

**Managerial perception of the impact of corporate
social responsibility on corporate branding in Indian
agribusiness firms**

By

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To My Family

Who offered me unconditional love and support throughout the course of this thesis and
kept my spirits up

Student Declaration

I declare that while registered as a candidate for the research degree, I have not been a registered candidate or enrolled student for another award of the University or other academic or professional institution. I also declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award and is solely my own work.

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Abstract

This study explores the managerial perception regarding the influence of CSR on corporate branding in the Indian agribusiness context. This thesis relies on CSR theories and brand management models and follows a qualitative case methodology. The study contributes to existing knowledge by focusing on the motives of Indian agribusiness firms to get involved in CSR practices and the means through which such practices influences branding. The study focuses on three key elements of corporate branding of Indian agribusiness - corporate image and reputation, corporate culture and corporate communication. The research draws on thematic analysis of 28 responses from semi-structured interviews of practicing managers in branding, marketing and CSR domains of four large agribusiness firms in India. The results reveal that though CSR practices does not influence corporate branding strategy of agribusiness firms significantly, firms do have implicit motive of branding while pursuing CSR. Firms primarily do CSR for operational reasons such as for removing the operational and legal hurdles for smooth functioning of the manufacturing plant and business which is an explicit motive of CSR. The other explicit motives are ‘community development’ and ‘philanthropy’. The study indicates that agribusiness firms use CSR practices to gain support of the local community for smooth operation of their business or at the time of crisis. The results illustrate that, CSR positively influences corporate image and reputation and thereby objectively influences corporate branding of Indian agribusiness firms. Other aspects of the study divulge that CSR has limited influence on advertising and communication programs because advertising of CSR is not common in India due to cultural and cost issues. However, promotion and internal communication of CSR initiatives are adequately done within the organisations. Moreover, the study also elucidates that firms possessing a corporate culture which gives importance to environmental sustainability are more likely to adopt CSR in their future brand strategy than firms which possess a corporate culture that is largely driven by market forces and competition.

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Abbreviations

CB: Corporate Branding

CEOs: Chief Executive Officers

CI: Corporate Image

CII: Confederation of Indian Industry

CR: Corporate Reputation

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

EU: European Union

FICCI: Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry

IARI: Indian Agriculture Research Institute

ICAR: Indian Council of Agriculture Research

ISO: International Organisation for Standardization

MNCs: Multi-National Companies

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

SAUs: State Agriculture University

UCLAN: University of Central Lancashire

WBCSD: World Business Council for Sustainable Development

CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

Recently the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and its effects on corporate branding (CB), have generated immense interest among brand researchers across the globe (Blumenthal and Bergstrom, 2003; Kitchin, 2003; Melo and Galan, 2011). Its importance in agribusiness sector has been realized significantly in last decade (Heyder and Theuvsen, 2008a; Hiss, 2009).

There is growing concern over the potential detrimental effect of agribusiness on society (Heyder and Theuvsen, 2008b). The entire agribusiness industry faces increasing pressure from environment, health and animal rights advocates (Edward and Schultz, 2005). The perception of stakeholders regarding agribusiness is becoming increasingly important whilst their influence is growing too (Gerlach, 2006). As a result, in recent years the agribusiness sector has witnessed a number of crises and conflicts, making firms in the sector increasingly exposed to the public eye (Jansen and Vellema, 2004).

Agribusiness in India has experienced conflicts with society over polluted environment, water and soil, loss of livelihood and income of farmers and concerns about public health. For example, *Green Revolution* in India has helped to substantially increase the production of grain but at a huge environmental cost (Pingali, 2012). It was characterised by the use of high yielding varieties of seeds which were more responsive to external inputs (such as fertiliser, pesticides and insecticides) for productivity. However, appropriate research and policies to incentivize judicious use of inputs were largely lacking (Pingali, 2012). Hence, unintended consequences in water use, soil degradation,

and chemical runoff produced serious environmental damage (Burney *et al.*, 2010). In recent years, such problems as salinity ingress along coastal areas, water-logging and high soil alkalinity have presented themselves as a growing problem in some regions resulting in diminishing land productivity. Environment problems have surfaced because of the faulty planning and unchecked use of improper technology which are not only environmentally unsafe, but have also adverse impact on the various vital components of the environment (Prajapati and Singhai, 2012). Many industrial units are located in densely populated zones aggravating the problem of pollution in cities.

This is a major criticism levelled against agribusiness that farmers have increasingly turned to chemical nutrients and environmentally unsound herbicides/pesticides (Poetz *et al.*, 2013; Raj, 2014). Historically, agribusiness has defended the use of some chemicals (for example, Urea) on the grounds that cheap food requires them: chemicals speed up the production process and increases yields (Poetz *et al.*, 2013). In reality it has been found that the excessive use of chemical fertilisers and herbicides increase the cost of food. However, farmers have become dependent on ‘new and improved’ chemicals. The companies selling seeds to farmers are interested in making them purchase ‘packages’ of seed and chemicals, thus forcing the farmers to continue or even increase the application of chemicals. In India, companies such as Monsanto and Dow Chemicals have faced frequent public protests regarding this.

As far as seeds are concerned, there are stringent regulations preventing the introduction of genetically modified (GM) seeds in India (BCG Report, 2014). Yet, after introduction of cotton GM seeds in India, the trial runs for many other crops such as rice, maize, mustard, chickpea, sorghum, wheat, groundnut and brinjal are underway by both public

sector and private sector companies (ICRA Report, 2015). These trial runs have faced widespread opposition from environmentalists, health agencies and farmers (BCG Report, 2014). Since hybrid and biotech seeds do not breed on their own, in addition to environmental and health safety concerns, there is fear that farmers may become totally dependent on large companies for the provision of seeds which will have serious implications for these companies not least because they will find themselves even more in the limelight of public scrutiny (ICRA Report, 2015).

Agribusiness firms, particularly food companies are also blamed for health related issues such as the promotion of junk food, adulterated food and substandard food. In 2015, Maggi (a popular food brand owned by Nestle) had to withdraw from the Indian market because its products were revealed to contain dangerously higher levels of mono sodium glucomate. In the recent years scandals related to low quality of food in India involved such big names as Cadbury and Coca-Cola. As a result consumers in India have become have become alert to changes in food quality and take food safety concerns very seriously (Khan and Ahmad, 2014; Deininger and Sur, 2007; FAO, 2003; Rimal *et al.*, 2001).

Another challenge for agribusiness firms is to establish fair and effective relations with the farming community that benefit both sides. This is not always the case as large firms are accused sometimes of using their power to the disadvantage of the farmers. In this context, the conflicts related to contract farming may be mentioned. Contract farming is a system for the production and supply of agricultural and horticultural produce by farmers/primary producers under advance contracts, the essence of such arrangements being a commitment to provide an agricultural commodity of a particular type (quality/variety) at specified time, price and in specified quantity to a known buyer

(Singh, 2002). Large firms are sometimes accused of not always holding their side of the bargain. They were found to deny farmers compensation in case of crop failure, delayed payments, poor technical assistance, manipulation of quality standards and outright cheating. This has generated a debate over the role of the existing agribusiness models in enhancing farm income and employment and social responsibility of agribusiness firms (Raj, 2014).

Agribusiness is also linked with emission of greenhouse gases. Such practices as conversion of forest land for agricultural use and the deliberate burning of crop-stubble for enhancing soil fertility has significantly increased agricultural emissions of methane and carbon dioxide (WRI, USDA, 2000). These emissions are a major contributor of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere which lead to global warming and other climatic changes (Nath, 2001).

All these have implications for the corporate branding strategy of agribusiness firms. In order to gain greater legitimacy with the society, alleviate the negative externalities of agribusiness operations and protect company's image and reputation, agribusiness firms in India increasingly turn to practices inspired by the corporate social responsibilities (CSR) concept (Raj, 2014). CSR relates to stakeholder satisfaction and is often a factor contributing to the societal legitimacy of a firm (Hiss, 2009; Seuring and Muller, 2008). In this context, agribusiness firms cannot afford to ignore CSR as one of the most important emerging social trends in the branding strategy. CSR has been described as a strategic branding tool, an element of a market differentiating strategy (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001) that can strengthen brand equity (Hoeffler and Keller, 2002). However, Indian agribusiness firms face the challenge of employing CSR strategically not only to

mitigate the conflict with the society but also to advance their relations with stakeholders and strengthen their competitiveness.

There has been a surge of interest in understanding the dynamics and peculiarities of CSR in developing economies (Blowfield, 2005; Idemudia, 2011; Newell and Frynas, 2007). Some scholars have contested the transferability of concepts in the developed market and argued in favour of a more grounded analysis of how CSR manifests itself in emerging markets (Egri and Ralston, 2008; Kolk and Van Tulder, 2010; Kolk and Lenfant, 2010). Since the developing countries present unique institutional characteristics that affect CSR manifestations, the context dependence of CSR is important (Jamali, 2008; Visser, 2008). In this study, we analyse the role of CSR as a prerequisite for a strong corporate brand in Indian agribusiness firms. More specifically, this study explores the relationship between CSR and key elements of corporate branding such as corporate image, reputation, culture and communication.

Despite the importance of agribusiness in developing countries, relations between agribusiness and society are not well researched (Grunert, 2005; Heyder and Theuvsen, 2008; Jansen and Vellema, 2004; Poetz *et al.*, 2013). There is a paucity of empirical studies investigating the interrelation of CSR and corporate branding within the agribusiness sector. This study aims to contribute significantly in closing the existing gap by investigating the influence of CSR on corporate branding strategy with a view to both advance theory and make practical recommendations regarding CSR and branding in emerging markets. The study adopts a cross disciplinary approach that relies on CSR theory, brand management models and the analysis of the Indian agribusiness environment and culture.

This study examines managerial perceptions regarding the impact of CSR activities on branding. Using existing scholarship as a starting point, this thesis takes the investigation of the influence of CSR on corporate branding further, first, by identifying the specific motivations related to the pursuit of CSR by Indian agribusiness firms, and, second, by examining the means through which CSR influences branding strategy.

1.1 Research aim and objectives:

This study aims at exploring managerial perceptions of the impact of CSR on corporate branding in the context of Indian agribusiness firms with objectives to contribute significantly to academic and practical understanding of:

- the importance of branding consideration as a motive of CSR in Indian agribusiness firms
- the impact of CSR involvement on corporate branding
- the barriers to CSR implementation and their consequences for corporate brand building

The approach of this study is inductive because it does not aim at testing a specific theory; rather it attempts to interpret the firm level data collected using qualitative methods (Bryman, Bryman and Bell, 2007).

1.2 Contribution to knowledge

The study will significantly contribute to expansion of knowledge and understanding of the nature of relationship between CSR and corporate branding in the context of agribusiness in a developing country.

The study makes a significant contribution to branding and CSR literature. This study conceptualises the brand and CSR in Indian agribusiness context and provides a working framework to understand these two concepts in relation to the Indian experience. It lays a solid foundation for implementing and analysing branding and CSR practices in Indian agribusiness. For firms and practitioners, its implication may be significant in terms of developing a corporate branding strategy that takes into account the impact of CSR factors.

The study intends to make a tangible contribution to the understanding of the nature of relationship between CSR and corporate branding in the context of agribusiness in a developing country. The study attempts to produce a conceptual framework for firms and practitioners that take into account the impact of CSR factors on drawing a corporate branding strategy. This framework provides a fertile ground for future researchers to conduct detailed enquiry into related contexts and to use quantitative and alternate qualitative methodological tools. The study also identifies specific motivations to pursue CSR by agribusiness firms and produces a framework that describes the CSR implementation of Indian agribusiness firms. Moreover, it investigates the prevailing measurement practices of CSR and identify the barriers in CSR implementation in the context of Indian agribusiness firms. Consequently the study provides a new perspective on CSR-brand relationship that offers valuable insights regarding sustainable corporate branding in agribusiness.

This study is inevitably constrained by certain limitations. For example, the study was limited to only large agribusiness firms. The exclusion of large number of firms weakens the generalizability of results to some extent. The study also suffers from methodological

limitations: interviews were the predominant source of data and individual biases of reporting cannot be ruled out.

To minimize the impact of this limitation, the researcher used multiple sources of data such as annual report, company's brochures, magazines, news articles and websites of the companies. As the researcher self-financed his PhD studies, monetary constraints limited the scale of the project.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of nine chapters and is structured as follows. Chapter two reviews the literature on corporate branding (CB), CSR and their relationship in order to assess the state of knowledge on the subject, identify a research gap and highlight contributions of this enquiry. It also introduces the context of the study including a description of current trend of branding in Indian agribusiness conditions. In chapter three, the theoretical framework of the research has been presented. Chapter four describes the research methods followed including the rationale for the research design and data collection methods. In chapter five the cases used in the study have been described. Chapter six describes Indian agribusiness sector. Chapters' seven to nine contain cross-case analysis and presents key findings of the research study. Chapter ten discusses the findings of the qualitative analysis and places them in the context of existing research. It also analyses the implications of this study for theoretical research, policy makers and practitioners. In addition, it discusses the limitations of the study and highlights avenues for future research and presents conclusions of this study.

CHAPTER – 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a critical analysis of the literature on corporate branding (CB), corporate social responsibility (CSR), Indian agribusiness and their relationships and identifies the gaps in research. The chapter begins with analysis of literature on corporate branding followed by a review of CSR literature. The objective is to outline the context of the research and to identify research gaps in the existing literature. Finally, the literature on process theory is analysed to lay foundation of the next chapter.

2.2 The concept of the brand

A brand is an intangible asset and because of its ethereal characteristics different people find different ways to make sense of it (De Chernatony, 1999). The traditional definition, proposed by the American Marketing Association in 1960, states that the brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors. Some academics have criticised this definition as too preoccupied with the product (e.g. Crainer, 1995) and too mechanical (Arnold, 1992).

De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998) reviewed different definitions of the brand proposed in the literature and identified twelve themes for their categorisation: the brand as (i) legal instrument; (ii) logo; (iii) company; (iv) shorthand; (v) risk reducer; (vi) identity system; (vii) image in consumer's mind; (viii) value system; (ix) personality; (x) relationship; (xi) adding value; (xii) evolving entity.

Analysis of these themes allows three key interpretations (De Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley, 1998). First; these themes are not mutually exclusive as some of them have overlapping meanings. For example, the definition of the brand as ‘company’ and as ‘identity system’ both refers to the coherent message communicated to the brand’s stakeholders. These overlaps suggest definitions redundancy. Second, the ‘brand’ is a complex multidimensional construct. Third, every brand theme mentioned above takes the perspective of either the firm’s staff or the consumer (or both). Hence, the firm’s activity (input) and consumer’s perception (output) emerge as the two main boundaries of the brand construct.

In order to conceptualise the brand, De Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley (1998) proposed the concept of a three level triangle representing functional values, emotional values and promised experience in a hierarchical manner, in which functional values are a foundation for the emotional values and the promised experience is a superstructure over the values. They define the brand as a cluster of functional and emotional values that promises a particular experience. This definition, in our opinion, has two important advantages. First, it represents the *brand as a dynamic interface* between organisation’s actions and customer interpretation. Second, it is *context independent*, which is particularly important for the purpose of this study. At the same time there are aspects of this approach to branding related to the hierarchy of values that this researcher finds debatable. In the Indian agribusiness context, where the consumer is highly price and quality sensitive, it is more appropriate to attach equal importance to functional and emotional values, unlike the assumption of the brand triangle proposed by De Chernatony and Dall’Olmo Riley. Hence, for the purpose of this research, the brand is conceptualised in a manner in which functional and emotional values are placed in the bottom corners of the triangle with promised experience at the top (Figure 2.1).

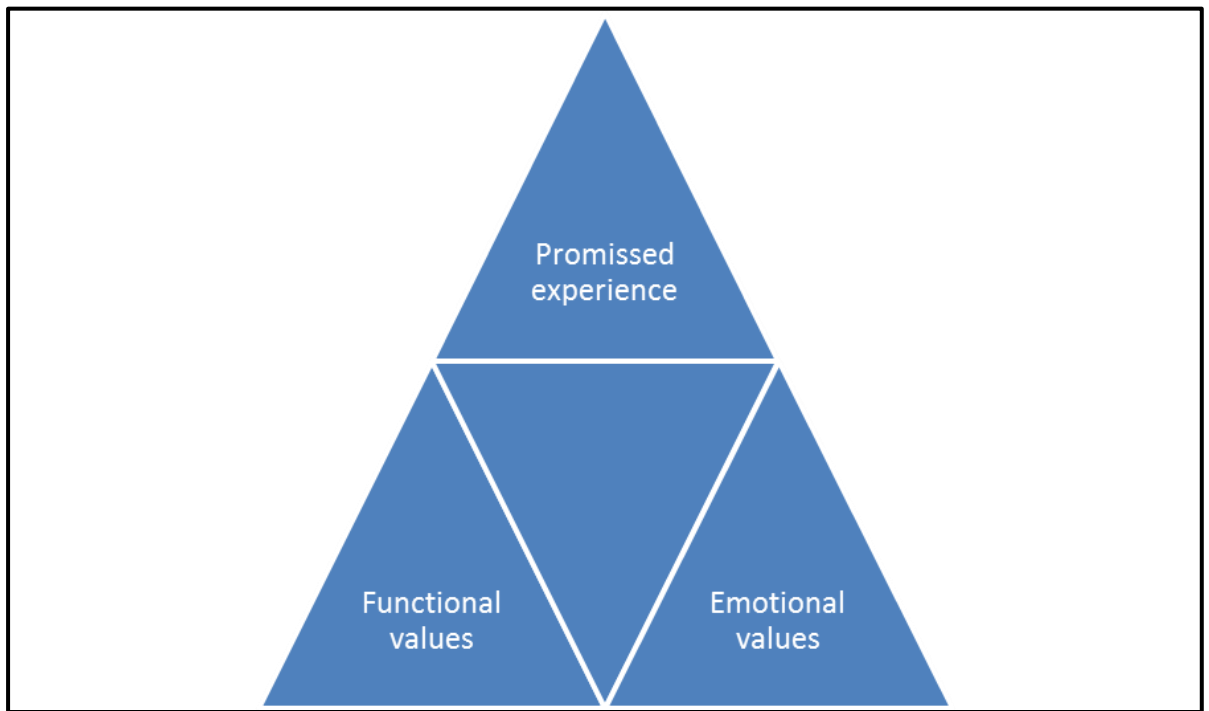


Figure 2.1: Conceptualization of Brand (authors representation based on De Chernatony framework 2002)

Thus, for the purpose of this study, the ‘brand’ is an *organisational process-oriented construct* that makes a part of the strategic mix of Indian agribusiness firms. The literature makes an important distinction between (a) product branding and (b) corporate branding (Kay, 2006). It is therefore essential to characterise the difference between the two within the context of this thesis.

2.3 Differentiating between product branding and corporate branding

Branding may have quite different meaning depending on whether one is concerned with the products or firms and this distinction is important because CSR may relate differently to the product and the firm. In fact, Urde (2003) argues that there are four basic brand architectures (strategies) available to firms: corporate, product, corporate-and-product (with dominant use of the corporate brand) product-and-corporate (with dominant use of product brands).

Literature Review

Branding scholarship has traditionally been dominated by an emphasis on product branding and how separate brand identities are built for different products (Davies and Chun, 2002; Xie and Boggs, 2006). However, the literature on branding has been evolving over the last three decades towards positioning the brand in a wider corporate context reflecting a remarkable shift from product branding to corporate branding as a strategic choice adopted by firms (Aaker, 1996; Balmer, 2001).

There are important differences between product branding and corporate branding. The former emphasises the brand's functional form (referring the brand's physical attributes and functional utility of the product), whereas the latter elevates the importance of the corporation's name (Siegel, 1994). The corporate brand can be regarded as the sum of the corporation's marketing efforts to provide a controlled representation of the corporation's value system and identity (Ind, 1997; Balmer, 2001). It differs from a product brand in its strategic focus and its implementation that combines corporate strategy including corporate image and reputation, corporate communications and corporate culture (Balmer, 1995, 2001).

Corporate branding requires much more complicated and sophisticated organisation than product branding (De Chernatony, 2002). While product branding could be handled within the marketing department of a company, corporate branding requires organisation-wide support.

Another difference is that corporate branding requires integration of internal and external communication, as well as creating coherence of expression across multiplicity of channels and news media whereas product branding focuses on tactical communication mix (Balmer, 2001). Corporate branding typically uses the total corporate communication mix

to engage target audiences who perceive and judge the company and its products or services. The core company values and heritage largely influence the image the firm aspires to have. While the perception of a product brand is usually derived from advertising, distribution, and communicated image, the image of corporate brand typically result from customers' interaction with the firm's employees, physical presence and overall marketing efforts. A degree of intangibility and complexity is considered to be a central characteristic of a corporate brand (Ind, 1997). Therefore, corporate branding can provide the strategic focus for product brand's positioning and consistency across the firm's marketing and communication activity (Siegel, 1994).

However, the most important difference between product and corporate branding is that while product branding focuses on the consumer, corporate branding targets all the stakeholders (managers, employees, community members, investors, partners, suppliers and other interested parties including consumers). Accordingly, corporate brand tends to demand greater attention to issues of ethical or social responsibility (Ind, 1997). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) assert that a 'good corporate citizen'; image created by a corporate brand with the help of CSR can enhance a firm's legitimacy and survival in complex environments. Similarly, Frooman (1999) and Freeman (1984) claim that respect, legitimacy and trust delivered by corporate branding strategy can assist firms in management of their supply-chain or distribution channels, directly or indirectly. Finally, CSR can also provide a means for firms to deal with some of the anti-branding attacks that affect strong brands (Kay, 2006). Accordingly, this dissertation focuses on the influence of CSR activities on corporate branding.

There are many ways to strengthen the corporate brand but they all require developing a *brand vision* as the first step. The conceptual foundations of brand visioning have been

developed in a comprehensive manner by De Chernatony (2001) and are examined in the next section.

2.4 Brand visioning

There are three components of a brand vision (De Chernatony, 2010). The first component, the *envisioned future*, encourages managers to think about the type of brand environment they would like to bring about in the future. The second component, the *brand purpose*, considers the purpose of the brand beyond profitability that will motivate and guide managers and staff. The third component of the brand vision is the *brand's value*. Values drive staff behaviour to deliver the brand promise and provide the basis for brand differentiation. De Chernatony (2010) argues that powerful brands are built on a low number of values, since staff find it difficult to remember a large number of values and become unsure about how they should act in particular situations, thereby leading to brand inconsistency.

A powerful brand vision is a necessary prerequisite for a successful brand. Brand visioning encourages a holistic, company-wide perspective on the future of the brand that emanates from a multidisciplinary senior management team so that the emphasis moves from strategy to implementation. It is typically a team based activity and involves a process of amending drafts of previous visions as feedback is provided from staff. This iterative process enables managers to reformulate their ideas about brand vision.

The concept of brand visioning lays foundation for our analysis of CB models, in which the role of organisational process and managers in building corporate brand has been emphasised. Four such CB models have been identified and are described below in order

to determine the key elements of corporate branding and subsequently their relation with CSR have been explored.

2.5 Analysis of corporate branding models

The models that describe the process of corporate brand management reflect the inherent complexity of the phenomenon. A number of detailed reviews of these models already exist in the literature (e.g. Stuart, 1999; Balmer, 2001). Both authors split the models of corporate branding into two distinct types: the macro models of the 1980s and early 1990s and the more recent micro models. Macro models incorporate complex constructs, such as corporate personality, identity and image. For example, Aaker's (1996) brand identity planning model focuses on the core nature of the brand. Since all brands have an identity, the framework is applicable to any type of brand. Dowling (1993) takes a further step by incorporating culture in the model. Whilst the macro models seem to have triggered the development of a multidisciplinary approach to brand management, most appear to be limited in terms of the insights they offer in explaining and connecting the constructs.

In response to these acknowledged limitations, many authors have recently developed a number of micro models of the corporate brands that are more practical and relevant for analytical purpose. Thus, Hatch and Schultz (2003) underscore three key aspects of corporate branding (vision, culture, and image) and point to the need for managers to check for alignment between these three elements. Rindova (1997) concentrates on the image formation process and defines four distinct types of image created by the organisation, third parties and individuals. This approach has been extended by Balmer (2000) who deconstructs corporate identity into actual, communicated, conceived, ideal, and desired, and suggests that all five should be part of the corporate brand management process.

In summary, the micro models of corporate brand management seem to capture more readily the challenges faced by organisations in managing and aligning multiple identities and images across differing stakeholder groups. However, even these models still tend to be rather conceptual and present major challenges to researchers engaging in empirical studies (Knox and Bickerton, 2003).

As demonstrated earlier in section 2.2, by conceptualising the ‘brand’ as an organisational process-oriented construct, this thesis investigates those aspects of corporate branding literature that attach importance to processes within the organisation in building corporate brand.

2.5.1 De Chernatony’s model (2002)

De Chernatony (2002) proposed a model that emphasises a strategic approach to corporate branding that encourages a coherent series of pan-company activities illustrated in Figure 2.2. The model links the levels of the CB triangle to four factors: vision, culture, objectives and the brand sphere. As described above, the brand vision consists of the future environment a brand wishes to bring about, its purpose and its core values. The future environment and purpose aspects of the vision provide indications about the promised brand experience. This model emphasises the role of staff (including managers) behaviour and systems (organisational processes) in building corporate brand and identifies corporate culture as a key element in building corporate brand. From the core values of the vision, managers develop guidelines about the functional and emotional values of the brand triangle. The challenge is for the managers to find ways of interpreting the core values for their teams, ensuring that their staffs understand implications for their behaviour. Translating vision into action for the corporate brand is a part of the organisation’s culture that can be conceptualized in terms of values and mental models (Schein, 1984). For

example, if an organisation has a transparent culture people may be inclined to discuss their ideas openly and top management may be found interacting with junior staff members. After appreciating their brand's vision, and the suitability of their corporate culture to support it, senior managers' face the challenge of transforming the vision into concrete objectives for the brand. To meet the brand objectives, the impact of different environmental forces constituting the brand 'sphere' must be accounted for.

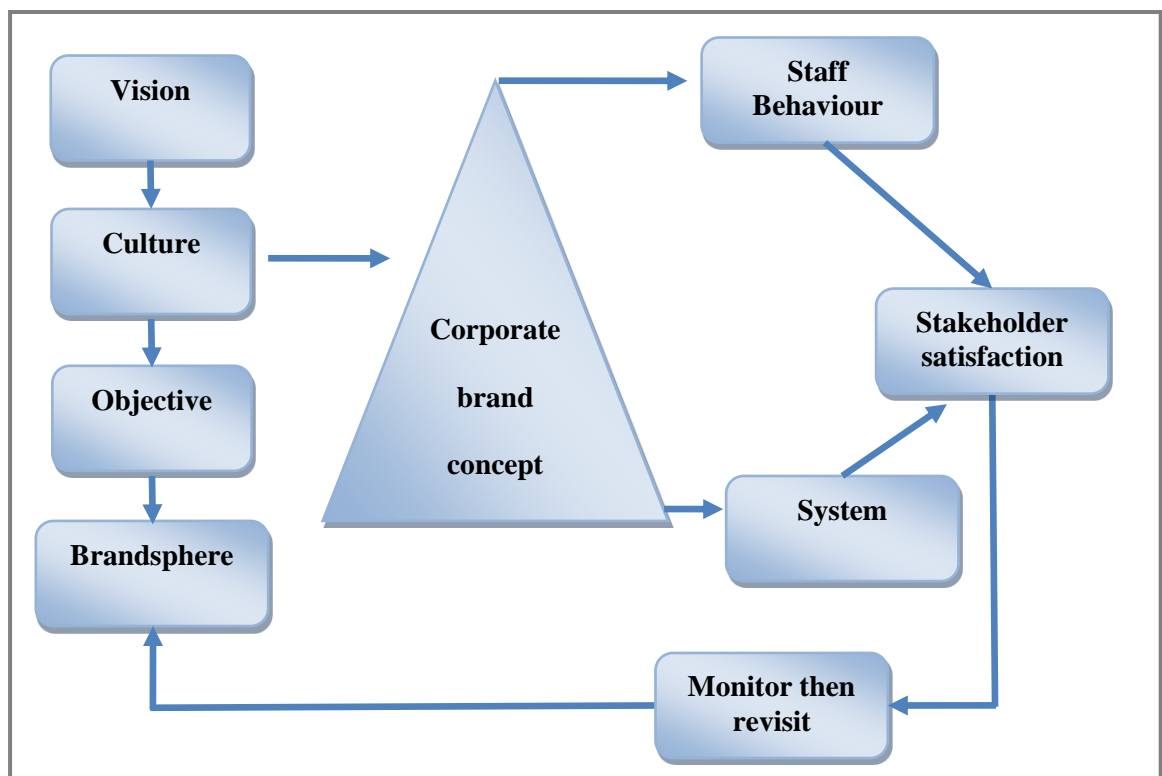


Figure 2.2: CB Framework (De Chernatony, 2001, p. 28)

Through the interaction of the brand vision, organisational culture, brand objectives and the brand sphere the nature of the corporate brand is determined. This is then enacted through the behaviour of managers and the systems that support their interactions with stakeholders. The ultimate intention is to build stakeholder satisfaction. By regularly monitoring stakeholder satisfaction and any gaps between the claimed and delivered brand promise, revisions can be instigated to satisfy the corporate brand objectives and results in greater stakeholder satisfaction.

This model moves corporate brand considerations from a tactical to a strategic perspective. It encourages a pan-company approach that may help create a more holistic brand. In summary, it emphasises the importance of the managers and staff and the systems including corporate culture in building corporate brand.

2.5.2 Hatch and Schultz's model (2003)

While De Chernatony's model focuses on building stakeholder satisfaction as an ultimate goal in corporate branding, Schultz and Hatch (2003) provide a framework for understanding corporate branding as a process linking strategic vision, organisational culture and corporate images (Figure 2.3). According to this model, corporate branding is dependent on the successful interaction between the three components called 'strategic stars'.

Strategic vision of a firm should clearly express the company's future goals. Hence, the business plan is generally conceptualised at the onset of business activities and vision statements can be found in the written policy document or on websites of the firms.

Within this model the organisation's culture is interpreted as internal values, beliefs and basic assumptions that embody the heritage of the company and communicate its meaning to its members; culture manifests itself in the way employees of all ranks feel about the company they are working for. In turn, corporate image denotes the views of the organisation developed by its stakeholders; the outside world's overall impression of the company including the views of customer, shareholders, the media and general public.

While De Chernatony concentrates on the enactment of CB, Hutch and Schultz believe in

a balancing act or interplay between vision, culture and image and proposes a cross-functional approach.

De Chernatony's model emphasises that CB is made of a sequential set of activities whereas Hatch and Schultz's model suggests that it is a set of simultaneous occurring activities.

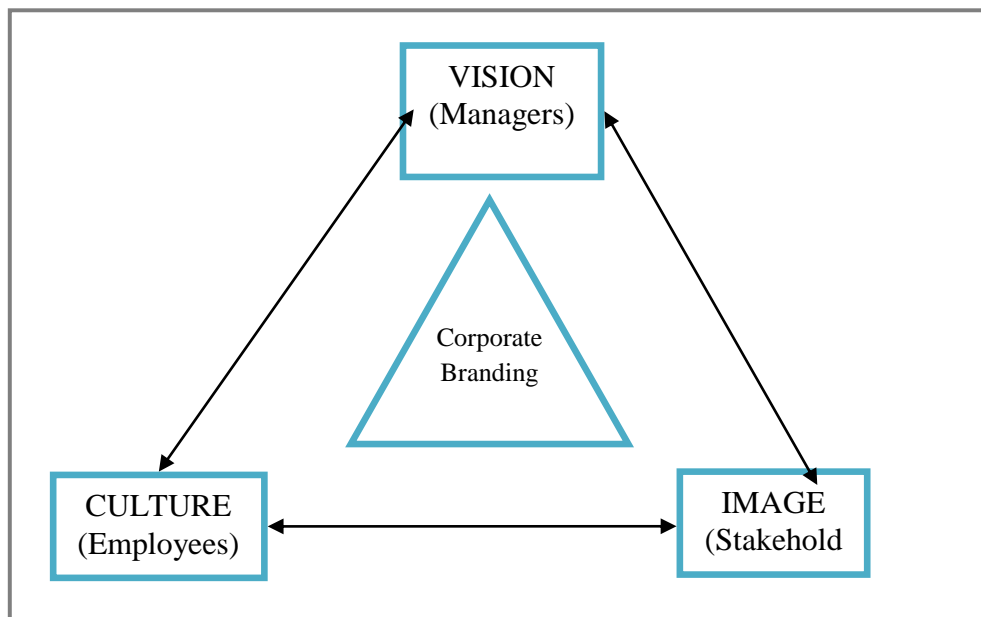


Figure 2.3: CB model (Hatch and Schultz, 2003, p. 1047)

It may be worth noting that, while both models identify the important role of managers in building a brand, 'corporate image' construct in Hatch and Schultz's model is an addition and extension of the 'corporate vision' and 'corporate culture' constructs present in De Chernatony model. Brand-CSR relationship literature (Visser, 2008) acknowledges that CSR have strong linkages with image and culture as explained in chapter 3.

Indian agribusiness firms are facing numerous challenges, controversies and conflicts with the society and are striving to maintain and improve their image and reputation (see section 2.13). Hence, the consideration of 'corporate image' is very important for brand building

efforts of Indian agribusiness firms. Similarly, the consideration of ‘corporate culture’ is also very important. The literature maintains that corporate culture of Indian firms is driven by typical Indian culture and values system which plays a critical role in branding and CSR implementation. The corporate culture of Indian agribusiness firms is characterized by market forces or firm’s commitment towards social and sustainability issues which could be instrumental in delineating the nature of motives behind CSR activities of Indian agribusiness firms. Accordingly, this study considers ‘corporate image’ and ‘corporate culture’ as important elements of CB.

2.5.3 Urde’s internal brand building model

A number of researchers explicitly concentrate on the corporate brand building processes. For example, Urde (2003) focuses on the internal corporate brand building process (Figure 2.4) and describes the relationship between the organisation and the brand.

This process begins with the company’s mission that describes the overall goals that should be integrated with the core values. These values summarise the identity of the brand, guide company efforts, and translate into customer value. Combined, mission, brand vision, organisation values and core values form the value base. Brand architecture dictates how the company organizes its brands. Product attributes build the core values into the product. Brand personality reflects the core values, described as human traits.

Through positioning, the brand forms an efficient communication strategy. The goal of the process is to create internal brand identity, meaning that the organisation understands and is committed to its brand (Urde, 2003). Here again the focus is on organisation staff and internal branding.

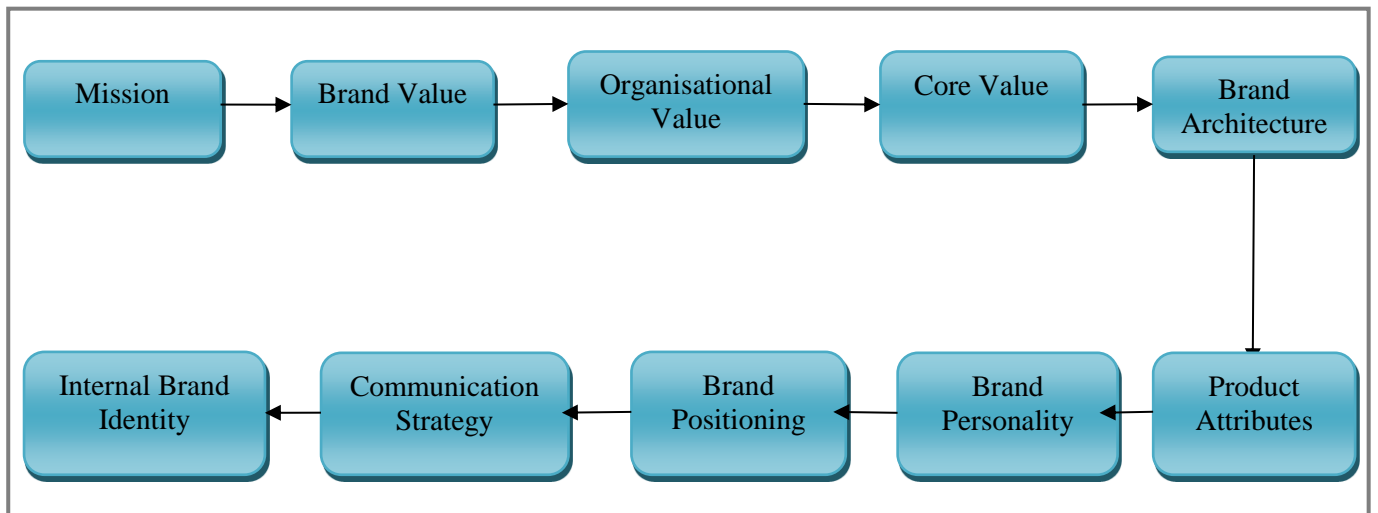


Figure 2.4: Internal brand building process (Urde, 2003, p.1018)

The success of building a corporate brand ultimately depends on the people involved in the process (De Chernatony *et al.*, 2011). Accordingly, this thesis considers managers perception to be instrumental in corporate brand building. This argument is followed throughout the thesis as we analyse brand- CSR relations from the manager's perspective.

2.5.4 Knox and Bickerton's model of CB

In contrast to Urde (2003), who bases his model on brand management theory, Knox and Bickerton's (2003) constructs are influenced by corporate identity studies. They assert that the corporate brand concept has evolved from marketing and organisation research, in which corporate identity is closely associated with corporate brand. They outline six conventions for understanding the processes of nurturing and managing a corporate brand (Figure 2.5).

The first convention is the 'brand context', which is the competitive landscape of the organisation. They suggest that in addition to image, culture and vision as prescribed in Hatch and Schultz (2003), another variable, 'competitive landscape', should be introduced to make the context more complete. They argued that the consideration of a competitive

context for corporate brand would facilitate understanding across two dimensions: one is the current image of the organisation and its future competition and the other is the current culture of the organisation and its vision for the future. The second convention is 'brand construction'. It is about describing a four-stage positioning that comprises organisational attributes and its performance, portfolio and network benefits and argue that it help managers to focus on common, unifying issues and to develop a shared understanding of the main considerations in positioning their corporate brand. The third convention is 'brand confirmation'. It is about articulating the corporate brand proposition. The corporate brand positioning developed during the brand construction phase needs to be consolidated and articulated to the rest of the organisation and external audiences. This calls for the development of a series of agreed statements that describe the corporate brand proposition. The fourth convention is 'brand consistency' which is about developing consistent corporate communications. Consistency has been widely acknowledged as a core principle of successful brand development (Olins, 1995). Further, the literature also acknowledges the pivotal role of communication in creating this consistency and concentrates on this aspect of corporate brand management (Van Riel, 1995). The fifth convention is 'brand continuity,' i.e. driving the brand deeper into the organisation. They highlighted the importance of aligning the relevant business processes with the corporate brand. This called for an examination of these business processes in order to review how they should be modified and developed to ensure continuity with the corporate brand proposition (Knox and Maklan, 1998; Knox, Maklan and Thompson, 2000). The sixth convention is 'brand conditioning' which refers to monitoring for relevance and distinctiveness. They propagate to strengthen the ability of an organisation to review its corporate brand on a continuous basis. They suggest the need for regular auditing through its cycle of development and renewal.

The main implication of this model is that the managers need not only communicate clearly the key aspects of the corporate brand but also ensure that these communications are reinforced by organisation's behaviours and supported by processes that deliver customer value.

