



Modern Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Through Dr.B.R. Ambedkar's Emphasis on Sustainable Development

Mr. Bajarappa¹, Prof. Gouri Manik Manasa²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Studies and Research in Social Work, VSKUB, Ballari, Karnataka, India

²Professor, Department of Studies and Research in Social Work, VSKUB, Ballari, Karnataka, India

Corresponding author Email: bajarappasujatha@gmail.com

How to Cite this Article:

Bajarappa, (2026). Modern Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Through Dr.B.R. Ambedkar's Emphasis on Sustainable Development.

International Journal of Creative and Open Research in Engineering and Management, 2(6).

<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijcope.v2i6.137>

License:

This article is published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and the source are credited.

© The Author(s). Published by International Journal of Creative and Open Research in Engineering and Management.



<https://doi.org/10.55041/ijcope.v2i6.137>

ABSTRACT

Modern corporate social responsibility (CSR) has grown beyond just giving money to charity. Now it includes fair governance, social justice, and protecting the environment. This paper analyses modern CSR practices through the philosophical framework of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's focus on sustainable development, social justice, and inclusive growth. Ambedkar's vision highlights the interdependence of economic progress, human dignity, and environmental responsibility, which closely aligns with present-day CSR frameworks. By integrating Ambedkarite principles such as equality, accountability, and welfare of marginalized communities, CSR can move towards a more people-centric and sustainable model of development. The study argues that adopting Ambedkar's holistic approach strengthens corporate commitment to long-term societal well-being while balancing economic objectives with ethical and environmental responsibilities in a globalized economy.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Sustainable Development, Social Justice.



1. INTRODUCTION

The author approaches this inquiry not merely as a theoretical exercise, but as a social work-oriented reflection on how corporate power intersects with structural inequality in contemporary societies. The motivation for this paper emerges from ongoing debates within Ambedkar Studies and CSR scholarship regarding whether ethical intent can meaningfully reshape market-driven institutions. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a central concern within global business discourse, particularly as corporations increasingly shape social, economic, and environmental outcomes. Within the discipline of social work, CSR is not merely a managerial tool but a normative framework concerned with justice, equity, and human well-being. Traditionally, CSR was understood as voluntary philanthropy or charitable activity undertaken by corporations to enhance public image. However, contemporary CSR frameworks emphasize ethical governance, stakeholder accountability, environmental stewardship, and inclusive development. This shift resonates strongly with the ideas of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, whose lifelong engagement with questions of social justice, human dignity, and structural inequality offers a powerful philosophical anchor for reimagining CSR in the present century.

Dr. Ambedkar's vision of development was fundamentally human-centered. He consistently argued that economic growth devoid of social justice would reproduce inequality and undermine democracy. In works such as *Annihilation of Caste* and *States and Minorities*, Ambedkar emphasized that institutions—whether political or economic—must be evaluated by their impact on the most marginalized sections of society. This perspective aligns closely with the ethical foundations of modern CSR, which increasingly prioritize sustainability, social inclusion, and long-term societal well-being over short-term profit maximization.

This paper situates modern CSR within a global framework while drawing on Ambedkar's philosophy as a normative guide. From a social work perspective, the study argues that integrating Ambedkarite principles into CSR practices can deepen corporate engagement with sustainable development goals, particularly those related to inequality, decent work, education, and environmental protection. The paper combines conceptual analysis with brief illustrations from Indian corporate CSR initiatives to demonstrate how Ambedkar's ideas can inform practice.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. **Panda et al. (2024)** examined CSR initiatives in India and found that corporate engagement in education, healthcare, and community development significantly contributes to sustainable development goals. The study emphasized the importance of aligning CSR activities with local developmental needs.
2. **Gupta (2025)** explored the relationship between CSR and sustainable development in the Indian context. The findings revealed that organizations adopting stakeholder-oriented CSR strategies demonstrate greater social impact and long-term sustainability compared to firms focusing solely on profit maximization.
3. **Hael et al. (2025)** conducted a bibliometric analysis of CSR literature and observed that responsible business practices contribute not only to societal welfare but also to organizational competitiveness. Their study highlighted governance, ethics, and sustainability as emerging themes in CSR research.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To examine the concept and evolution of modern Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- To analyze Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's views on social justice, sustainable development, and inclusive growth.
- To explore the relevance of Ambedkarite principles in contemporary CSR practices.
- To assess the contribution of CSR initiatives towards sustainable and equitable development.
- To suggest an Ambedkarite framework for strengthening ethical and socially responsible corporate governance.



