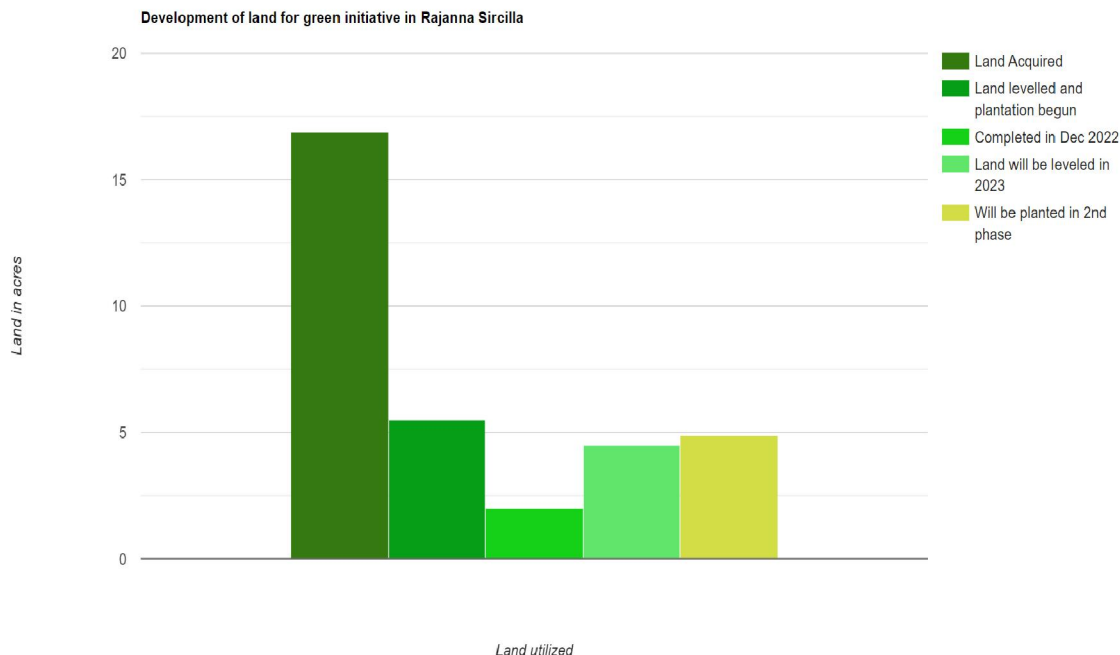


Source: <https://www.iskconbhiwandi.org/csr>

Second major initiative taken by them is Green Initiative. Under which they have acquired approximate 17 Acres of land in Attapur-Hyderabad in a town named Ranjana Sircilla. In this green initiative they have been working in collaboration with ISKCON Attapur-Hyderabad. On that land projects like, trees plantation including vegetables, flowers and fruits plants, water conservation, cows nurturing and protection.

Along with they are also providing with farmers training programs and livestock protection programs for the native farmers. Apart from these key activities they will be serving meals to needy sections of local society under Food for Life

Program. In this plan's first phase they have already started with tree plantation on 5.5 acres and plantation on remaining 2 acres is about to start in December 2022. Total 7.5 acres of land was leveled to make it plantation ready. In 2nd Phase remaining 4.5 acres of land will be leveled to and plantation will be done on the same.



Source: <https://www.iskconbhiwandi.org/csr>

Third most important initiative they are functioning into Value Education. In which they aim to empower India with values. Values that creates charismatic personalities such as Discipline, Truthfulness, Concentration, Dutifulness, Self-control Non-violence, Simplicity, Respect, Forgiveness, Compassion. They are heading towards making strong successors with the use of principles from Vedic scriptures.

Especially they are up and running thiese initiatives for youth who is addicted to the internet, adolescent students who are addicted to alcohol and individuals who have reduced with their attention span from 12 seconds to 5 seconds since decade of 2000. To deal with the same they have designed the curriculum with the help of educational experts, also they are taking help of Vedic teachings which they have put in their value education book. Various representatives of ISKCON are visiting the schools where they enroll students in value education contest and prices are awarded to first 15 participants. Under this contest, ₹300 are spent on one student where, Value education book along with copy of Bhagavad-geeta is provided to the participants and they ensure that students go through the same, so that their goal of imparting values to them gets achieved.

Since, 11 years from today i.e from 2010 this contest is prevailing throughout India. In which 2750+ schools from more than 275 cities. If we explore about the outreach of students then, 750000 students have been imparted with the value education throughout the India. They are having potential in the year of 2023to reach out to 100000 students across 500 schools in the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Gujrat.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to secondary data only. Area of the research is limited to Bhiwandi region of Thane district of Maharashtra. The main focus of the study is highlighting on CSR activities conducted by ISKCON Bhiwandi. No other area has been chosen. But for the further study, other areas can be chosen as, Currently, ISKCON temples, centers, schools from various regions of India are diligently working on under CSR initiative of Govt. of India.

V. CONCLUSION

ISKCON Bhiwandi is based at Mansarovar region of Bhiwandi. Currently they are working with the native people and communities. They are conducting various religious, social welfare and spiritual activities that are up-lifting our nation to become strong society. In today's highly challenging and uncertain times ISKCON Bhiwandi is making heartwarming move towards society.

From April 2020 to September 2022, 13,30,000+ free meals has been provided by ISKCON Bhiwandi. Various monks and devotees of ISKCON say that, their aim is to reduce insecurity and scarcity of food that can provide at least nutrition to the needy ones.

Also, with the help of sponsors they have started working on first phase of green initiative of tree plantation. Along with it the value education is also making our society stronger from within. This initiative especially making our youngsters rich with confidence and character, and next generation future ready. So, it has been observed that ISKCON Bhiwandi is playing a crucial role in passing around great noble and eternal message in community about corporate social responsibility along with spirituality.

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