On this basis Knox and Bickerton (2003) defined the corporate brand as the visual, verbal and behavioural expression of an organisation's unique business model suggesting a multi-disciplinary approach that combines strategy, culture, and corporate communications to build corporate brand pointing towards ensuing research direction. Accordingly, for the purpose of this study 'corporate communication' has been identified as another key element of corporate brand.

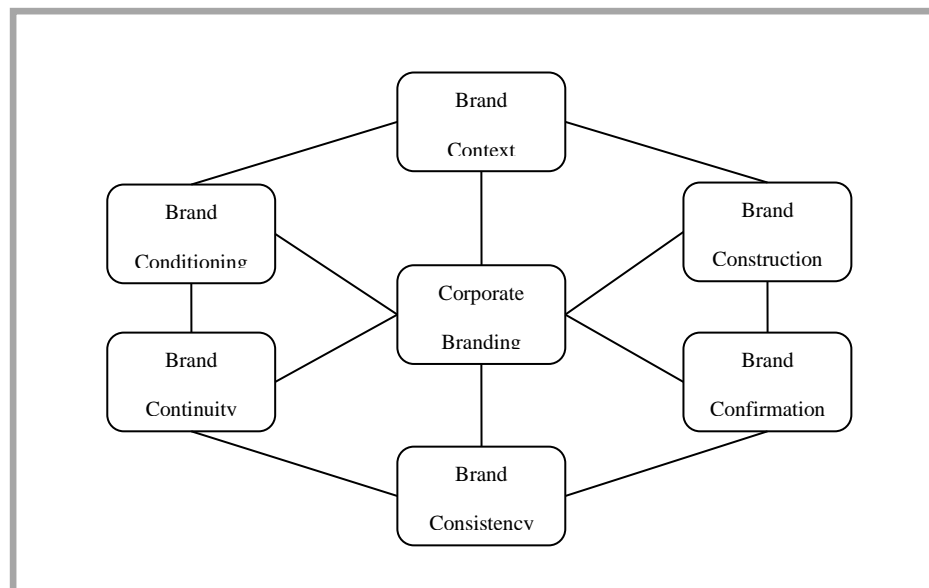


Figure 2.5: CB Model (Knox and Bickerton's , 2003, p.25)

2.5.5 Summary of analysis

The analysis of all the four models described above is summarised in Table 2.1. These models indicate that *corporate image*, *corporate culture* and *corporate communication* are three key elements of corporate branding. In this dissertation, another construct, '*corporate reputation*' is used interchangeably with the construct '*corporate image*' because, in practice, managers do not distinguish between image and reputation for marketing purpose (Balmer, 1998; Balmer and Greyser, 2006; Dowling, 2001). The sections that follow offer a more detailed exposition of corporate image, corporate culture and corporate communication as essentials of branding.

<i>Model/ Framework</i>	<i>Key constructs</i>	<i>Central theme</i>	<i>Commonality</i>	<i>Differences</i>	<i>Relevance for this research</i>
De Chernatony's Framework (2002)	Corporate Culture, Managers and Staff, Stakeholder satisfaction	-Stakeholder satisfaction through organisational processes and manager's role -CB is a sequential activity	With Hatch and Schultz model because of focus on corporate culture	With Hatch and Schultz model- CB as a sequential activity	Corporate culture as a key element of corporate brand.
Hatch and Schultz's Model (2003)	Culture, Image and Vision	Managers should balance the interplay between these three strategic stars to build CB	With De Chernatony – focus on corporate culture	With De Chernatony – CB is non- sequential	Corporate image is a key element of CB
Urde's Model (2003)	Organisational values, Internal brand identity	Creating internal brand identity is critical in corporate branding Focus on organisation culture and managers	With De Chernatony- focuses on internal processes	With Hatch and Schultz model- CB is sequential Less focus on stakeholders	Internal organisation analysis is important for CB
Knox and Bickerton's Model (2003)	Brand context, Strategy and Corporate communication	The context should be considered while building corporate brand. Corporate communication is critical in building corporate brand	CB is strategic as described by other models.	Differs (focus of corporate identity model) with Urde model (focuses on brand management theory) Interaction with external stakeholder is important	The context of the brand must be considered Corporate communication is pivotal in building corporate brand

Table 2.1: Comparative analysis of CB frameworks

2.6 Corporate image and reputation

One of the fundamentals of corporate branding (CB) is corporate image (CI) (Hatch and Schultz, 2001). The relation between corporate branding and corporate image is so intense that some researchers define corporate branding as corporate image (De Chernatony, 1999; Ind, 1997). However, in the context of this study, CB has been conceptualised as an organisational process oriented multidimensional construct, in which corporate image is a subset of the whole (i.e. corporate brand).

The term corporate image (CI) is often used to refer to an organisation's views about external stakeholders' perceptions with respect to an organisation (Davies and Chun, 2002). The marketing literature stresses the external foundation of the image concept (Bromley, 1993), pointing to the different external images held by various constituencies (e.g., customers, suppliers, regulators, special interests).

In other words, CI is mental associations that the members of an organisation believe people outside the organisation hold about their organisation (Brown *et al.*, 2006). He refers to this as a 'construed' image that encompasses all the associations that internal organisational members have about external stakeholders' perceptions of the organisation. This understanding of image addresses the question - what does the organisation believe others think of the organisation (Brown *et al.*, 2006) ?

As noted earlier, the concept of corporate image should be distinguished from the concept of corporate reputation (CR). Corporate reputation refers to 'a stakeholder's collective representation of past images of an organisation (induced through either communication or past experiences) established over time' (Cornelissen, 2008, p.70; see also Fombrun, 1996) whereas corporate image is a stakeholder's immediate impression of an organisation

in relation to a specific message or image and can be shaped quickly through well-conceived communication programs (Cornelissen, 2014; Gray and Balmer, 1998). Corporate reputation is often seen as a 'general view of the company' (Bick *et al.*, 2003). Good corporate reputation has strategic value for the firm and 'ensures acceptance and legitimacy from stakeholder groups, generates returns, and may offer a competitive advantage as it forms an asset that is difficult to imitate' (Cornelissen, 2008, p.69). Hence, while 'corporate image' is the immediate mental picture that audiences have of an organisation, 'corporate reputations' typically evolves over time as a result of consistent performance, reinforced by effective communication. Hence image and reputation have strong linkages with communication of the firm as discussed in section 2.7. This distinction between image and reputation is important for the analysis of corporate communication programs because the firms may use short term communication programs to safeguard or boost its image and long term communication program to strengthen its reputation.

Literature indicates strong linkages of CSR with image and reputation. For example, a recent study by He and Lai (2014) indicates that the perceived legal and ethical responsibilities of brands may improve brand loyalty through enhancing positive functional and symbolic image. Functional image constitutes the intrinsic advantages of a product's consumption and typically matches product-related attributes such as quality and usage. Positive functional image may satisfy consumers' basic motivations such as solving or avoiding problems so as to increase the perceived benefits from a brand (Herrmann *et al.*, 2007). Symbolic image is the extrinsic advantage of product consumption, which corresponds to non-product-related attributes and is associated with the basic need for social approval or individual expression (He and Lai, 2014).

He and Lai (2014) argue further that legally responsible behaviour helps firms to enhance the functional image perceived by consumers more than symbolic image, while ethically responsible action impacts a symbolic image more than a functional image indicating an indirect relation of CSR and brand with mediating effect of brand image. This aspect is developed further in chapter 3 that discusses the theoretical framework of the research.

2.7 Corporate culture

Corporate culture is a broad concept and represents the implicit and explicit contracts that govern behaviour within an organisation (Bénabou and Tirole, 2011; Tabellini, 2008). The term corporate culture (or organisational culture) was first used in the management literature by Pettigrew (1979).

Corporate culture has turned into an integral part of modern day organisations and also an interesting area of research due to its complex composition (Dasgupta and Vaghela, 2015). In literature, there is a wide range of definitions, starting from the concepts of established behaviour guidelines, rites and rituals and organisations norms (Trice and Beyer, 1993) to shared values, beliefs and assumptions (Schwartz and Davis, 1981), and to forms of collective sense making (Smircich, 1983). Trice and Beyer (1993) consider corporate culture as a collective response to uncertainty and chaos. However, a more concrete definition has been given by Cameron and Quinn (1998), according to which, corporate culture outlines the core values, assumptions, interpretations and approaches that characterise an organisation. He identified four types of corporate cultures (termed culture dimensions): control, competition, collaboration, and creation. It draws on the widely used competing values framework by Quinn and Rohrbaugh (1983). A similar definition has been offered by Hills and Jones (2001) who describe corporate culture as a specific collection of values and norms that are shared by people and groups in an organisation and

that control the way they interact with each other and with the stakeholders outside the organisation. These values may be influenced by legal and social trends as well as the cultural traditions of the society (Tajeddini and Mueller, 2012). Overall, in the modern literature, corporate culture is seen as a set of values, beliefs and behaviour patterns that form the basic identity of an organisation, and have their origin in the thinking of the founders, evolving over time by the accumulation of experiences, new social trends and the changing values of managers up to the present day (Ortega *et al.*, 2013). This study broadly subscribes to the views on corporate culture expressed by Cameron and Quinn (1998), Hills and Jones (2001) and Ortega *et al.*, (2013). However, specifically, since corporate social responsibility and marketing are two main tenets of this thesis, this researcher is interested in analyzing corporate culture from two specific perspectives that may be described as ‘sustainability culture’ (Serafim *et al.*, 2011) and ‘market culture’ (Cameron and Quinn, 1998).

Dasgupta and Vegehla (2015) notices that the relationship between an organisation’s culture and sustainability has evolved as an exciting area of research, due to its relationship with the key characteristics of the sustainability performance of an organisation. Many authors have put forward the claim that organisations must respond to the ecological and social challenges only through a planned and structured culture change and organisational transformation process. Calabrese *et al.*,(2013) argue that CSR dimensions can help firm attain competitive advantage and propose a two-dimensional CSR model for supporting managers in their pursuing for long-term competitiveness: the ‘CSR development’ dimension and the ‘CSR commitment’ dimension. The CSR development dimension allows decision makers to position companies with respect to the stage of their CSR cultural evolution, whereas the CSR commitment dimension assesses companies’ degree of commitment based on their economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic CSR

performance. The position that a company occupies in the two-dimensional CSR model describes both its actual stage of CSR cultural development and its CSR commitment. Finally, Crane (1995) emphasise that there is need for a focused approach in organisations to develop a culture that supports sustainability initiatives.

The ‘market culture’ perspective generally describes the situation when the firm focuses on customer relations and improving its competitive position. Some author argue that in the West, a positive relationship exists between market culture and firm performance (Kirca, Jayachandran and Bearden, 2005; Yaprak *et al.*, 2015). However, the adoption and implementation of market culture as a strategic orientation in the emerging market context is under-researched (Yaprak *et al.*, 2015). This is surprising because emerging markets have become attractive for marketers recently with their brand-hungry middle classes with voracious appetites for consumer goods (Kravets and Sandikci, 2014) and institutional voids that marketers can fill with more market responsive strategies (Khanna and Palepu, 2010). Managers at many emerging market firms are eager to infuse market orientation mind-sets in their functional and customer-level managers (Bodlaj, 2012). However, this is also realized by the managers that this cultural transformation will require persistent time and effort that is not immediately rewarding (Gebhardt *et al.*, 2006).

A culture of sustainability is a feature of firms that have integrated social and environmental policies in their business model (Brochet *et al.*, 2012). These firms, according to Payne (2006), place more emphasis on long-term goals, care more about the impact of externalities from their operations on other stakeholders and the environment and focus more on the ethical grounds of their decision. These policies reflect the underlying culture of the organisation, in which environmental and social performance, in addition to financial performance, is important. Such firms proactively engage in social

and environmental CSR programs. In a recent study by Khojastehpour and Johns (2014) it is indicated that environmental CSR has a positive effect on corporate/brand reputation and corporate profitability. Linking a sustainability approach with branding, Hutchinson *et al.* (2013) argue that the corporate brand is a multi-construct concept that may be evaluated and developed by considering the components of climate change, environmental impact, internal corporate codes of ethics, and external corporate codes of ethics of the organisation as dimensions of the brand. Stressing the need of expanding the culture of CSR practices in supply chains, Soundararajan and Brown (2014) argue that, beyond merely using voluntary governance mechanisms as a route to gain competitive advantage, global buyers must commit to embracing the essence of social responsibility into the whole supply chain, in combination with imparting utility and value-added for participants along the chain. Moreover, corporate social responsibility (CSR) is being used for combining the economic, social and environmental concerns into organisation's overall strategy (Dasgupta and Vagehla, 2015).

However, the emergence of the corporate culture of sustainability raises a number of fundamental questions. For example, do sustainability firms have better stakeholder engagement? Does their information dissemination system differ? Could meeting other stakeholders' expectations come at the cost of creating shareholder value? Some argue that companies do well by doing well (Godfrey, 2005; Margolis, Elfenbein and Wals, 2007; Porter and Kramer, 2011). This claim is based on the belief that meeting the needs of stakeholders other than shareholders directly creates value (Freeman *et al.*, 2010; Porter and Kramer, 2011). It also reflects the belief that not meeting the needs of these stakeholder can destroy shareholder value, for example, through customer boycotts (Sen *et al.*, 2001), inability to hire the most talented people (e.g., Greening and Turban, 2000), and punitive fines by the government. These consequences will have negative impact on the corporate

image of firms affecting the sustainability of the brand. Hence, the firm must avoid engaging in activities that are not in the interest of its stakeholders. On the contrary, when the firm meets the need of its stakeholders it gets support for its activities and the corporate image is boosted or protected. However, the firm must address the long term interest of its stakeholders in order to protect and strengthen its reputation. All this would determine how corporate brand could be sustainable.

By contrast, for some firms the basic assumptions are that the external environment is not benign but hostile, consumers are choosy and interested in value and the organisation is in the business of increasing its competitive position. This type of culture may be termed as 'market culture'. When this type of organisational culture prevail, the interests of clients and consumers interests are often taken into account, but the interests of employees, trade unions and local communities are often ignored as argued by Cameron and Quinn (1998). The core values are competitiveness and productivity which are achieved through a strong emphasis on external positioning and control.

Some recent research suggests that in emerging markets firms should pay much more attention to the development of 'market culture'. For example, Bodlaj (2012) shows that the transition from a state-controlled to a liberalized market economy required fundamental changes in managerial attitudes in Slovenia urging a rapid adoption of market culture as a competitive tool. Embracing market culture by Slovenian firms infused changes in managerial attitude and behaviour and focused them on customer value.

In another study, Ozturan *et al.* (2014) show that firms who are more responsive to the market conditions in the turbulent Turkish context (economic contraction followed by rapid economic expansion) achieved higher performance in their advertising strategies

when compared to other firms. Thus market culture resulted in an improved communication strategy with positive impact on firms' performance. In summary, these studies conducted in emerging market contexts highlight that firms are increasingly become more market oriented in quest for improved performance and profitability.

Yet, developing a market orientation may be harder for these firms than for their counterparts in developed countries since firms they have typically grown behind protectionist barriers and operate in markets that have institutional voids (Yaprak *et al.*, 2015). In addition, emerging markets typically lack professionally-trained managerial talent that would readily embrace market responsiveness, inter-functional communication and coordination skills (Khanna and Palepu, 2010). Recently, however, emerging markets have been experiencing economic and social transformations that require new thinking on market orientation (Sheth, 2011).

2.8 Corporate communication

Corporate communication is defined as an instrument by means of which all consciously used forms of internal and external communications are harmonized as effectively and efficiently as possible to create a favourable basis for relationships with the groups upon which the company is dependent (Riel, 1995). Others, e.g. Argenti and Druckenmiller (2004) and Gray and Balmer (1998), give similar definitions of corporate communication as an important method by which corporate marketers transmit messages about an organisation to multiple stakeholder groups and align stakeholder's interests with company interests. Hence, corporate communication can encompass a mix of various communications such as advertising, public relation, integrated marketing communication, press releases, press conference, annual reports, company magazines and newsletters, etc.

Burke *et al.*, (1995) emphasise the importance of corporate communication by highlighting its significance in helping to sustain, foster and develop an organisation's reputation. Several qualitative studies have supported the positive effect of corporate communication on reputation building (Foreman and Argenti, 2005). This is because an effective corporate communications program can enhance perceptions about the activities that are relevant to specific stakeholders and can also trigger an overall positive evaluation about the company as a whole.

Fombrun and Shanley (1990) suggest that various informational signals from organisations such as signals indicating performance, social norms and organisation's strategy all contribute to company image pointing towards a strong relation of corporate image with corporate communication. For example, Blomback and Scandeliuss (2013) argue that when CSR communication has heritage and legacy element then such communication is positively related to the image of a responsible brand. However, corporate heritage identity on its own does not influence consumer perceptions unless it is linked to CSR communication.

An emerging stream of research examines how firms use corporate communication to highlight their commitment to CSR (Capriotti, 2011; O'Connor and Shumate, 2010; Highhouse *et al.*, 2009). In recent years corporate CSR communication and reporting has become a mainstream management function. Chaudhri (2014) outlines three dominant perspectives whereby corporate communication plays the *instrumental*, *relational* and *constitutive* roles in the enactment of CSR.

Within the *instrumental* perspective, communication is conceptualized as a strategic tool and a mechanism for optimizing CSR gains. Such an approach rests on the business case

or the bottom line reasons for engaging in CSR (see Carroll and Shabana, 2010), which include, for example, risk mitigation (e.g., Godfrey, 2005), competitive advantage (e.g., Porter and Kramer, 2006) and reputation enhancement (e.g., Fombrun, 2005).

Premised on stakeholder theories, the *relational* approach to corporate communication situates dialogue, relationships, and trust at its core. The objectives of this approach is to gain understanding of stakeholder interests and concerns, develop mutually agreeable solutions, foster shared meanings and increased level of trust all of which are important determinants for the success of CSR practices (see Golob and Podnar, 2011).

The *constitutive* view argues that organisations are, in fact, constituted in and through communication (Schoeneborn and Trittin, 2013). In other words, organisations are systems of communication and discursive constructions (Fairhurst and Putnam, 2004). A constitutive perspective, then, treats CSR itself as a communicative process/phenomenon and brings attention to how CSR is constructed by organisations and stakeholder groups (Chaudhri, 2014). Critics often argue that communicative events such as site visits may be doctored to show the organisation in good light. Such critique is reminiscent of much theorizing that treats communication and action as separate, treats communication of CSR as green washing, and/or accords greater importance to the ‘doing’ of CSR (actions) over ‘saying’ (Chaudhri, 2014). Furthering the constitutive approach, Shoeneborn and Trittin (2013) posit that CSR communication is one among the universe of organisational communication practices and its influence on firm depends on how well it is integrated with other communication practices.

Another CSR communication model developed by Tata and Prasad (2015) proposes that incongruence between desired and current CSR images may be decreased through CSR communication. The model also identifies four dimensions of CSR communication

structure (anticipatory–reactive, assertive–protective, direct–indirect, and image enhancing–image correcting) and includes a feedback loop through which audience interpretation of the CSR communication can influence the organisation’s CSR image incongruence.

Tata and Prasad (2015) argue that anticipatory CSR communication is used proactively when an organisation foresees a potential discordance between its desired and current CSR images; this type of communication can ward off and defeat in advance doubts and negative typification of the organisation.

Reactive CSR communication is used after an incongruence has occurred or is perceived to have occurred. The literature suggests that both anticipatory and reactive communication can be useful. As discussed above, when an organisation is highly motivated to decrease the incongruence between desired and current CSR images, it is more likely to put effort into identifying potential threats to the image and more likely to use anticipatory CSR communication. In addition, such motivation may also result in a focus on organisational characteristics and the use of direct CSR communication. Similarly, the favourability of the CSR image (i.e., the extent to which the organisation is perceived as socially responsible or socially irresponsible) is likely to influence the use of assertive versus protective CSR communication. The direction of the incongruence (i.e., whether the current CSR image indicates a lower or higher level of social responsibility than the desired CSR image) will influence the use of image-enhancing versus image-correcting CSR communication.

One of the major factors which moderate the relationship between desired and current image is media attention and public scrutiny (Tata and Prasad, 2015). Public scrutiny is

also influenced by advocacy groups and other interested entities who attempt to increase concern about CSR issues. Firms operating in industries that are perceived as presenting a risk to the social and natural environments, of which agribusiness is one, are likely to find their CSR activities under higher levels of public scrutiny (Alali and Romero, 2011; Tata and Prasad, 2015). Firms from industry sectors with high environmental impact have to respond to external pressures and communicate social responsibility, because these firms have a higher level of visibility and their actions are more closely scrutinized by the media, advocacy groups, and the public compared to firms from other sectors (O'Dwyer 2003). Hence, media attention and public scrutiny may play an important role in how firms are assessed regarding social responsibility (Hatch and Schultz 2002), and augment the visibility, salience and accessibility of the firm's CSR image and its incongruence (Tata and Prasad, 2015).

Finally, in modern times, considering the importance of CSR on environmental and climate change activity, a discussion on CSR communication regarding these aspects have begun. This has become relevant for today's Indian agribusiness practices considering the inherent linkage of the sector with greenhouse gas emission. In India, 'agriculture' sector is the second largest contributor to greenhouse gases after 'energy' sector. Investors in agribusiness within and outside India have interest in communications regarding environmental and climate change concerns of firms. In a recent study by Lee *et al.*, (2015) it is indicated that investors recognise carbon information disclosure as bad news and thus are concerned that the cost of coping with global warming would outweigh any benefits. However, Kitic *et al.* (2015) advocate that CSR environmental communication should be incorporated in companies' business communication strategies that address both, internal and external target groups in order to increase environmental awareness among stakeholders.

In sum, the literature indicates that communication about CSR can lead to stronger relationships with the publics (Bortree, 2014), greater legitimacy (Du and Vieira, 2012), and more positive attitudes among stakeholders (Du, Bhattacharya and Sen, 2010). The literature suggests that managing CSR and crisis communication has become the essence of public relations practices that add value to a corporate reputation. However, little research has been attempted to examine how CSR practices protect and restore company reputation in a crisis event (Rim, 2013). Recently researchers have exhibited interest in investigating CSR and communication relationship as a distinct field of study and a few publications exist on CSR relations with corporate communication. These are discussed further in chapter 3.

2.9 Branding in emerging economies

In recent years, the emerging market economies have demonstrated strong growth¹. According to an estimate, by 2035, the gross domestic product of emerging markets will permanently surpass that of all advanced markets (Wilson and Purushothaman, 2003). According to the International Monetary Fund 2008 data, using a purchasing power parity index, China is already equivalent in terms of the market power to the United States, and India is in the third place. Several factors are responsible for the growth of the emerging markets. First, economic reforms in Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC) have unlocked markets protected by ideology and socialism. This policy change has resulted in creating altogether new markets for branded products and services. Second, all advanced countries are facing market saturation and hence eyeing the emerging markets. Third, globalization has led to competition and service offerings with unprecedented choices of

¹ There is no official list of emerging markets, different agencies and experts may disagree on its exact composition. Most commonly this term is applied, apart from India, to Russia and the other former Soviet republics, China, Brazil, and Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey, South Africa, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Korea, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Turkey and Vietnam.

branded products, especially in emerging markets (Sheth, 2011). Finally, the emergence of a new middle class, especially in large population markets such as China and India, is creating large-scale first-time buyers of everything.

With regard to agricultural commodities, India can be considered a major player in the international market, occupying a prominent position in the global ranking of producer countries. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), India and other 'developing countries' should lead to both consumption and production of most agricultural commodities by the year 2017 (OECD, 2008). In such an environment, branding emerges as a plausible response to promote marketing and consumption of agricultural commodities. In addition, as consumer's income rises, demand becomes more discriminating, i.e. wider variety and higher quality are sought. Branding of products ensures that the farmers/ producers receive prices of their products according to their quality.

2.9.1 Branding in Indian agribusiness

Although literature on branding in the Indian context is still evolving, there has been hardly any research on branding the agri-commodity. However, existing literature provides a platform to review branding in Indian agribusiness.

Kumar and others (2002) highlight the fact that many Indian brands have formulated their strategies against the backdrop of Indian culture that is strongly entrenched in consumer psyche, and amidst changes in the social environment. This change in social environment can be best understood by analysing the development of branding concept chronologically in India.

Literature Review

During pre-independence time Indian agribusiness was dominated by family-run businesses managed either by an individual or a joint family (Jain and Muthukumar, 2010). The founders of these family businesses usually possessed necessary leadership traits and often nurtured strong values such as loyalty and social welfare which used to get translated in branding. These firms committed themselves to society by building small establishments and infrastructure and provided relief in times of natural disasters (Nivarthi *et al.*, 2012).

After India attained independence in 1947, she sought to be sovereign and secular, resulting in family businesses getting protection from foreign and imported brands (Jain and Muthukumar, 2010). During the 1960s-80s, the Indian political structure of a socialist democratic republic strengthened public investments to the detriment of private sector undertaking (Chahoud *et al.*, 2007). The government introduced taxes, a quota and a license system and tighter restrictions on private sector resulting in corporate malpractices in terms of tax evasion by corporate payees, misuse of the quota and license system by politicians and civil servants, etc. (Jain and Muthukumar, 2010). Consequently, corporate governance, labour and environmental issues had to be legislated, shifting the prominence from self-regulation to strict legal and public regulation. Pradhan and Ranjan, (2010) described this as an 'era of command and control' that brought economic reforms exacting monitoring, enforcement and accountability.

During the period from 1970 to 1990 the private sector faced a lot of problems regarding capital and taxes that discouraged expansion by big agribusiness brands (Jain and Muthukumar, 2010). Many big Indian agribusiness firms went public to solve the problems of cash crunch (Jain and Muthukumar, 2010). The unorganised sector in agribusiness flourished and started dominating the agriculture sector. In this sector products are not branded and usually supplied by several small manufacturers of these offerings (Kumar *et*

al., 2007). The extent of unorganised sectors can be substantial. For example, in the production of tea, edible oil, biscuits and mineral water it varies from 50 to 60 per cent (Kumar *et al.*, 2002). Branding in an unorganised sector poses its own set of challenges, which is a typical characteristic of agribusiness.

In agribusiness, particularly in the food sector, the external market factors such as changes in the consumers' demand, the retailers' increasing market power and, in general, the competitive landscape have forced companies to seek a more market-oriented approach, which includes the use of brands (Edwards and Shultz, 2005). Branding is a way to escape the trap of competing on price and volume, which also helps the branded product survive in an environment where there is constant downward pressure on price (Dumlupinar, 2006).

While branding the source (farm) is not easy, branding at the point of sale in the form of organized *retailing* is gaining popularity in agricultural commodity business. These retail outlets create their own brands which are called store brands. While store brands in many manufacturing categories are considered inferior to producer brands, in agribusiness 'store' brands are seen as that of superior quality. With changes in the agricultural produce market committee (APMC) Act and foreign direct investment (FDI) in retail, there will be more direct relationship between farm and retail store (Raj, 2014).

In most of agribusiness situations, the brand owner is not the agri-product producer but an agribusiness firm or an intermediary. Hence, in agribusiness context it may be appropriate to consider or define brand from a company's point of view or as 'corporate brand'. Branding activities done at company's level is termed as 'corporate branding'. By corporate branding strategy companies express who they are and what they stand for

(Balmer, 2001). Accordingly, managing brands at the corporate level require interactions with multiple stakeholders, not just customers (Balmer and Gray, 2003). Since CSR is also largely a corporate level initiative and affects the entire organisation rather than a typical product, it would be more desirable to analyse CSR- brand relations with respect to corporate branding.

2.10 Reviewing CSR literature

CSR occupies a prominent position on the global corporate agenda and has gained significant importance as an area of business practice and academic inquiry (Du *et al.*, 2010; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001).

The academic discussion on CSR advanced after Bowen published his seminal work entitled the 'Social Responsibilities of the Business' in 1953. According to Bowen 'CSR refers to the obligations of the businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society'. Bowen recognised that firms' engagement in CSR was linked to self-interest. Actions like support for education, conserving natural resources, philanthropy, good human relations at work and other similar activities were included as aspects of CSR and it was recognised that these actions had high returns for firms (Frederick, 2006). Following Bowen's work, Theodore Levitt saw CSR as a potential danger for the foundations of the free-market and warned of a threat of complicating the role of businesses and that of the government. His position can be best illustrated by the following statement: 'government's job is not business, and business's job is not government' (Levitt, 1958, p. 47). Building on Levitt's argument Friedman suggested that a company's only social responsibility was to pursuit maximization of returns for their shareholders within the boundaries set by law (Friedman, 1962). This view is heavily

criticised in the CSR literature. Friedman's approach draws on agency theory and implies that firms' mere obligation is to satisfy the shareholders' interest. Friedman argued that it was not business but the government who was responsible for taking care of the social and environmental aspects of businesses through the application of laws. This approach treats CSR as a waste of resources that could be used as returns to shareholders or as means of internal investment (McWilliams, *et al.*, 2006).

The underlying assumption of both Bowen's and Friedman's approaches is the same, i.e. both treat firms as profit-maximization organisations that are interested in improving their financial performance. The difference is that Bowen perceived CSR as an opportunity for companies to increase their benefits whereas Friedman saw it as a threat.

The social turmoil of the 1960s and 1970s and the gradually increasing significance of environmental problems broadened the spectrum of the social responsibilities of businesses. Thus, apart from recognizing firms' financial motives for engaging in CSR, scholars like Davis (1960; 1973) suggested that CSR should be analysed from a different perspective. The new approach included a moral dimension in the argument, i.e., it was proposed that firms should engage into CSR activities because it is the right thing to do and not because CSR entails potential benefits for firms. Along the same lines, the Committee for Economic Development (CED) report published at the beginning of 1970s claimed that corporations should be perceived as organisations operating within the whole of society rather than just in the market place (Frederick, 2006). According to this, the businesses were anticipated not only to produce products and services and undertake philanthropic actions, but they were also required to operate in a way that satisfies societal needs and expectations. The CED explicitly refers to the concept of the social contract, attributing to CSR an obligatory rather than a voluntary notion. The CED report was

composed by the practitioners, implying a willingness on behalf of firms to renegotiate their relationship with the society (Carroll, 2008).

Subsequently, CSR research changed track and instead of analysing whether firms should engage in CSR or not, focused on what businesses can do to respond and satisfy societal demands. In this regard, two contributions provided significant guidance to a more practical approach to the analysis of CSR. The first one was Ackerman and Bauer's (1976) theory of Corporate Social Responsiveness. In their analysis, the scholars attributed higher priority to defining the procedures of managerial responsiveness to CSR than to defining CSR per se. They argued that the important thing for business was not only to decide what to do, but also how to implement their strategy.

The second contribution was Carroll's three dimensional conceptual model of corporate social performance (Carroll, 1979). In this model, Carroll argued that the social responsibilities of the business should have included four dimensions: economic, legal, ethical and discretionary or philanthropic. Carroll's model made CSR theory more applicable since he proposed a way for assisting firms in the implementation of CSR practices. The scholar suggested that firms should first define their social responsibilities, identify the CSR aspects and then decide whether to respond proactively or reactively.

The predominance of neo-liberal economic views in the 1980s and 1990s compelled the firms to move away from philanthropic dimensions of CSR. The attention of scholars and practitioners shifted towards economic rather than social matters and introduction of market friendly tools like management standards and code of ethics emerged. Scholar's reaction to these developments was to adopt a managerial approach to the analysis of CSR (Carroll, 1977). In this context, the predominance of stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984),

at the middle of the 1980s, was not surprising. Consistent with the political and business climate of the era, this approach suggested that, with reference to CSR policies, firms needed to focus on constituencies other than stockholders, i.e., customers, suppliers, employees and local communities. Stakeholder theory highlighted a necessity for an engagement into CSR due to its potential for providing benefits for companies. Hence, the adoption of CSR practices is seen as something that satisfies both parties these being companies and society. As a stakeholder-oriented concept, CSR holds that organisations exist within the network of stakeholders, face the potentially conflicting demands of these stakeholders, and translate the demands into CSR objectives and policies (Lindgreen and Swaen, 2010). To achieve the successful implementation of CSR, managers must build bridges with their stakeholders - through formal and informal dialogues and engagement practices – in the pursuit of common goals, and convince them to support the organisation’s chosen strategic course (Andriof and Waddock, 2002). Stakeholder’s engagement then becomes ‘CSR in action’ (Lindgreen and Swaen, 2010, p. 2). ‘CSR in action’ refers to implementation of CSR. However, for implementation of CSR, the models and suggestions available to managers are unclear (Porter and Kramer, 2006). This is an important research gap.

The broad acceptance of stakeholder theory influenced the way CSR began to be seen as a necessity and not as a choice. CSR was seen as promoting firms’ interests by strengthening the environment in which businesses operated. This perception otherwise known as ‘enlightened self-interest’ moved research into a direction which later was going to be one of the dominant perspectives in the field focusing on the existence of a link between financial and social performance.

During the 1990s scholars focused on the topics of environmental sustainability which was included as a CSR dimension after the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 (Lindgreen and Swaen, 2010). This trend continues even today and a recent study by Kotilainen *et al.*, (2015) reveals that in the context of mining companies in Africa, local conflicts concerning environmental and social issues have a key role in driving the companies to pay more attention to practices through which they engage with the communities.

However, the views prevailing in the 1990s empowered the trend to treat CSR as a topic closely related to market outcome (Beurden and Gössling, 2008; Brammer and Millington, 2005; Margolis and Walsh, 2001; McWilliams and Siegel, 2001). Until the dawn of the 2000s more than 120 studies had adopted this approach, otherwise known as the business case for CSR (Margolis and Walsh, 2001). The basic belief that CSR can be good for business clearly drives corporate interest in CSR (Kotler and Lee 2005), based on the reasoning that organisations create a competitive advantage by integrating non-economic factors (Porter and Kramer, 2006), differentiating themselves from competitors and building a better image and reputation (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990).

Despite contradictory evidence regarding the existence of a link between corporate responsible practices and financial performance, this tendency persist to this day influencing CSR research at large.

The corporate scandals at the dawn of this century gave rise to another interesting approach to the analysis of CSR. It exposed the requirement of more effective means of corporate governance. Hence, researchers started analysing the strategic aspects of corporate responsibility focusing on how firms incorporated CSR into their business strategy and how they used it for their own benefit.

At present, research is directed towards focusing on the practical aspects of CSR. There is a recognised need to refine existing approaches and develop new ones. There is a lack of a dominant theoretical approach, methods and assumptions but for some this is not necessarily a bad thing since it results in various approaches and theoretical perspectives (Crane, 2008). The uncertainty surrounding CSR research has created two divergent perspectives. The first one treats CSR as a development, which can enhance firms' social and financial performance (Lydenberg cited in Carroll, 2008). Proponents of this view point to increasing levels of reporting but tend to confuse reporting with performance (Steger, 2008). The other view holds a more sceptical stance on the potential of CSR to influence business. According to it, CSR has taken a false trajectory since it is mostly used as a resource that has the potential of increasing firms' profits (Vogel, 2005).

Modern researchers are also critical on the communicational aspects of CSR for branding purpose (Van de Van, 2008). According to recent research, communicating about social activities does not always benefit the organisation, notably because CSR communication may trigger stakeholders' scepticism and cynicism (Mohr *et al.*, 2001; Schlegelmilch and Pollach 2005). In literature it is debated whether organisations should communicate about their CSR initiatives and, if organisations choose to communicate, whether traditional marketing tools are appropriate (Van de Van 2008).

Finally, contemporary researcher draws our attention that CSR research has evolved along two avenues in terms of the level of analysis (Lee, 2008). Researchers have moved from a discussion of the macro social effects of CSR to an organisational-level analysis of CSR, such as CSR's impact on organisational processes and performance. In terms of the

theoretical orientation of CSR, researchers have shifted from explicit normative to implicit normative and performance-oriented managerial studies (Lindgreen and Swaen, 2010).

2.11 Defining CSR

Many argue that the exact meaning of CSR is not clear (Crane, 2008). The problem with CSR is that it means different things to different people (Kuznetsov and Kuznetsova 2010; Sethi, 1975). The overabundance of the definitions of CSR ostensibly creates confusion. However, it is not a problem of CSR that researchers with different backgrounds give different interpretations of this phenomenon. In fact this is a reflection of the fact that CSR is a multifaceted phenomenon. While there is an agreement that CSR deals with the societal obligations of corporations, there is much less certainty about what these obligations might include (Smith, 2003)? Thus, CSR still remains a widely contested concept (Windsor, 2006).

One recent study has counted 37 definitions of CSR (Dahlsrud, 2008); number that Carroll and Shabana (2010) believe to be a wild underestimation. Apart from academic attempts of defining CSR, different organisations have framed their own definitions. For example, the European Commission's green paper on CSR (2001) asserted that being socially responsible entails going beyond fulfilling legal expectations and investing more into human resources, environment and stakeholder relations. In turn, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) defined CSR as firms' commitment to contribute to sustainable economic development, working with employees, their families, the local community and society at large to improve their quality of life (WBCSD, 1998).

Practitioners get confused as a result of the ongoing scholarly debate whereas academics find it difficult to create a pool of consistent data that will enable them to compare results

and comprehend the implications of CSR practices (Hart, 2010; McWilliams and Siegel, 2001). It is thus important when studying such an elusive topic to explicitly determine how the researcher perceives CSR.

Despite the existing variety of views on the essence of CSR, it is possible to identify certain characteristics of this phenomenon. Contemporary notions of CSR practices emphasise the voluntary component of CSR and perceive CSR practices as actions that go beyond those prescribed by statutory norms (Carroll, 1979; Davis, 1973; McWilliams and Siegel, 2001). Additionally, CSR is seen as an initiative that promotes self-regulation of business as a substitute for state regulation (Albareda *et al.*, 2008; Crane, 2008).

CSR generally represents a continuing commitment by an organisation to behave ethically and contribute to economic development, while also improving the quality of life of its employees (and their families), the local community, and society at large (Watts and Holme, 1999). Organisation's efforts to address a wider variety of social and environmental problems also are CSR. It thus appears natural that CSR spreads from voluntary programs and partnerships to mitigate the environmental impact of industrial plants and production methods (Rondinelli and Berry, 2000) to the development of sourcing and marketing initiatives that protect social welfare and commit to environmental benefits (Roberts 2003; Szmigin *et al.*, 2007). Accordingly, this study perceives corporate social responsibility as the continuing commitment by businesses to undertake actions, beyond philanthropy, to mitigate the negative externalities of their operations. Thus, by conceptualizing CSR as a business processes oriented construct, this study focuses on the social and environmental impacts of business processes used for the production of goods and services (Lewis and Slack, 2003). In so doing, the study will identify the influence of CSR on corporate branding of agribusiness firms in India and enhance our knowledge on

the topic. Literature suggests that CSR in Indian firms can be best explained through a stakeholder approach (Balasubramanian *et al.*, 2005).

2.12 Stakeholder theory

Stakeholder theory is one of the major concepts in social and management research (Frynas and Yamahaki, 2016; Montiel and Delgado-Ceballos, 2014). It was first developed by R. Edward Freeman in the monograph '*Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*' (1984).

Central to this theory is the claim that firms have stakeholders. Freeman (1984) defines a stakeholder as follows: 'A stakeholder in an organisation is (by definition) any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives' (1984, p. 46). Specifically, Freeman suggested that firms should identify their direct and indirect stakeholders. In literature, these are also referred to as primary and secondary stakeholders (Carroll, 1989; Wood, 1993). Primary stakeholders are those with formal or official contractual relationships with the company, such as clients, suppliers, employees, shareholders, among others; and the secondary stakeholders are those without such contracts, such as government authorities or the local community (Clarkson, 1995).