4. Conceptual Foundations of Modern Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved significantly over time. Initially, businesses focused mainly on maximizing profits and increasing shareholder wealth. Social and environmental concerns were often considered outside the scope of business activities. However, growing awareness among civil society, labor organizations, consumers, and environmental groups has expanded expectations regarding corporate accountability.

Today, CSR is viewed as a comprehensive approach that integrates economic, social, and environmental responsibilities. Modern CSR is based on the concept of the **Triple Bottom Line**, which emphasizes economic growth, social equity, and environmental sustainability. Companies are now expected not only to generate profits but also to contribute positively to society and protect the environment.

From a social work perspective, CSR is closely connected with community development, social justice, and human rights. Effective CSR initiatives should address issues such as poverty, inequality, discrimination, and environmental degradation. Merely engaging in charitable activities or improving corporate image is insufficient. Instead, CSR should contribute to long-term social change and the empowerment of disadvantaged communities.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's philosophy provides an important ethical framework for evaluating CSR. He strongly opposed social inequality and advocated for justice, equality, and human dignity. Ambedkar argued that economic systems must protect the rights and welfare of vulnerable populations. Therefore, CSR inspired by Ambedkar's ideas should focus on promoting social inclusion, reducing inequalities, and ensuring equitable development rather than serving as a symbolic corporate exercise.

5. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's Vision of Sustainable and Inclusive Development

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar viewed development as more than economic growth. He believed that true development must combine economic progress with social justice, equality, and moral responsibility. According to Ambedkar, development should improve the quality of life of all citizens, particularly those who are socially and economically marginalized.

In his work *States and Minorities*, Ambedkar advocated state intervention to prevent the concentration of wealth and ensure the fair distribution of resources. He supported labor rights, minimum wages, and social security measures to protect workers and disadvantaged groups. These ideas remain relevant to modern discussions on corporate responsibility and sustainable development.

In *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar emphasized that social reform is essential for economic progress. He argued that caste-based discrimination restricts access to education, employment, and economic opportunities. From a CSR perspective, this highlights the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion within organizations. CSR initiatives promoting education, skill development, and equal employment opportunities reflect Ambedkar's vision of an inclusive society.

Ambedkar's later writings on Buddhism further enriched his philosophy. In *The Buddha and His Dhamma*, he emphasized compassion, rationality, and social responsibility. These values align closely with contemporary sustainability principles, which encourage environmental protection, social welfare, and ethical decision-making. Thus, Ambedkar's ideas provide a strong moral foundation for sustainable and inclusive development.

6. CSR, Social Work, and Global Development Frameworks

The integration of CSR with global development initiatives has expanded the role of corporations in society. International frameworks such as the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** encourage businesses to contribute to poverty reduction, quality education, gender equality, decent work, and environmental sustainability.



Social work professionals play an important role in ensuring that CSR initiatives promote social justice and community welfare. They help organizations understand community needs, encourage participation, and evaluate social impacts.

Ambedkar's concept of social democracy complements the goals of sustainable development. He believed that political democracy could not succeed without social and economic equality. Similarly, CSR initiatives should address both environmental sustainability and social inequality. Programs that ignore social justice concerns may fail to achieve meaningful development outcomes.

Global standards such as the **UN Global Compact** and **ISO 26000** provide guidance for responsible business practices. However, Ambedkar's philosophy reminds us that CSR initiatives must also consider local social realities, historical inequalities, and the needs of marginalized communities. This approach can make CSR more relevant and effective in countries like India.

7. Indian Corporate CSR Initiatives through an Ambedkarite Perspective.

Several Indian companies have implemented CSR programs that reflect values similar to those advocated by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

The **Tata Group** has a long history of supporting education, healthcare, community development, and labor welfare. Its initiatives in skill development and rural livelihood enhancement promote economic empowerment and social inclusion.

The **Infosys Foundation** has contributed significantly to education, healthcare, and social welfare programs. Scholarships for disadvantaged students and investments in public health align with Ambedkar's commitment to equal opportunities and social justice.

Similarly, **ITC Limited** launched the e-Choupal initiative, which uses technology to improve market access for rural farmers. This program empowers rural communities by providing information and better economic opportunities, thereby reducing structural inequalities.

