

INDIA'S CSR PROGRAMMES MUST GO THROUGH REVAMP

Posted on June 5, 2023 by Dr Edmond Fernandes



Categories: [CSR Impacts](#), [Opinion](#)

The development of business and social wealth stands inspired in India today because of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). In many ways, my team and I at CHD Group consider it Common Shared Responsibility (CSR). It is obvious evidence that when your neighbor's house is on fire, your own property remains at stake. Likewise, running a big machinery in any geography without really uplifting the region, without really given back to build social wealth may provide for momentary growth, but it will be a tough battle to win in the long run.

The role of Industry in India's Socio-Economic wealth creation

Industries falling under the ambit of CSR have a brilliant opportunity that lies ahead of them. Our nation is in the middle of a climate crisis, our economy is proliferating due to internal and external factors, our public health needs are rising and a hopeful nation seeks wealth creation which is within the realm of reality. At this juncture, Industry representatives have a strong role to play. Sometimes, some offices are unable to make decision and leave the development sector confused and in chaos. It is of no good if we win the whole world but lose our soul. Industries must stop doing the work that must be done by development sector professionals.

Critical errors made by Industries while doing CSR

First, companies trying to implement CSR themselves miss the opportunity to engage with people with passion. Money can put a project together, but passion cannot be brought with money. This can only be channelized by working with some of the most passionate organizations that have existed over the years and the new ones built on strong values of professional excellence. Working with passionate people and seeing value in the work there is to be done calls for deep vision which not many have.

Second, companies who out-source CSR in the hands of consultancies miss the opportunity to meet new talents, understand new energies, lack conceptual abilities to pursue committed CSR and often lose out working with the best energies that exist, the best professionals. I have seen over the years on how so many consultancies have only served their friends instead of serving the spirit of CSR in the true sense of the word. Consultancies tend to keep out people with big vision and ensure they never reach the senior teams in the corporate world. In such instance the onus is on senior teams to engage in talent search and directly work with visionary development leaders spread across the nation.

Third, companies who try to fix eligibility criteria built on turnover get the grant giving majorly wrong. You don't assess talent by turn-over. You assess passion by aptitude, by genuine listening and a history of work if opportunities were provided. True leadership boils down to building new leaders.

The way forward:

India is at a critical juncture in history and the epicenter of stardom is centered in Asia. Industries need to identify talented NGO sector leaders, engage them, involve them and work on the CSR front with them. Politics of development is not sustainable and we must be guided by a moral compass on this regard. The Industry-NGO bridge is the only way CSR can become a game-changer. But this bridge must be built on quality, talent, vision and passion alone.