Freeman emphasised that firms should look for a fit between the firm and its stakeholders. In order to do this, a firm should know 'what it stands for' (Freeman, 1984, p. 83) and must make trade-offs between its goals and the goals of its stakeholders. One way of assessing these trade-offs is to identify the nature of effects that stakeholders have on the firm or that the firm has on stakeholders. Freeman (1984) categorises these effects as economic, technological, social, political, and managerial.

Stakeholder theory is built upon the postulate that businesses should serve a variety of interests rather than just those of shareholders and in so doing businesses will achieve superior performance. Likewise, if a business does not consider its stakeholders, then its ‘*licence to operate*’ could be revoked by society. In short, stakeholder theory suggests that ‘there is a multiplicity of groups having a stake in the operation of the firm – all of whom merit consideration in managerial decision making’ (Phillips 1997, p. 52). Still, the stakeholder theory is also managerial in the broad sense of that term. It does not simply describe existing situations or predict cause-effect relationships; it also recommends attitudes, structures, and practices that, taken together, constitute stakeholder management.

The focus on ‘managing stakeholder relationships’ is sometimes criticized for being a prescription to treat all stakeholders equally (Gioia, 1999; Marcoux, 2000). However, ‘managing stakeholder relationships’ does by no means imply that all stakeholders must be treated equally, regardless of the specific circumstances. Donaldson and Preston (1995, p.74) point out that ‘stakeholder management’ should be understood as embracing the understanding that ‘all stakeholders’ interests have intrinsic value’. They make a distinction between three aspects of stakeholder theory: descriptive/empirical, instrumental, and normative. These three interpretations of stakeholder theory, although quite different, are mutually supportive and that the normative base serves as the critical underpinning for the theory in all its forms.

Normative stakeholder theory

Donaldson and Preston (1995, p. 88) place the normative dimension of stakeholder theory at the core of their conceptualisation and conclude that ‘the ultimate justification for the stakeholder theory is to be found in its normative base’. They focus on the identification of moral or philosophical guidelines for the operation and management of firms and

conclude that stakeholders are identified by their interests in the firm whether or not the firm has any corresponding functional interest in them. In addition, the interests of all stakeholders are of intrinsic value, i.e., each group of stakeholders' merits consideration for its own sake and not merely because of its ability to further the interests of some other group, such as the shareholders.

Descriptive stakeholder theory

Descriptive stakeholder theory describes, and sometimes explains the operations of companies (Donaldson and Preston 1995, p.70). It presents a model of the firm as a constellation of cooperative and competitive interests possessing intrinsic value. For example, stakeholder theory has been used to describe (a) the nature of the firm (Brenner and Cochran, 1991), (b) the way managers think about managing (Brenner and Molander, 1977), (c) how board members think about the interests of corporate constituencies (Wang and Dewhirst, 1992), and (d) how some firms are actually managed (Clarkson, 1991).

Instrumental stakeholder theory

The instrumental aspect of stakeholder theory makes a connection between stakeholder approaches and commonly desired objectives such as profitability (Donaldson and Preston, 1995). This approach helps to establish a framework for examining the connections between the practice of stakeholder management and the achievement of various corporate performance goals. The assumption is that, other things being equal, firms that practice stakeholder management will be relatively successful in conventional performance terms. Interpreting this view, Kaler (2003, p.72-73) points out that the instrumental aspect of stakeholder theory has 'its use in arguing that the adoption of a stakeholder approach to running companies is an equally good or better way of achieving 'conventional corporate objectives' as 'rival approaches'. In this sense, stakeholders are

considered as ‘means’ for improving the firm’s performance. According to Jawahar and McLaughlin (2001, p.399) ‘a fundamental assumption is that the ultimate objective of corporate decisions is market place success, and stakeholder management is a means to that end’.

Modern CSR theory builds on the premise of the existence of an implicit social contract that makes business act in accordance with society’s expectations or demands (Kuznetsov and Kuznetsova, 2012). Once it is acknowledged that business and society need each other (Porter and Kramer, 2006), the management of the business side of the relationship becomes a crucial aspect of corporate performance. This relationship however is implicit and not governed by laws.

Involvement in CSR requires that firms become aware of this relationship and develop understanding of how business activity influences society (Freeman, 2001; Lantos, 2001; Quazi and O'Brien, 2000). Freeman (1984) argues in his seminal work on stakeholders that systematic attention to stakeholder interests is critical to the firm’s success and that firms cannot exist without managing their stakeholders well (Freeman, 1984). This is the essence of stakeholder theory. The instrumental aspect of the theory deals with the ways in which the firm can manage its relationship with its various stakeholders and with designing a strategy through which this relationship can ultimately benefit business performance (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Jones *et al.*, 2012). Stakeholder theory assumes that it is not only logical but also natural for a corporation to take advantage of these relations and undertake initiatives that maximize the ‘payback’ from society in response to CSR initiatives.

This approach to CSR, sometimes called strategic CSR (Lantos, 2001), views CSR as a form of investment (Mc Williams and Siegel, 2001). For instance, Mishra (2015) analyses innovation in firms and observes that more innovative firms demonstrate high CSR performance subsequent to a successful innovation. This implies the existence of an ‘optimum’ level of CSR at which CSR investment maximizes profits, while also satisfying stakeholder demand for CSR.

Many studies linking CSR with marketing and branding use instrumental perspective of CSR. For example, Maignan *et al.*, (1999) established a positive relationship between CSR and customer loyalty in a managerial survey. Other studies have also demonstrated that consumers are willing to actively support companies committed to cause-related marketing, environmentally friendly practices, or ethics (e.g., Barone *et al.*, 2000). Furthermore, there is evidence that some consumers are ready to sanction socially irresponsible companies, for example, by boycotting their products and services (Sen *et al.*, 2001). We elaborate on these findings in chapter 3.

2.12.1 Criticism of stakeholder theory

According to Fassin (2008), the success of stakeholder theory, both in the management literature and in business practice, is due in large part to the simplicity inherent to the model. Some authors, however, argue that this simplicity is a weakness, not a strength. For example, Stoney and Winstanley (2001) argue that this theory provides an excessively simplistic conceptualization of power that may be negotiated between the organisation and the groups of stakeholder and, therefore, offer very limited explanation of the means by which different stakeholder group interests emerge.

However, one of the main issues about stakeholder theory is the definition of the term 'stakeholder'. There is no common consensus as to what the concept of stakeholder means, with hundreds of different published definitions. For example, Miles (2012) counted 435 different definitions in 439 articles; a new definition every 1.13 articles published. Many authors agree that there is a conceptual confusion over the expression 'stakeholder' (Fassin 2008; Friedman and Miles, 2006). Freeman *et al.*, (2010, p. 63) state that 'others have suggested that there is just too much ambiguity in the definition of the central term for it ever be admitted to the status of theory'. This criticism is echoed by Mansell (2013) who expresses doubt that any goal pursued by a corporation in a market based economy may be not reducible to the interest of shareholder.

A typical criticism of a broad definition of the stakeholder is that 'expansive views of relevant stakeholders tend easily to become so broad as to be meaningless and so complex as to be useless' (Orts and Strudler 2002, p. 218). However, Freeman (1984, p.52, 53) was aware of this potential criticism in his 1984 work, when he wrote that stakeholder theory 'must be able to capture a broad range of groups and individuals' but also when the concept is put 'to practical tests we must be willing to ignore certain groups who will have little or no impact on the corporation at this point in time'.

One of the most profound evaluations of stakeholder theory has been done by Key (1999). He criticized it on four main counts. First, stakeholder theory does not adequately explain the process. Key (1999) observed that beyond the concept of 'affect/affected by' Freeman's work does not sufficiently address the dynamics which link the firm to the stakeholders which are identified. Second, the theory makes an incomplete interlinking between the internal and external variables. Freeman presents an incomplete linkage between actors, and between internalities and externalities. To this end, an actor may be a member of a

variety of groups; hence, an employee may be a member of internal interest groups, shareholders and employees, and external stakeholder groups, such as professional and consumer organisations, environmental activist associations, parent or other community action entities (Hsueh, 2014). Key (1999) argued that while it may be correct to suggest that the firm's survival be linked to external and internal variables, the motivating description of this linkage needs to be more clearly addressed. Strengthening this view, Mainadres *et al.*, (2011) argued that Freeman (1984) put forward a framework that lacks logic of development or the causality that would serve to connect the variables and does not provide any form of testing or predicting the behaviour of either the company or that of external actors.

Third, the theory does not pay enough attention to the system within which companies operate as well as those levels of analysis within the system. Freeman argued that business and society/social issues and responsibility should not be separated from business strategy and policy, and that the impact of social and economic issues cannot be bifurcated. However, Freeman's model does not provide an understanding of the operation of the overall system that includes the firm's environment. Fourth, the theory also inappropriately evaluates the environment as static, focused upon the company and made up only of stakeholder groups. Since the system and the processes are not fully explained, the firm at any given time can be viewed in static frame and thus the element of change that occurs overtime is not explained using Freeman's model.

Another criticism of stakeholder theory is that Freeman did not provide a theoretical base that was appropriate for explaining either the behaviour of the company or that of individual actors, whether internal or external (Mainardes *et al.*, 2011). An actor may be a member of a variety of groups; hence, an employee may be a member of internal interest

groups, shareholders and employees, and external stakeholder groups, such as professional and consumer organisations, environmental activist associations, parent or other community action entities (Hsueh, 2014).

There seem to be a general agreement among authors criticizing stakeholder theory that firms pursuing stakeholder management and valuing principles of stakeholder theory, experience managerial confusion, conflict, inefficiencies and even a weakening of the corporation (Abreu *et al.*, 2013). Regarding the applicability of stakeholder theory, Sen and Cowley (2013) observes that CSR within the SME sector is more aligned to the essentials of social capital theory and not stakeholder theory. A few authors question the validity of stakeholder theory for its failure to provide clear management objectives and maintain that stakeholder interests are frequently mutually incompatible.

From a philosophical perspective, Antonacopoulou and Me´ric (2005) concluded that stakeholder theory is more of an ideological product than something scientific. Pointing to the lack of scientific thoroughness in the stakeholder theory propositions they lamented that the theory preaches more moral behaviour to market organisations as a counterbalance to capitalism and the economic objectives of firms (Kemper and Martin, 2010). Finally the theory lacks the production of knowledge to be able to explain the complex and multi-faceted social relationships between the company and its stakeholders (Un and Montoro-Sanchez, 2010).

These criticisms help in nurturing the development of stakeholder theory. There are questions to resolve, such as stakeholder focused decision making processes, the managerial structure appropriate to focusing on stakeholders, the role of intermediaries in

this relational interaction, the real legitimacy of stakeholders, the means of relating and interacting between the organisation and each of its stakeholders (Key, 1999).

In spite of these criticisms, stakeholder theory is widely used and many firms in emerging economies deploy CSR initiatives based on stakeholder approach. Several authors have indeed favoured a stakeholder approach when examining CSR. For example, Jamali (2008) chooses a stakeholder perspective on CSR because the language of stakeholder theory is easy to grasp by managers as most firms understand and define obligations and responsibilities vis-a-vis their traditional stakeholders; and that stakeholder theory seems easier to manoeuvre in collecting and analysing CSR data as evidenced by the proliferation of empirical studies that have essentially integrated a stakeholder approach to CSR. In addition, Indian firms are reported to be favouring stakeholder approach (Balasubramanian *et al.*, 2005; Dhanesh, 2014). This thesis subscribes to these views and accordingly uses stakeholder theory in the study.

Companies have to proactively take into consideration the interests of their multiple stakeholders to formulate strategies to gain support and trust from key stakeholders (Freeman, 2010) rather than passively meet the regulations (Chang, 2015). This typology of CSR has been referred to as proactive and reactive CSR which we discuss next.

2.13 Proactive and reactive CSR

Drawing on the long-established ‘reaction-defence-accomodation-proaction’ typology, firms can be viewed as operating along a continuum of CSR ranging from Reactive to proactive in nature (Fang *et al.*, 2010; Michael, *et al.*, 2015; Muafi, 2016). The assumption underpinning this continuum is that every firm has a social responsibility and that it is the degree and kind of CSR practices a firm uses to meet that responsibility whcihc will vary.

Proactive CSR refers to vigorous and voluntary practices through which a firm engages in CSR practices, above and beyond regulatory requirements in order to support sustainable economic, social and environmental development (Groza *et al.*, 2011; Torugsa *et al.*, 2013).

Moreover, proactive CSR embraces the design and development of sustainable products, operations, and production processes. When a company puts forth effort for an extended period of time, CSR activities generate public loyalty (Ledingham, Burning and Wilson, 1999). Thus by proactively engaging in CSR in a consistent manner the company can accentuate its commitment to socially responsible practices and its concern for society in order to create the public's CSR association with the company (Brown and Dacin, 1997; Kim, 2015).

Torugsa *et al.*, (2013) describes three dimensions of proactive CSR - economic, social and environmental. *Economic* dimension of proactive CSR describes firms' attempt to preempt issues (e.g. product quality, customer satisfaction, safety etc.) that might arise while their interactions with stakeholders (European Commission, 2003, p.11; Torgusa *et al.*, 2013). Economic-related proactive CSR creates value through promotion of new products development, lower costs of inputs and improved production efficiencies. However, as this CSR dimension requires huge investment and effective management of different types of economic capital, firms must adopt a long-term perspective in decision-making (Dyllick and Hockerts, 2002).

The *social* dimension of proactive CSR has two points of focus: the *workplace* and the *community*. The social dimension of proactive CSR actively identifies 'the health, safety

and general well-being of employees; motivate the workforce by offering training and development opportunities; and enables firms to act as good citizens in the local community' (European Commission, 2003. p.5; Torgusa *et al.*, 2013). Such social dimensions of proactive CSR also consider social and ethical questions that take care of the interests of all stakeholders in decision-making (Bansal, 2005).

The *environmental* dimension of proactive CSR relates to pollution prevention, eco-efficiency and innovation (Torugsa *et al.*, 2013). Environmental-related proactive CSR is characterised by a total quality management approach and adhering to internationally recognised environmental management systems in order to monitor the environmental impact of the firm. This dimension of CSR requires substantial resources and technical expertise.

The impact of proactive CSR in crisis situation is more perceptible. Rim (2013) identifies two types of risk faced by the firms - *preventable* and *non-preventable*. This author argues that the effects of proactive CSR are greater when a company experiences a preventable crisis versus a non-preventable crisis. Therefore, if company is actively involved in CSR practices prior to the crisis event, it may be easier for the company to offset negative perceptions cause by crisis. Considering the negative impact caused by preventable crisis due to greater crisis responsibility, the potential of proactive CSR to act as a buffer to reputational damage is noteworthy (Rim, 2013). Moreover, when firms implement CSR proactively, stakeholders perceive as adding altruistic value in society and resulted in more favourable attitudes of stakeholders (Groza *et al.*, 2011).

In contrast to proactive CSR, reactive CSR takes place when the company's ambition is merely to meet the national laws and regulations (Maignan and Ferrell, 2001). For

example, with regard to the environment, reactive CSR would mean for a company simply to satisfy the requirements of environmental regulations (Chang, 2015).

A reactive CSR strategy usually indicates that firms engage in CSR for legitimacy purposes (Chang 2015) and to protect the image of the organisation (i.e., mitigate harm) after some irresponsible action has been reported (Murray and Vogel, 1997; Wagner *et al.*, 2011). Therefore a reactive strategy is often perceived as a face saving mechanism that is aimed at attaining business goals (Micheal *et al.*, 2015).

It has been found that when companies implement CSR reactively, they are perceived by stakeholders to be serving business goals, (Groza *et al.*, 2011). Consumers, however, respond negatively when CSR efforts are enacted only after pressure from stakeholders (i.e., stakeholder-driven) because such actions are perceived as forced and insincere. Thus, reactive CSR does not focus on long-term interest of society (Groza *et al.*, 2011).

Companies tend to behave in socially responsible ways if organisational culture creates the proper set of incentives for such behaviour (Campbell, 2007). Different types of organisational culture influence different types of CSR activities. When companies or their managers do not concern the responsiveness of environmental management and protection, these companies respond to environment reactively.

In terms of reactive CSR, research suggests that communicating CSR after a crisis event has no impact on perceived motivation of stakeholders regarding company image and reputation (Rim, 2013). Proactive CSR can help the company to minimize reputational damage, especially when it deals with preventable crisis. In addition, it can also help a company to strengthen its reputation.

However, it has been noted that outcomes from the implementation of CSR strategies are not assured (Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2009. Michael, 2015). This is because it has been noted that CSR is context specific, hence dependent upon the context within which it is implemented (Freeman and Hasnaoui, 2011; Gjolberg, 2009; Michael, 2015). Hence, we examine CSR strategy in the context of emerging market economies and the Indian context.

2.14 CSR in emerging market economies

In recent years, many authors (Jamali, 2014; Jamali and Neville, 2011; Visser, 2008; Jamali and Mirshak, 2007) have emphasised the need for analysing CSR from a perspective of the context of emerging market economies. This is because in many of the developing countries an alternative discourse encompassing culture, traditional values, and politics provides a socio-economic context and a national backdrop for CSR action. Chappel *et al.*, (2014) note that the practice of CSR in developing economies differs significantly compared to Western countries. Sharma (2013) studied ten countries and identified key elements that define the practice of CSR in Asian companies: cultural influences, classical philanthropy; state capacity, participation in global supply chains and home-grown corporate misdemeanours. Low *et al.*, (2014) emphasises that the concepts of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainable development (SD) developed in the West should not be adopted without proper adoption and adaptation to Asian values. The authors discuss the development of CSR and sustainability development in major Asian countries and conclude that China, Japan, South Korea and Singapore share Asian values influenced by Confucian ethics, Indians root their values in Hinduism while Indonesian values are highly influenced by Islam. With respect to global companies, Kolk and Lenfant (2010) cautions that the lack of awareness in embracing local cultures in CSR

efforts may not only cause the failure in such activities but can also jeopardize their businesses in emerging markets. However, the actual process of developing, implementing, and assessing CSR initiatives in developing countries could be more challenging than envisaged (Mak, 2015).

Many authors attribute this difference to the typical nature of institutional environments and constellations as the unique characteristics of CSR in developing countries (Jamali, 2014). The literature specifically identifies the limited and contracted role of governments in developing countries which often creates environments that are ripe for abuses given limited legal and regulatory enforcement (Khavul and Bruton, 2013; Newenham-Kahindi, 2011). Other institutions such as NGOs and civil societies are also not effective (Jamali and Neville, 2011). However, while differences in the institutional environment of CSR in Western countries are relatively well documented (Jackson and Apostolakou, 2010; Matten and Moon, 2008), less is known about the state of CSR in Asian economies (Chapple *et al.*, 2014). However, there are also signs that the institutional environment is changing in Asian emerging market. For example mandatory requirements of CSR reporting have been developed in India, Indonesia, and Malaysia. In Philippines national stock exchanges have adjusted their listing requirements to encourage greater corporate transparency on environmental and social issues (Chappel *et al.*, 2014).

Evidence suggests that the attention for issues related to sustainable development and business responsibilities for society is growing in Asian countries (Chappel *et al.*, 2014). These authors note that CSR reporting has increased dramatically in the last decade. The number of Asian companies using GRI has grown rapidly in recent years (GRI, 2010).

Deviating from a conventional perspective, Visser (2008) reviewed Carroll's CSR pyramid and argued that the model is more suited for the West and suggested a new model that better reflected the practice of CSR in the emerging market context. He proposed a hierarchical model in which philanthropy or discretionary responsibility has been given more importance than legal and ethical responsibility. Visser (2008) further argued that, unlike in the West, poverty, hunger, unemployment and shortage of foreign direct investment prevails in developing countries and hence philanthropy in CSR is more important in these countries.

Jamali and Mirshak (2007) and Jamali and Neville (2011) have shared this view and argued that CSR is often equated with philanthropy in developing countries. This could be attributed to cultural norms (Gao, 2009; Jamali and Mirshak, 2010), religious expectations (Jamali, Sidani and El-Asmar, 2009) and pressing socio-economic needs in developing countries. Another reason of emphasis on putting philanthropy over legal obligations have been attributed to weak judicial infrastructure and limited government capacity and regulatory enforcement (Khavul and Bruton, 2013; Newenham- Kahindi, 2011) which do not exert pressure on firms to behave responsibly unlike firms in developed countries which are subject to heightened scrutiny and regulatory pressure (Visser, 2008).

Jamali (2014) reviewed important drivers of CSR for developing countries and identified *Charity or Zakat* (in Muslim countries) as important drivers of CSR. Other drivers include globalization, international trade and governments' inability to satisfy the needs of the society (Jamali, 2006). Moreover, a study has revealed that emerging markets are increasingly adopting ISO 14001 and the Global Reporting Initiative's Sustainability Reporting Guidelines (Baskin, 2006). Other pressing drivers are 'international codes and standards' to embrace CSR (Jamali, 2010).

In the Indian context, studying CSR is important for a number of reasons. First, we believe there are additional elements to be analysed that are not included in Western paradigms. A focus on CSR in India and the practices of its leading firms can provide scholars and practitioners with a new model (Cappelli *et al.*, 2010). Second, a focus on the fastest growing economy could inform general managers as well as CSR managers about the attributes of the Indian approach to CSR. Finally, India makes an interesting case as a country that has the highest level of CSR among other Asian economies (Reserve Bank of India, 2009; UNIDO, 2002).

Many Indian firms are believed to have embraced an *ethical model* inspired by Gandhi's concept of social trusteeship (Balasubramanian *et al.*, 2005). Its focus is on a voluntary commitment by companies to public welfare. Between 1914 and 1960, many businesses largely aligned their social initiatives with Gandhi's reform programs such as abolition of untouchability, women's empowerment and rural development (Arora and Puranik, 2004). The period of 1960s and 1970s saw an emergence of CSR activities being inbuilt in corporate philanthropy (Mohan, 2001). Recent studies suggest that stakeholder approach is currently more prevalent among Indian firms (Tyagi *et al.*, 2013; Balasubramanian, *et al.*, 2005; Waddock, 2004). For example, Mishra and Suar (2010) examined whether CSR towards primary stakeholders influences the financial and the nonfinancial performance of Indian firms. Moreover, the contemporary research has started focusing on investigating into the stakeholder relationships of firms from an Indian perspective (Tyagi *et al.*, 2013).

Literature provides some clues about what motivates Indian firms to pursue CSR. A thorough review of the literature on CSR in India revealed that the key drivers of CSR are in a state of transition from their moralistic, philanthropic roots during the early days of

industrialization to increasingly strategic overtones (Dhanesh, 2014). The literature of the last decade indicates that ethics and values serve as important motivators for Indian firms (Balasubramanian *et al.*, 2005; Cappelli *et al.*, 2010). There is a widely held belief in India that service to other is important and that one's goal in life ought to extend beyond one's material needs (Cappelli *et al.*, 2001). This trend is still continuing. However, some studies have found that CSR in India is driven primarily by moral values and top management commitment (Arevalo an Aravind, 2011; Dhanesh, 2014). Although most studies indicate that CSR in India continues to be philanthropic in nature, a more recent study by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (2013) found that it is turning more strategic. Now firms in India are engaging into CSR for its reputational, financial, and relational benefits (Dhanesh, 2014; Sharma, 2013). Dhanesh (2014) argues that in addition to these studies with strategic and ethical perspectives, an emerging stream of research has focused on concepts from social and cultural frameworks specific to India. In the context of agribusiness, social and cultural framework of local community could be of much importance. It appears that CSR in Indian agribusiness could be guided by the concept of 'social license to operate'. A company can only gain such license to operate through abroad acceptance of its activities by society or the local community. Without this approval, a business may not be able to carry on its activities without incurring serious delays and costs (The Ethical Funds Company, 2009). However there is lack of evidence for this claim indicating the presence of a notable research gap.

Finally, a new trend of *sustainability reporting* is gaining recognition among corporate in India (Yadava and Sinha, 2015). This is another motivation for firms to pursue CSR. Aguinis and Glavas (2012) considers triple bottom line (TBL) perspective and refers CSR as a company's actions that take stakeholder's expectations into account and achieve the bottom line of economic, social and environmental performance. While the trend has been

positive, there is a huge scope for greater response from Indian firms, where only 20 out of 104 submitted reports were found to be comprehensive (Global Reporting Initiative Resource Library, 2011).

However, there are many barriers to the above mentioned drivers of CSR. The literature informs that companies are under extreme pressure to cut cost. Indian firms lack modern technology in their operation and struggle with inefficiency in operation. Similarly extra manpower results in high labour cost. In addition, corruption in the government, excessive bureaucracy and confused policy results in companies not spending enough on CSR. To tackle this issue government has recently mandated Indian firms to spend 2 % of the net profit on CSR activities (see Appendix 5). Indian firms are also blamed for unprofessional management and lack of manager's commitment to CSR. Moreover, Arevalo and Aravind (2011) in their study found that lack of resources (skilled manpower and financial) and lack of management support are major obstacles in implementing CSR in India. These characteristics present unique challenges for Indian managers which make it distinguishable and more challenging compared to their western counterparts.

In sum, this thesis, by conceptualising 'brand' and 'CSR' as organisational process oriented construct, emphasise on the *process* in building the corporate brand of Indian agribusiness firms. Hence, this study is guided by *process theory* which we discuss next.

2.15 Process theory

This study uses *process theory* as it involves understanding the organisational process in implementing the evolving phenomenon of 'corporate social responsibility' and 'branding' in the Indian agribusiness context. As this study investigates the impact of CSR, it also relates to perceived social change in the community and to social identity of Indian

agribusiness firms. Process theory can also be related to social change process that creates social identities (Jaspal and Breakwell, 2014). Hence, in this section, first applicability of process theory in this study is described and then identity process theory is introduced to elucidate the socio-psychological processes underlying identity construction and change.

Process research focuses empirically on evolving phenomena, and it draws on theorizing that explicitly incorporates temporal progressions of activities as elements of explanation and understanding (Langley *et al.*, 2013). In management research, process theory provides an explanation for 'how' something happens (Mohr, 1982) and it specially addresses questions about how and why things emerge, develop and grow overtime (Langley *et al.*, 2009; Mohr, 1982). This study specifically focuses on how CSR practices influences branding in Indian agribusiness context. Hence, process theory offers a methodological direction to this study. Rasche and Chia (2009) argues that qualitative research methods correspond well to a perspective emphasizing process questions and an ontology where processes rather than things are the primary focus of attention. This argument has been further developed in chapter 4 to delineate the approach of the study.

Process theory enables us to move from description to explanation. This is critical for this study as it seeks to explain the relationship between CSR and branding by analysing the perception of managers. Explanation requires a *generic story*, and such stories can be understood as process theories (Pentland, 1999). In narrative theory, the story is an abstract conceptual model. Pentland (1999) argued that a process theory should include five features in the story: (1) a clear sequence of beginning, middle, and end in time, (2) focal actors who may play the protagonists or antagonists, (3) an identifiable voice reflecting some actor's viewpoint, (4) an evaluative frame of reference of what is right or wrong, appropriate or inappropriate, and (5) other indicators of context over time and place.

Though the theoretical descriptions of the thesis may not fit this model exactly, but it has a strong underlying plot.

Not all forms of process research are equal or the same (Aldrich, 2001; Van de Ven and Engleman, 2004). These authors emphasize the need to distinguish between outcome-driven and event-driven research. Outcome-driven explanations are built backward, from an awareness of observed outcomes to prior causally significant events. In contrast to outcome-driven explanations, event-driven explanations are built forward, from observed or recorded events to outcomes. Researchers pick certain sets of events a priori and then record their occurrences over time. There is no rule for such designs, and some events may appear in more than one narrative. Moreover, most events we observe probably have no obvious consequences, thus requiring that researchers have strong a priori theoretically grounded notions of the expected causal process (Van de Ven and Engleman (2004). It has been further developed in chapter 3.

Process theories focus on critical events and conjunctions of events to explain development and change, and hence they hinge on necessary causality (Abbott, 1990). The process approach employs narrative explanation to note what the contribution actions and events make to a particular outcome and then configures these parts into a whole episode (Polkinghorne, 1988). This enables researchers to describe all aspects of development and change. The process perspective explicitly focuses on events rather than variables because of the inherent complexity of developmental processes as events are the natural way to simplify the social process (Abbott, 1990).

Finally, process theory can be thought of in relation to social change (Jaspal and Breakwell, 2014) in the form of *identity process theory* (IPT) (Breakwell, 1986, 2001;

Jaspal and Cinnirella, 2012) that elucidates the socio-psychological processes underlying identity construction and change. This study emphasises on the social change in local community, being brought by way of implementing effective CSR programs by Indian agribusiness firms. IPT specifies (i) the necessary requirements of a positive identity, (ii) the ways individuals/organisations cope with threats to identity, and (iii) what motivates individuals and groups to defend their sense of self (Bardi *et al.*, 2014). These parameters offers useful clue for analysing CSR- identity relations in this study.

IPT explicitly recognises the role of ‘*social representations*’ in the psycho social processes that underlie identity construction (Breakwell, 2001). For Indian agribusiness firms, such social construction could be in the form of corporate reputation. For Breakwell (1986, p. 55), a ‘social representation is essentially construction of reality’ that enables individuals to interpret the social world and to render it meaningful. For managers, social representations emerge through interpersonal and intergroup communication that creates identity (Breakwell, 2001). Furthermore, the social representation enables understanding both personal and social change, because individual and public understandings of specific phenomena vary with contexts. Hence, changes in social representations are vital for understanding identity processes. The theory hypothesises that the impact of social change on identity is contingent on three main factors. First, the impact is greater the more personally relevant the social change. Second, social changes vary in their demands for revising the content and evaluation of particular identities. Third, it is important to consider how people themselves evaluate the change. Social change can radically change the meaning of identities as it can reshape the social representation of a stimulus or social position. In this way, social change affects the degree of centrality of individuals’/ groups’ different identities (Bardi *et al.*, 2014). This perspective is useful in analyzing the

managerial perception in Indian agribusiness, regarding the impact and evaluation of CSR programs on the local community.

2.16 Inferences from the literature review

Agribusiness firms in India face the challenge of employing CSR strategically not only to mitigate the conflict with the society but also to advance their relations with stakeholders and strengthen their competitiveness. Agribusiness companies try to alleviate these challenges by protecting and sustaining their brands through various means. One solution may be to employ effective corporate branding strategy within which these issues could be addressed. Unfortunately, current CB literature does not address these important issues or provide any guideline for Indian agribusiness firms. CSR is one such important emerging social trend which has largely been ignored in CB literature. This lays foundation for this research to provide direction and a solid ground to explore the brand – CSR relationship in the context of large Indian agribusiness firms in more detail.

It is evident that different firms have different motivational factors to perform CSR activities. It ranges from attaining sustainability, building good corporate image, making profits, abiding by government norms or simply being philanthropic. On some occasions it appears that CSR practice is driven by community needs, on other - by company's own interest. However, it is apparent that Indian agribusiness firms do not have a clear cut strategy to pursue CSR.

On the contrary, evidence suggests that CSR efforts of agribusiness firms also give rise to speculations and doubts regarding company's real motive behind CSR activities. While some CSR activities are welcomed by stakeholder, media and community, others are not.

This raises an important question – whether firms are adopting right strategy for CSR? Are firms getting optimum benefit out of CSR spending? Are firms doing enough CSR? This calls for attention of agribusiness managers to devise correct and optimum strategy of corporate branding with CSR in built in it. These questions will be addressed in this thesis.

Despite the high potential for conflict in the agribusiness only a few research studies have yet been undertaken in the field of agribusiness relations to society (Grunert, 2005; Heyder and Theuvsen, 2008; Jansen and Vellema, 2004; Poetz *et al.*, 2013). While some recent studies attempt to understand the impact of CSR on business performance, its effects on corporate branding (which is central to business performance) particularly in the context of agribusiness firm is not addressed adequately in the literature and subsequently there is lack of empirical studies on interrelation of CSR and corporate branding of agribusiness firms, in particular in a developing country context.

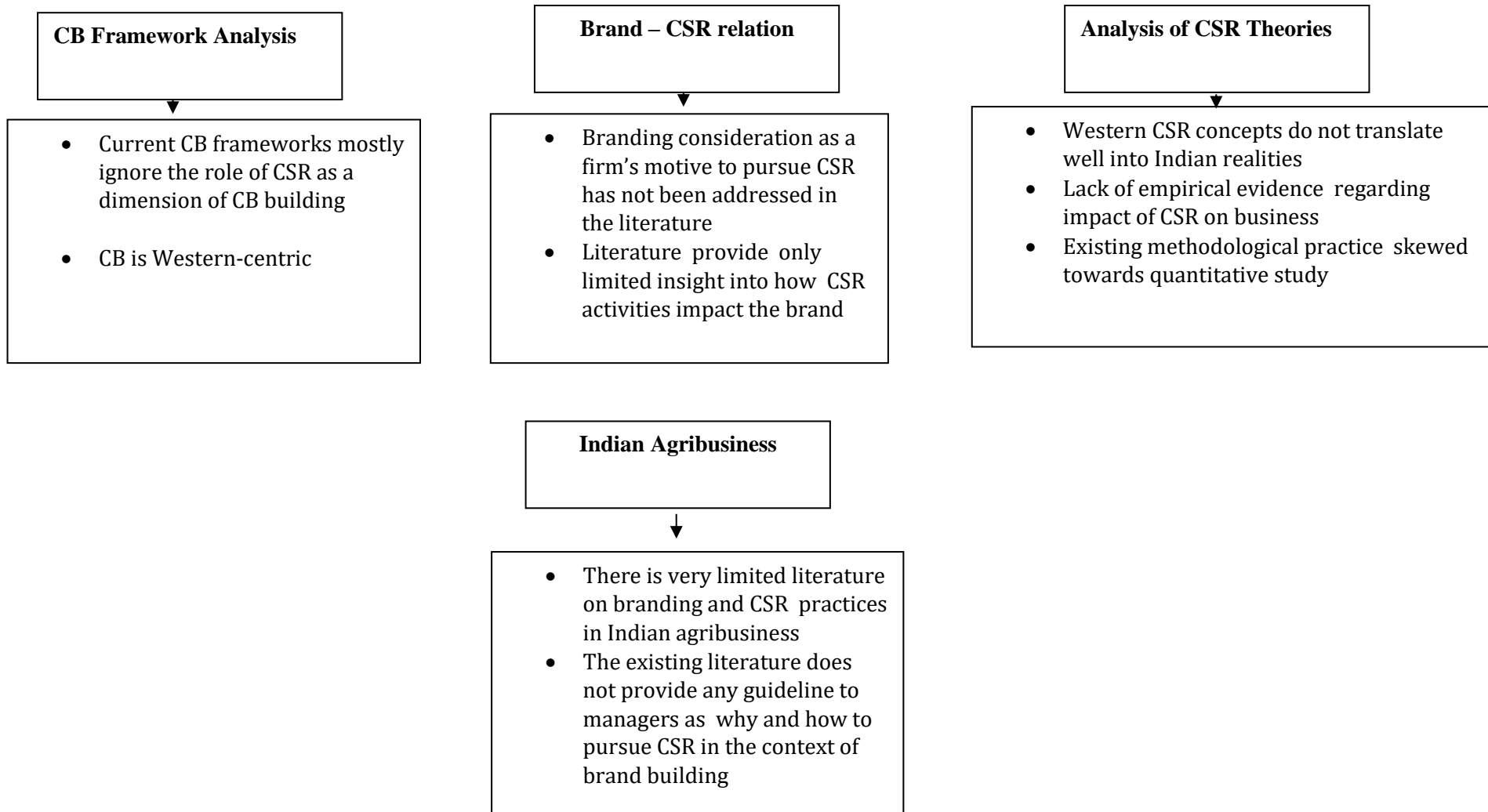


Figure 2.6: Research gaps identified through literature review

2.17 Conclusion

In this chapter, the key constructs of the research such as the brand, image, reputation, corporate culture, corporate communication and CSR were conceptualised with the help of the extant literature on branding and CSR. In doing so, the chapter critically reviewed literature on corporate branding framework and CSR theories to identified research gaps. By conceptualising the branding and CSR as organisational process oriented construct this dissertation delineates boundaries for the investigating brand-CSR linkages. In the next chapter, the theoretical framework of the research will be described.

CHAPTER - 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at establishing conceptual approaches for bridging the research gaps identified in previous chapters. In doing so, this chapter explores the linkages of corporate branding with CSR to develop plausible research propositions and conceptualise a theoretical framework to address them. This chapter adopts an interdisciplinary approach that relies on CSR theories, brand management models and the analysis of the peculiarities of the Indian culture and the agribusiness environment as described in chapter 2.

3.2 Brand- CSR relation

Analysis of the literature reveals that branding experts pay increasing attention to CSR as a factor influencing branding. Some researchers (Hoffler and Keller, 2002) have identified CSR as one of the key characteristic of a corporate brand.

One common theme which emerges from the literature is the use of the instrumental stakeholder theory of CSR by modern branding researchers in order to establish linkages between CSR and branding. Researchers have established that CSR is a valid source of intangible competitive advantage (Melo and Galan, 2010) and may increase financial performance by improving the relationship of a firm with its major stakeholder groups (Beurden and Gossling, 2008). These arguments constitute a business case for CSR as a branding instrument. Literature argues that CSR can become a market differentiating strategy (McWilliams and Siegel, 2001), build brand equity (Hoeffler and Keller, 2002), and lead to customer loyalty and other positive post-purchase outcomes (Bhattacharya and

Sen, 2003). Lai and Chiu (2010) argue that CSR has positive effects on industrial brand equity and brand performance.

Another theme which is emerging from the analysis of the literature is the discussion on brand-CSR integration strategy been adopted by firms. In recent times, researchers have advocated brand-CSR integration as a major organisational strategic tool to leverage CSR for brand building purpose (Blumenthal and Bergstorm, 2003). According to a popular saying, 'brand happens - whether we like it or not'. It means that all activities undertaken by the organisation affect brand perception. This is the basic rationale for integrating CSR into an overall brand management system (Blumenthal and Bergstorm, 2003). They propagate the concept of brand council and explain that branding and corporate social responsibility both long term trends have moved from the organisational periphery to its front and centre. In another study, Carol (2006) provides a framework of integration and suggests six replicable or non-replicable organisational prototypes which manager can practice to integrate CSR with the brand.

A number of other themes have been discussed in the literature such as the impact of CSR on brand value and brand dimensions. For example, Melo and Galan (2010) argue that brand value gathers in one single variable a range of components and characteristics that are highly sensitive to CSR. In turn, Chen (2011) provides empirical evidence to show that different types of CSR endeavours have differentiating effects on the corporate brand dimensions. However, a study by Srinaruewan *et al.*, (2014) in the context of Thailand indicates that consumers' perceptions of firms for engaging in CSR are not different for brands having CSR elements and without CSR elements. This is due to consumer scepticism about firms' motives for engaging in CSR. Consumers may perceive that companies use CSR just to enhance own image and boost financial performance rather

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than as a sign of genuine concern about social issues. However, a study by Tingchi Liu *et al.*, (2014) shows that a brand can become more preferable to Chinese consumers through CSR efforts and investments. Moreover, a study by Alexander *et al.*, (2014) in Ghana indicates that the company can take advantage of the stakeholder's commitment and support to develop new brands for the market and the combined effort of the company and that of the stakeholders in the community towards brand building would be much more than only firms' effort.

A recent study by Torress *et al.*, (2012) demonstrates that practicing CSR toward stakeholder groups has a positive impact on global brand equity. In addition, global brands that follow local social responsibility policies in communities obtain strong positive benefits through the generation of brand equity, enhancing the positive effects of CSR toward other stakeholders, particularly customers. Therefore, for managers of global brands, when generating brand value, it is particularly effective to combine global strategies with the need to satisfy the interests of local communities.