While these initiatives contribute positively to society, continuous monitoring is necessary to ensure that they create long-term social benefits and address deeper structural issues.

8. Challenges and Ethical Limitations of Contemporary CSR

Despite its growing importance, CSR faces several challenges. One major criticism is that some companies use CSR primarily as a public relations strategy rather than as a genuine commitment to social welfare. Such initiatives may improve corporate image without addressing the root causes of social and economic inequality.

Ambedkar strongly criticized superficial reforms that failed to bring meaningful change. His perspective suggests that CSR should focus on structural transformation rather than symbolic actions.

Another challenge is balancing voluntary CSR activities with government responsibility. Ambedkar believed that strong institutions and legal frameworks are necessary to protect vulnerable populations. Therefore, CSR should complement government efforts rather than replace public welfare programs.

Furthermore, inadequate transparency, limited community participation, and weak impact assessment can reduce the effectiveness of CSR initiatives. Addressing these issues is essential for achieving sustainable development outcomes.



9. Towards an Ambedkarite Framework for Ethical CSR

An Ambedkarite approach to CSR is based on the principles of equality, justice, accountability, and human dignity. It encourages corporations to actively participate in reducing social inequalities and promoting inclusive development.

This framework emphasizes:

- Equal opportunities for all individuals.
- Transparent and accountable corporate governance.
- Community participation in decision-making.
- Long-term commitment to social development.
- Protection of environmental resources.
- Empowerment of marginalized communities through education and skill development.

Social workers can contribute to this process by facilitating community engagement, assessing social impacts, and promoting ethical practices. Through such efforts, CSR can become an effective instrument for sustainable and inclusive development.

10. CONCLUSION

Modern Corporate Social Responsibility has evolved from charitable activities to a comprehensive framework that integrates economic growth, social justice, and environmental sustainability. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's philosophy provides valuable guidance for making CSR more ethical, inclusive, and socially responsible.

His emphasis on equality, human dignity, social justice, and democratic values aligns closely with the objectives of sustainable development. Integrating Ambedkarite principles into CSR can help corporations move beyond symbolic philanthropy and contribute meaningfully to social transformation. In this way, CSR can become a powerful tool for achieving inclusive growth, reducing inequalities, and promoting long-term societal well-being.

FOOT NOTES

1. Ambedkar's concept of constitutional morality emphasizes ethical conduct by institutions beyond legal compliance, a principle directly relevant to CSR governance structures.
2. In *States and Minorities* (1947), Ambedkar proposed state responsibility in regulating capital to prevent exploitation and social harm.
3. *The Buddha and His Dhamma* articulates an ethical humanism grounded in compassion and rationality, offering a moral foundation for sustainability ethics.



REFERENCES

1. Ambedkar, B. R. (2014). *Annihilation of caste: The annotated critical edition*. Verso Books.
2. Ambedkar, B. R. (2011). *The Buddha and his dhamma: A critical edition*. Oxford University Press.
3. Carroll, A. B. (1991). The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organizational stakeholders. *Business horizons*, 34(4), 39-48.
4. Gupta, S. (2025). Corporate social responsibility and sustainable development goals for a developed India@ 2047. *Journal of Sustainable Business*, 10(1), 15.
5. Hael, M., Belhaj, F. A., Hazaea, S. A., Eldaia, M., & Al-dalaien, B. O. (2025). A bibliometric and content analysis of the role of corporate social responsibility in enhancing competitive advantage. *Discover Sustainability*, 6(1), 1118.
6. Lee, B. X., Kjaerulf, F., Turner, S., Cohen, L., Donnelly, P. D., Muggah, R., ... & Gilligan, J. (2016). Transforming our world: implementing the 2030 agenda through sustainable development goal indicators. *Journal of public health policy*, 37(Suppl 1), 13-31.
7. Panda, A. B., Ramegowda, A., Lakshmana, G., & Pawar, M. (2024). Corporate Social Responsibility and the Sustainable Development Goals: Insights from India. *The International Journal of Community and Social Development*, 6(3), 299-316.
8. Poddar, A., Bagadeem, S., & Magry, M. A. (2025). Aligning corporate social responsibility with sustainable development goals in India across pandemic phases. *Discover Sustainability*, 6(1), 1355.