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Jubilant helps to create impactful community development framework

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About Author: Powered with more than 17 years of experience in the labour and social welfare industry, Mr Vivek Prakash has emerged to be a subject matter expert on community affairs and CSR. He spearheads the operations of 'Jubilant Bhartia Foundation', the foundation that actively undertakes various community development initiatives of Jubilant Life Sciences. Vivek also extends his expertise to CII Northern Council in the capacity of a co-Chairman of CII's CSR Committee.

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Our country has emerged as an economic powerhouse in recent times. Yet, it is a fact that large number of people who are poor and socially deprived dwells in India. Corporates are part of the society and especially in the developing country like ours, have a major role to play through CSR towards the development of the country. I consider CSR as a commitment of the business towards inclusive growth.

The inclusive development has a requisite that social progress keeps pace with the growing economy. As an engine for social progress, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) helps companies to attain sustainable development. The major two categories of business comprises of service sector and manufacturing sector.

Manufacturing sector, owing to huge infrastructure investment and their seasoned existence for several years, bears close connection with the environment and society. Hence, we firmly believe that industry is a part of the society and cannot exist in isolation. CSR is not only about enhancing the credibility and branding of an organization, it is important for the sustainability. An organization may find it difficult to flourish in the absence of a sound social infrastructure in and around its area of operations.

CSR in the Indian Corporate landscape segment has gone through several stages and has finally evolved into a state, wherein companies are giving back to the people and society. In comparison to the rest of the world, Indian companies fair high with respect to their tradition of CSR and a lot has been done by the industry to make Indian Entrepreneurs conscious of their social responsibility as an important aspect of their business activity. Even still, CSR in India is yet to receive widespread recognition because companies fail to understand that the CSR approach of corporates has to be in line with their attitudes towards mainstream business- companies setting clear objectives, undertaking potential investments, measuring and reporting performance publicly.

Many philanthropy experts believe that CSR expenditure has to expand for creating a society in which development challenges are addressed well. On the contrary, I am of the opinion that while funding plays its own role, it is equally important to focus on channelizing these funds to ensure minimal aberrations and sustainable interventions. When we at Jubilant take up any of the community development initiative, our focus is primarily on curbing the gaps in delivering quality services in the remote areas. With our experience and our study of ground realities, we have understood that not all regions or community development framework face lack of funds. Government at the central and state level has rolled out some great policies to benefit the marginalized segment. What lacks is its implementation, monitoring and a great deal of motivation of the ground force. This is where Jubilant has taken a lead and has endeavored in addressing the underlying causes for the quality gap that exists in education, healthcare, livelihood generation and even in promoting talent of a social entrepreneur. These four areas of community work are the founding pillars of all CSR activities at Jubilant Life Sciences. We have been offering our interventions for positive results at multiple levels. For example, we have been addressing capacity building challenges in education: undertaking efforts to improve primary education by motivating children of a village to attend classes, by ensuring teachers are motivated to train and educate; healthcare awareness amongst community members, promoting institutional delivery for safe motherhood, providing basic healthcare services training offered to youth, including women, for livelihood generation and enhancing employability. Most of all, we have also reached and penetrated at the grassroots level to encourage people who have the potential to be a social entrepreneur.

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At Jubilant, sustainable development with focus on environment and pluralistic culture is the mainstay of the society. The foundation takes pride in reaching out to the grassroots level of the society where it is most important to include people in the development process. Jubilant has seen umpteen success stories in the past and achieving the goals of social development while walking the path of sustainable development gives us the encouragement to move up the ladder.

Competing against the industry adversities for CSR (lack of understanding of the concept, inadequately trained staff, deficiency of authentic data and specific information on the kinds of CSR activities) Jubilant has been able to make a difference to the lives of people and society on the whole. Jubilant has always believed that for CSR to make a difference, it has to come out of the purview of 'doing social good' and should be synced as a 'business necessity'.

Since, the 'business case' for CSR has gained ground and corporate houses are realizing that 'what is good for workers - their community, health, and environment is also good for the business' the Indian landscape for CSR has finally evolved to a mature situation. The recommendations and modification in the company law may propel the initiative further and may see rise of a new community focused society in future. May the year 2014, usher in a community which is more inclined to interventions, not merely with funds but also with managerial expertise, know-how and of all in addressing systematic issues and with an enhanced focus on capacity building.