Finally, the analysis of the literature by Pakseresht and Herbert (2014) suggests a positive correlation between corporate responsibility, corporate reputation, brand value and financial performance and they argue for an inclusion of corporate responsibility activities as brand attributes in consumer-based brand-value frameworks.

However, authors are wary of presenting above findings and recommendations as conclusive. For example, Freeman and McVea (2001) reached the conclusion that environmentally friendly products have never been big sellers. Ambiguous results (Waddock and Graves, 1997), mixed empirical evidence (Brammer and Millington, 2003; Brammer and Millington, 2008), a lack of overwhelming evidence (Frankental, 2001),

equivocal evidence (Lantos, 2001) and a dearth of persuasive empirical studies (Schnietz and Epstein, 2005) are some of the other recurrent comments on research results. More specifically, recent research points out that little is known about the way CSR perception affects corporate reputation or brand equity (Hur *et al.*, 2014).

There seems to be a general agreement nevertheless (McWilliams and Seigel, 2001; Lantos, 2001; Brammer and Millington, 2003) that the lack of empirical evidence may be due to research methodology issues as well as the evolving nature of the brand-CSR concept. This provides a serious research gap and potential opportunity for the researcher to contribute through empirical study.

Finally, in the context of emerging economies, the evolution of CSR and its relation with other firm's performance constructs deserves scholarly attention (Wang *et al.*, 2016). More specifically, with regulatory mandates of CSR in India, mapping of motives of CSR activities has become a rich avenues for research (Wang *et al.*, 2016).

3.3 Development of research propositions

As described in chapter 2, this study focuses on exploring managerial perception because of the importance attached to it in relation to building corporate branding strategy. The rest of the chapter is arranged as follows: First it discusses the importance of managerial perception of this research. Then the analysis of the use of instrumental stakeholder theory in branding has been provided. Finally, the linkages between CSR and the three key elements of branding identified for the purpose of this research, i.e. corporate image, corporate culture and corporate communication have been analysed.

3.3.1 Managerial perception

According to Oxford English Dictionary, the fundamental meaning of the term ‘perception’ is apprehension by means of the senses or of the mind. Accordingly managerial ‘perceptions’ include everything that goes into manager’s understanding of their work situations (Mezias and Starbuck, 2003). The critical role of managers’ perception in the organisational decision making has long been acknowledged in the literature. Thus, Graham (1968, p.292) pointed out that ‘an individual’s reaction within a situation is a function of his perception of the situation’. The role played by perceptions in decision making makes the study of managerial views on CSR and branding central to this study.

3.3.2 Branding and instrumental stakeholder theory

Based on the literature review it is evident that strategic CB emphasises stakeholder satisfaction as a premise of a strong brand. This perspective is in line with the concept of strategic CSR according to which companies practice CSR to gain stakeholder confidence, promote an organisation culture which is sensitive towards societal demands and build or reinforce the reputation of the firm.

As described in chapter 2, once it is acknowledged that business and society need each other, the management of the business side of the relationship becomes a crucial aspect of corporate performance. Stakeholder thinking suggests that firms cannot exist without managing their stakeholders well (Freeman, 1984).

The instrumental part of the stakeholder theory deals with the ways in which the corporation can manage its relationship with its various stakeholders and make strategy in which this relationship can benefit business (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Jones *et al.*,

2012). According to this premise, it is not only logical but also natural for a corporation to take advantage of this implicit contract and undertake initiatives that maximize the ‘payback’ of society in response to those CSR initiatives engaged in.

From this perspective CSR becomes a form of investment (Mc Williams and Siegel, 2001). This means that establishing an ‘optimum’ level of CSR, the level at which CSR investment maximizes profits, while also satisfying stakeholder demand for CSR, acquires critical importance for the firm.

The instrumental stakeholder theory offers a conceptual framework that suggests to firms that CSR activities, through their impact on the implicit social contract, will be somehow rewarded by the society. This reward in the strategic marketing context may take the form of enhanced reputation and image of the firm. The firm will try to instill a corporate culture which is sensitive towards the societal need and chalk out vision which spells out firm’s commitment towards society.

Accordingly, and as described in chapter 2, this dissertation focuses on linking CSR with three key elements of corporate branding which are:

1. Corporate image and reputation
2. Corporate culture
3. Corporate communication of CSR

3.4 Linking CSR with corporate image

Western authors are almost unanimous in claiming that CSR is an important factor constituting corporate image (Visser, 2008). When a corporation sets a high standard of social responsibility, corporate image is improved in stakeholder’s minds. Therefore, in

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general, meeting social responsibilities improves corporate image. For example, according to (Berrone *et al.*, 2007) CSR leads to enhanced financial performance precisely because it is prone to create such intangible assets in terms of image and reputation.

Although not empirically conclusive, there are persuasive indications that CSR is beneficial for the brand, according to both empirical and theoretical studies, worldwide. Most of the argument and analysis on the benefits of CSR is focused on the quest for correlations between corporate financial performance (CFP) and CSR, (Griffin and Mahon, 1997; Roberts and Dowling, 2002; Stanwick and Stanwick, 1998; Waddock and Graves, 1997). It is interesting to observe, however, that this financial association is linked to 'reputation' gained by CSR as Roberts and Dowling (2002) argued that based on reputation, companies engaging in CSR would be rewarded by their stakeholders which will be reflected in superior financial performance.

Developing this position further, McWilliams and Siegel (2001) maintain that support for CSR creates a reputation that a firm is reliable and honest and that consumers will tend to assume that products from such firms would be of a higher quality than those from firms that do not enjoy this perception. Roberts and Dowling (2002) share a very similar view, remarking that those firms perceived to have a good reputation are better able to sustain superior profit outcomes over the time. Thus, it would be these intangible, difficult-to-replicate assets that create a kind of competitive advantage ultimately leading to an enhanced financial performance (Branco and Rodrigues, 2006; Schnietz and Epstein, 2005).

The literature argues that this quest for improved financial performance through CSR reflects the fact that Western firms face a lot of pressure from consumers to be socially

responsible (Blumenthal and Bergstrom, 2003). By contrast, as described earlier in chapter 2, Indian companies do not experience much pressure from their customers to be socially responsible. As a result CSR is less embedded in their core strategies. However, Indian agribusiness firms have been reported to be facing significant challenges regarding social and environmental issues. Hyder and Theuvsen, (2008) study the interrelation of German agribusiness firms with the social environment and conclude that CSR strategies positively affect firm's performance via reputation and legitimacy directly or indirectly. Such studies have not been conducted in India.

Thus, the views on the importance of CSR for branding, including agriculture, are based on Western experience but are not thoroughly tested in India. More specifically, for Indian agribusiness firms, the authenticity and process of strengthening the corporate brand through gaining reputation and legitimacy through CSR is not only not evident but is also of paramount importance for the firms and the policymakers. Hence, our first proposition is

Research Propositions 1: CSR activities create a positive influence on the corporate image through gaining reputation and legitimacy with the stakeholders in Indian agribusiness.

3.5 Linking CSR with corporate culture

In general terms corporate culture may be defined as the core values, assumptions, interpretations and approaches that characterise an organisation (Cameron and Quinn, 1998). For the purpose of this research corporate culture is studied from a social responsibility perspective. In this context, categorisation of corporate culture in terms of culture of sustainability (Serafeim *et al.*, 2011) and market culture (Cameron and Quinn, 1998) proves to be useful.

Theoretical Framework

The culture of sustainability is a feature of firms that have integrated social and environmental policies in their business model (Brochet *et al.*, 2012). These firms place more emphasis on long term goals, care more about the impact of externalities from their operations on other stakeholders and the environment, and focus more on the ethical grounds of their decision (Payne, 2006). During the last 20 years, a relatively small number of firms have integrated social and environmental policies in their business model and operations on a voluntarily basis (Brochet, Loumioti and Serafeim, 2012). This thesis argues that these policies reflect the underlying culture of the organisation, a culture of sustainability where environmental and social performance, in addition to financial performance, is important. These policies also forge a stronger culture of sustainability by making explicit the values and beliefs that underlie the mission of the organisation.

However, the analysis of the literature confirms that Indian firms are known to abide by ethical and cultural values and engage in extensive philanthropic and social activities. The big corporate houses are particularly regarded for their commitments towards sustainability issues and adopting an employee centric corporate culture. The recent trend of practicing CSR extensively by big firms could be a part of the firm's strategy to be sustainable in the long term.

This leads to our next research propositions:

Research Proposition 2a: Engagement in CSR activities helps in inculcating the culture of sustainability leading to strengthening the corporate brand within Indian agribusiness firms.

Firms that belong to this group may be expected to actively engage in CSR programs, irrespective of any pressure from stakeholder or media. They tend to pursue CSR programs

even prior to any negative information being received by stakeholders (Du *et al.*, 2010). This type of CSR can be termed as ‘proactive CSR’. Stakeholders typically perceive proactive CSR positively due to its seemingly altruistic nature (Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2006). They found that proactive CSR resulted in more favorable attitudes of the consumers in the form of increasing purchase intention of the company’s products. Hence, our next research proposition is:

Research Proposition 2b: Indian agribusiness firms possessing culture of sustainability will adopt proactive CSR.

By contrast, for some firms the basic assumption is that the external environment is not benign, but hostile, consumers are choosy and interested in value and the organisation is in the business of increasing its competitive position. This type of culture may be termed ‘market culture’ (Cameron and Quinn, 1998). The market culture is focused on transactions with external constituencies, including suppliers, customers, contractors, licensees, unions, regulators and so forth. Competitiveness and productivity in market organisations are achieved through a strong emphasis on external positioning and control. In this type of culture, clients and consumers’ interests are often taken into account, but the interests of employees, trade unions and local communities are often ignored. Recent literature indicates that due to globalization and privatization there may be a trend of adopting a market culture by those Indian agribusiness firms which are primarily driven by market forces, competition, sales and profits. However, in the light of new Indian law on CSR mandating firms to spend 2% of the net profit on CSR, such firm may be pursuing CSR programs only for legal compliance and statutory requirements due to focus on reducing cost and increasing profit. Hence our next proposition is:

Research Proposition 2c: Due to competition, cost and market pressure some Indian agribusiness firms are practicing CSR only to the extent of fulfilling legal obligations.

These categories of firms generally tend to adopt CSR programs only to protect the image of the organisation (i.e. mitigate harm) after some irresponsible action has been reported (Murray and Vogel, 1997; Wagner, 2010). This type of CSR can be termed as ‘reactive CSR’. This type of CSR is used for damage control and immediate reconciliation with the stakeholders. However, sometimes reactive CSR may lead to negative and skeptical attitudes of the consumers towards the company (Ricks Jr, 2005).

Research Proposition 2d: Firms possessing market culture will adopt reactive CSR in Indian agribusiness.

3.6 Linking CSR with corporate communication

The literature is emphatic that the impact of CSR on firm’s value depends on the ability of CSR to influence the stakeholders of the firms (Barnett, 2007). For this, firms communicate their CSR initiatives using corporate communication mediums such as annual reports, press releases, public relation activities, annual general meeting addresses of CEOs published in the newspaper etc.

The analysis of literature highlights the importance of ‘corporate social reporting’ or ‘social disclosure’ in the discourse. Sometimes CSR communications are meant for legal compliance purpose, exhibiting a positive image of the firm to the society, clarifying the firm’s position on certain contentious issues, safeguarding from potential negative impression about the firm and protecting its general interest. This corporate social reporting is an important area for analysing CSR communications. Regarding corporate

Theoretical Framework

social reporting, different theoretical perspectives have been employed. Two most prevalent perspectives are agency theory and legitimacy theory. Both stress that companies engage in corporate social reporting in order to affect public's perceptions of the company (e.g. Brown and Deegan, 1998; Neu *et al.*, 1998; Zadek, 1997). Most clearly such a notion emerges in the studies utilizing the legitimacy framework (Gray *et al.*, 1995). Authors employing this framework suggest that social and environmental disclosures are responses to both public pressure (Patten, 1992; Walden and Schwartz, 1997) and increased media attention (Brown and Deegan, 1998; Deegan *et al.*, 1999). More specifically, these authors argue that the increase of social disclosure represent a strategy to alter the public's perception about the legitimacy of the organisation' (Deegan *et al.*, 1999, p.4). Legitimacy theory is the most widely used framework to explain disclosures with regard to the environmental and social behaviour of an organisation (Gray *et al.*, 1995). Central to legitimacy theory is the concept of a social contract, implying that a company's survival is dependent on the extent that the company operates 'within the bounds and norms of the society' (Brown and Deegan, 1998, p.220). According to legitimacy theory, corporate social reporting is aimed at providing information that legitimises the company's behaviour by influencing the perception of stakeholders and members of society about the company (e.g. O'Donovan, 1997; Neu *et al.*, 1989). In this respect, corporate social reporting is a public relation vehicle aimed at influencing people's perceptions.

Another theme emerging from the literature is the issue of low awareness of CSR among stakeholders. Consumers often do not notice firm's CSR activities (see, for example, Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Du *et al.*, 2010). The literature maintains that when stakeholders are not fully aware of firm's CSR activities, the CSR effect on the firm's value is moderated or reduced. The lack of customers' knowledge about CSR initiatives is a major limitation of their ability to respond to these CSR

Theoretical Framework

initiatives. McWilliams and Siegel (2001) argued that potential customers must be fully aware of CSR characteristics for CSR activities to be successful; they also predicted a positive co-relation between advertising intensity and the provision of CSR. Cone (2007) reaffirms the findings that CSR is most effective with those who are already familiar with the brand. Servaes and Tamayo (2013) also maintain that firms possessing high level of consumer responsiveness about CSR can be expected to have high firm value. Bhattacharya and Korschun (2006) reveal that stakeholders who were aware of a CSR initiative had more positive company-related associations, displayed greater organisational identification with the company and indicated a greater intent to purchase products, seek employment, and invest in the company than respondents who were unaware of the initiative. Finally, Turkel *et al.* (2015) argue that familiar and unfamiliar brands elicit dissimilar responses in terms of attitude toward brand and purchase intentions. These authors advocate an effective formulation and dissemination of CSR-related messages in order to achieve stakeholder engagement. A common feature of the surveyed literature is consensus that firms should work on increasing CSR awareness levels among stakeholders if CSR is to be a profitable strategic investment.

That is, if the initiatives of a company are well known in its community, its CSR activities will strengthen its brand more than if this were not the case. It implies that CSR is more impactful with stakeholders who are already familiar with the company, enhancing relationships with existing clients or other stakeholders. However, there is substantial lack of evidence of above findings in Indian context. Indian firms are not known for spending money on advertising or communication of CSR and face challenges in advancing their relationship with the stakeholders.

Hence, the next research proposition is:

Research Proposition 3: Communication and advertising of CSR helps strengthening the relationship with stakeholders and the brand in Indian agribusiness.

3.7 Theoretical framework of research

The research propositions above were developed on the basis of conceptualisation of the five key constructs of the research. These are corporate branding (CB), corporate social responsibility (CSR), corporate image and reputation, corporate culture and corporate communication. The interrelationships among the construct constitutes the theoretical framework of the study as shown in Figure 3.1. The theoretical framework provides insight into the influence of CSR on corporate branding elements. According to this framework, CSR should improve the corporate image and corporate reputation of agribusiness firms. Next, corporate communication plays an important role in increasing the effectiveness of CSR on branding. Thus, it can be expected that the relationship between CSR and corporate branding should be more significant in firms which advertise or practice more corporate communication programs about CSR. Finally, the framework suggests that CSR activities influences corporate culture. Accordingly, it can be explored whether Indian agribusiness firm possess market culture or sustainability culture and pursue reactive or proactive CSR strategy respectively. This study test, these assumptions through empirical study. The theoretical framework, thus developed can be represented as in Figure 3.1. Thus the theoretical framework provides a guiding foundation for the research to answer the key research questions and determine the methodology.

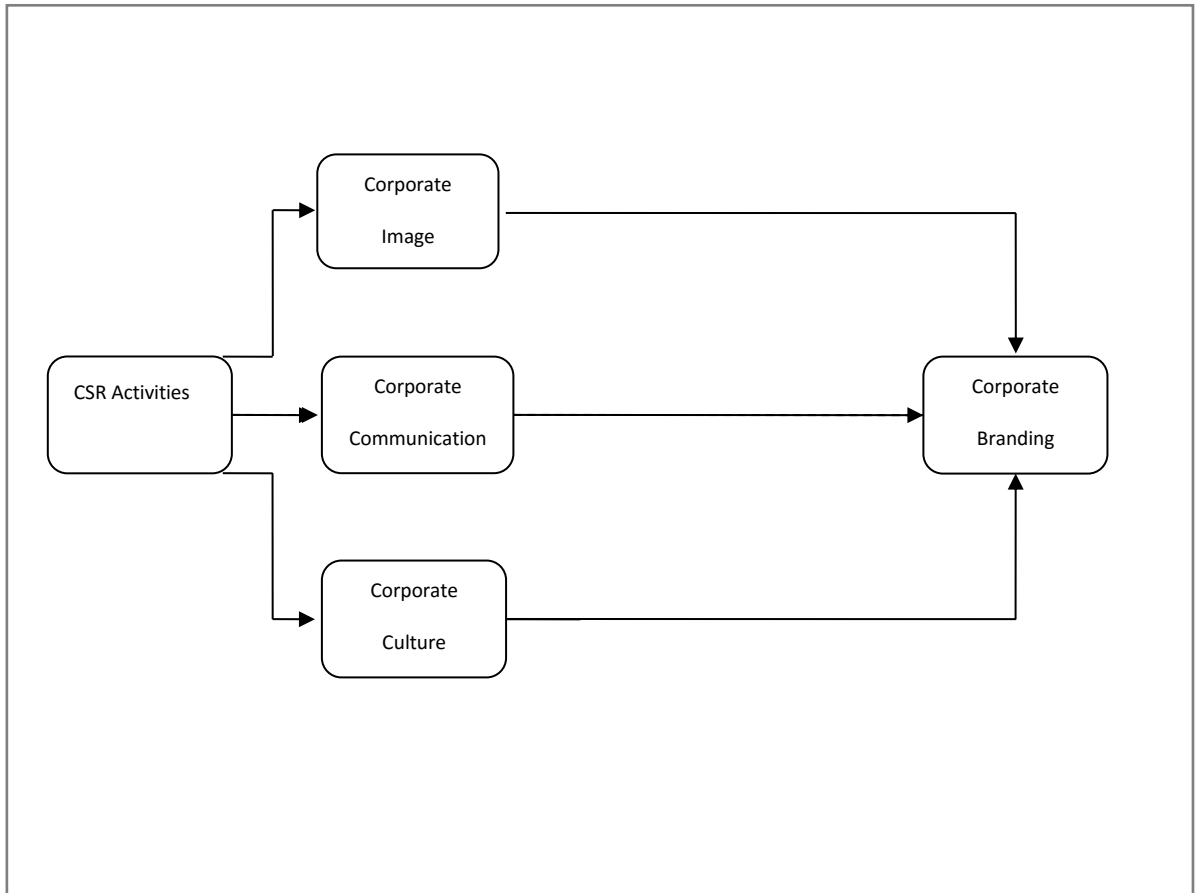


Figure 3.1: Theoretical framework of research

3.8 Conclusion

The current chapter established linkages between CSR and elements of corporate branding. The literature suffers from a paucity of evidence on the degree to which CSR has penetrated the fabric of corporate branding. However, the literature indicates that while some firms seem to truly engage in socially responsible practices, others are driven by different motives and are mostly interested in serving own interests. Based on the analysis of the existing literature, three key research propositions were framed. Subsequently a theoretical framework of the research was developed to address the research questions.

CHAPTER -4

METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology applied in this thesis and the methods used for data collection. Methodology refers to the rationale and the philosophical assumptions that underlie a particular study whereas method is a specific technique for data collection under those philosophical assumptions (White, 2000).

This chapter begins with a brief introduction to the ontology and epistemological principles used in social science. It then identifies appropriate research design and methodological approach for the study. In the process it describes the choice and rationale for suitable method for data collection and the selection of cases for the study. It then describes the research location and data collection process. Finally, the chapter examines the ethical considerations related to this study.

4.2 Philosophical orientation of research

Methodological choices for social scientists can be located within broader debates on the philosophy of science. The term ‘ontology’ is the starting point for most of the debates among philosophers. ‘Ontology’ denotes ‘beliefs about what is there to know about the world’ (Ritchie and Lewis, 2005, p.11). Thus an ontological position demonstrates the researcher’s view about the nature of social reality. The main ontological questions, according to Ritchie and Lewis (2005), include: whether or not social reality exists independently of human conceptions and interpretation; whether there is a common-shared-social reality or just multiple context specific realities; and whether or not social behaviour is governed by ‘laws’ that can be seen as immutable or generalisable. In turn,

epistemological position of the researcher reflects his/her opinion of what can be known about the world and how it can be studied.

There are two contrasting views of how social science research should be conducted. They are positivism and social constructionism. The key idea of positivism is that the social world exists externally, and that its properties should be measured through objective methods, rather than being inferred subjectively through sensation, reflection or intuition (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2010). The great French philosopher Auguste Comte was the first person to encapsulate this view: ‘there can be no real knowledge but that which is based on observed facts’. This statement contains two assumptions: first an ontological assumption, that reality is external and objective; and second, an epistemological assumption, that knowledge is only of significance if it is based on observations of this external reality.

Positivism dominated social science research for a long time until the recent emergence of critical social science. The view that positivism provides the best way of investigating human and social behaviour originated as a reaction to metaphysical speculation (Aiken, 1956). As such, this philosophy has developed into a distinctive paradigm over that last one and a half centuries.

A new paradigm, which has been developed by philosophers during the last half a century largely as a reaction to the application of positivism to the social sciences, stems from the view that ‘reality’ is not objective and exterior, but is socially constructed and given meaning by people. The idea of social constructionism then, as developed by authors such as Berger and Luckman (1966) and Watzlawick (1984), focuses on the ways that people make sense of the world, especially through sharing their experiences with others via the

medium of language. Social constructionism is one of a group of approaches that Habermas (1970) has referred to as interpretive methods.

There have been strong parallels between the natural sciences and the social sciences, but there have also been differences. However, the argument among social scientists can, in some respect, be mapped onto the natural science debate. This debate is mainly between *realism* and *relativism*. Traditional realists' starts with the position that the world is concrete and external and that science can only progress through observations that have a direct correspondence to the phenomenon being investigated. Internal realists believe that scientific laws once discovered are absolute and independent of further investigations. The relativist position goes a stage further in suggesting that scientific laws may not be quite so immutable (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2010). The relativist position, in both science and social science, assumes that different observers may have different viewpoints and that, 'what counts for the truth can vary from place to place and from time to time' (Collins, 1983, p.88).

Another variant of the relativist position is the idea of *critical realism*, which starts with the realist ontology of Bhaskar (1978) and then incorporates an interpretative thread (Sayer, 2000, Smith *et al.*, 2010). Critical realism makes a conscious compromise between the extreme positions. It recognises social conditions as having real consequences whether or not they are observed or labelled by social scientist; but it also recognises that concepts are human constructions.

Philosophical position, particularly the ontology and epistemology, has a major impact on the way research is conducted and evaluated. Pure positivists methods usually incorporate the assumption that there are true answers, and the job of researcher is either to start with

a hypothesis about the nature of the world, and then seek data to confirm or disconfirm it, or the researcher poses several hypotheses and seek data that will allow selection of the correct one. This type of research typically consists of quantitative study. Within this paradigm, experimental and quasi-experimental research designs are included. Since this study does not aim at testing any theory or hypothesis, a quantitative study or a deductive approach is not preferable.

Constructionist research design starts from the assumptions that there is no absolute truth, and the job of the researcher should be to establish how various claims for truth and reality become constructed in everyday life. Within this paradigm, action research and ethnography are key research methods. Even advocates of single cases generally come from a constructionist epistemology.

Within relativist epistemology, large scale survey and multiple case designs could be used (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2010). However, survey are typically suited for a quantitative study that aim at establishing relationships between variable and concepts where there are prior assumptions and hypotheses regarding the nature of these relationships.

Critical realism offers exciting prospects in shifting attention towards the real problems that we face and their underlying causes (Mingers *et al.*, 2013). As such it offers a robust framework for the use of a variety of methods in order to gain a better understanding of world, this researcher subscribes to ‘critical realist’ ontological position on which this study rests.

4.2.1 Critical realism (CR)

One of the most important tenets of critical realism is that ontology (i.e., what is real, the nature of reality) is not reducible to epistemology (i.e., our knowledge of reality) (Fletcher, 2016). In consonance with Bhaskar (1978), Fletcher (2016) argues that human knowledge captures only a small part of a deeper and vaster reality. In this respect, CR deviates from both positivism and constructivism. Mingers *et al.*, (2013) argue that there is an existing, causally efficacious, world independent of our knowledge that defends against both classical positivism that would reduce the world to that which can be empirically observed and measured, and the various forms of constructivism that would reduce the world to our human knowledge. Hence it is *realist*. Minger *et al.*, (2013) argue further that CR recognises that our access to this world is in fact limited and always mediated by our perceptual and theoretical lenses. It accepts epistemic relativity (that knowledge is always local and historical), but not judgemental relativity (that all viewpoints must be equally valid). Hence it is *critical* in a Kantian sense.

One of the most important contributions in this field is by Sayer (1992) who formulated the eight key assumptions of critical realism. He primarily argued that the world exists independently of our knowledge of it and our knowledge of the world is fallible and theory-laden. Moreover, social sciences must be critical of their object: in order to be able ‘to explain and understand social phenomena we have to evaluate them critically’ (Sayer, 1992, p.5).

In CR ontology, reality is stratified at three levels (Fletcher, 2016). The initial ‘empirical level’ is a domain of events, observations and experience. At this level, events or objects can be measured empirically and are often explained through common sense, but these events are always mediated through the filter of human experience and interpretation

(Fletcher, 2016). At the ‘actual level’ there is no filter of human experience. These true occurrences may be different from what is observed at the empirical level (Danermark *et al.*, 2002 p.20). Finally at the ‘real level’ causal mechanisms exist that are properties in an object or structure that act as causal forces to produce events (Fletcher, 2016). The main goal of critical realism is to explain the phenomenon through references to these causal mechanisms.

CR has emerged as a valuable philosophical and methodological approach to social research. However, as CR accepts the existence of different types of objects of knowledge – physical, social, and conceptual, – which have different ontological and epistemological characteristics, they require therefore a range of different research methods (Mingers *et al.*, 2013). Hence, as it offers a multiple choice of methods, there is a debate on the appropriate methodological choice within CR ontology. Fletcher (2016) argues in favour of using a qualitative research methodology. He provides a concrete example of applied qualitative research using CR as a philosophical and methodological framework. According to Easton (2010), multiple case research design is most suited for researchers subscribing to critical realism epistemology. He argues that it fits well the study of complex situations, regardless of the numbers of research units involved, but only if the process involves a thoughtful in-depth research with the objective of understanding why things are as they are.

4.3 Research design

This study focuses on exploring managerial perceptions regarding the influence of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) phenomenon on corporate branding (CB) strategy of agribusiness firms in India. This is achieved by adopting a case study approach because this method allows a holistic, in-depth investigation and rich contextual understanding of

research issues (Feagin *et al.*, 1991). By definition, a case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2014). Case studies are typically based on a variety of data sources and allow rich, empirical descriptions of particular instances of an object under investigation (Yin, 1998).

According to Eisenhardt (1989, p. 534), case study research can be defined as ‘a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings’. Case studies typically combine such data collection methods as archives, interviews, questionnaires, and observations (Eisenhardt, 1989). The evidence may be qualitative, quantitative or both. Case studies can involve either single or multiple cases, and numerous level of analysis (Yin, 1984). Thus case study is not only a method of data collection but a methodological strategy of the research. This strategy allows comprehensive and in depth investigation of the research issue at hand.

Nevertheless, case study research suffers from confusions arising out a large number of definitions of case study and the methodological incompatibility. Gerring (2004) argued that seven characteristics must be considered for a case study approach. *Ceteris paribus*, case studies are generally useful (1) when inferences are descriptive rather than causal; (2) when propositional depth is valued over breadth and roundedness; (3) when (internal) case comparability is given precedence over (external) case representativeness; (4) when insights into causal mechanisms are more important than insights into causal effects; (5) when the causal propositions at issue is invariant rather than probabilistic; (6) when the strategy of research is exploratory, rather than confirmatory, and (7) when useful variance is available for only a single unit (Gerring, 2004).

In the light of the above on these pages we adhere to the definition of the case study given by Gerring (2004): it is an intensive study of a single unit with an aim to generalise across a larger set of units.

Case study research is often said to be mainly suitable for research seeking to answer ‘*how*’ and ‘*why*’ questions (Yin, 2014). This study intends to address the research questions by exploring the perception of managers regarding the research issues. This calls for qualitative research approaches have been used by researchers in order to obtain ‘a more naturalistic, contextual and holistic understanding of human beings in society’ (Todd *et al.*, 2004). This approach focuses on studying phenomena in their natural settings and strives to make sense of these phenomena with respect to the meanings people bring to them (Banister *et al.*, 1994). By its very nature, qualitative research emphasises cultural and contextual factors that enhance or impede the efficacy and social/ecological validity of interventions or programs (Nastasi and Schensul, 2005).

A primary consideration in designing case study research is making a choice between single and multiple case study designs. A multiple case is chosen because it either predicts (a) similar results among the chosen cases (literal replication) or (b) contrasting results but for anticipated reasons (theoretical replication) (Yin, 2014). When a finding is observed in more than one case, its generalisability is enhanced. In turn, theoretical replication helps to establish the boundary conditions of the theory concerned so that the theory would not be applied to inappropriate situations (Jardine and Tsang, 2013).

Multiple case designs have distinct advantages in comparison to single-case design. The evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the overall study is regarded therefore as being more robust (Herriott and Firestone, 1983). More

importantly, analytic benefits from having two (or more) cases may be substantial (Yin, 2011). For example, a multiple case study design may facilitate better theoretical overview for a major reason that it can be difficult to separate generalisable theoretical relationships found in a case from idiosyncrasies associated with the case (Jardine and Tsang, 2013). Thus, keeping other things constant, a multiple case design provides a stronger basis for theoretical generalisation than a single-case design. Accordingly this study adopts a multiple case research design.

The next step in planning a case research is to decide between longitudinal and cross sectional case design. In principle, the research questions of this dissertation could be answered with the help of longitudinal case studies. Assessment of certain performance indicators could be conducted before and after the occurrence of a certain event (in this case the implementation of CSR); and respective results could be compared. This, however, require cases that have not been using CSR earlier. This situation could not be found among the potential cases. Therefore, follow-up measurement within the study's given timeframe was not possible. Therefore, this researcher adopted a comparative case study design, which comprises the assessment of cases that differ on certain characteristics. The cross case design allows to evaluate the result and address rival explanations. Accordingly, a cross sectional multiple case study approach was deemed the most appropriate method to facilitate a valid response to the research questions.

When a qualitative research strategy is employed within a cross-sectional design the research tends to take, an inductive approach to the relationship between theory and research (Beardsworth and Keil, 1992). Since this study aims to empirically scrutinize theory and produce findings that nourish existing knowledge on branding and CSR, it

pursues an inductive approach. Inductive approach refers to moving from specific observations to broader generalization.

Figure 4.1 gives a graphical representation of the research design.

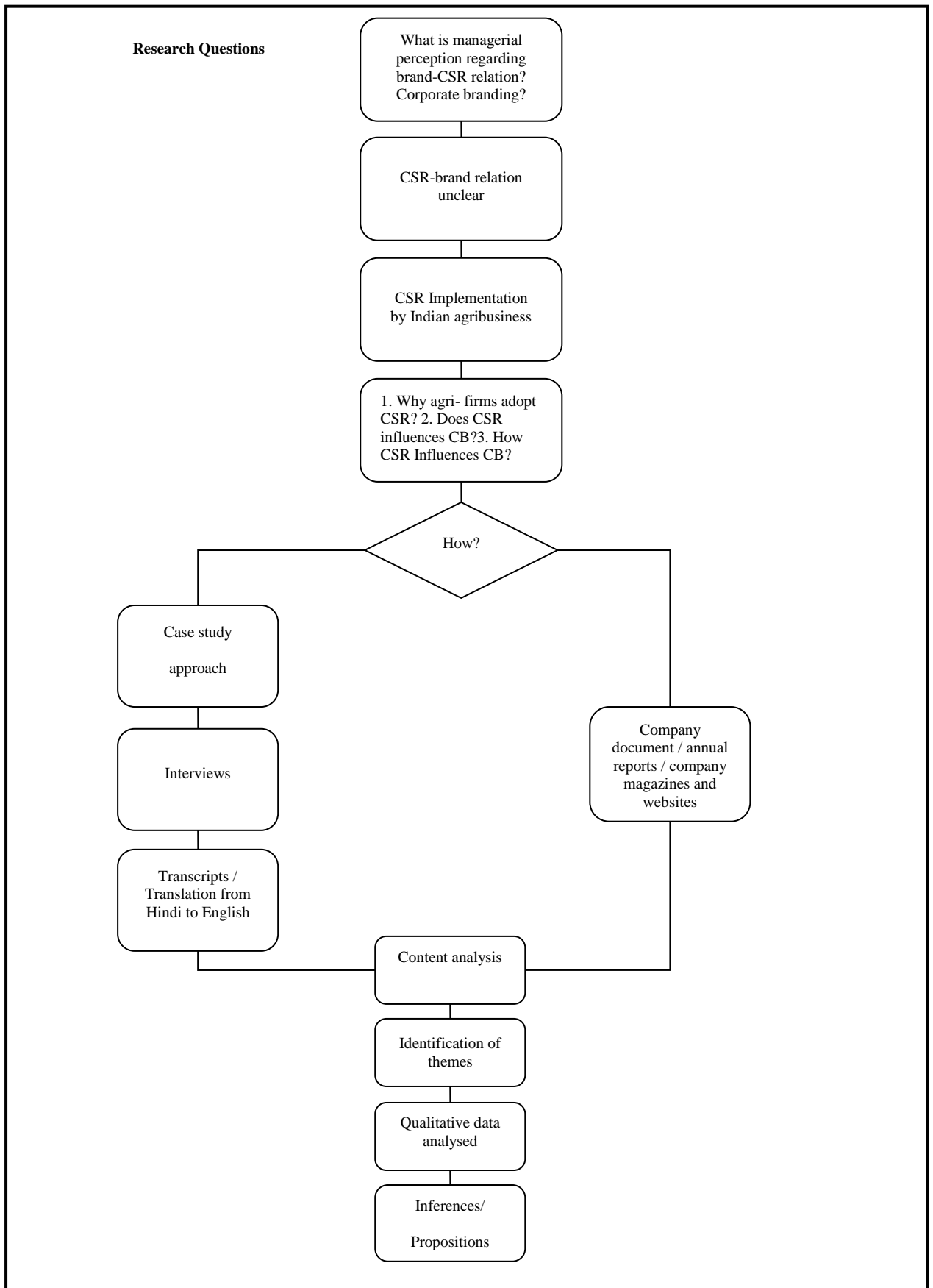


Figure 4.1: Research design of the study

4.4 Case selection

As in hypothesis testing research, the concept of population is crucial because the population defines the set of entities from which the research sample is to be drawn. The Warwick study of strategic change and competitiveness illustrates these ideas (Pettigrew, 1988). In this study, the researchers selected cases from a population of large corporations in four market sectors. This allowed controlling environmental variation while the focus on large corporations constrained variation due to size differences among the firms.

Following this approach and the suggestions by prominent authors in the field (Yin, 2014; Eisenhardt, 1989), this study selected the cases according to the following criteria:

- (a) **Feasibility and accessibility**– The investigations were feasible only in those firms that had clearly identifiable CSR and branding practices. Extreme care and background work was carried out to ensure that the chosen agribusiness firms had clearly identifiable CSR and branding practices. The ‘accessibility’ factor was largely determined by the firm’s willingness to participate in the study and to provide the required information. Not only did this include the provision of resources, e.g. to release managers from work for interviews, it also included access to documentation.
- (b) **Sample variation**- It was ensured that cases are selected from distinct subsectors of Indian agribusiness firms. In India, main agribusiness subsectors are agriculture input, food, and commodity trading and agriculture machinery.
- (c) **Size of the firm** - The literature emphasize that it is predominantly medium to large firms which are interested in CSR and branding. Accordingly the selected cases are large Indian agribusiness firms.

(d) **Geographic location of the firm** - India is a vast country. So it was important to select a location which could best represent Indian context. Head offices of major Indian agribusiness firms are located in New Delhi the capital of India. Hence, this research was conducted with firms located in and nearby New Delhi.

Based on the above criteria four case studies were selected in four subsectors of Indian agribusiness viz. Input (fertiliser, pesticides, and seeds), food (processed and packaged food), production (agro-machinery, tractors etc.) and commodity trading (salt, sugar, pulses, water etc.).

Even though adopting this approach to selecting cases from the four distinct subsector of Indian agribusiness gives credibility to this research, the author is fully aware of its limitations considering the sheer vastness and complexity of the agro-sector in India. However, because the purpose of the research is not to test theory but to develop propositions, theoretical sampling rather than random or stratified is appropriate (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007a). Theoretical sampling simply means that cases are selected because they are particularly suitable for illuminating and extending relationships and logic among constructs (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007b). In this study, the key constructs are CSR, branding, corporate image and reputation, corporate culture, corporate communication. Accordingly firms have been selected so that the sample is close to theoretical sampling.

Table 4.1 outlines the profile of the selected companies. Due to reasons of anonymity their true names cannot be revealed; instead letters are used. The detailed descriptions of these companies will be provided in the next chapter.

<i>Company</i>	<i>Key business</i>	<i>Year of Inception</i>	<i>No. of Employee</i>	<i>Turnover in Crore (Rs)</i>
A	Fertiliser, Pesticides, Salt, Water	1939	4752	8892
B	Packaged food and juice, Herbs, Ayurvedic medicines	1940	6382	4979
C	Tractors and farm machinery	1944	10,483	6372
D	Seeds, Agri retail, fertiliser	1932	2553	6133

Table 4.1: Firm's profile (Year 2014)

4.5 Data collection

Although case studies occasionally involve the collection and analysis of quantitative data (Eisenhardt and Bourgeois, 1988), methodologically case studies are often considered as a form of qualitative research that comprises an array of non-statistical research practices with an intention of capturing the actual meanings and interpretations that actors ascribe to the phenomenon under the study (Guest *et al.*, 2006). Qualitative data have many positive features. First, and foremost, typically, they provide natural occurring information that allows increasing the understanding of phenomena. Second, qualitative data tend to be collected in close proximity to a specific situation such as via direct observation or an interview, with the influence of the local context being taken into account and not being discarded (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Third, qualitative data often contain some inherent 'richness and holism, with strong potential for revealing complexity' (Miles and Huberman, 1994), which yield thick, rich description that are contextualized (Onwuegbuzie and Leech, 2004). Fourth, qualitative data, which often centre on peoples lived experiences, allow the researcher to study phenomena and strive to make sense of, or interpret, them with respect to the meaning people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

A semi-structured interview has been chosen as the most appropriate technique to achieve the aims of this project. This type of interview enables the researcher to cover specific

topics (Noaks and Wincup, 2004) and at the same time to encourage respondents to talk openly and spontaneously rather than answering questions in a defensive manner. In addition, semi-structure interviews provide a greater breadth of data in comparison with structured interviews (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). They also allow the researcher to make respondents explain the meanings that they ascribe to different phenomena (Saunders *et al.*, 2011). In this way, the interviewer had a better understanding of the interviewees' views. On the one hand, this kind of interview gives interviewees an opportunity to reveal their views, while on the other hand it allows the interviewer to frame flexible questions and phrasing.

Data was collected using a key informant method that involves interviewing individuals who are likely to provide needed information, ideas and insights on a particular subject (Kumar, 1989). Accordingly, in the four firms company executives in charge of CSR and branding and relevant senior and middle level managers were selected as informants.

One advantage of using key informant interviews is that information comes directly from the knowledgeable people; hence it can provide data and insights that cannot be obtained from other methods (Kumar, 1989). Another advantage is that it provides flexibility to explore new ideas and issues that had been not been anticipated in planning the study but that are relevant to its purpose.

Using snowball sampling technique a total of 28 interviews were conducted and recorded. 7 respondent in each firm in CSR, marketing, and communication department were interviewed. Table 4.2 gives the profile of managers according to their professional responsibilities.

<i>Sr. No</i>	<i>Firm</i>	<i>Designation of Manager</i>	<i>Department</i>
1	A	Associate Vice President	Corporate Affairs
2	A	AGM	HR
3	A	Senior Manager	Marketing Services
4	A	Senior Manager	Marketing Services
5	A	AGM	CSR
6	A	Manager	CSR
7	A	Brand Manager	Marketing
8	B	Vice President	Corporate Communication and Brand
9	B	Deputy Manager	CSR
10	B	Manager	Marketing
11	B	AGM	Procurement
12	B	Senior Manager	CSR
13	B	Manager	Branding
14	B	Senior Manager	Sales
15	C	Vice President	Sales and Marketing
16	C	Vice President	ER & CSR
17	C	Manager	Marketing
18	C	Senior Manager	HR
19	C	Manager	Marketing
20	C	Manager	Marketing
21	C	Manager	CSR
22	D	Vice President	CSR
23	D	General Manager	Marketing
24	D	Manager	Marketing
25	D	Manager	Corporate
26	D	Senior Manager	Retail
27	D	Senior Manager	Corporate HR
28	D	Senior Manager	CSR

Table 4.2: Profile of respondents

In order to enhance construct validity, multiple source of evidence such as interview, field notes, news articles and company’s available document (e.g. annual reports, magazines and brochures) were used in the study.

4.6 Data collection process

Initial contacts were established within chosen organisations to get access to relevant managers for interview and appointments were arranged over the phone and by e-mail. The researcher collected data in two phases, each included visits to two organisations. To ensure that all issues/ questions that required attention were going to be addressed, an interview guide was prepared in advance. The themes as identified in chapter 3 formed a basis for the preparation of the interview guidelines. The guideline followed a semi-

structured format. In accordance with existing recommendations (Arksey and Knight, 1999; Bryman and Bell, 2007; Saunders *et al.*, 2011), the following issues were taken into account during its preparation:

- The topics were arranged in a logical order;
- The language used was comprehensible and relevant to interviewees;
- Closed up, multiple or leading questions that limited the interviewees' freedom to choose responses were avoided;
- Biased questions that indicated the researcher's position were avoided;
- Long questions, questions with too many theoretical concepts or questions with jargon were also avoided;
- Simple and short questions were favoured;
- Questions were designed to provoke reflective discussion so that interviewees were not lured to simply answer 'yes' or 'no';
- To avoid bias, and where possible, the use of open questions was preferred. These were followed by probing questions;
- Sensitive questions were placed towards the end of the interview to allow more time for the researcher to build up trust and confidence with the interviewees.
- Throughout the interview, the interviewer maintained neutral attitude and refrained from voicing personal opinion.

The interviews were recorded with a voice recorder after getting consent from the respondent. Interviews lasted between forty minutes and 90 minutes and were conducted until saturation in responses was achieved (Kvale, 1999). Field notes were prepared and observations of the body language were also noted to get deeper insights of the issue. Transcripts were prepared on the same night so that the researcher does not miss important

points. As the researcher gained experience, the transcript were analysed by applying content analysis technique to accomplish deeper insights and new themes were identified. Field notes and observations and some key documents were also helpful in preparing the final analysis of the findings.

This procedure promoted validity and reliability as interviewees had the time to consider the information requested and where appropriate to gather any supporting organisational documents that they thought would be useful (Fontana *et al.*, 2005). The order of questions varied depending on the flow of conversation.

4.7 Data analysis

Because this research required an in-depth understanding of manager's perceptions of CSR and branding, a qualitative approach was deemed appropriate (Padgett, 2011). The primary method of data collection was the in-depth interview, which reveals the meaning of participants' experience and their world from their point of view (Kvale, 2006). In addition, other source of data such as company's annual report, newsletters and magazines were also used for contextual understanding.

Once the data were collected and interviews transcribed, responses were analysed via a thematic approach. Bailey suggests that 'thematic analysis works most effectively when you seek themes that address your research questions, frame themes conceptually, and explore links among them'. The author followed the process of interpretive analysis suggested by Spiggle (1994) by analysing each interview separately and then merging them together into a consistent whole. Interpretations of issues that emerged across the interviews point at key areas of focus and suggest a framework for understanding the role of CSR in corporate branding strategy of Indian agribusiness firms.

The following step by step process was adopted for data analysis:

Step one - Preparing interview summary sheet

A one-page summary sheet that summarized the main findings of an interview was prepared when field notes were developed after each interview. This made it possible to reduce vast amounts of information into manageable themes that could be easily examined. Each summary sheet included information about the key informant, the reasons for his or her inclusion in the study, the informant's main observations and insights and ideas that evolved during the interview.

At times throughout the research project, the researcher also wrote 'memos' (Field and Morse, 1985) about ways of categorising the data. These serve as memory joggers and helped in recording ideas and theories that the researcher came across throughout the study.

Step two-Immersion in the data

Transcripts were read through and notes made, throughout the reading, on general themes within the transcripts. The aim, here, was to become immersed in the data. This process of immersion is used to attempt to become more fully aware of the real world.

Step three -Use of the 'descriptive code' and 'category development'

Coding involves a systematic recording of data. The researcher used short abbreviations as descriptive codes to label data under an appropriate category. Categories were generated at this stage. These descriptive codes were organized around relevant ideas, concepts, questions or themes. These were noted on the left margin of the interview text. A sheet

was then prepared that lists page numbers devoted to particular items, which later became subheadings in the text.

The best approach to coding is to develop the categories and subcategories after several (8-10) interviews have been completed (Kumar, 2010). Accordingly, this researcher developed codes which were empirically grounded as they reflected the actual comments of the informants rather than the initial conceptual framework of the study. Then the researcher had a better idea of what categories and subcategories are realistic and relevant.

While developing coding scheme, proper care was taken so that (a) the categories were clear and precise, (b) the code focuses on a broad theme so that the list of code did not become unmanageable, (c) data were not double coded and (d) coding was selective and only relevant points were coded.

Step four: Review of the categories

The list of categories was reviewed and examined by the researcher and categories were grouped together under higher-order headings. The aim was to reduce the number of categories by ‘collapsing’ some of the ones that were similar into broader categories.

Step five: Finalisation of the categories

The new list of categories and sub-headings is worked through and repetitious or very similar headings are removed to produce a final list.

Step six: Assess coverage

Transcripts were re-read alongside the final list of the categories and sub-headings to establish the degree to which the categories covered all aspects of the interviews. Adjustments were made as necessary.

Step seven: Storing and retrieval system

Once interviews were coded, the information was stored in a computer so that the researcher can easily locate relevant items of information.

Step eight: Use of software

Once the preliminary analysis was complete, the study employed the QSR NUD*IST Vivo (NVivo-10) software for gaining deeper insights and to facilitate the management of the data. NVivo is one of qualitative analysis tools most widely used by scholars. This is a software package for the management and analysis of qualitative data that provides an online environment for organizing and handling data, notes and ideas. It was chosen because it allows researchers to code text while working at the computer and to easily retrieve the coded text (Bryman and Bell, 2007). These features enabled the researcher to better organize the transcribed text and get a clearer view on interviewees' responses.

Step Nine: Writing

Once all the themes were together, the writing up process begins. The researcher started with the first theme, selected the various examples of data that had been filed under that section and wrote a commentary that links the examples together. The researcher then continued on to the next theme and so on until the whole project was written up. All the time that this writing up process was being undertaken, the researcher referred back to the

original tape recordings and to the complete transcripts of the interviews. In this way it was possible to stay close to original meaning and contexts.

Analysis of qualitative data usually follows an inductive process during which the data are used for theory building (Teddie and Tashakkori, 2009). In this study, the theoretical framework provided only a guideline for data collection and the key themes emerged from the data. These themes were segregated with the purpose of classifying them in *second order* themes. Similar themes were combined to generate first order theme. Together they produced an aggregate understanding of influence of CSR on corporate branding –the focus of our interest. Accordingly, an inductive process was adopted and qualitative analysis was carried out to develop new propositions.

4.7.1 Approach to data analysis through NVivo-10 software

Data analysis through NVivo-10 followed an iterative process with two main phases. In the first phase, all interview recordings were listened to and were transcribed. Each interview was listened to twice to secure that all important issues were put onto paper. The texts were checked for accuracy and where necessary cleaned from any errors occurred during the transcription process. Transcribed data were saved in a word-processed file using file names that maintained confidentiality and preserved anonymity of interviewees whilst allowing easy identification of each interview.

The second phase aimed at tracking information on the brand, CSR and brand-CSR relation in the context of Indian agribusiness. To do so, the transcribed texts were systematically studied. The first reading of the transcript of each interview was undertaken with the recording of each interview running. This helped the researcher to focus on emphasis, mood, and intonation. Analysis proceeded in an iterative way by reading and

rereading the interview transcripts several times for the researcher to form a comprehensive image of the data. During this phase, quotes in the interview texts that unveiled information on the areas of interest was marked and marginal notes on the transcribed text were taken (memos).

As the reading progressed, these memos were refined into codes. Coding is the process of organizing data into 'chunks' and it involves segmenting sentences into categories and labelling those categories with a term (Creswell, 2003). To assist the coding procedure, free nodes were used; this enabled the researcher to include all quotes on a certain topic from all interviews combined. Bringing data from many documents together in the same node was significantly important as it enabled the researcher to analyse more effectively the interview texts and focus each time on the topic of interest. These nodes constitute the key themes of the research which have been listed in the next chapter and elaborated in chapter six, seven and eight.

4.8 Researcher's role during interviews

The researcher made a special effort to make the respondents feel comfortable and positive about the process of being interviewed. The interviewer tried for conversational interaction and maintained a friendly tone in discussing all issues. It was explained to all interviewees that they did not have an obligation to answer all questions.

Throughout the meeting the interviewer paid attention and recorded respondents' use of any non-verbal modes of communication. This provided the researcher with additional insights in the veracity of interviewees' answers. Additionally, to avoid a biased or incomplete interpretation and to allow the interviewees to evaluate the adequacy of the interviewer's interpretation (Healey and Rawlinson, 1994), the researcher summarized the

statements provided by the interviewees. Occasionally, the researcher misrepresented what the respondents said to make sure he had understood them accurately. This misrepresentation was generally followed by corrections from the interviewees and further explanations. At the end of the procedure, any notes taken were shown to the interviewees for evaluating their accuracy and all participants were thanked for their cooperation. To minimize any external distortions interviews were taken in a quiet, private setting.

Based on literature's suggestions on how to control bias and produce reliable data after an interview (Healey and Rawlinson, 1994; Saunders *et al.*, 2011) the following contextual data were recorded:

- Location of the interview;
- Date and time;
- Setting of the interview;
- Background information on the interviewee; and
- The researcher's immediate impression on how the interview went.

4.9 Ethical considerations

The study received ethical approval from the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan). This research was undertaken in accordance with UCLan's 'Ethical Principles for Teaching, Research, Consultancy, Knowledge Transfer and Related Activities'. Moreover, the researcher conducted his PhD study in agreement with the University's 'Code of Conduct for Research'.

Compliance with ethical boundaries such as informed consent, respect of privacy, avoidance of harm and deception was guaranteed to all respondents. Participants were also informed about the outputs of the project, its aim and objectives. Interviewees received a

comprehensive consent form and were asked to read and sign it (see Appendix - 4). At the beginning of each interview, the purpose of the research and its progress up to that time were briefly outlined. Respondents were also informed about the nature of the study's outputs and how the data collected will be managed during and after the project. The right of participants to withdraw from the study at any time was also mentioned and on top of that their right to anonymity and confidentiality was highlighted.

The execution of this project did not threaten the participants' psychological well-being, health, values or dignity. Confidentiality and anonymity of all participants in both phases of the study were ensured. Nothing said by participants was attributed to them without first seeking and obtaining their permission.

Data collected were protected according to the 1998 Data Protection Act. It is not in the intentions of the researcher to use this data for other purposes without participants' permission. Data were processed lawfully and fairly. Finally, all participants were offered to obtain a summary of the project's findings.

4.10 Conclusion

This study adopted a qualitative multiple case study design with an intention to carry cross-case analysis, based on semi-structured interviews. Four agribusiness firms in distinct sub-sectors of Indian agribusiness were chosen for investigation. The aim of the interviews was to identify the prevalent tendencies regarding *why* firms adopt CSR and if there is a branding motive behind it, and *how* CSR influences branding.

CHAPTER 5

INDIAN AGRIBUSINESS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of Indian agribusiness sector and delineates the context of the study. The chapter begins with a brief overview of Indian agribusiness and its relation with ‘agriculture’. In the process, it describes some key characteristic of Indian agriculture that helps in better understanding of the agribusiness sector. Then ‘agribusiness in Indian context’ has been conceptualised. Subsequently, the chapter provides a detailed description of subsectors of Indian agribusiness relevant for this study.

5.2 Indian agribusiness and agriculture

Agribusiness is currently the single largest sector in India, worth nearly Rs. 17,000 billion, nearly 60 per cent larger than the next largest industry— financial services (BCG Report, 2012). Moreover, the sector is estimated to be growing at the rate of 10 per cent per annum and it has the potential to become a Rs. 36,000 billion segment by 2020 (BCG Report, 2012).

Agribusiness is closely linked with agriculture production because a robust agricultural production base facilitates the growth of agribusinesses. Hence, for better understanding of the agribusiness sector, it would be helpful to highlight some key characteristics of Indian agriculture, which we discuss next.

India is an agrarian economy and agriculture continues to be the mainstay of the Indian economy and provides livelihood for nearly 65% of the population (Yogesh and Chandrasekhar, 2014). As against the target of growth of 4 % growth of the agriculture and allied sector, the growth registered was 3.7 per cent in 2013-14 and 1.1 per cent in

2014-15 (Economic Survey of India, 2015). India has the largest area of arable and permanently cropped land in the world, estimated at 169.6 million hectare around 11 % of the total land area (FAO, 2011). All India food grain production 265.6 million tonnes in 2013-14 (ICRA Report, 2015). Rice and wheat are the primary food grain produced by the country. India is the second largest producer of wheat and rice and is the largest producer of cotton in the world (Govt. of India- Economic Survey, 2015).

Though there are many characteristics of Indian agriculture, this section highlights only those few characteristic (See Table 5.1) which may have direct bearing on Indian agribusiness.

Characteristics	Remarks
Fragmented Agriculture	In India, the small and marginal farmers account for more than 65 per cent of the land holdings, while they hold only 30 per cent of cultivable lands. This leads to a low average productivity. India has more than 100 million small farmers with an average farm size of less than 1.2 hectares, a size that does not allow farmers to enjoy scale economies.
Subsidy	Government is providing subsidies on various agricultural activities for the benefit of poor farmers. But large agricultural subsidies are also hampering productivity-enhancing investment.
Varied Agro climatic zones	India is one of the very few countries in the world, endowed with rich and diverse agro climatic zones and vast land resources for cultivation (about 160 million hectares). In addition India has around 270 days of sunshine a year, nearly 900 millimeters of annual rainfall, extraordinary biodiversity and 6,700 km of coastline. Indian agriculture is characterized by arid lands of Gujarat and Rajasthan in the west to the hilly terrain of North-East, from the snow-clad Himalayas to the north to the sun-soaked sands of south India, and large Indo-Gangetic Plains with hundreds of rivers crisscrossing the country.
Dependency on Monsoon	Indian agriculture is still heavily dependent on rainfall with just 49% of the total land area used for food grains (including wheat, rice, coarse grains and pulses) being irrigated (ICRA Report, 2015). The monsoons play a critical role in determining whether the harvest will be rich, average, or poor.

Table 5.1: Key Characteristic of Indian Agriculture (Adopted from Raj, 2014)

These characteristics present their own set of challenges to agribusiness firms in various forms. In spite of these challenges, India has made immense progress, towards food

production after Independence in 1947. However its share in country's GDP has fallen over years (Refer Figure 5.1).

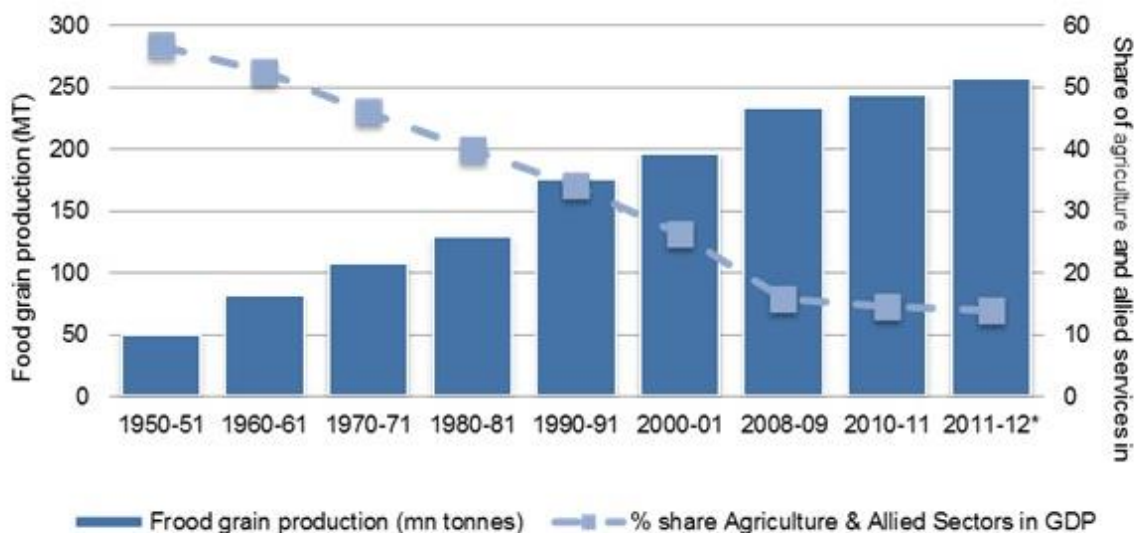


Figure 5.1: Food Production vs. share (%) of agriculture in GDP
(EMD Report, India Agriculture Industry, 2013)

It can be seen that that while food production has increased more than ten times over last nine decades, the share in GDP has decreased over more than four times. Between year 1970 and 2011, the GDP share of agriculture has fallen from 43% to 16 %. In 2013-14, the share of agriculture in GDP was 18 % (Economic Survey of India, 2015). The annual growth in total agricultural production is below 2 % for recent many years. The low growth rates may constitute in part a response to inadequate returns to Indian farmers.

Prior to the mid-1960s India relied primarily on imports and food aid to meet domestic requirements. However, after severe drought in 1965 and 1966 India reformed its agricultural policy. India adopted significant policy reforms focused on the goal of food grain self-sufficiency. This led to a program of agricultural improvement called the ‘Green Revolution’. It involved bringing additional area under cultivation, extension of irrigation

facilities, the use of improved high-yielding variety of seeds, better techniques evolved through agricultural research, water management and plant protection through judicious use of fertilisers, pesticides and cropping practices. Today, India is a leading producer in many agricultural commodities such as mango, papaya, banana, spices, millets and milk. India is second leading country in silk and third in coconut, tobacco and tomato.

India's agricultural economy is undergoing structural changes. To give fillip to the agriculture and make it more profitable, ministry of food processing industries was set up in July 1988. In the 90's cropping patterns began to be determined by market forces rather than agronomic conditions. It marked a shift from subsistence farming to that of cash cropping. Government has also taken initiatives to encourage private sector investment in the food processing industry. For example, in order to boost investments in the sector, the Government of India has allowed 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) in retail and for the development of seeds.

5.2.1 Branding and communication in Indian agribusiness

Government's deregulation policy and reduction in subsidy have forced agribusiness firms to improve their efficiency in terms of cost, productivity and service. In addition, the external market factors such as changes in the consumers' demand, the retailers' increasing market power and, in general, the competitive landscape have forced companies to seek a more market-oriented approach, which includes the use of brands (Edwards and Shultz, 2005). In the Indian agribusiness context, the large players usually possessed necessary leadership traits and often nurtured strong values such as loyalty and social welfare which used to get translated in branding. These firms have used charity and philanthropic work to build their reputation among consumers (Nivarthi *et al.*, 2012). Such values and

activities are communicated to stakeholders through corporate communication programs. Annual reports, press releases, publications of corporate magazines, and proceedings of the annual general shareholders' meetings feature prominently in local newspapers as agribusiness firms seek to communicate with the stakeholders.

Consumers of agribusiness products recognise the company and its products on the basis of the brand name, product quality, the logo, innovative packaging, communication and advertising activities. Consumers of agri-input firms are typically farmers living in rural areas whereas consumers of processed/packaged food live in towns and cities. Urban consumers generally rely on mass media such as TV, print and radio for identifying and distinguishing the produce of one manufacturing plant from another. Agri-input firms in particular employ innovative rural communication strategies such as use of local dialects and languages in their advertising materials, including static (wall painting, hoardings) and interactive media (sampling, demonstration, video on wheels) to connect the rural consumer with the brand.

A recent trend for agribusiness firms in India has been to launch large retail outlets, in an attempt to provide farmers a one-stop solution for all their needs. ITC's *e-choupal*, DSCL's *Hariyali Bazar* and Tata Chemical's *Tata Kisan Sansar* are some of such initiatives. One key motive behind these initiatives is to increase the brand visibility and enable the customer to identify and differentiate own product vis-a-vis another company's product.

One of the typical characteristics of Indian agriculture is that the majority of agricultural products in India are sold to the market as commodities with very little value added. Many

of them are so basic that it is very difficult for consumers to differentiate them. This has impact on branding. In Indian agribusiness, branding of agricultural products typically starts off with offering packaging which safeguards consumers from adulteration and guarantees certain basic product quality. In agribusiness, branding generally follow common rules of branding such as understanding consumer needs, market segmentation, product differentiation and brand communication. A list of pioneering Indian brands is provided in Appendix 10. Indian agrifirms also practice branding at the point of sale in the form of organized *retailing*. This approach is gaining popularity. Many retail outlets create their own brands which are called store brands. While store brands in many manufacturing categories are considered inferior to producer brands, in agribusiness 'store' brands are seen as that of superior quality.

Branding in agribusiness is a challenging task in India. This is because of fragmented land holding as a result of which individual farmers cannot afford to brand their agricultural commodity. In most cases, the brand owner is not the farmer as producer but an agribusiness firm or an intermediary. Hence, in the agribusiness context it is more appropriate to consider or define brand from the company's point of view or as 'corporate brand'. Through corporate branding strategy firms express who they are and what they stand for (Balmer, 2001). Accordingly, managing brands at the corporate level require interactions with multiple stakeholders, not just customers (Balmer and Gray, 2003). Consumer buy branded agricultural products because they trust the name and goodwill of the agribusiness firms standing behind these brands (Raj, 2014). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the presence of corporate branding phenomenon in Indian agribusiness is also evident from the fact that large firms have nurtured and developed their brand using their company name. The advantage of considering the company as a brand is the opportunity

for achieving a coherent focus across the brand portfolio and conveying consistent messages to consumer, employee, supplier, and outside world.

The purpose of corporate branding is to establish an identity and communication with stakeholders with a view to establish a competitive position. There are many examples explaining this relation. For instance, ITC's agribusiness division (ITC-ABD) introduced *e-choupal* to link directly with rural farmers via the internet for the procurement of agricultural and aquaculture products such as soybean, wheat, coffee and prawns. With the help of *e-choupal* farmers can directly negotiate the sale of their produce with ITC-ABD. The programme installs computer with internet access in rural areas of India to offer farmers up-to-date marketing and agricultural information. It was specifically designed to tackle the challenges posed by the unique features of Indian agriculture, characterised by fragmented farms, weak infrastructure and the involvement of numerous intermediaries, and low risk taking abilities of the farmer, among others. ITC-ABD created strong identity through its *e-choupal* and today this initiative reaches over 4 million farmers in over 40,000 villages through 6500 kiosk across ten states (Raj, 2014). By empowering the farming community, not only has ITC achieved both brand recognition and greater profit but has also gained advantageous competitive position.

5.3 Defining Indian agribusiness

Agribusiness is the business of agricultural production that includes crop production (farming and contract farming), seed supply, agrichemicals, breeding, farm machinery, distribution, processing, marketing, and retail sales (Yogesh and Chandrashekhar, 2014). Modern agribusiness has become a vast and complex system that reaches far beyond the farm to include all those who are involved in bringing food and fibre to consumers. The seminal definition of agribusiness was given by Davis and Goldberg (1957) as the sum

total of all operations involved in the manufacture and distribution of farm supplies, production operations of the farm, and the storage, processing, and distribution of the resulting farm commodities and items. This definition included all the activities concerned with agriculture incorporating farming, management, financing, processing, marketing, growing of seeds and nursery stock, manufacture of fertilisers, chemicals, implements, processing machinery, transportation equipment and the process of transportation itself. Similar definitions have been offered by other researchers. For example, Downey considers agribusiness as all those business and management activities performed by firms that provide inputs to the farm sector, produce farm products, and/or process, transport, finance, handle or market farm products. Importantly, from this perspective, agribusiness includes not only those who farm the land, but also people and firms that provide the inputs (e.g., seed, chemicals, credit, etc.), process the output (e.g., grain, milk, meat, etc.) manufacture the food products (e.g., bread, biscuits, ice cream, breakfast cereals, etc.) and transport and sell the food products to consumers (for, ex. retail chain, supermarkets, etc.).

Market-centric agribusinesses not only seek to optimize production, but also on maximizing consumer experiences and total customer satisfaction in order to strengthen their competitive position in the market. This tendency is reflected in what Edward and Schultz (2005, p. 66) called a market-centric characterization of agribusiness: ‘Agribusiness is a dynamic and systemic endeavour that serves consumers globally and locally through innovation and management of multiple value chains that deliver valued goods and services derived from the sustainable orchestration of food, fibre and natural resources’. Food here means grain, fruits, vegetables, whether naturally grown, harvested, extracted or synthetic and processed. Fibre would mean natural and synthetic fibres such as cotton, wool, silk, nylon, paper and apparel. Natural resources would include air, water, soil and fertiliser.

This thesis is guided by the wider approach to agribusiness as represented by this definition of Edward and Schultz (2005), albeit with suitable adaptation for the Indian context. Not so long ago, Indian agriculture primarily operated at the subsistence level. All functional operations were carried out by the growers themselves. However, Indian agribusiness has undergone a rapid transformation as new industries have evolved and traditional farming operations have grown larger and more specialized. In India, the agribusiness sector encompasses four distinct sub-sectors, viz. agricultural inputs (seeds, fertiliser, pesticides etc.), agricultural production (tractor, farm machinery, irrigation equipment etc.) agro-processing (packaged and value added food and beverages etc.), and agri-commodity (salt, sugar, water etc.) marketing and trade (Raj, 2014). Descriptions on the four sub-sectors are provided next.

5.4 Agriculture input

Agricultural inputs like seeds, fertiliser, and pesticides play a critical role in improving agricultural productivity resulting in higher yield. The growth of Indian agriculture heavily depends on improving the quality and availability of inputs for the farmers. A brief overview of these input sectors has been presented below.

5.4.1 Seed

The Indian seed industry is the sixth largest in the world in value terms accounting for about 4.5% of global industry preceded by US (27%), China (22%), France (6%), Brazil (6%) and Canada (4.8%) (ICRA Report, 2015). The Indian seeds industry is valued at 3.2 billion dollar and consumption of 3.5 million tonnes in financial year 2015 (ICRA Report, 2015).

Indian seed industry took a formal shape in 1963 when National Seeds Corporation Limited was established. The seed industry was liberalized in 1988, with the articulation of National Seed Policy (BCG Report, 2012). It came with a Rs. 7 billion loan from the World Bank to help privatize the Indian seed industry. The policy was the turning point for the industry, and eventually gave shape to the organized seed industry. Hence, the seed industry can be classified into organised and unorganised sector. According to Ministry of Agriculture, the organized sector accounts for 15-20% of the total seed distributed in the country (Care Report, 2012). The organized sector comprises distribution of certified and quality seeds (i.e. includes both public and private sector companies) while the unorganised sector mainly comprises of farm-saved seeds and counterfeit, cloned (manufactured and sold illegally as legitimate seeds) or passed-off seeds (manufactured or packaged to resemble legitimate seeds). In the organized sector space, private sector forms 49% of domestic seed industry in terms of volume (Care Report, 2012). The main focus of private seed companies has been on the high value low volume seeds (such as cotton, corn, sunflower, vegetables and horticulture) (Care Report, 2012).

The growth in Indian seed industry is driven by adoption of hybrid varieties of seeds promoted by private companies and improving seed replacement ratio for food crops (such as wheat, paddy and pulses) (ICRA Report, 2015). The use of the right variety of seeds is essential to ensure high yield. The Indian seeds industry comprise all the three types i.e. varietal, hybrids and biotech/genetically modified (GM) seeds based on the initial development process followed by the seed producers. The public sector players are present mainly in varieties, with their private sector counterparts operating only in hybrids. Despite the success of hybrid seeds in cash crops, the penetration of hybrid seeds is limited and is currently estimated at about 25 per cent of the total seed market in India (BCG Report, 2012). This could be because the private sector seed companies in India lag behind the

leading international seed producers in terms of research and development spend. For example,, the average research and development spend of seed companies in India is about 4-5% of sales compared to about 8-10% for leading global companies (ICRA Report, 2015). However, the adoption of Protection of Plant Varieties And Farmers' Rights Act, 2001 (PPVFRA), covering the rights of the producers in terms of protecting intellectual property and those of the farmers by ensuring quality of the inputs spurred the development of newer varieties of hybrids and biotech /GM seeds (ICRA Report, 2015). This is in the light of the national seed policy that allowed foreign direct investment and liberalized import of improved varieties and breeding lines.

In India, there are stringent regulations preventing the introduction of Genetically Modified (GM) seeds. All non–varietal seeds need to be certified by the government prior to sale. As a result, the adoption of current hybrids is low (BCG Report, 2012).The focus on improving existing varieties is also be driven by the fact that newer varieties particularly Biotech /GM seeds follow a cumbersome process of trials and approval. As a result, currently only cotton is planted using GM seeds. The trial runs for many other crops such as rice, maize, mustard, chickpea, sorghum, wheat, groundnut and brinjal are underway by both public sector and private sector companies. However, these trial runs have faced widespread opposition from environmentalists, health agencies and farmers. Since, hybrid and biotech seeds do not breed on their own; there is a concern of farmers becoming increasingly dependent on seed companies for their technology besides addressing the environmental and health safety concerns (ICRA Report, 2015). This a major challenge for Indian agribusiness firms.

However, Indian seed industry enjoys government support to improve seed replacement ratio and transit to high yielding varieties. Moreover, to improve the acceptance and

affordability of seeds among the farmers, the government is offering *subsidies*. This is critical from two perspectives: (i) combating the vicious cycle of farm poverty which arises due to low productivity leading to low farm income thereby resulting in usage of poor quality inputs in the following cropping season which again impacts productivity, (ii) achieving the government targets under National Food Security Mission (NFSM) which aims to ensure right to food to significant proportion of below the poverty line population in India (ICRA Report, 2015).

Moreover, government has exempted domestic seed companies from payment of income tax, excise duty and value added tax, allowed 200% of deduction on research and development expenditure under Section 35 of IT Act, provided back ended subsidy to private companies for creation of seed infrastructure, allowed foreign direct investment (FDI) up to 100% in the development and production of seeds and planting material, subject to certain conditions (Care Report, 2012).

5.4.2. Fertilisers

The fertiliser industry has been heavily regulated for decades by the Government of India (GoI) as the products are socio-politically sensitive in nature. Government policy in the fertiliser sector has gone through three phases: a period of less control (1950s and 1960s), a period of tight controls (1970s and 1980s) and post reforms (1990s to present) period (Sharma and Thaker, 2010). Broadly, the governmental regulations have covered, inter-alia, the farm gate price, types of fertilisers eligible for subsidy, distribution pattern and the extent of profitability that can be earned by the manufacturers (ICRA Report, 2015).

Until 1970, fertilisers were under price control not distribution controls. In October 1970, Indian fertiliser policy was reviewed and controls on prices and distribution of fertilisers

were introduced in 1973 (Fertiliser Movement Control Order) and movement of fertiliser was brought under the Essential Commodity Act (Sharma and Thaker, 2010). In 1977, the Retention Price cum Subsidy (RPS) Scheme was implemented, which encouraged investment in the sector by assuring a 12 per cent post-tax return over net worth to the fertiliser producers. Under the RPS, the government fixed the farm-gate price for urea and other fertilisers and also decided on the retention price for manufacturers and the difference between two was given to the manufacturer as subsidy. This helped in achieving self-sufficiency in fertiliser production but at a very high price (Sharma and Thaker, 2010)

The Indian fertiliser companies produced around 32.4 million tonnes of fertiliser in the year 2012-13. However, the total availability was short of demand and was met through imports. Of total fertiliser production, urea output increased to 22.6 million tonnes in FY'12-13 from 22.0 million tonnes in FY'11-12 due to better capacity utilization. While production of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) output down 3.6 million tonne in FY'12-13 from 4.0 million tonnes last year, output of NPK (nitrogen, phosphate and potassium) decreased 6.2 million tonnes in FY'12-13 from 7.8 million tonnes in FY'11-12.

There are mainly three types of fertilisers that are used in Indian condition.

Urea

Urea is the key fertiliser consumed within the nitrogenous fertilisers segment and accounts for almost 55-60% of all fertiliser consumed in India (ICRA Report, 2015). India has 30 manufacturing units of urea with an installed capacity of 21.6 million tonnes till 2013 (Krishijagran, 2016). India is meeting most of its urea requirement through indigenous production but still supply is less than the demand and hence, the industry is dependent on import. Urea manufacturer gets subsidy from the government. As a controlled commodity,

the retail price of urea is fixed at Rs 5,360 per tonne, and the difference between the cost of production/imported price is paid as subsidy to the companies.

Phosphatic and potassic fertilisers

Phosphatic fertilisers are consumed in the form of complex fertilisers with varying levels of nitrogen and phosphorus. Potassic fertilisers mainly comprise of Muriate of Potash (MOP). Its entire potash requirement, about 90 per cent of phosphatic requirement, and 20 per cent urea requirement is met through imports. There are 12 units of DAP producing plants with a combined capacity of 8.3 million tonnes. Complex fertilisers in the country have installed capacity of 6.4 million tonnes from 19 units.

Phosphatic and potassic (P & K) fertiliser segment was partially decontrolled during 2010 with the introduction of nutrient-based subsidy (NBS), following which the players are able to alter the retail prices of the fertilisers as per their cost structure and market prices, although the GoI continues to monitor the prices of subsidised P&K fertilisers to a large extent. Farmers pay only 50 per cent of the delivered cost of P&K fertilisers, the rest is borne by the Government of India in the form of subsidy (Krishijagran, 2016)

Single super phosphate (SSP)

SSP is the oldest chemical fertiliser manufactured in India. SSP is a low priced and multi nutrient fertiliser. SSP production is entirely domestically concentrated with SSP being produced by 95 manufacturing plants in the country with an installed capacity of 9.61 MMT (Krishijagran, 2016). Most of the SSP manufacturers are small in size and are unable to enjoy economies of scale. Several large fertiliser manufacturers have planned Greenfield foray into manufacture of SSP through significant capacity additions. Entry of large players should increase the market size for the product, which should help all the

players in general. However, there is moderate risk of overcapacity over the medium term, despite strong expected growth in demand.

5.4.2 Crop protection chemicals

Crop protection chemicals mainly consist of pesticides, insecticides and herbicides. The Indian crop protection market is dominated by insecticides, which form almost 60% of domestic crop protection chemicals market. The major applications are found in rice and cotton crops (FICCI Report, 2014).

Fungicides are largest growing segments accounting for 18% of total crop protection chemicals market (FICCI Report, 2014). The fungicides find applications in fruits, vegetables and rice. The key growth drivers for fungicides are shift in agriculture from cash crops to fruits and vegetables and government support for exports of fruits and vegetables.

Herbicides is second largest growing segments accounting for 16% of total crop protection chemicals market(FICCI Report, 2014).Rice and wheat crops are the major application areas of herbicides. Increasing labour costs and labour shortage are key growth drivers for herbicides.

Bio-pesticides include all biological materials organisms, which can be used to control pests. Currently bio pesticides constitute only 3% of Indian crop protection market; however they provide significant growth opportunities due to increasing concerns of safety and toxicity of pesticides, stringent regulations and government support (FICCI Report, 2014).

Globally, India is fourth largest producer of crop protection chemicals, after United States, Japan and China. The Indian crop protection industry is estimated to be USD 4.25 billion in FY'14 and is expected to grow at a cumulative annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12% to reach USD 7.5 billion by FY'19 (FCCI Report, 2015). The consumption of crop protection chemical in India is mainly in paddy (28%) and cotton (20%) (FICCI Report, 2015).

The Indian agrochemicals market is highly competitive and fragmented in nature. According to FICCI Report (2014) there are 125 technical grade manufacturers, 800 formulators and over 145,000 distributors. The Indian agrochemicals sector is facing numerous challenges. The sector is characterized by low capacity utilization and high inventory. The demand of pesticides is seasonal and irregular. The agrochemical companies face problem of long credit period to farmers. This leads to fierce competition among the agrochemical firms. Moreover, the sector is also suffering because of large scale mergers and acquisitions in recent years (FICCI Report, 2014).

India also exports pesticides to USA and some European and African countries (ICRA Report, 2015). Exports currently constitute almost 50% of Indian crop protection industry and are expected to grow at a CAGR of 16% to reach USD 4.2 billion by FY'19, resulting in 60% share in Indian crop protection industry (FICCI Report, 2015).

5.5 Food processing and packaged food

India is the world's second largest producer of food next to China, and has the potential of being the biggest with the food and agricultural sector. In addition to economic growth, Indian agribusiness sector is subject to stringent regulatory controls on consumer safety, product quality and environmental protection (Yogesh and Chandrashekhar, 2014).

The food processing industry is one of the largest industries in India-it is ranked fifth in terms of production, consumption, export and expected growth. The industry size has been estimated at US\$ 70 billion by the Ministry of Food Processing, Government of India. However, the level of processing in each food category is very low in India, as compared to other developed nations. India accounts for just around 1.5 per cent of the global processed food trade (ASA Report, 2015). Nevertheless modern food processing is growing rapidly in India. The Indian government plans to raise the share of agricultural produce that is going for processing from 10% to 30% in the coming years (McKinsey and Company, 2013, p. 50). The highest share of processed food is in the dairy sector, where 37 per cent of the total produce is processed, of this only 15 per cent is processed by the organized sector.

The Indian food processing industry is highly fragmented, with 25 per cent unorganized players, 42 per cent small-scale industries (SSI), and 33 per cent organized players (BCG Report, 2012). Primary food processing industry includes hundreds of thousands of rice-mills and hullers, flour mills, pulse mills and oil-seed mills, several thousands of bakeries, traditional food units and fruits, vegetable and spice processing units in the unorganized sector. In comparison, the organized sector is relatively small, with around 516 flour mills, 568 fish processing units, 5,293 fruit and vegetable processing units, 171 meat processing units and numerous dairy processing units at state and district levels (ASA Report, 2015). However, some food-processing firms that operate farms have begun to market fresh produce under their brand names (Yogesh and Chandrashekhar, 2014).

5.6 Agriculture production (tractor and farm machinery)

Tractor and farm machinery has played an important role in Indian agriculture production. Tractor and farm machinery are used mainly for primary and secondary tillage operation. In addition they are also used in land reclamation, seeding, harvesting and transporting the agricultural commodities.

After Independence in 1947, the use of tractor was promoted but there was no production facility. Tractors were still being imported. In 1960-61 the tractor manufacturing was started in India by five manufacturers (Indian Mirror, 2015). Between 1971 and 1980 six new manufacturers also started production of tractor. Till 1991, the tractor industry enjoyed the government protection. After liberalisation in 1992, obtaining an industrial license for manufacturing of tractor became necessary. Since tractor is a big investment item farmers are provided subsidy by government and credit facilities by manufacturers. During last two decade, credit facilities improved and the tractor industry grew rapidly. Today, approximately 600,000 units of tractors are manufactured annually (TMA Report, 2014). Figure 5.2 shows the sales pattern of tractor sales in India. According to the figure, the tractor industry suffered set back in 2003-04 and then gradually improved over years (TMA Report, 2014).

In year 2015, Indian tractor market faced challenges of sales volume declined by 13.0% compared to 2014 due to host of unfavourable factors, such as delayed and deficient monsoons, decline in Kharif output, softening commodity prices, lower realizations in cash crops and farm losses due to extensive crop damages due to unseasonal rainfall (ICRA Report, 2015) . However, while domestic tractor sales remained low, export segment continued to perform well through the fiscal with a 20% year on year growth during FY'15 (ICRA Report, 2015).

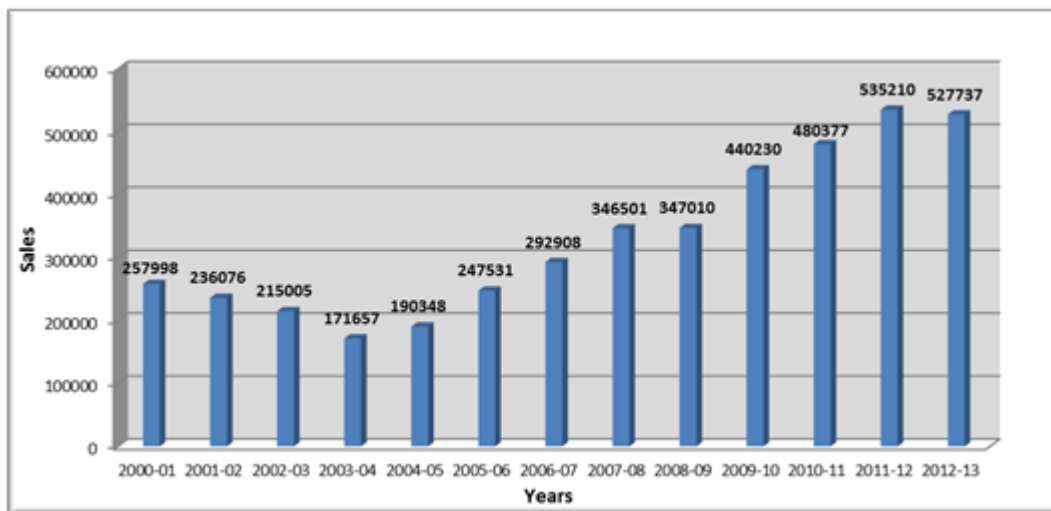


Figure 5. 2: Indian tractor industry trend (Tractor Manufacturer Association, 2014)

In terms of horse power, 75 % of tractor industry volumes comes from tractors between the 31-50 horse powers (ICRA Report, 2015). However in year 2015, sluggish volumes in these two segments have dragged down the overall industry volume (ICRA Report, 2015). However, despite relatively sharp declines in the 31-40 HP and 41-50 HP sub segments, these two categories continue to constitute bulk of the tractor market mainly driven by larger addressable market, suitability of applications (agri and haulage) and relatively better affordability (ICRA Report, 2015).

5.7 Food retail and agriculture commodity trading

The current size of the retail market in India is estimated at Rs. 20,000 billion and is projected to rise to Rs. 59,000 billion by 2020 (BCG Report, 2012). Organized retail is currently estimated at Rs. 1,300 billion, amounting to 6 to 7 per cent penetration of the total retail market and is expected to be Rs.8,000 billion to Rs. 12,200 billion industry depending on factors like income levels, increase in consumerism, changing consumer preferences, etc. (BCG Report, 2012).

Organised retail is gaining popularity in agricultural commodity business. Within organised retail, food retailing is expected to grow at a much faster pace as it is highly unorganized with current penetration of organized retail limited to approximately 1 per cent, despite 60 per cent consumer spending on food and grocery which means almost 60% of organised retail chain businesses are from food and related items (BCG Report, 2012). In food retail, a recent trend is branding the agri-commodity at the point of sale. These retail outlets create their own brands which are called store brands (Raj, 2014). In agribusiness, 'store' brands are considered to be of superior quality.

The growth of Indian food retail started with economic liberalization process in 1991 that provided the opportunity for modern retail to take off. In addition, there are some specific reforms which have taken place over the years. For example, slowly but steadily, the Government of India is opening up retail to foreign investment. In 1997, for the first time in India's history, the government allowed 100 per cent foreign subsidiaries to operate in wholesale cash and carry business. In 2006, 51 per cent FDI investment was approved in single-brand retailing. Companies were allowed to sell multiple products under a single brand name. In 2008, the government was mulling over the idea of allowing 100 per cent FDI in single-brand retail and 50 per cent in multi-brand retail. More recently, the cabinet cleared the bill to increase FDI to 100 per cent in single-brand retail. These changes in the regulatory environment have attracted several international players to the Indian food retail industry.

For the past decade the country is being hailed as one of the most attractive destinations for retail investments globally and was ranked three times (2006, 2007, 2009) in A.T. Kearney's Global Retail Development Index as the most promising target for global retail

investments (Kearney, 2010). The pace of modern retail growth in India was five times higher than GDP growth in the past years and among the fastest in the world (Reardon and Minten, 2011).

However, food retailing industry face challenges from different quarters. One, the organized food retailer faces stiff competition from unorganized *kirana stores*. Often, these kirana shops score high on convenience as they are mostly located in their vicinity and are preferred by many customers especially for small ticket size purchase. Unorganized retail is often preferred by low and middle income customers due to the short-term credit they provide. Two, lack of quality post-harvest infrastructure increases overall procurement and storage cost for the retailers. Overall cost of goods for the retailer increases due to high wastage that occurs due to inadequate and poor quality warehousing infrastructure. Three, there exist a fragmented supply base and large number of intermediaries: Traditional retail has multiple aggregators, wholesalers, and retailers, all claiming margins in the value chain. Fragmented supply base not only leads to higher prices but also more wastage due to loading, unloading, and packaging of commodities at multiple places where it changes hands from one stakeholder to another.

Agribusiness is also characterized by agricultural commodity and raw material that are mostly perishable, variable in quality and not regularly available (Yogesh and Chandrashekhar, 2014). In this category mostly fresh fruits and vegetables are included. In Indian supermarkets the share of fresh fruits and vegetables of total food sales is between 18% and 24% (Reardon and Minten, 2011a, p. 155). Considering the early stage of retail development in India and the fact that usually, modern retail tends to penetrate first into staple and processed foods where supply chains are much easier to organize, these figures are surprisingly high (Reardon and Minten, 2011b). Sourcing fresh fruits and

vegetables is not only a key concern for modern retailers in India but also for the food processing industry.

In 2003, the Agricultural Produce and Marketing Act of 1951 was reformed. With changes in the agricultural produce marketing committee (APMC) Act and foreign direct investment(FDI) in retail, there will be more direct relationship between farm and retail store (Raj, 2014).

A recent trend in Indian agribusiness is that the traditional production and distribution methods are being replaced by more closely coordinated and better planned linkages between agribusiness firms, farmers, retailers and others in the supply chains (Yogesh and Chandrashekhar, 2014). Hence, the importance of supply chain in agribusiness has increased manifold. Facilitating direct linkages between these industries and the farming community has become a key focus area for the Indian government in the past two decades. The hope is that such direct interactions would lead to a modernization of supply chains, efficiency enhancements and technology spill overs, and would open up alternative and more remunerative marketing channels for farmers (McKinsey and Company, 2013).

Lack of transparent trading practices and market infrastructure wastage can amount to up to 30% in fresh produce supply chains (Chari and Raghavan, 2012; Trebbin and Franz, 2010). To encourage private sector investments in agricultural and food supply chains, the Indian government successively reduced restrictions against foreign direct investment (FDI) in these areas. Regulations on FDI were first relaxed for the food processing industry in the early 1990s (Landes, 2008). Around the same time, the wholesale, retail, processing and logistics sector were taken off a list of sectors in which only small and medium

enterprises were allowed to operate, thus admitting also large companies in these sectors (Reardon and Minten, 2011a).

Critics of increased investment by modern retailers in supply chains, however, justifiably highlight negative effects on the traditional trading system and the exclusion of smallholder farmers (Trebbin and Franz, 2010). But it also needs to be taken into account that smallholder farmers who work on up to two hectares of land, account for 80% of India's farmers. For them agreements with food processors or retailers are often the only source of inputs and assistance, especially because government extension programs are highly inadequate. Furthermore, considering that modern food retail in India is still largely an urban phenomenon, the retailers' sourcing areas of fresh products are rather defined by the time in which fresh produce can be transported from the fields to the centres of demand, rather than by the size of farms. In other words, with the vast majority of farmers in India being small or marginal farmers and lack of transport infrastructure being a major constraint in sourcing fresh products, modern retailers often have no choice but to source from smallholders if they wish to source directly from farmers. This implies that in the Indian case, there is a strong incentive for smallholder farmers to get linked to organized value chains (Trebbin, 2014).

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided detailed description of subsectors of agribusiness, challenges the sector is facing and the opportunities the sector has. It also threw light on policies related to agribusiness. The chapter delineates the context and scope of this research. It provides a broader setting of the study in which this research was conducted. Thus, this chapter lays foundation for selection of cases and data collection.

CHAPTER 6

CASES AND DATA COLLECTION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of two parts. In the first part, the four firms selected for the study are introduced. The description provides basic information about their key businesses, different growth stages of firms and financial highlights. In addition, it also presents a commentary on firm's branding and CSR strategy. Unless otherwise stated, the first part is built on the analysis of firm's web pages, annual report of last 10 years, newsletters and magazines, media reports and researcher's own understanding of the industry from his 12 years of industry experience. In the second part, the details of data collection and interviews conducted have been provided. In addition, the key themes of the research have also been identified in this chapter.

6.2 Case 1 – Firm 'A'

6.2.1 Introduction of Firm 'A'

Firm 'A' is a part of very large and old business conglomerate in India. The group is highly regarded for its contribution to India's social and industrial development (Srivastava *et al.*, 2012). The firm started its business with chemical fertilisers and gradually diversified into essential foods, crop protection and crop nutrition business. Today, 'A' is a leading agribusiness firm in India dealing in fertilisers, pesticides, speciality nutrients, seeds, bio-fuels, salt and pulses. In addition, it also provides advice on farming solutions and crop nutrition practices to farmers.

According to the company's web page, the firm's corporate philosophy is deeply rooted in the principles of sustainability which implies a commitment to environmental stewardship.

6.2.2 Stages of growth

Firm 'A' was established in 1939. The company started with a small salt factory in the semi-arid dessert and salt pans of western Gujarat state in India. Between 1939 and 1953 the firm faced many challenges. For example, during the pre-independent colonial period, the company was not allowed to sell salt anywhere except Calcutta. It faced competition from foreign firms who possessed closely guarded technology. The outbreak of World War II added problems for the company and it took some time to stabilise its production. Gradually the company overcame those challenges and started growing. In 1946, some philanthropic activities were launched in the form of building hospitals and medical facilities. However, it was only in 1955 that the company's declared its first dividend on ordinary shares.

From 1954 to 1968 was the period of expansion and consolidation. The production capacity expanded four times since 1953 to 1964. The company started manufacturing pesticides in 1956 and insecticides in 1957 and improved its production process and technological expertise (Annual Report, 2011-12).

Between 1969 and 1983, the firm built its infrastructure related to public policy and social work. In 1970, the CSR strategy was formalised through the amendments to the *Articles of Association* of the group companies (Srivastava *et al.*, 2012). According to the amendments, 'the company shall be mindful of its social and moral responsibilities to consumers, employees, shareholders, society and the local community and the group

companies had to actively assist in improving quality of life in the communities in which they operated'. In addition, the firm supports the *UN Global Compact* and is committed to reporting its sustainability performance in accordance with *GRI guidelines*. In 1974, an energy research institute was established to conduct public policy research on renewable energy resources. In 1980, the firm set up a Society for rural development to fulfil its social commitment to the communities around its manufacturing facilities. This Society is now a fully-fledged CSR arm of the firm with a stated objective of protecting and nurturing rural population around firm's manufacturing facilities (see section 6.2.5 for details). Although both organisations get full patronage from the firm, they have independent managing bodies that look after day to day operations.

In 1983, the firm entered consumer market. The firm pioneered iodised, packaged edible salt in India which is a landmark in the history of the company. Subsequently, many variants of salt, cooking soda, pulses, detergent and water purifier were launched. Fertiliser, insecticides, pesticides and seeds business were also expanded.

The years from 1984 to 1998 could be viewed as an era of diversification as the firm made a strategic shift from chemicals to farm and food essentials. The firm positioned itself as a crop nutrient provider. Products like fertiliser, pesticides, seeds, speciality nutrients and quality agro-services became key business areas. In 1994, the firm set up the country's first dual feed fertiliser (urea) manufacturing plant, with an ability to run on 'Neptha' and 'gas'. It is currently India's most energy efficient urea plant (Annual Report, 2013-14). It is notable achievement creating a favourable image for firm's commitment towards environmental sustainability. However, during that time the firm had also to deal with natural calamities such as cyclone in 1998 and the earthquake in 2001, hitting the production.

The years 1999 to 2014 can be categorised as a period for building processes, growth and globalisation. In 2003, the firm equipped itself with quality certifications and adopted world class processes including registration with *British Safety Council* (Annual Report, 2011-12). Many global acquisitions and rebranding of its global subsidiaries happened. New variants of salt and fertilisers were also launched.

However, the journey has not been smooth as the firm is facing tremendous competition from national and global players and the government has started deregulating many agro-sectors. Section 6.2.4 on branding strategy throws light on the impending challenges facing the firm in the years to come. Table 6.1 summarises the milestones at different stages of the firm.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Milestones</i>
1939	Firm 'A' was incorporated
1944	Given rights to manufacture salt
1946	Hospital and medical facilities set up near its manufacturing plant
1956	Pesticide manufacturing starts
1957	Insecticide manufacturing starts
1957-58	Major expansion programme launched to increase capacity of products
1962-63	Breakthrough in treating sea water in place of fresh water.
1974	Energy Research Institute set up
1980	Society for Rural Development established
1983	India's first iodised, vacuum evaporated, branded salt launched.
1992	Detergent launched
1994	Fertiliser plant commissioned in 36 months
1998	Relief and rehabilitation programmes undertaken for those affected by the cyclone in Gujarat.
2001	Production severely affected due to earthquake on January 26, 2001 and the fire in the power plant on March 2, 2001.
2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salt ranked No. 1 Food brand in Brand Equity Survey of India's most trusted brands. • The fertiliser plant registered with British Safety Council.
2004	Set up of the Innovation Centre.
2005	First step towards internationalisation.
2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of 'cooking soda' • Launch of 'water purifier.'
2010	Launch of 'branded pulses'
2011	Rebrands global subsidiaries
2012	Launches India's first iodine plus iron fortified salt
2013	Under CSR help save more than 350 whale sharks
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launches ammonium phosphate sulphate fertiliser • Completes 75 years in business

Table 6.1: Milestones of Firm 'A'

6.2.3 Financial Highlights

The Table 5.2 depicts the financial highlight of firm ‘A’.

(Figures in Rs. Crore; 1 Crore = 10 Million)

Year	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Revenue	3559	4048	6666	8550	9712	6441	8267	8895	8892
Expenditure	3083	3454	5491	7889	8779	5882	7370	7901	8105
Profit after tax	353	444	964	452	723	408	586	643	436

Table 6.2: Financial Trend of Firm ‘A’

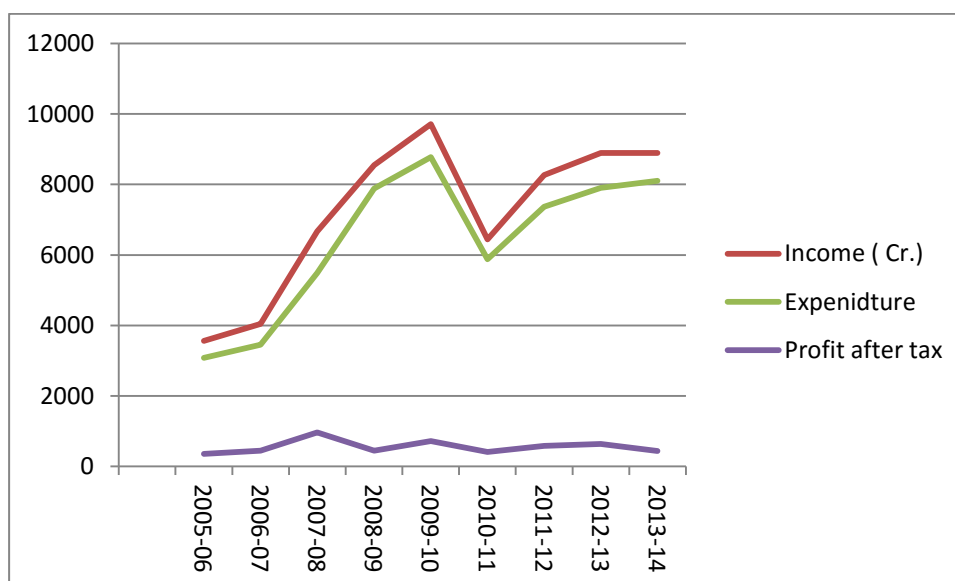


Figure 6.1: Financial Trend of Firm ‘A’

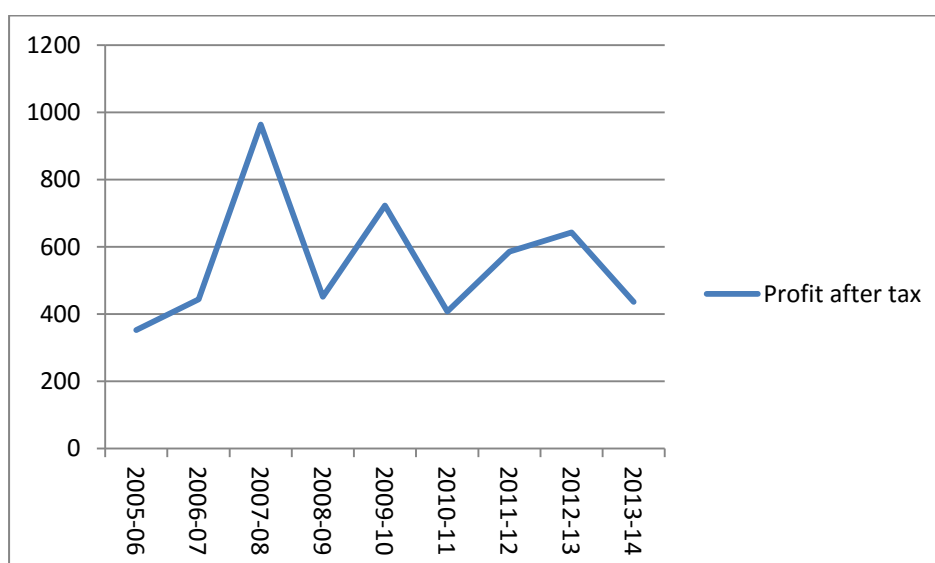


Figure 6.2: Profit after Tax of Firm ‘A’

Analysis of the financial records reveals that although the firm is on a growth path in terms of revenue, the profitability has not increased substantially. CSR expenditure does not get reflected in the financial statements. However, the analysis of the income and expenditure account of the rural development society for the year ending March 2013 indicates that the total expenditure on CSR activities was approximately 1 % of the net profit implying that the firm is not spending as much as mandated (2% of the net profit) by the recent CSR law in the country.

6.2.4 Branding strategy

According to the firm's web pages, over the years the firm has been following a combination of product and corporate branding strategy. However, in 1996, the parent group introduced a 'Brand Equity and Business Promotion Agreement' according to which the group firms wishing to use the corporate name and brand must sign the agreement, pledging to pay an annual royalty (Goldstein, 2007). The agreement also ensures that firms adhere to the *Code of Conduct* and *Business Excellence Model* prescribed in the agreement.

After signing this agreement, firm 'A' has shifted to corporate branding strategy. This stimulated 'A' to undertake a massive consolidation exercise. The businesses were realigned to present the corporate brand across the world. For example, in 2011, the firm decided to consolidate its many chemicals businesses into a single unit: the *Global Chemicals Business* (Annual Report, 2013-14). The acquisitions were rebranded to reflect both the unified name and the global spread.

The firm decided to go for one common brand for all its products for several reasons. First, a few key global customers wanted the firm to create a single customer interface. Second, the power of a corporate brand gives the firm better leverage with financial and

government authorities, and improved supply-chain efficiencies. Third, there was also an internal factor that contributed to the rebranding i.e. employee sentiments. According to one manager, employees wanted to be a part of something bigger, a group that stands for ethics, values and stability, understands business and is willing to invest' (interview with the author).

The shift has also prompted new positioning for the firm. For decades the consumer face of the firm was the iconic 'A' Salt brand, which ranked as the No. 1 food brand in *Brand Equity Survey of India's Most Trusted Brands* in 2003. However, the firm is now positioning itself as a provider of solutions that address tomorrow's food, water, and health and climate-change challenges. The firm web pages describe this transformation: 'the firm has developed an identity that is more well-rounded and mature. From a commodity company, it is shifting towards providing end solutions, is developing a strong business-to-consumer interface, and is now investing in research and development, innovation and cutting-edge technology'. This marked shift could be in the response to increased competition within the agro-sector. The government deregulation policy and reduction in subsidy have forced agribusiness firms to improve their efficiency in terms of cost, productivity and services. In this context, it would be interesting to study the impact of firm's CSR strategy on its branding strategy.

6.2.5 CSR strategy of Firm 'A'

The firm's CSR strategy is governed by the conviction of its founder that 'in a free enterprise, the community is not just another stakeholder in business but is in fact the very purpose of its existence'.

The firm implements its CSR activities through a Society for Rural Development that was set up in 1980. According to the company's web pages, 'the Society for Rural Development develops and implements CSR programs tailored to the need of each region and lays emphasis on the spirit of participatory development by involving the beneficiaries at each stage of the development process'.

Memorandum of association promoted by the firm directs the Society to undertake, carry out, promote, sponsor, assist or aid directly or in other manner, any activity for:

- The promotion and growth of rural economy
- Rural welfare
- Activities relating to environmental protection
- Conservation of natural resources
- Creating and developing facilities for public education
- Fostering conservation and research in the field of natural history

The firm provides technical know-how and implements rural development programs at its discretion, wholly or partly through the Society. Initially the projects implemented by the Society focused on welfare and relief activities. In early 90's the focus shifted to a proactive approach that aimed at sustainable community development.

The Society undertakes CSR activities in six thematic areas: natural resource management, livelihood development through agriculture activities, empowerment of women, health, education and infrastructure development support (Annual Report, 2012-13).

According to the Annual Report (2012-13), the natural *resource management (NRM)* program of the Society focuses on 'building the capacity of the local community towards better management of the natural resources. At the Society, the NRM encompass program

on integrated water management; land and agriculture development; animal husbandry and pond management and fisheries’.

The integrated *agriculture* growth program of firm ‘A’ follows a three-pronged strategy of education, promotion of diversification of agriculture and promotion of new modern technology and inputs (Annual Report, 2013-14). The purpose is to increase income of people through agriculture intervention, provide them with opportunities to grow and reduce their risk and vulnerability. For example, the Society started land reclamation project in 1993 to increase the income of marginal farmers by improving the soil fertility and thereby improving the agricultural productivity. The various other agricultural practices supported by the Society includes agricultural mechanization, crop diversification and facilitating service and support systems covering planting materials, credit and extension, enhancing farmers’ capacities to understand and adopt modern agricultural practices through trainings (Annual Report, 2012-13). It is evident that agriculture is one of the key areas for the firm’s CSR efforts.

Livestock has special importance in areas with low agricultural income and poor resource-endowment. The Society started the animal husbandry project in 1994 with the aim to improve the household income. The program targets three essential elements: improved animal health care that is available at the doorstep, improvement of breed quality and availability of quality fodder (Annual Report, 2012-13). According to firm’s web pages animal health care programs includes vaccination drives, medical camps and availability of help at the doorstep. Animal health camps are also held wherein expert team of veterinaries provide proper counselling and medicines. Finally, insights regarding assessment of CSR activities are found in the year 2012-13; *Company’s President’s Message* of the Society for Rural Development: ‘An annual community satisfaction survey

is conducted by the Society to assess the impact of its community development intervention. Both the community satisfaction survey and the third party assessment conducted last year reveal that the Society's interventions have a 'positive impact on the lives of people and the environment'.

In summary, analysis of the firm's documents indicates that although the firm is involved in many types of CSR activities (which will be described in the succeeding chapters), its key CSR activities revolve around agriculture and natural resources themes. The firm has a mechanism to measure the impact of CSR. A detailed thematic analysis follows in subsequent chapters.

6.3 Case 2 - Firm 'B'

6.3.1 Introduction of Firm 'B'

Firm 'B' is a leading Indian agribusiness firm with interest in natural herbs and packaged food. It is credited to be the world's largest ayurvedic and natural health care company. The firm started with ayurvedic medicines made of natural herbs and gradually diversified into food and health care products. The firm has over 250 herbal/ayurvedic products in its portfolio (Annual Report, 2013-14). Today, firm 'B' also operates in key consumer products categories such as hair care, oral care, health care, skin care, home care and foods.

According to the firm's website, it has a wide distribution network, covering over 5.8 million retail outlets with a high penetration in both urban and rural markets and also has a presence in over 60 countries across the globe. The firm has 14 manufacturing units spread in India and abroad. The foreign facilities are located in Nepal, Dubai, Bangladesh, Egypt and Nigeria. Three of the facilities in India are strategically located in excise duty

free zones. The firm has a multi-fruit processing plant in West Bengal for production of pulp and concentrates. This is a step taken by the firm towards backward integration by locating this facility in proximity to its juice plant in Nepal.

6.3.2 Stages of growth

Firm 'B' was launched in 1884 in Calcutta and was the first mass-producer of ayurvedic formulations under modern scientific methods. In 1940, the company entered the market of personal care with the launch of hair oil made of gooseberry. In 1949, the firm introduced Chyawanprash, the first branded 'immunity booster' in a packaged form. The company's operation grew and it expanded its product portfolio by adding oral care products in 1970. With increasing manufacturing pressure, the year 1972 witnessed a shifting of operations from Calcutta to Delhi. Here the most modern herbal medicines plant was set up and the commercial production started in 1979. During 1990s, with the economy opening up, the management realized the importance of scaling up its operations and decided to go public. The firm chose to professionalize its operations by curtailing the role of the promoter family and started the process of inducting professionals from outside. One positive outcome was that the company set up a Sustainable Development Society dedicated to carrying out its CSR activities (see section 6.3.5 for details). As part of its growth strategy, the company not only diversified into food business in 1996, but also acquired a major Indian herbal company in 2005. Moreover, the company also forayed into organised retail in 2007. Forging ahead with its expansion plan the company made its first overseas acquisition in Turkey in 2010. However, the company faced huge branding challenges due to lack of clear cut positioning in the market in the light of its growth and expansion as described in section 6.3.4. Table 6.3 depicts the milestones of the firm 'B'.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Milestones</i>
1884	Established at Calcutta
Early 1900s	Production of ayurvedic medicines
1936	The firm 'B' was incorporated
1940	Launch of personal care product through Ayurveda
1949	Launched Chyawanprash in tin pack
1970	Entered oral care and digestives segment
1972	Shifts base to Delhi from Calcutta
1979	Commercial production starts
1994	Comes out with first public issue
1996	Enters foods business with the launch of 'fruit Juice'
1998	Family hands over management of the company to professionals
2003	Became the first ayurvedic products company to get ISO 9002 certification.
2005	Acquires a leading domestic herbal company
2005	Announces bonus after 12 years
2006	Adopted US GAAP in line with its commitment to follow global best practices and adopt highest standards of transparency and governance.
2006	Decides to raise up to \$200 million from the international market through Bonds or any other securities for acquisition plans in India and abroad.
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merges its wholly-owned food subsidiary with itself • Foray into organised retail
2008	Acquires a leading player in the women's skin care market.
2010	Makes its first overseas acquisition in Turkey
2011	Launches its first-ever online shopping portal

Table 6.3: Milestones of Firm 'B'

6.3.3 Financial highlights

The table below depicts the financial highlight of firm ‘B’.

(Figures in Rs Crore; 1 Crore = 10 Million)

Year	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14
Revenue	1,375	1,795	2,111	2,439	2,890	3,813	4,436	4979
Expenditure	1,160	1,510	1,746	2,014	2,363	3,181	3,687	4117
Profit After Tax	189	252	545	374	433	463	591	672

Table 6.4: Financial Trend of Firm ‘B’

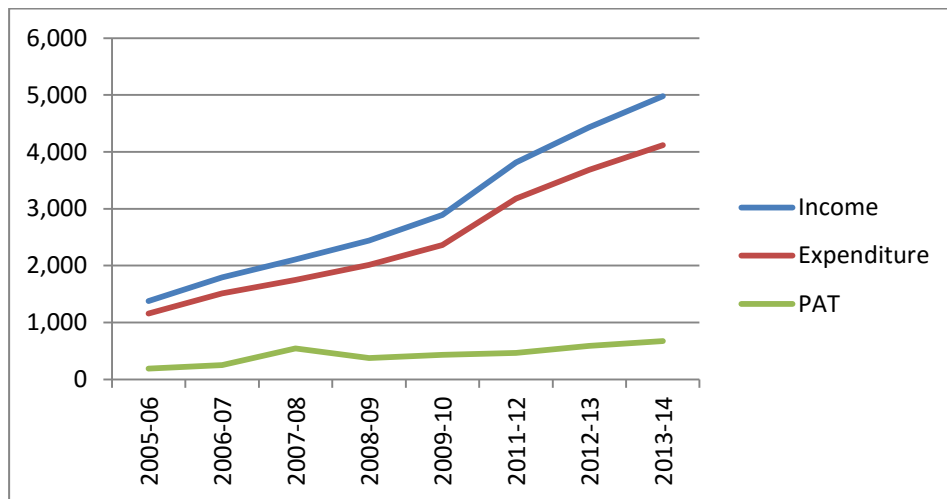


Figure 6.3: Financial Trend of Firm ‘B’

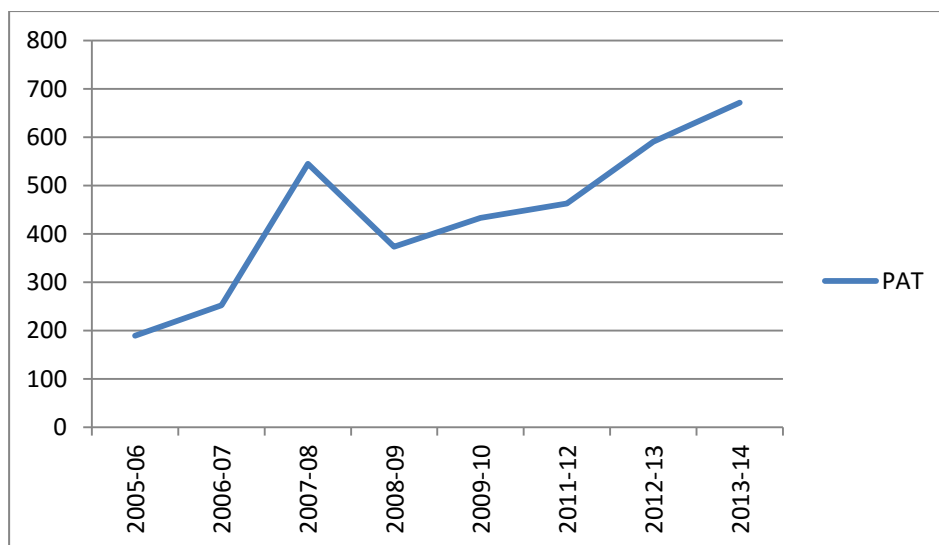


Figure 6.4: Profit after Tax of Firm ‘B’

The data indicates that firm's revenue and profitability have grown steadily after 2004; however, it was also marginally hit by the financial crisis of 2007. The revenue and profitability grew rapidly after 2008.

6.3.4 Branding strategy

The firm's branding strategy involves 'developing and implementing marketing initiatives based on a clear strategic plan with restructured brand architecture, continuously introducing a stream of new products and creating a niche for the company based on the 'herbal and natural' products segment' (Annual Report, 2009-10). However, the company faced major branding challenge. Soon after liberalisation, the industry saw competition intensifying with deep-pocketed multinational companies (MNCs) trying every trick to capture a market share. The demand and consumers aspirations were rising and the product portfolio of the firm had also expanded from ayurvedic medicine to herbal, food and personal care products, but the firm was still seen as a traditional old firm making ayurvedic medicines. This prompted the firm to redraft its positioning and the logo was changed to convey firm's strength as an herbal consumer producer. Brand architecture was modified and five mother brands were identified for all its products. A massive advertising campaign was launched to communicate the new positioning of the company. In addition, the firm has launched India's first *Ayurvedic Medical Journal* to propagate messages, on the ayurvedic way of life. These initiatives have resulted in the firm named the *Most Trusted leader* in the 'ayurveda' category in the Brand Trust Report, 2013. That not only changed how consumer perceived the company but also put the company firmly on growth track (Business Today, Aug 5, 2012).

6.3.5 CSR strategy

The firm maintains that its CSR policy is inspired by the words of its founder ‘What is that life worth which cannot bring comfort to others’. This indicates a strong philanthropic foundation of the CSR activities of the company. However, over time, the company has shifted its focus from mere philanthropy to business interest, legal compliance and community development work. According to firm’s policy documents (2012-13), ‘while pursuing our business strategy of introducing products that give our consumers health and wellness, the company operates in a manner that not just continues to generate an attractive return for shareholders, but also minimizes our impact on the environment and helps in replenishing the planet; while lending a helping hand to the community’. It appears that the firm seeks to make its CSR projects sustainable by way of active community participation as is evident in its vision statement: ‘Through sustainable measures, the CSR programs actively contribute to the social, economic and environmental development of the community in which we operate ensuring participation from the community and thereby create value for the nation’. Hence, community participation emerges as key to CSR activity of the firm.

According to the CSR policy document, the firm pursue CSR activities in mainly four broad areas:

1. Eradicating hunger, poverty and malnutrition
2. Promoting health care including preventive health care
3. Ensuring environmental sustainability and ecological balance through
4. Employment and livelihood enhancing vocational skills

In addition, the firm has identified other two areas for community development interventions: (a) promotion of education especially among children, women, and elderly

including promoting gender equality and empowering women and (b) rural development projects.

The firm implements the aforesaid CSR activities on its own to an extent possible. At the same time, the firm also work in partnership with other players like NGOs and voluntary organisations to implement its CSR activities. However, the principle implementer of the CSR activities is the Sustainable Development Society formed by the firm in 1994. This organisation aims to reach out to the weaker and more vulnerable sections of society. Over the years, operating in two states, it has contributed to many worthy causes, addressing children's literacy, improving healthcare services, skill development, and environment.

6.4 Case 3 - Firm 'C'

6.4.1 Introduction of Firm 'C'

Firm 'C' is among India's leading tractor and farm mechanization companies. The firm has pioneered farm mechanization in the country and played a pivotal role in the agricultural growth of India for over six decades. According to the firm's Annual Report (2013-14), it offers more than 45 variants of tractors under three brands. It has over 1600 sales and service outlets and footprints in over 40 countries.

6.4.2 Stages of growth

The genesis of firm 'C' goes back to 1944 when it made a major thrust into the agricultural arena by taking on the marketing and service franchise for imported tractors in Northern India. In 1960 it set up its own plant to manufacture India's first indigenous tractors which played a pivotal role in the 'green revolution' and is acclaimed for being one of the forerunners in country's effort to make India self-sustainable in food. With ample

protection provided by the Licence Raj¹, the firm was growing (Bhandari, Nov 5, 2014). As a result, in 1969 the company became the largest tractor manufacturer in India.

In 1974, the firm exported for the first time. After winning a global tender, 400 tractors were shipped to Afghanistan. In 1977, the company set up its first independent research and development centre.

During the 1980s and 1990s the company saw many ups and downs. The family owned enterprises was affected by a sibling dispute and asset related controversy. A major setback to the company happened in 1983 when an attempt of a hostile takeover with the patronage of political influence took place. However, the company survived and continued to grow.

In 1989, the firm entered into its first international joint venture in Germany to manufacture harvester combines. However, competition intensified with the liberalisation of the market in the 1990s. Most multinationals found local partners of little use and were keen to be on their own. Firm 'C' had to exit its foreign ventures. Some businesses were folded up after they failed to live up to projections. For example, the firm had to divest its consumer electronics and retail ventures (Bhandari, Nov 5, 2014).

¹ - License Raj –India's first Prime Minister Pd. Jawaharlal Nehru was the architect of the system of License Raj or the Permit Raj. It refers to the elaborate license, regulations and accompanying red tape that were required to set up and run businesses in India between 1947 and 1990.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Milestones</i>
1948	Started the Firm 'Ç'
1958	Started importing tractor from Yugoslavia for marketing in India.
1960	A manufacturing plant was set up at Faridabad.
1965	Industrial licence was acquired to manufacture tractors.
1969	Established Institute of Farm Mechanisation in Bangalore.
1974	Exported 400 tractors to Afghanistan.
1977	Beginning of Scientific Research Centre
1983	Established state-of-the-art R&D centre
1990-91	First Public Issue (February'91) over-subscribed four times. Shares listed on Delhi and Bombay Stock Exchanges.
1996	Disengagement of Joint Venture (JV) collaboration with foreign player and launch of new brand of Tractor.
1998	MOU was signed with for setting up a JV in USA.
1999	MOU for JV with a Polish firm was signed for assembly, manufacturing and marketing of farm machinery.
2012	Launch of high end tractors for rich and progressive Indian farmers

Table 6.5: Milestones of Firm 'Ç'

6.4.3 Financial highlights of Firm ‘C’

The table below depicts the financial highlight of firm ‘C’.

(Figure in Rs. Crore; 1 Crore = 10 Million)

Year	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-14
Revenue	2103	2051	2663	3380	3251	4097	6372
Expenses	2114	2006	2606	3198	3141	4007	6104
Profit After Tax	-6.44	11.87	28.6	132	120	73.81	245

Table 6.6: Financial Trend of Firm ‘C’

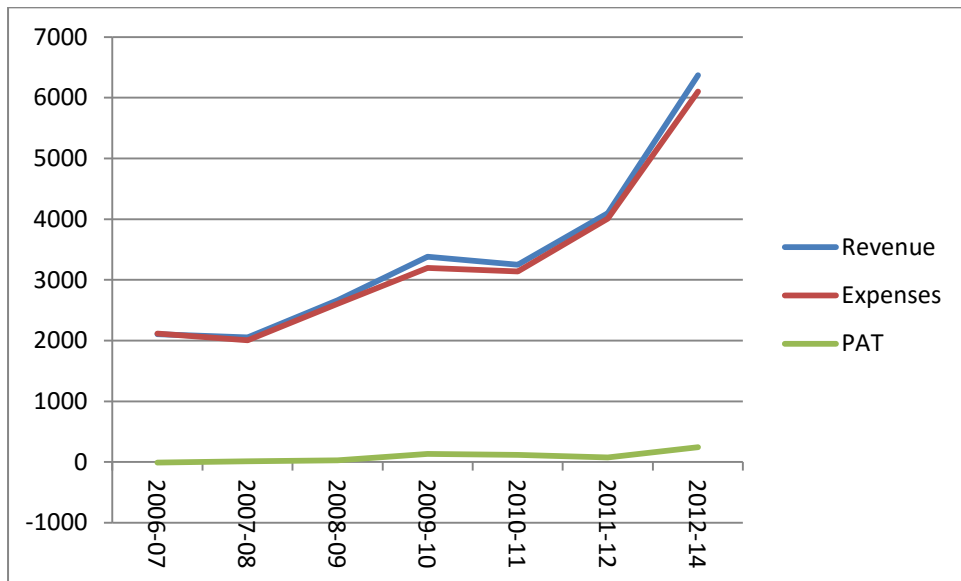


Figure 6.5: Financial Trend of Firm ‘C’

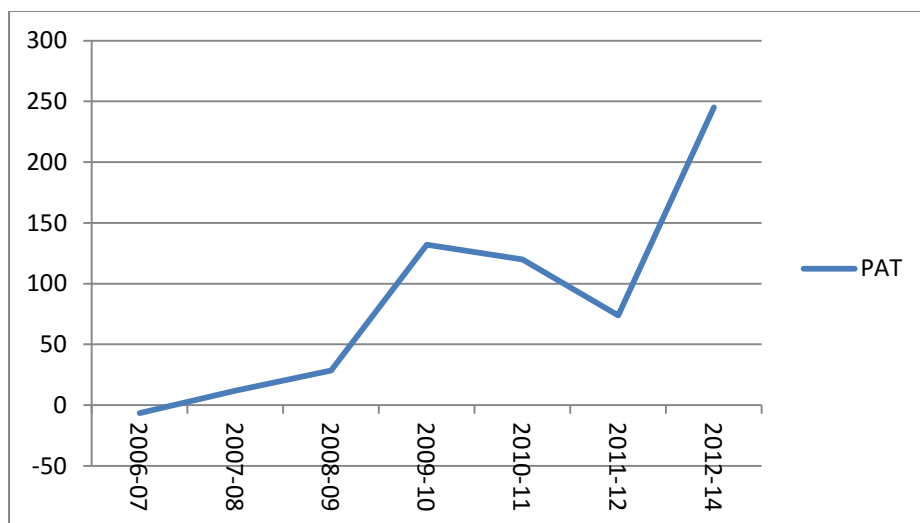


Figure 6.6: Profit after Tax of Firm ‘C’

The data indicates that while the revenue has grown but so has the expenses. In fact, the profit margin is low in absolute terms though it has grown over years.

6.4.4 Branding strategy

The firm's web pages indicate that it follows product as well as corporate branding strategy. The firm has three recognized and well-accepted tractor brands. As a branding strategy, the firm is laying great emphasis on improvement, innovation and effective execution of its offerings. However, the firm faces some challenges to its corporate image. The firm was marred by labour protest, corruption and inefficiency. Thus, controversy struck when the firm converted its hospital (earlier as charitable trust) to a company with the aim of selling it.

In order to streamline its operation and expand its brand portfolio, the firm has recently brought two customer centric initiatives –new products and variants that are aligned with emerging applications and the shift of the company from being a standalone tractor manufacturer to being a complete '*Farm Solution*' provider. However, this journey is difficult for the firm as it is already facing the issue of profitability, cost and inefficiency. Yet, the branding strategy appears to be on a right track, however it remains to be seen that how successful this strategy becomes over the next few years.

6.4.5 CSR strategy

According to firm's web pages, firm 'C' is CSR active and implements CSR programs on its own or in collaboration with industrial associations and NGOs. Some of the CSR activities mentioned are public infrastructure projects, health care, women empowerment and environment and employee welfare. The founders of the firm were instrumental in developing an entire belt of townships in the region where its manufacturing plants are

located. They also established a Medical Centre, and a Heart Institute and Research Centre. For women empowerment, the firm has initiated a special initiative for their overall development through activities such as life skills training and hygiene awareness sessions etc. In respect of the environment, the firm attempts to bring together industrialists to commit towards greener practices in their manufacturing operation through awareness campaigns. For 'employee welfare' the management implements employee welfare schemes. In addition, few other activities such as orphanage, old age homes and drug prohibition centres are also run by the firm.

However, these programs are not on a very wide scale. Surprisingly, the firm does not have well-laid CSR guidelines or even budget allocated for such activities. It gives an impression that CSR activities are carried out on an infrequent basis and are not strategic in nature.

6.5 Case 4 - Firm 'D'

6.5.1 Introduction of Firm 'D'

Firm 'D' is a large company providing a complete basket of agro-inputs to the farmer community by offering a range of fertilisers, micro-nutrient, hybrid seeds, pesticides, and other value added products such as seeds (GM and hybrid), crop care chemicals (insecticides, fungicides and herbicide), soluble fertilisers, micro-nutrients etc. and bulk fertilisers like DAP, MOP and SSP. The business is also supported by a strong distribution network in 17 states, reaching 0.4 million farmers and 30,000 retailers (Annual Report, 2013-14).

6.5.2 Stages of growth

The firm has an illustrious and long history. The founder of the company was an eminent industrialist, philanthropist and one of the trend-setting visionary leaders of the Indian business community. He began as a humble worker and went on to set up one of India's largest business houses in 1909 and revived it in 1917 after the First World War. The industrial empire manufactured a vast variety of goods including textiles, sugar, chemicals, vegetable oils, pottery, fans, sewing machines, electric motors and capacitors. Through the years, the company diversified into many other businesses. Sugar and textiles mills were set up between 1932 and 1948.

After independence, the country faced one of the biggest challenges to become industrially self-reliant. The founder of the firm 'D' was instrumental in setting up different types of industrial units. He brought the entrepreneurs of that period together by forming institutions like Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) and The Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FICCI) which today play a key role in the growth of modern India.

Involvement with agribusiness began in 1969 when the company started to manufacture urea in Rajasthan. In 1991, the firm went into marketing arrangement with a bio seed company. Soon after, the market liberalization in 1991, the company had become a comprehensive agro-input player and selected 'agriculture its core area of growth. In 1992, pesticide was introduced and in 1996 an agriculture development program was initiated. In 2002, a separate strategic business unit was formed for agro-inputs. The company expanded the product portfolio, ventured into new markets and strengthened its distribution network. Today, firm 'D' caters to most input requirements of the farmer. However, this led the firm to adopt a market centric approach and it launched an agro-

retail chain in spite of being not fully prepared for the move. As a result, this new venture failed and hence the firm is now gradually rationalising this business. This has enabled the firm to reduce substantially the losses from operations. The company is now focussed on sale of surplus properties located in rural areas.

Finally, in 2010, the firm launched a farm productivity solution initiative to provide technical guidance and advice to farmers on the best practices of agriculture.

Table 6.7 lists important milestones of the firm.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Milestones</i>
1932	Sugar factory set up
1934	Textile Mills set up
1940	Sugar factory set up
1958	Spinning mills set up at Delhi
1948	Textile Mills set up
1969	Urea plant set up
1991	Marketing arrangement for bio-seed
1992	Introduction of pesticides
1996	Launch of Agriculture Development Program
2002	Formation of Agri inputs SBU
2010	Launch of farm productivity solutions

Table 6.7: Milestones of Firm ‘D’

6.5.3 Financial highlights

The table below depicts the financial highlight of firm ‘D’.

(Figures in Rs. Crore; 1 Crore = 10 Million)

Year	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2012-14
Revenue	2735	2524	3439	3448	4098	4985	5446	6133
Expenses	2498	2389	3363	3351	4149	4965	5188	5825
Profit After Tax	45.81	670.99	101.79	71.28	-30.66	14.26	190	274

Table 6.8: Financial Trend of Firm ‘D’

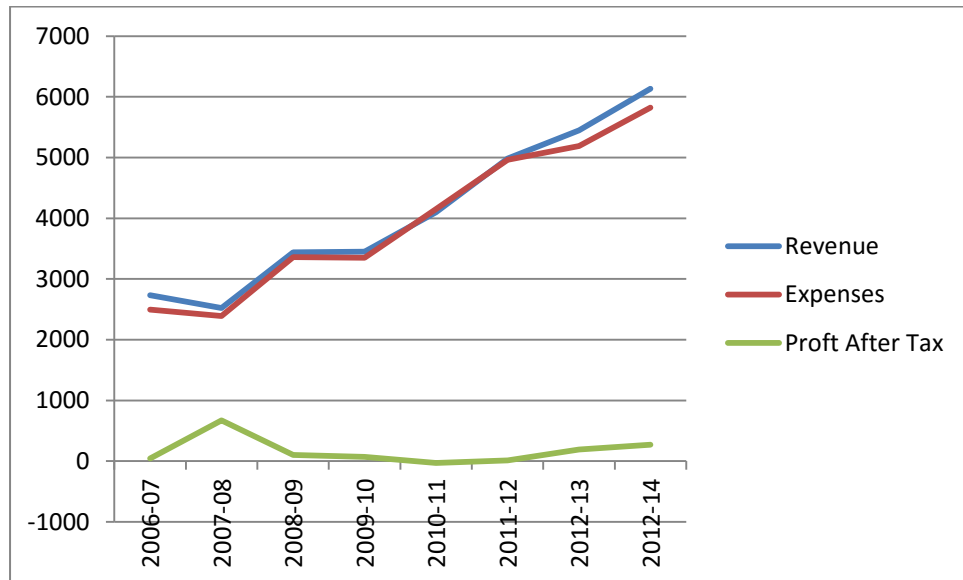


Figure 6.7: Financial Trend of Firm ‘D’

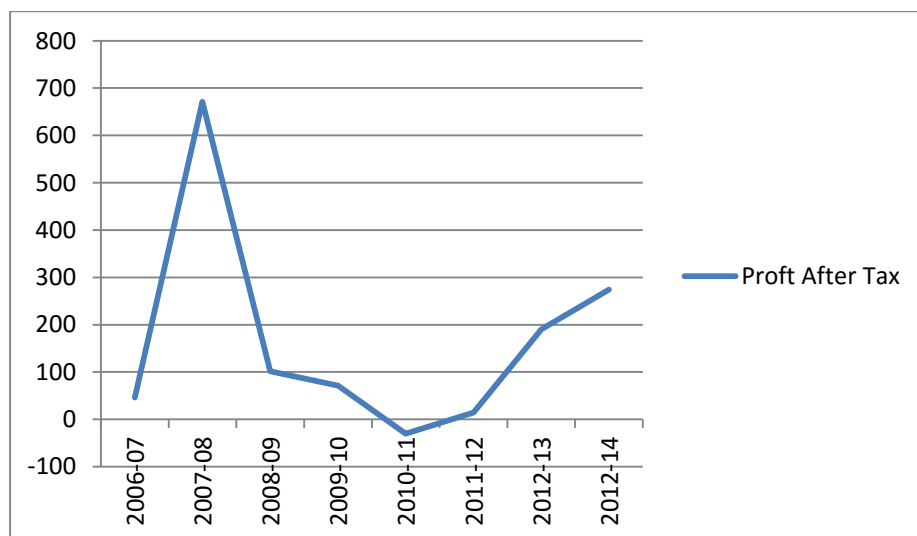


Figure 6.8: Profit after Tax of Firm ‘D’

The data indicates the trend of ups and downs in its revenue during last decade. The profit margin is low in most of the years but tend to increase after 2011. The expenses are high till 2012 but now gradually the difference between the revenue and the expense is increasing.

6.5.4 Branding strategy

According to the firm's web pages, over the last five decade the firm is implementing a mix of product and corporate brand strategies. In product branding, launch of new products is a regular feature of the firm in order to meet farmer's changing demand and to respond to competitive products. The competitive strategy is also evident in firm's pricing policy. It strives to focus on improving its cost efficiencies and offering very competitive price of the product to the farmers. The product development is not only focused on providing high yielding hybrids, but also on other qualities, such as disease tolerance, salinity and drought tolerance. In fact, the firm invest as much as about 8 % of their revenue in research for developing new products (Annual Report, 2013-14).

Another strategy to build its brand is to focus on agro-extension activities, working very closely with the farming community. The firm organises farm camps, training programs for farmers and many such activities to create awareness about the best practices in farming and in the process build its brand.

6.5.5 CSR strategy

According to the Annual Reports (2012-13), the firm implements its CSR program directly or in partnership with a local NGO. In addition, firm's agriculture extension activities as mentioned above also helps in meeting firm's CSR objectives. As part of extension program the firm organises six-month training for farmers. Crop seminars, farmer's

meetings, vocational training and income generation programme like embroidery, stitching, food processing, compost making, poultry farming are an integral part of the program.

Health, environment and education are some of the other area of CSR. The firm's health initiative reaches out to over 7000 families in about 40 villages with the mandate to promote disease prevention measures, chiefly among women and children (Annual Report, 2012-13). Health advisory, blood donation and vaccination camps are conducted in association with Red Cross Society and Government District Hospitals. On environmental front, communities led by volunteers' plant saplings in the neighbourhood of sugar mills, villages and schools. Moreover, *Bio Control Labs* near the sugar units assist farmers in controlling pest attacks and help in improving the ecological balance. For education, it has instituted scholarships in various government educational institutions and supports the government's *Mid-Day Meal Scheme*¹ (Annual Report, 2010-11).

However, unlike firms 'A' and 'B', firm 'D' does not have a dedicated separate organisation for managing CSR activities. This could be because firm's CSR activity is limited to a small catchment area. Though the firms' document illustrates the CSR policy and guidelines, its implementation on ground, the scale and magnitude of CSR activities remains questionable due to firm's waver thin profit margin and cost cutting concerns.

¹ Mid- Day Meal Scheme - It is a programme of the government of India to improve the nutritional status of school-age children nationwide. On November 28th, 2001 the Supreme Court of India passed an order stating: '*We direct the State Governments/Union Territories to implement the Mid-Day Meal Scheme by providing every child in every Government and Government assisted Primary School with a prepared mid-day meal*'.

6.6 Data collection

As described in chapter 4, the interview data were collected in two phases in the months of June and July of 2014. In the first phase, managers of two organisations were interviewed and in second phase the rest of the interviews were completed. The details of the interview data collection are provided in Table 6.10. In addition to interview, other data sources were also used following the interviews as listed in Table 6.9.

<i>Type of Data</i>	<i>Source of Data</i>	<i>Collection Duration</i>
Company's information	Company's Annual Reports, Company's websites and magazines	June- July, 2014
Financial highlights	Company's Annual Reports, Company's websites, Industry Analysis	Aug- Sep, 2014
Industry data	Industry report, market analysis data, company websites	Aug-Sep, 2014

Table 6.9: Secondary sources of data

Cases and Data Collection

Sr. No	Company	Designation of Manager	Respondent Code	Department	Date	Time	Location
1	A	Associate Vice President	AR1	Corporate Affairs	8.6.14	32 min 35 sec	Office Chamber
2	A	AGM	AR2	HR	8.6.14	27 min 59 sec	Office Chamber
3	A	Senior Manager	AR3	Marketing Services	9.6.14	28 min 15 sec	Meeting Room
4	A	Senior Manager	AR4	Marketing Services	10.6.14	39 min 48 sec	Meeting Room
5	A	AGM	AR5	CSR	10.6.14	43 min 27 sec	Office Chamber
6	A	Manager	AR6	CSR	11.6.14	45 min 14 sec	Conference Room
7	A	Brand Manager	AR7	Marketing	11.6.14	50 min 12 sec	Meeting Room
8	B	Vice President	BR1	Corporate Communication and Brand	14.6.14	42 min 51 sec	Office Chamber
9	B	Deputy Manager	BR2	CSR	12.6.14	30 min 15 sec	Office Chamber
10	B	Manager	BR3	Marketing	12.6.14	36 min 28 sec	Meeting Room
11	B	AGM	BR4	Procurement	14.6.14	28 min 54 sec	Office Chamber
12	B	Senior Manager	BR5	CSR	15.6.14	49 min 25 sec	Meeting Room
13	B	Manager	BR6	Branding	16.6.14	57 min 17 sec	Meeting Room
14	B	Senior Manager	BR7	Sales	18.6.14	23 min 38 sec	Conference Room
15	C	Vice President	CR1	Sales and Marketing	3.7.14	37 min 25 sec	Office Chamber
16	C	Vice President	CR2	ER & CSR	4.7.14	77 min 46 sec	Office Chamber
17	C	Manager	CR3	Marketing	4.7.14	29 min 14 sec	Meeting Room
18	C	Senior Manager	CR4	HR	6.7.14	48 min 56 sec	Office Chamber
19	C	Manager	CR5	Marketing	7.7.14	24 min 19 sec	Conference Room
20	C	Manager	CR6	Marketing	8.7.14	33 min 51 sec	Conference Room
21	C	Manager	CR7	CSR	8.7.14	42 min 15 sec	Meeting Room
22	D	Vice President	DR1	CSR	10.7.14	68 min 27 sec	Office Chamber
23	D	General Manager	DR2	Marketing	11.7.14	62 min 15 sec	Meeting Room
24	D	Manager	DR3	Marketing	11.7.14	44 min 19 sec	Meeting Room
25	D	Manager	DR4	Corporate	8.7.14	37 min 46 sec	Conference Room
26	D	Senior Manager	DR5	Retail	14.7.14	32 min 11 sec	Reception Area
27	D	Senior Manager	DR6	Corporate HR	15.7.14	43 min 19 sec	Meeting Room
28	D	Senior Manager	DR7	CSR	18.7.14	45 min 23 sec	Office Chamber
	Total					19.39 Hrs	
	Average					41.56 min	

Table 6.10: Details of Interview Data Collection

6.7 Identification of themes

In this study, the research questions and the theoretical framework provided guideline for data collection. In addition, it also assisted in identifying broad themes. However, the key themes emerged from the data as transcripts were analysed by applying content analysis for inductive purposes to identify new themes (See section 4.6 in chapter 4 for more detail).

These themes were segregated with the purpose of classifying them in *second order* themes. Similar themes were combined to generate first order theme. For this, the use of N-Vivo 10 software was helpful. There is a facility in the software that allows coding the content under a particular node. To assist the coding procedure, free nodes were used; this enabled the researcher to include all quotes on a certain topic from all interviews combined (See section 4.6.1 in chapter 4 for more detail)

Together they produced an aggregate understanding of influence of CSR on corporate branding – the focus of our interest.

Figure 6.9 displays the result of the process of theme identification.

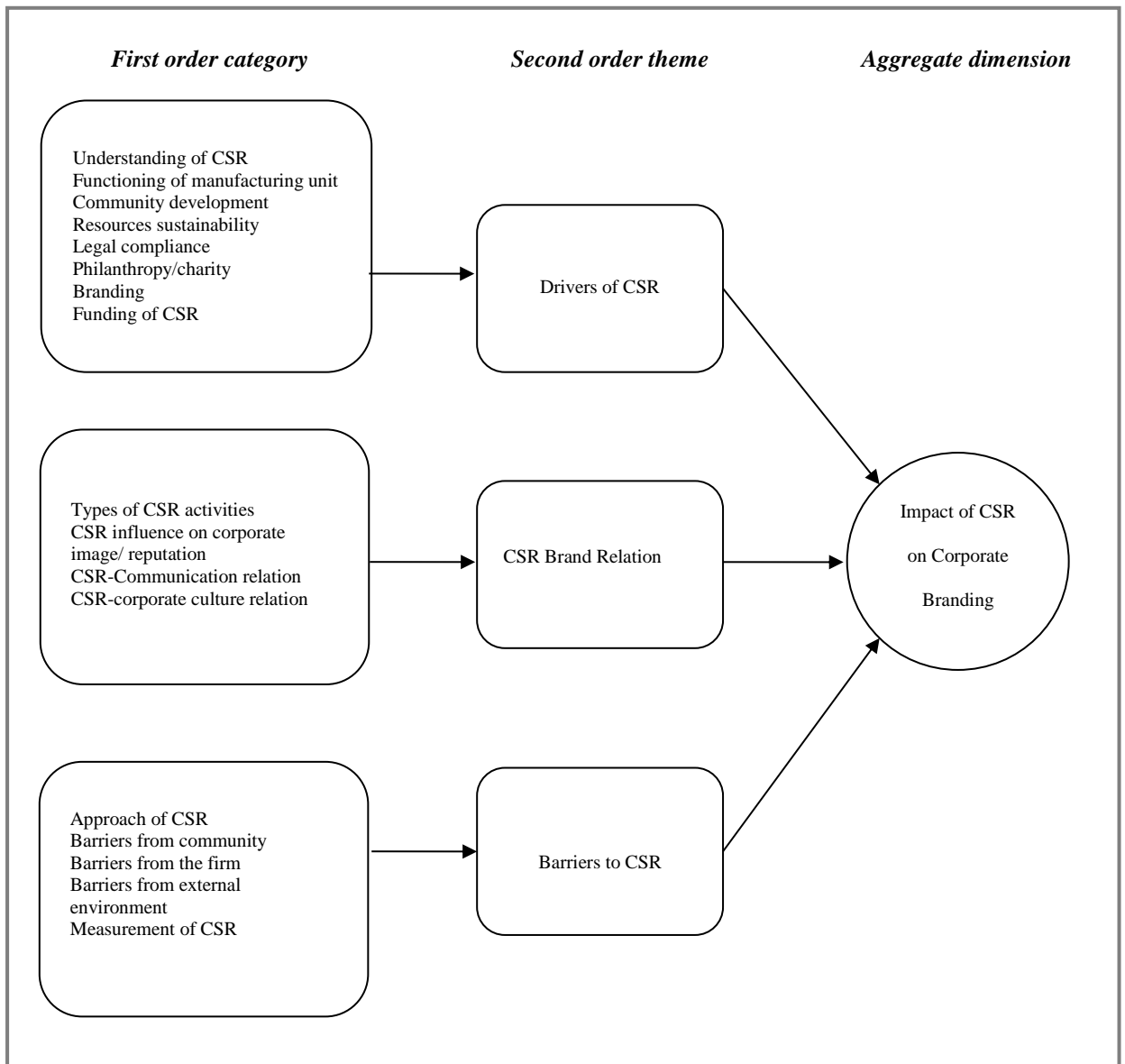


Figure 6.9: Identification of themes of the study

6.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided basic information about the firms studied and elaborated on the current practices of their branding and CSR strategy. In addition, the chapter provides details of the interview data collection and other secondary sources. Most importantly, the key themes of the research were identified in this chapter. The analysis of three main themes of the research is the focus of the next three chapters.

CHAPTER 7

DRIVERS OF CSR IN INDIAN AGRIBUSINESS

7.1 Introduction

The chapter provides an in-depth cross-case analysis to identify and categorize emerging patterns, contrasting evidences and rival explanations on one of the main theme – drivers of CSR. The analysis begins with briefly describing the method of data analysis (see section 4.6 for details) and exploring the perception of Indian managers about CSR. It then investigates the specific motivations of Indian agribusiness firms to pursue CSR. In the process it identifies and pays special attention towards firm's branding considerations as a motive to pursue CSR in order to address the research issue at hand. Finally, it also provides a commentary on the funding of CSR as an outcome of the firm's motive to pursue CSR.

7.2 Data analysis

The data was investigated with the help of content analysis. Content analysis has been defined as a systematic, replicable technique for compressing many words of text into fewer content categories based on explicit rules of coding (Weber, 1990). A content analysis goes far beyond simple word count. However a simple word count indicates that the words that are mentioned most often are the words that reflect the greatest concerns (Stemler, 2001). A preliminary examination was carried out through a word count query function available in N-Vivo 10. This function enables us to identify key words used most frequently or infrequently by the interviewees. The result of its application is shown in Table 7.1. However, word lists and word counts take words out of their original context. A Key Word in Context (KWIC) approach addresses this problem. KWIC is a data analysis method that reveals how

Drivers of CSR in Indian Agribusiness

Word	Count
CSR	656
company	441
activity	398
brand	277
community	262
product	209
image	148
benefit	132
marketing	129
reputation	123
business	107
government	95
sustainable	92
problem	84
strategy	83
corporate	82
impact	79
farmers	79
development	78
health	70
education	69
program	68
training	62
environment	59
directly	59
Society	56
positive	56
plant	56
measuring	52
implementation	52
contribution	50
publicity	43
industry	42
NGO	41
fund	41
association	41
participate	36
skill	33
trust	32

Word	Count
anning	32
social	31
agriculture	30
media	27
voluntarily	26
investment	26
policy	25
culture	24
budget	24
priority	20
stakeholder	15
health	15
charity	15
protest	14
mandatory	14
visibility	13
pressure	13
SHG	12
regulation	12
philanthropy	12
participatory	11
hospital	10
agribusiness	10
poor	9
livelihood	9
resistance	8
firm	8
feedback	8
rapport	7
prioritise	7
PRA	7
eyewash	7
legal	7
beneficiaries	7
tax	5
compliance	4
committee	4
benchmark	4
religious	3

Table 7.1: Word Count

respondents use words in context and can also help in identifying underlying connections that the participant was implying through her/his speech (Fielding and Lee, 1998).

7.3 Understanding of CSR

This section explores the general understanding of CSR by Indian managers interviewed in the course of this project. Their perception regarding CSR allows investigating the specific motives of the Indian agribusiness firms behind pursuing CSR activities.

One of the most frequently occurring key words is 'community' (used 262 times). This word has attracted the attention of the researcher because CSR literature recognises the importance of 'community' in the context of defining CSR. For example, World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and Watts and Holme (1999) focus on community and lifestyle development while defining CSR (see section 2.9 in Chapter 2).

The findings of this study indicate that all sampled firms have been engaged in community development activities as part of their CSR initiatives. The analysis of the interview transcripts reveals that 'community development' has now become central to the concept and understanding of CSR in India. For example, the Vice President (Marketing and Sales) of firm 'C' states:

CSR is a consistent effort by the firm to develop a community and give back to the community which is bringing you profit.²

In turn, a senior marketing manager of firm 'A' says:

²Here and everywhere else in the text the quotes from the interviews preserve unedited the manner of speech and the vocabulary of the respondents

CSR is basically for making the life better of the community so that your business practices ...whatever you are doing should be continued.

The preliminary evidence implies that 'community development' activities are concerned with lifestyle improvement of the community.

It may be noted that these excerpts carry a whiff of 'sustainability' approach of CSR which has been discussed later in the chapter. It is interesting to note that the 'community development' and 'lifestyle improvement' notions are overlaid with philanthropic tone. For example, the General Manager (Marketing) of firm 'D' explains:

We are doing CSR just to improve the life of people and for those who need some kind of help.

Similarly, a Senior Manager (Marketing Services) of firm 'A' states:

CSR is not only giving money, not only doling out, it is basically for making the life better.

The analysis of the interview transcripts reveals that some managers use the word 'CSR' and 'community development' interchangeably. Hence, it would be useful to understand what perception of a 'community' the managers have. According to the Associate Vice President (Corporate Affairs) of firm 'A':

Community could be the people residing near the manufacturing plant, the people who have lost their land to the firm for setting up the manufacturing plant, farmers doing cultivation in the vicinity of

manufacturing plant. When CSR is done in a marketplace, the community can comprise the labourers engaged in the supply chain, sales people and the customer.

Thus the community is a broad set of people affected by firm's CSR activity. This perception of community is corroborated by other managers as well.

When the 'community' involves more stakeholders (such as sales person, supply chain workers, vendors and customer), the scope of the CSR activity also expands. For example, the Associate Vice President (corporate affairs) of firm 'A' points out:

Off late the understanding of CSR is expanding beyond manufacturing locations. Now we are undertaking CSR programs even for non – manufacturing locations such as market, wherever we have our supply chain arrangements, so labourers engaged in loading unloading and handling of material... we undertake CSR with them. Then in the market where the sales team is doing some marketing job, sometime some eye camp, animal camp, conducting farmer's programs. We have expanded... extended the definition of CSR now.

This perception of CSR seems to be closer to the definition given by WBCSD and Watts and Holme (1999) which makes special mention of 'community and lifestyle improvement' than the definition provided by European commission which asserts investment in human resources, environment and stakeholder relations.

The community centric perception of CSR appears to be typical of agribusiness because this is a sector which is heavily dependent upon the local community for agriculture and resource purpose. From CSR point of view, the firms' emphasis on community development and lifestyle improvement of community is probably a testimony that 'community' as a stakeholder is more valued than other stakeholder (such as customer, for example).

Another frequently occurring word is 'society'. Managers consider 'society' as a broader set encompassing the community, consumer, employee and other stakeholders. However, some managers do not distinguish between 'society' and 'community'. For example, one Senior Manager of firm 'A' said:

When you need the participation of society in terms of accepting the products and services manufactured at the plant, then the same people are going to be your consumer or customers. So, it is both ways... so, you are actually engaging them to set up the plant and then after you manufacture the product you are actually selling it to them. So, acceptance of your product is higher because you have engaged with them even before the start of the plant.

This dialogue highlights at least two important points. Firstly, it is evident that the manager is talking about the 'people' who participate in the community development work, construction work of the manufacturing plant and eventually become customer of the product manufactured from the plant. This set of people comprise of the community who live in the vicinity of the manufacturing plant. Thus, for managers the 'community' may

take a form of the 'society' for CSR purpose. This interpretation allows analysing the dynamics of the community in the light of social theories. Secondly, it may be construed that community development activities are also motivated by the business performance and market needs. This leads to the conclusion that CSR in Indian agribusiness is in agreement with the instrumental aspect of the CSR theory which deals with the ways in which the firm can manage its relationship with its various stakeholders and with designing a strategy through which this relationship can ultimately benefit business performance (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Jones *et al.*, 2012).

Thus, CSR activities of Indian agribusiness firms are centred on community development activities which main goal is to improve the lifestyle of the community. In return the society provides necessary social environment and acceptance of the business within the social framework. This corroborates the existence of an implicit social contract that makes business act in accordance with society's expectations or demands (Kuznetsov and Kuznetsova, 2012).

Understanding CSR from the manager's point of view not only reflects what CSR actually means to firms but also what motivates firms to pursue CSR. These preliminary evidences provide useful guidance for in-depth analysis of the motives of agribusiness firms to pursue CSR which have been discussed in subsequent paragraphs.

7.4 Motives of CSR

This section focuses on uncovering the explicit and implicit motives of the firms to pursue CSR. The perception, personal values and the belief system of Indian managers provide a foundation and a starting point to investigate the key motives behind pursuing CSR activities. The content analysis brings out some common occurrence across the firms that

have been categorised to produce six key sub themes (see figure 6.6 in chapter 6) of the main theme – drivers of CSR as follows:

- (a) Smooth operation of plant
- (b) Community development
- (c) Resources sustainability
- (d) Legal compliance
- (e) Philanthropy/charity
- (g) Branding

These sub themes are examined next.

7.4.1 Smooth operation of manufacturing plants

One of the key themes emerging from the interview data is the firm's intention to use CSR for 'smooth operation of its manufacturing plants'. When a firm approaches a community for setting up a manufacturing plant or business, it may face a lot of negative and aggressive behaviour from the community. Our data reveal that firms use CSR to reduce the negative and aggressive behaviours of the community. As the Head of CSR of firm 'B' said:

You use CSR because there is always some issue with the local community.

The Associate Vice president (Corporate Affairs) of firm 'A' explains:

I mean...the CSR activity starts first. Before you lay the foundation stone you know... CSR activity starts at that time. Largely because you

actually will find that that in a large setup of this nature... you will find initially there will be lot of aggressive behaviour of local community... when you starts doing something different, which actually impact their daily routine life. In order to bring down that aggressive attitude you start working with them and talking with them along and, you know, communicating with them. That is important because then you start engaging with them, then lot of unnecessary hurdles are already negotiated.

Here it is interesting to note that firms use CSR as an effective communication mechanism to gain the support of the community in order to reduce their negative attitude. As 'communication' is an essential ingredient in branding, 'CSR as a communication mechanism' ought to have branding implications that have been described in section 8.4.6

In particular, environmentally hazardous industries such as chemicals and fertiliser face more challenges when acquiring land for setting up of manufacturing unit because of concerns regarding the protection the soil, water and the environment in general. In addition firms may face legal and operational hurdles. In such cases, firms use CSR to reduce local resistance by gaining support from the local community.

If you do CSR, the community is very much supportive of whatever you are doing and you don't face any road blocks in terms of construction activity, unnecessary legal issue, and any or those kinds of hassles. [CSR] is not only to reduce negative attitude or aggressive behaviour of community, but also to gain support and cooperation in firm's activity.

(Associate Vice President, Corporate Affairs- Firm 'A')

Thus, CSR activities allow firms gaining support of the community, which in turn facilitates setting up a manufacturing plant and running it. However, to achieve this, firms must take care of the well-being of the local community and the environment as described in excerpts below:

You cannot damage environment and do business. That will not go.

(Senior Manager, Marketing Services- Firm 'A')

If you have done some good work for the community in the past then community will support you, but if you are totally aloof then you will have to face lot of resistance from the community.

(Head of CSR, Firm 'D')

Hence, if a firm is not sensitive towards the community or the environment then it may face a lot of resistance from the members of the community. This implies that firms do not have the freedom to do business at the cost of damaging environment even if they are active in pursuing CSR. Hence, if a firm's CSR activity were concerned with only social issues such as education, health and poverty and not environmental issues then the firm would still face stiff resistance to its operation creating difficulties for its operation. The central government generally relies on regulations to handle environmental issues. However, these regulations tend to cover only broader and larger issues allowing firms to find loopholes that make it possible to ignore local environmental concerns when designing environmental CSR programs. In this situation, the local community may not be content with the firm's action. It is unlikely that firms could ignore the opinion of the community justifying their action with references to legal compliance because for firms

community is a very important stakeholder. Firms, therefore, attempt to align their CSR activities with the environmental issues as perceived by the community.

This creates a win-win situation for both the firm and the community. This is how, in this context it may be inferred that Indian agribusiness firms, by adopting CSR programs, seek to legitimize their business activities (Suchman, 1995; Kuznetsov and Kuznetsova, 2012). This finding is in line with the prevalent notion in the literature (Rondinelli and Berry, 2000) that CSR can be used to reduce the negative externalities of the operation.

Successful management of organisational legitimacy contributes to corporate survival (Palazzo and Scherer, 2006, p. 74). In other words, securing legitimacy is a resource that contributes to the corporation's continued existence. The interview data corroborates this notion.

I would say that CSR activity is very much linked to the existence of the firm.

(Associate Vice President -Corporate Affairs of Firm 'A')

CSR – [starts] before the plant is set up. [Due to CSR] Firm 'B' is here [it became possible to set up the plant near Delhi].

(Head of CSR of Firm 'B')

If there is no CSR then in the long run it [the firm] will have problem. Sure. That [CSR] is required.

(General Manager, Marketing, Firm 'D')

Within this perspective, the researcher examines CSR as a 'license to operate' in the context of agribusiness (Hiss, 2009). The notion of CSR as a 'license to operate' is derived from the fact that every company needs either tacit or explicit permission from the government, communities and numerous other stakeholders to do business (Porter and Kramer, 2006). It assumes that by engaging in CSR activities firms get such permission and attain the right to operate the business. Many authors consider 'license to operate' to be a more pragmatic and useful strategy for firm's existence and operation because it offers a more concrete way to identify social issues that matter to stakeholders and make decision about it (Porter and Kramer, 2006). However, the evidence of this study indicates that in some cases firms may exploit CSR for their own advantage as follows from the words of the Vice President (Marketing and Sales) of firm 'C':

There are companies, which have got their acceptance in the community just because of CSR initiatives. So there are lot of places where people will not accept you ... especially if [they] see most of the companies, which are environmentally not so safe ... they have got their acceptance of their plant and their establishment in those area just because they did lot of CSR.

In other words, firms may still be environmentally unsafe but they try to legitimize own business activity by offering carrot of CSR in the form of incentives to the community. However, the evidence also indicates that such tactics of diverting attention of the community through CSR may not always be successful as articulated by Head of CSR of firm 'A'.

The community is not ... 'foolish'... if we are doing something wrong...

Simple example...we have a chemical plant and if we are polluting the area... and the community... and the company wants stop the protest of the community because company is giving something in [the form of] CSR... No. It is not that way. No, it is not that way.

Thus, even if a firm is addressing, through its CSR programmes, some social issues such as health and literacy, but it is not sensitive towards the local environment, soil, water conditions and livelihood engagements or engage in some transgressions, then the community may not support the firm's operations. In consequence, despite its involvement in CSR, a firm may not be able to offset the dissent and resentment of the community in the event of environmental callousness or some wrong doing. This phenomenon is even more pronounced in a crisis situation as the General Manager (CSR) of firm 'C' reveals:

If there is a crisis situation, then CSR can do nothing. CSR is a preventive mechanism, not a corrective mechanism.

Therefore, in a crisis situation, CSR might not have any positive impact. On the contrary, as one manager of firm 'A' puts 'It might boomerang': CSR activities done in crisis situation are likely to be viewed by the community as firm being 'opportunistic', consequently damaging the brand image and reputation. This could be more pronounced when the negative impact of the firm's operation is more apparent to the community. Instead, the manager insists that the firm should adopt proactive CSR and focus on rectifying operational mistakes in order to prevent such occurring.

Therefore, the evidence of this study raises a question mark over the current practices of gaining organisational legitimacy. In addition, the findings of this study are a step forward in identifying the exigent conditions in Indian agribusiness which poses threat to the application of ‘CSR as a license to operate’ concept. Therefore, it can be concluded that ‘CSR as a license to operate’ is probably still a farfetched idea in the context of Indian agribusiness. By stirring a debate on the topic, this research opens a new line of enquiry and contributes significantly to the extant literature.

Finally, the word ‘sustainable’ has attracted the attention of the researcher. Several authors (e.g., Batres *et al.*, 2010) have identified similarities between CSR and sustainable development. The Brundtland report (1987) defines ‘sustainable development’ as meeting the needs of the present (generation) without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs. United Nations (2005) identifies economic development, social development and environmental protection as three integrated elements of sustainable development. In this sense, all sustainable development initiatives can be labelled as CSR initiatives (Batres *et al.*, 2010).

The interview data suggest that Indian agribusiness firms appear to be concerned with ‘sustainable development’ and CSR has a major role to play in it.

Associate Vice President (Corporate Affairs) of firm ‘A’ says

I would say that we are always very cautious about whatever activity we do, whatever business opportunity we explore. We examine the business opportunity on three parameters. One is in what way it is going to be socially beneficial, what way it is going to be economically beneficial in

terms of income and lifestyle of people and third is how it is going to impact the environment.

This evidence is in line with Annual Report (2014) of firm 'A' which claims that the firm's activities strictly adhere to the *Triple Bottom Line* approach of sustainability which includes economic, social and environmental parameters to evaluate the feasibility of a business opportunity.

The manager continues:

If you try to exist without that [CSR] it is not possible. I mean, you can exist for some time, but at some point of time it is going to boomerang.

The findings suggest that a firm will not be sustainable or would face stiff resistance and negative reaction from the community if it chooses not to practice CSR. Therefore, firms attempt to adopt a sustainability approach that secure long-term economic performance by avoiding short-term behaviour that is socially detrimental and environmentally wasteful (Porter and Kramer, 2006).

It must be noted that some authors, e.g., Porter and Kramer (2006), are wary of a sustainability approach on the ground that it is less pragmatic because it requires managers to trade-off between the demand of meeting long-term objectives and incurring short-term cost. This study, on the contrary, emphasises that sustainability approach is pragmatic for sectors that are more prone to be criticized for environmental issues, such as chemical and fertiliser industry.

In summary, this study illuminates that through CSR agribusiness firms gain support of the community that facilitates not only the existence of the firm in the region but also acceptance within the community for smooth operation of the manufacturing units along with few riders such as sensitivity towards the need of the community and avoidance of any wrong doing. Additionally, the study recognises CSR as a critical component in the process of smooth functioning of manufacturing plants. Hence, this finding corroborate to the conceptualisation of CSR as a business process oriented construct.

7.4.2. Community development

The basic rationale behind firms pursuing CSR programmes that target community development is expressed by a Senior Manager (Marketing Services) of Firm 'A' and echoed by most other managers:

If society is not doing well you cannot do well.

As discussed in section 7.3., all sample firms attach importance to community development as part of their CSR activities. The agribusiness sector heavily depends upon local communities for agriculture land, agriculture activity and for buying agriculture inputs and products. In the context of developing countries community development (CD) refers to initiatives undertaken by community in partnership with external organisations or business entities to empower individuals and groups of people by providing them with the skills they need to effect change in their own communities (Ismail, 2009). The United Nations (United Nations, 1971) offers a similar characterisation of CD as an organized effort of individuals in a community conducted in such a way as to help solve community problems with a minimum help from external organisations. Both these descriptions emphasise the community effort to own and sustain the community development activities.

The analysis of the interview transcripts reveals that most Indian firms do comply with the ‘community participation’ aspect of the definitions of community development. For instance, the managers interpret the meaning of community development as ‘involvement’ of the community in development programs:

Our CSR programs are participatory in nature. All our programs involve the community participation. (Head of CSR of firm ‘B’)

The participation of the community is an indication that the community is interested in these CSR activities because they see some tangible benefits in them. In addition, the participation of the community ensures that it gradually acquires a larger stake in community development programs. As firms withdraw from those particular CSR activities, the community becomes responsible for taking the activity forward. In this sense, community development activities are owned by the community and finally the activities become sustainable in the long run (see section 9.2. in Chapter 9 for more detail).

Emphasising the importance of ‘participation’ in the Annual report of year 2013-14, the president states in the President’s message: ‘The fulcrum of Firm A’s successful implementation of development programs is its participatory approach. This has been at the core of Firm A's interventions since inception’.

Another aspect of community development relates to ‘improvement of lifestyle of the community’. As described in section 6.2., Indian agribusiness firms have an explicit agenda of improving the lifestyle of the community through CSR.

CSR is helping to connect with the community, understand their lifestyle and their difficulties in day-to-day life. CSR is helping to improve the life of the people. (Senior Manager-HR of firm 'C')

In turn, firms also use CSR for 'building good relation with the community,' which generates marketing and branding benefits.

CSR is an activity, which brings the firm and the people closer. It bridges the gap between them. It makes a kind of bonding between the two. (Senior Marketing Manager of Firm 'D')

CSR also gives benefit to marketing through good relation with community. (Marketing Manager of Firm 'B')

Acceptance of your product is higher because you have engaged with them [community] even before the start of the plant.

(Associate Vice President, Corporate Affairs of Firm 'A')

It may be noted that firms use CSR as a 'communication tool' to interact with the community, build rapport and maintain harmony (see section 8.5 in chapter 8 for more detail). Our analysis indicates that CSR activities help firms in building good relation with the community and establishes a positive bonding.

7.4.3. Resource sustainability

By 'resource sustainability' this study means that some firms want to continuously meet their raw material needs through involvement in CSR. This study found that one of the

main motives of firm 'B' to engage in CSR activities was to ensure 'resource sustainability':

CSR is a key thing for sustainability. For example, timber companies can't survive if they do not get the raw material from forest. That is true for us also. For resource sustainability you must do CSR.

(Head of CSR- Firm 'B')

The manager adds that they aided the community to form a self-help group for making vermin compost which is used as an input in the farming operation of the firm. He continues:

As part of CSR programs, [the community] formed self-help groups. We set up vermin compost [organic manure] units. Now for entire area, they [the community] provide vermin compost to the firm.

Against the backdrop of strict forest regulations, it is very difficult for firms to procure natural resources such as exotic herbs and medicinal plants. Hence firm 'B' provides assistance to farmers who help to grow the rare herbs in the green house which otherwise is very difficult to procure.

The firm employ members of the community in a green house and implement extensive community development programmes such as literacy drive, skill development and agriculture development activities as part of CSR.

In return, firm get the raw material at a predetermined price and provides all the technical knowhow, training and resources for growing rare herbs. This is used as a raw material for the firm. In return, this type of engagement helps in building good relation with communities. In this manner firm 'B' practices CSR activities to ensure that it gets uninterrupted supply of its raw material from the forest and agriculture land.

The extant literature does not recognise this important motive of Indian agribusiness firms to pursue CSR. This is a significant contribution of this study that may have substantial policy implications. It should be noted that firm 'B' is into herbal and natural products procured from the forest and agricultural activities in mountainous areas. It may be possible that such motives are unique for agribusiness firms which are heavily dependent upon natural resources as a source of raw material. The implication of this are elaborated further in chapter 10. This finding seems to be an altogether completely new insight that has not been discussed in the literature.

7.4.4. Tax benefit and legal compliance

Compliance with the law means operating at a minimum level of acceptable conduct. It has often been said that law is at the floor level of acceptable behaviour (Carroll, 1998). The analysis of the interview transcripts reveals that the CSR programme of firm 'C' and 'D' is mainly motivated by 'legal compliance'.

. Currently, it [CSR] is only for compliance.

(Senior Vice President-Marketing and Sales of Firm 'C')

If there is no fear of compliance than you will not do anything. If firms are not afraid of compliance then they will not pay even taxes.

(The Vice President -CSR of Firm 'C')

Currently, in India the companies are focused on Here and Now ...

CSR is a long drawn process...Unless and until you are a leader, you cannot do CSR activities for marketing benefit.

(Senior Vice President, Marketing and Sales of Firm 'C')

CSR is done for meeting statutory requirements and tax saving.

(General Manager, Marketing of Firm 'D')

It may be noted that firm 'C' and 'D' are facing extreme pressure to reduce cost and increase profitability. Senior Vice President of Firm 'C' said:

We as a company... today we are not making much money. In terms of the whole tractor industry,...if I have to take the leader, they make about 18-19% EBITA (Earnings before interest and taxes and amortization). They are number one. And when we make lesser EBITA that means our costs are very high. The smallest among the Indian player makes about 21 % EBITA. We make about 9 % EBITA. So, we are very inefficient in a sense.

He continues:

Our costs are high because of inherent problem ...because we are very old company in a same place. So, our manpower cost is the biggest burden which we have. So, if the industry standard is about 4 % manpower we are about 10 % manpower. So, our manpower costs are very high.

We try to keep our cost very low because we are under tremendous pressure to cut cost

(Manager – Marketing, Firm ‘D’)

These firms (C and D) do not seem to be pursuing large scale CSR programs beyond legal compliance. By contrast, firms ‘A’ and ‘B’ view ‘legal compliance’ as a threshold level to pursue CSR and go beyond what is mandated by the law. The Vice President (corporate communication) of firm ‘B’ states:

We are already doing [in terms of CSR] more than what is mandated by the law.

It is interesting to note that views of managers of firms C and D are in contrast with the views expressed by managers of firm ‘A’ and ‘B’ who consider CSR as critical for existence. For deeper insights, the characteristics of these firms should be noticed. Firm ‘A’ deals mainly in chemical and fertiliser which is much more susceptible to environmental controversies. Firm ‘B’ relies heavily on natural and forest products for its resource sustainability. In order to fulfil firm’s self-interest, the role of CSR increases in both cases. Therefore, firms ‘A’ and ‘B’ go beyond legal compliance in pursuance of CSR. In turn, Firm ‘C’ is environmentally safe, and firm ‘D’ and ‘C’ operate on a low profit margin (see section 6.4.3 and 6.5.3 in Chapter 6 for more detail). Thus it can be inferred that firms that are environmentally safe or operate on low profit margin are less likely to pursue CSR beyond legal compliance. Consequently, this study reveals that in the regard to legal compliance, there are at least three important factors according to which firms

determines the scope of CSR, i.e., the nature of agri-business, the degree of the environmental susceptibility of the firm and the net profit margin of the firm.

The literature is upbeat by the notion that upright corporate citizen must go beyond mere compliance with the law (Carroll, 1998). In this context the word 'voluntarily' draws the attention of the researcher as contemporary notions of CSR practices emphasise the voluntary component of CSR and perceive CSR practices as actions that go beyond those prescribed by statutory norms (Carroll, 1979; Davis, 1973; McWilliams and Siegel, 2001).

As the Vice President (Corporate communication) of firm 'B' maintains:

CSR is something which you should do and do it voluntarily out of your own sense.

Another Senior Manager of firm 'A' states:

Yes! [CSR] It is voluntarily kind of thing. When activity is there an e-mail is floated and those who feel that I have to go depending upon their personal occupancy on a particular day, people go on voluntarily.

Though there is no denying of the fact that 'voluntary CSR' is the spirit of CSR, in India, the regulatory pressure from the government has made it obligatory to pursue CSR. According to the new Indian Companies Act 2013 Clause 135, 'Every company having net worth of rupees five hundred crore or more, or turnover of rupees one thousand crore or more or a net profit of rupees five crore or more during any financial year shall ensure that the company spends, in every financial year, at least two per cent of the average net profits of the company made during the three immediately preceding financial years, in

pursuance of corporate social responsibility activities' (See Appendix 5 for more detail). This mandatory nature of CSR compliance serves as a preventive mechanism that keeps firms from unduly benefiting as a result of the current inefficient and unaccountable system. In other words, making CSR obligatory is one way of ensuring that there is no free ride for corporations (Priyono, 2007 as cited in Waagstein, 2011). Prominent CSR researchers consider regulation as a natural adjunct to improving the social performance of business (Porter and van der Linde, 2000, p. 156). However, literature suggests that it is unlikely that governmental regulatory pressures can be counted upon to promote CSR outcomes at the industry and firm levels (Haigh and Jones, 2000). In the Indian context, where CSR is legally obligatory, this study, on the contrary, suggests that through ensuring widespread compliance to regulations, competing firms may be motivated to spend more on CSR in order to gain competitive advantage in terms of acceptance of firm's operation by the public, as the Vice President of firm 'B' points out:

As the activities have scaled up the budget has moved up accordingly. It was never kept with 2 % cap in mind. Before the regulation came, we were over and above the 2 % cap. I have no intention to bring it down to 2 % and reduce the scale of my activity. I am very content with what I am doing and what I am spending. Because if I decide to pull out an activity, it will be very bad for the community,

This implies that regulatory pressure may also be considered as a mechanism of promoting CSR or motivating the firms to pursue CSR

7.4.5. Philanthropy/ Charity

Aroara and Puranik (2004) argue that in India activities undertaken in the name of CSR are merely philanthropic or an extension of philanthropy. Philanthropy is commonly believed to be a desire to help human kind through act of charity (Carroll, 1998). Many Indian managers consider CSR to be very similar to philanthropy.

CSR is a pure philanthropic kind of activity. We are not seeing any commercial benefit or any long term or short term image building kind of exercise. (The General Manager of Firm 'D')

What is the life worth which cannot bring comfort to others?

(Founder of Firm 'B' - Stated by VP -Cor. Communication)

CSR is restricted to charity. It is considered to be that you are doing something because you should return back to the society.

(Vice President, Sales and Marketing- Firm 'C')

Unlike firms 'A' and 'B', which have more strategic motives, firms 'C' and 'D' are driven largely by philanthropic motives. There is a marked difference in the approach of firms 'C' and 'D' compared to firm 'A' and 'B' which practice more of strategic CSR. It may be noted that, when discussing philanthropy and charity, managers of firm 'D' and 'C' do not link CSR with the image building and branding. This is in contrast to firm 'A' and 'B', in which 'image and reputation' is the implicit sine quo none of CSR. Hence, firms that have a more philanthropic orientation towards CSR are less likely to link CSR with the brand as compared to firms that have a strategic orientation of CSR.

One common perception among managers of all the sampled firms is expressed with the ubiquitous phrase ‘giving back/return back’ (see Table 6.2).

The interviews support the position expressed in the literature about the role of the ‘return back’ philosophy as a driver of CSR. This notion of ‘giving back to the society or community’ is in line with the existing literature conforming to the moral and philanthropic dimension of CSR (Carroll, 1979).

<i>Firm</i>	<i>Exemplary Quotes</i>
A	‘CSR is whatever you take from the community – <i>give back</i> to the community’
C	‘CSR is a consistent effort by the firm to develop a community and <i>give back</i> to the community which is bringing you profit’.
B	‘ CSR is <i>giving back</i> to the society’
D	‘We have some obligation towards society because we are taking something from the society (either land, or affecting the environment). If we are earning some amount from the society so we should <i>give back some part</i> to the society’.
D	‘CSR is restricted to charity. It is considered to be that you are doing something because you should <i>return back</i> to the society’.

Table: 7.2: ‘Giving back’ as a motive of CSR

Philanthropic giving, frequently manifested through corporate contributions, is an activity that many in the business community loosely equate with corporate citizenship. That is a good corporate citizens ‘give back’ to the community, in which they reside or maintain offices (Carroll, 1998). Good citizenship is sine qua non of CSR, and companies need to do it well (Porter and Kramer, 2006). Regardless of the motive, good corporate citizens engage in philanthropic giving and strive to make their communities and stakeholders better off (Carroll, 1998). Carroll mentions different types of corporate citizenship and argue they are interrelated despite the fact that they are in frequent tension with each other. However, in this situation firms have the widest scope of discretionary judgment and

choice, in terms of deciding on specific activities or philanthropic contributions that are aimed at giving back to society (Jamali and Mirshak, 2007). The roots of this type of responsibility lie in the belief that business and society are intertwined in an organic way (Frederick, 1994).

However, this study emphasise that the trend of CSR's motive in Indian agribusiness is slowly changing from 'philanthropy' to 'self-interests'. For example, while managers of firm 'C' and 'D' still attach much importance to charity and philanthropy respectively (Table 7.2), firm 'B' gradually embraced community development activities for meeting its raw material needs (see section 7.4.3) in spite of being initially guided by philanthropic motive. Similarly, firm 'A' is fully engaged in CSR activities for reasons other than charity and philanthropy.

Finally, an interesting insight is about the existing notion in the literature that Indian CSR had been guided by religious thoughts and sentiments (Muniapan and Dass *et al.*, 2008). This study notify that the trend of linking CSR with religious thoughts is finally fading away fast among big agribusiness firms because the firms are realising that these activities may alienate certain section of society as mentioned by the Senior Vice President (Marketing and Sales) of firm 'C'.

Good companies don't. But some time some companies do commit a mistake by linking CSR with religious events. The other section gets alienated.

Thus, big firms are refraining from this approach to CSR.

7.4.6 Branding

The content analysis of the interview transcripts reveal that there is a definite and emerging trend, though not so evident, of use of CSR by agribusiness firms for branding benefit. Most interviewed managers agree that CSR has long-term benefit in terms of building better brand equity.

Non-tangibles benefits are many and non-tangibles are..., you know, in terms of creating a good... feel, good about the company ...branding.

(Associate Vice president, Corporate Affairs, Firm 'A')

Company gets long-term benefit - brand image.

(Brand Manager of Firm 'B')

Long-term benefits would be in terms of better brand equity.

(Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Firm 'C')

CSR is something, which is done in a positive way. So, it will create positive impact. And it will give boost to the positive image of the company. (Marketing Manager of Firm 'D')

This finding is in line with the extant literature that emphasises that CSR helps in building brand equity (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2001). The study's finding also brings to notice that there could also be short-term marketing benefits related to an increase in the sales of the product.

Short term benefit of CSR can be... increase in sale in a particular area or something like that. In new territory, it could be better brand recognition. (Marketing Manager of Firm 'C')

This means that, when firms launch its business activities in a new territory, managers implement CSR programs in anticipation of improved brand recognition in that territory. In addition, CSR can also help to induce product trial.

People know us because of various CSR activities and they have a positive image about us later on through another arm if we extend our distribution over there and introduce new product, they easily accept it on trial. They start trying the product.

(Marketing Manager of Firm 'Ç')

Whenever any crisis happens and you have positive image about the firm, then it would help to easily get out of the crises.

(Senior HR Manager of Firm 'Ç')

I think CSR activities help to create a security net around the firm.

(Marketing Manager of Firm 'C')

This 'security net' refers to the influence of CSR to build strong brand equity that can thwart any negative impact of firm's activity. This brings to an interesting insinuation that negative externalities of firm's operation may be reduced through the route of strong brand equity created by CSR activities.

The interview data suggest that firms seek to generate goodwill and brand visibility through CSR. However, managers are hesitant to declare that CSR has any branding or public relation motive. For example, a Vice President (Corporate communication) of firm 'B' states:

We have been doing CSR since 1994, but we have never spoken about it.

When asked if CSR is a public relation ploy, The Vice President (marketing and Sales) of firm 'C' reacts:

No, CSR is not eyewash! No, it is not eyewash! It is restricted to charity.

A slightly divergent viewpoint is the managers' opinion that CSR is an opportunity that firms can use for branding and community development purpose. For example, Head of CSR in firm 'C' states:

My personal opinion is that CSR is an opportunity ...in the hands of corporate and the industry... to leverage from both the angle to contribute to the society and to showcase to the society... that how they are contributing and ... use the platform to promote their product ...and it is a platform where they can interact with the society to understand their requirements and come up with the proposal for the development of society as well as align their product with the community.

This aspiration and implicit notion are closer to the view of Bowen (1953), who perceived CSR as an opportunity for firms to increase their benefits, than to the view of Levitt (1958), who wrote: ‘government’s job is not business, and business’s job is not government’ (p.47) and of Friedman (1962) that a company’s only social responsibility was to pursuit maximization of returns for their shareholders within the boundaries set by law. The findings of this study reveals that firms intend to use CSR as an opportunity in terms of providing a platform to launch activities which are beneficial for the brand.

In summary, the interview data reveal that agribusiness firms have implicit motives of branding and brand visibility while pursuing CSR. This brings to the first key finding of this research that:

Finding 1: Strengthening the brand is a hidden motive of Indian agribusiness firm in pursuing CSR primarily by way of improving brand visibility through CSR. The key motive of Indian agribusiness firms to pursue CSR is ‘smooth functioning of manufacturing plants and its business’ by way of negotiating operational hurdles through ensuring community participation.

This finding addresses first two research objectives mentioned in chapter 1.

In sum, this study highlights that Indian agribusiness firms have explicit and implicit motives to pursue CSR. Explicit motive of CSR refers to voluntary programs and strategies driven primarily by self-interest that address issues of CSR (Matten and Moon, 2008, p. 409). Implicit CSR is embedded in various relationships among business, society, and government within the political system, and is represented by strong values, norms, and rules or regulations which require corporations to address stakeholder issues (Matten and

Moon, 2008, p. 409). Thus, traditionally, implicit CSR is perceived as mandatory or customary, and explicit CSR as voluntary. This study highlights that Indian agribusiness have explicit motives such as ‘smooth operation of manufacturing plants’, community development and philanthropic activities. The implicit motives of pursuing CSR by Indian agribusiness firms are branding, legal compliance and resource sustainability. Figure 7.1 represents the current form of explicit and implicit motives of Indian agribusiness firms to pursue CSR.

The Figure 7.1 represents that ‘smooth operation of manufacturing plant’ and ‘community development’ activities are main motives of agriculture input, chemical and fertiliser, and natural resource based firms. Resource sustainability is an important implicit motive of firm based on natural resources and forest product. Branding is a powerful implicit motive of all the firms in agribusiness. Legal compliance remains an implicit motive of all the firms.

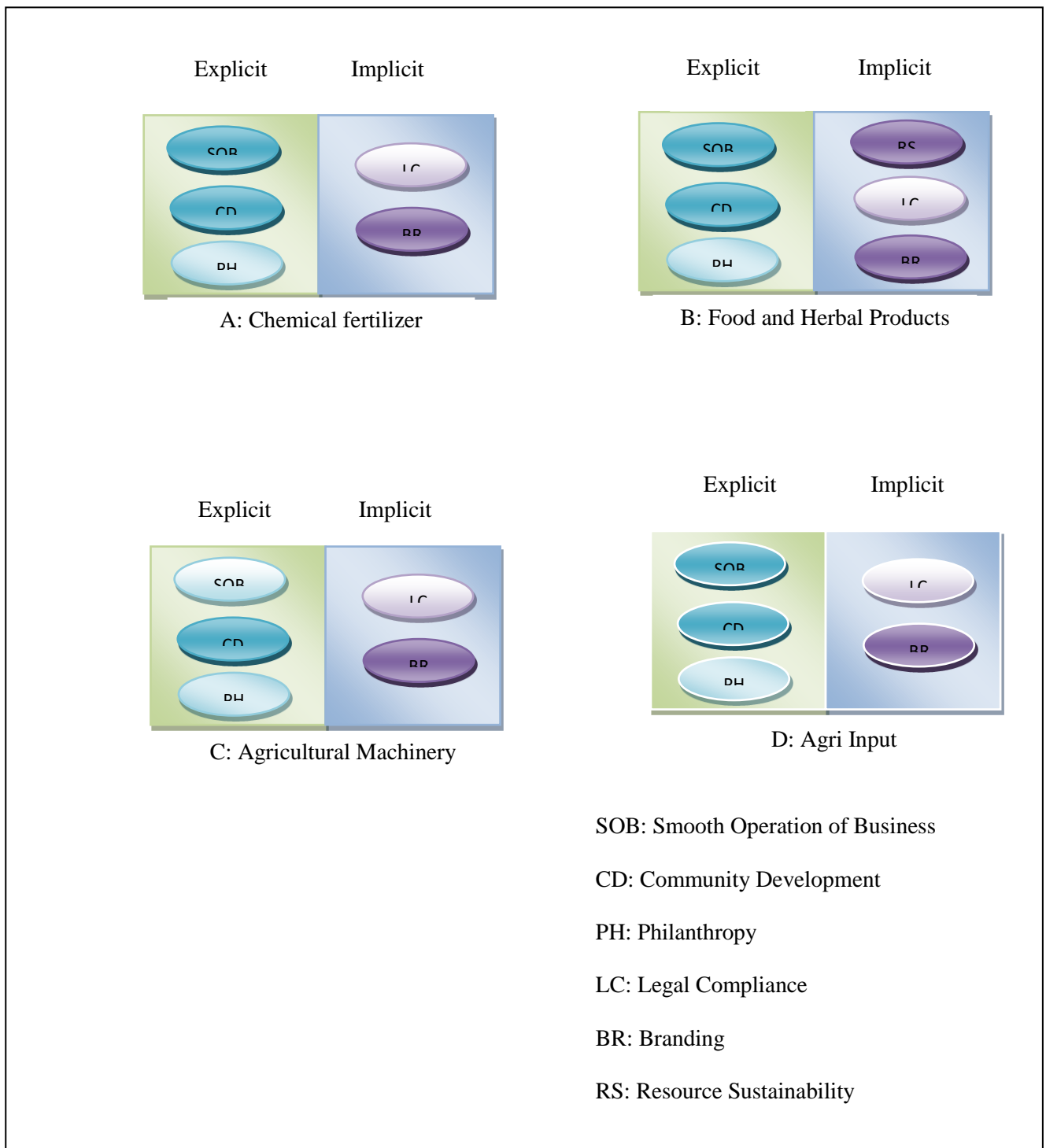


Figure 7.1: Drivers of CSR in Indian agribusiness

7.5 Funding of CSR

The collected data indicate that the extent and the magnitude of funding of CSR activities depend upon the nature of the firm’s intent in pursuing CSR. For example, if the company is interested in doing the groundwork for setting up a plant, then it will require a huge fund to take care of issues related to land acquisition, rehabilitation and livelihood of the displaced community etc. However, if the firm intends to get only branding benefits by showcasing CSR, then the budget would be small and limited to launching awareness campaign and visibility drive for the brand. Hence, the firm’s long-term or short-term intent is instrumental in determining the extent of funding for CSR. Table 7.3 provides evidence for this.

<i>Firms’ intent</i>	<i>Exemplary quotes</i>	<i>Funding magnitude</i>
Ground work for setting up of plant	‘If you are going to set up a chemical plant, which is going to be very dangerous, or lot of inflammable items, or dangerous chemicals have to be stored, so company community around has to be covered in a larger area. And if it is going to be more manual intensive plant, then obviously your community will get smaller area because the impact of that will be different. So, accordingly your contribution gets determined’	large
Showcasing	‘It is more important that what is your intent, and you motive, you want to only showcase and demonstrate or you really want to make difference. If you really want to make a difference then the budget will get decided accordingly’	small

Table 7.3: Funding of CSR as an indicator of motives of CSR

The mechanism of getting funds for CSR differs in different organisation. This brings up two important questions about what determines the amount of funding in a firms and what the mechanisms of getting the funds are.

How the funding is determined?

The funding of the CSR project at firm 'A' depends upon the nature of the project and the number of beneficiaries involved. A manager of firm 'A' states:

It all depends on the definition of the community which you target. It is like if I am targeting to benefit... you require certain minimum level of investment to bring that difference in their lifestyle.

In firm 'B', the funding is driven by the identified needs of the community in order to maintain good relation with the community. In this regard a manager states:

As the activities have scaled up the budget has move up accordingly. It was never kept with 2 % cap in mind. Even before the regulation came, we were over and above the 2 % cap. I have no intention to bring it down to 2 % and reduce the scale of my activity. I am very content with what I am doing and what I am spending because if I decide to pull out an activity, it will be very bad for the community.

Hence, the company invests money in CSR in order to maintain good relation with communities that are critical for managing raw material resources for the firm.

In firm 'C' the budget is decided by the owner or the managing body of the firm. The top management determines the type of CSR activities, on which these funds should be spent.

In turn, in firm 'D' the total budget is decided by the managing body and then it is

distributed among the individual unit's based on their profit. For example CSR Manager of firm 'D' states:

Corporate office funds the entire project and decides which of its unit will get how much money. Generally, budget in CSR activity is decided based on unit's profit. How many villages are there in the vicinity of the plant? What is the population of these villages? What is the requirement of the community?

Hence it is evident that Indian agribusiness firm do not have any fixed formula for deciding the budget.

What is the mechanism of getting funds?

The rural development society of firm 'A' is funded by the firm and many other external sources, including international funding bodies, the government and other agencies. Firm 'B' has an internal corpus fund for its CSR programs. Firms 'C' and 'D' invest the requisite amount in the CSR activities as prescribed under the *Company's Act and Regulations*. Budgets are approved by the board. Any surplus arriving out of a CSR an initiative is not used for the business of the firm, but reinvested towards its CSR programs.

Thus, the source of CSR fund and amount of fund differs according to the type of business agribusiness firm is into. In this study, it is found that agribusiness firms which are into environmentally susceptible business, such as chemical fertiliser and pesticides and do CSR on large scale get funding from external agencies and government bodies in addition to their own corpus fund. On the other hand, firms which are environmentally not so questionable, such as agriculture machinery, commodity trading and retail engage in small

scale CSR projects and primarily depend on their own corpus fund. It can be summarised as in Table 7.4

<i>Type of Firm</i>	<i>Source of Fund</i>	<i>Quantity of Fund</i>
Chemical Fertiliser, Agri input (A)	Company, External international agencies, government bodies	As per the project need
Food and Herbal (B)	Internal corpus, funding agencies	As per the project need
Tractors and Farm Machinery (C)	Internal	As prescribed under the Company's Act and regulation
Agri input, commodity and retail (D)	Internal	As prescribed under the Company's Act and regulation

Table: 7.4 Type of agribusiness firm and CSR funding

7.6 Conclusions

At the outset, the chapter presents the understanding developed by managers of Indian agribusiness sector about CSR. It is revealed that Indian managers regard as CSR mainly community development programs. The chapter then brings out six specific drivers that typically make Indian agribusiness firms pursue CSR. These are 'the smooth functioning of manufacturing plant and business', resource sustainability, community development, philanthropy, legal compliance and branding. It is revealed that some of these drivers are explicit while others are implicit. However, the business environment and tax regime in India is changing, compelling the Indian firms to mandatorily pursue CSR. In the light of growing tendency of firms to link CSR with branding and against the backdrop of traditional Indian culture and value system, in which philanthropy and charity are not the topics to talked about, this chapter brings one of the key findings of the research that branding is an implicit motive of Indian agribusiness firms in the pursuit of CSR.

CHAPTER 8

BRAND-CSR RELATIONS IN INDIAN AGRIBUSINESS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on uncovering significant relations between CSR and the key elements of corporate branding identified in this study, i.e., corporate image and reputation, corporate culture and corporate communication. In the process it also assesses the nature of impact of CSR on branding. It begins with identifying the preconditions for experiencing impact of CSR. It then critically analyses the brand CSR relations with the help of in-depth content analysis of the empirical data, and produces three key findings of this research. Finally, it draws inferences regarding futuristic intent of use of CSR as a strategy for strengthening branding in Indian agribusiness.

8.2 Preconditions for impact of CSR

The in-text search query in the context (KWIC) reveals that there are at least three conditions for CSR to make an impact on branding.

One of the most important requirements is that CSR should be a regular and consistent activity. As the Senior Vice President (Marketing and Sales) of firm 'C' affirms:

For long-term benefit it is essential that the CSR activities are done at a very regular interval and frequently. I think CSR has to be consistent because if you do for a while and move out then it causes more bad than what it causes good of doing an activity.

The Brand Manager of Firm 'A' supports:

Also for long-term benefit, it is essential that the CSR activities are done at a very regular interval and frequently. If you do one small activity and then forget then benefits are not going to come.

Most other managers in the sample firms agree with this outlook. From this perspective CSR becomes a form of investment (Mc Williams and Siegel, 2001), in which an ‘optimum’ level of CSR acquires critical importance for the firm.

Next, to make an impact on the brand, CSR should be noticeable and offer perceptible benefits to the community.

Unless and until you do some extraordinary work, the benefit may not accrue because everybody is doing some kind of CSR activities these days and community may not be aware or may not distinguish your CSR activities with others. (Brand Manager of Firm ‘A’)

It depends upon the CSR activity you are doing. Is it linked with the end consumer? I am end consumer of so many products. Until and unless I find something relevance for me, *Duniya Kuch Bhi Kare* [The world may do anything] – does not make any impact. So it depends what is the [CSR] activity. (Brand Manager of Firm ‘D’)

This is because different firms provide similar kinds of CSR activities and reach the same set of communities repeatedly. This may create confusion in the minds of the community members in terms of identifying and relating a CSR activity with a particular firm.

This is the case with all the companies here. All [firms] are implementing their [CSR] project in this region only. (CSR Manager of Firm 'B')

The evidence, therefore, puts forward at least two important points. First, the ordinary and inexpensive CSR activities such as making parks or setting up health camps, blood donation camp etc., which is anyway expected by the community; will not grant identifiable benefits to the firm. However, if a firm offers innovative and valuable CSR programs such as electrification of the village (by setting up series a solar panel lights) or setting up a multi-speciality big hospital or constructing roads, for widespread benefits to the villagers or local community, then it is likely that firm will garner branding advantage. Second, since most of the CSR activities are implemented only in the vicinity of manufacturing locations, it results in overlaps of CSR activities of different firms. Such overlaps reduce stakeholder's ability to distinguish one firm's CSR activities from another. Thus firm's identity with respect to CSR is threatened resulting in reduced impact of CSR on brand. In such a situation, it is recommended that firms should learn to innovate in their CSR program so that community could make a distinction of CSR activities of one firm from another.

The evidence draws our attention towards a typical situation, in which firms are doing plenty of CSR activities in a limited geographical area for tax benefit and legal compliance. CSR literature ignores this distinctive aspect prompting the future researcher to draw a new line of enquiry about investigating the dynamics of CSR in such situation.

Another interesting finding of the study is managers perceive that firms have a moral responsibility of serving even those communities who are not located in immediate vicinity of the manufacturing plant but require CSR interventions for development.

Here [near plant]... all communities are rich. They have scope to work, they have favourable climate. I personally find that they are not the most needy person for the community development. There are other people in other villages far from here who are more vulnerable and more needy. We should reach them. From this month I have started to go away from this place. I am also trying to get permission from my senior that we should implement our project there, because though they are at faraway places... may be 20 km away... but they are the most needy person. We want to implement [CSR there]. We are trying. It has social value that will cover the cost. It will give long term benefit to the company also. (CSR Manager of Firm 'B')

Like we were doing it [CSR] earlier we were doing it only near plant site. Now we are spreading to non-sites as well. The dealers, the vendors the end person like farmers who are not there near plant sites... so we started off... with non-sites also. Definitely it [scope of CSR] is increasing.

(Head of CSR of Firm 'A')

So in nearby villages, if we have good reputation, good relation with *Pradhan* (Head of village), there are two benefit... First operation of

plant properly, moral satisfaction... with the community and they praise the company. They don't disturb the company operation. It also gives benefit to marketing. (CSR Manager of Firm 'B')

We replicate [CSR activities] to other villages / other areas also if there is a similar need arises...we are doing certain projects in West Bengal certain requirement... field requirement... in Gujarat definitely... we replicate, we replicate here also... we take up initiate our project ... then we replicatethat way.. other areas, other villages...away from plant... It will also have its own benefits.

(Head of CSR, Firm 'A')

The data shows that firms are now initiating to implement CSR activities beyond the immediate vicinity of the manufacturing locations. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that, such initiatives will not only have long-term positive implications on the brand but will also have huge 'social value' that should offset the potential additional cost involved. This interpretation can have significant implications on the way firms are currently devising their branding strategy and implementing CSR. For one, there is likelihood of potential competitive situation for firms extending CSR activities beyond the plant, forcing firms to spend more on CSR activities. Therefore, two, firm should consider expanding the scope of CSR activities in terms of location and scale.

Indian firms are spending less on CSR than stipulated by government policy norms anyway. Hence, this analysis could have significant policy implications for the government as they may decide to take steps to encourage firms to implement CSR programs beyond the immediate vicinity of their manufacturing locations. Government

could collaborate with corporate and design policy to leverage the expanded reach of the firm's CSR programs in order to benefit the community and provide impetus to the developmental agenda of the country.

Third, a 'prior goodwill or reputation' is a prerequisite for building corporate image. As the Vice President (CSR) of firm 'D' states:

A prior reputation is important for CSR to become more effective, more visible and more acceptable. People's participation will be more when you have a prior reputation.

This prior goodwill and reputation of firms may encourage the stakeholders to be aware about firm's CSR activities (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Du *et al.*, 2010). The literature maintains that when stakeholders are not fully aware of firm's CSR activities then the CSR effect on firm's value is moderated or reduced (McWilliams and Siegel (2001). This study, hence, endorses the appeal made by McWilliams and Siegel (2001),

Cone (2007), and Servaes and Tamayo (2013) that firms work on increasing CSR awareness levels among stakeholders if CSR is to be a profitable strategic investment.

8.3 Impact of CSR on corporate image/corporate reputation

In chapter 2, we have conceptualised ‘image’ and ‘reputation’ as being used interchangeably by managers. The content analysis of the interview data justifies this notion. The data indicate that most of the time both words have been used together and interchangeably indicating that managers do not clearly distinguish between image and reputation.

I think there is not much difference between image and reputation.

(Senior Manager, Marketing of Firm ‘A’)

Brand image and brand reputation??..... [Long pause] I do not know how to distinguish. I do not know how to answer that. It is very difficult. May be not... There are very thin lines.

(Vice President, Corporate Communication of Firm ‘B’)

Moreover, it also appears that some managers do not distinguish even between corporate image, brand image and imagery because when asked about difference between corporate image and corporate reputation, the Vice President (Corporate Communication) of Firm ‘B’ had following to say:

While I have changed the imagery of the brand... we introduced Chawanprash 50 years back in tin packages, from there how we migrated to PET [Polyethylene terephthalate] and different

keeping the bottle shape. So, that is the imagery. However, even after all this year the reputation is still intact.

It indicates that the manager is talking about the packaging and product image when asked about corporate image. This excerpt on one hand signifies that the product image is significantly linked with the corporate image; on the other hand it magnifies the existing confusion prevailing among managers about the meaning of corporate image, brand image and imagery. However it may be noted that the manager attempt to distinguish between image and reputation on the assumption that image can be modulated through marketing programs but reputation remains intact by continuously improving the image.

Another view point is expressed by the Brand Manager of firm 'B' that

Both [image and reputation] are complementary to each other.

Divergent viewpoints lead this researcher to interpret that such distinction may possibly be of little importance for marketers in short term because it might be difficult to assess the difference in impact of any marketing initiative differently on image or reputation. Managers are driven by short term goals as Vice President (Sales and Marketing) of firm 'C' says:

Most of the Indian companies and managers are focussed on 'HERE and NOW'.

Hence, short term strategy appears to be dominant over long term strategy. The unclear distinction between image and reputation exposes the firms to the danger of confusion

between short term and long term strategy for the brand. This may pose challenge to the firm's long term branding strategy.

Our next interest is to uncover the relationship between CSR and corporate image and reputation. The evidence suggests that the impact of CSR on image and reputation can be analysed under three sub themes.

One, evidence indicates that the impact of CSR is felt by the managers in different situations.

The impact of CSR is felt at many places/instances such as when seeking a government approval for a project, when speaking in a forum, when interacting with community and when seeking vendors or suppliers and when talking to the customer to sell company's product.

(Associate Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Firm 'A')

First, the data show that managers notice the impact of CSR in the 'government offices' when they negotiate with the governmental authorities about the approval of a project or when an international investor seeks information about company's CSR activities (see Table 8.1). Stakeholders turn out to be willing to collaborate and partner with firms pursuing CSR, leading to increased brand recognition and improved brand image and reputation of the firm. Managers feel proud and motivated to speak in an industry forum if their firm is actively engaged in CSR activities.

Content analysis produces persuasive evidences of a positive relation of CSR with corporate image and reputation (Table 8.1). Analysis reveals that CSR positively influences the image and reputation.

This study therefore subscribes to the position of McWilliams and Siegel (2001) and Roberts and Dowling (2002) who maintain that support for CSR creates these intangible, difficult-to-replicate assets such as good reputation and image that create some sort of competitive advantage ultimately leading to an enhanced financial performance.

Another important place where the impact of CSR is felt is the 'market'.

You get the benefit in market place, in terms of selling your products and services and creating goodwill around you with suppliers, with alliances, with partners and community at large.

(Brand Manager of Firm 'A')

In addition, it might also help with inducing a product trial and increased acceptance of the product in certain conditions (see Table 8.1). Some managers, though not vehemently, concede that CSR also helps in increasing sales of the product and generating higher revenue. For example, one Marketing Manager of firm 'D' states:

CSR helps in product sales because the people become familiar to the company so they think that the company, which has done so much for them, must be a good company, so they buy their product.

However, when a firm is engaged in CSR in a small way it may not experience any significant positive impact on image and reputation.

You can say that in that particular area, in which you have done the CSR activity, if you know... if some production activity or your factory is falling in that area, then you can gain some sympathy and you can better connect with the people of that area.

(General Manager, Marketing, Firm 'D')

In such situations, managers try not to associate CSR with marketing and branding. The reason could be traced in the Indian ethical values and culture where linking philanthropy with profit or any kind of benefit is still considered a taboo. As a Senior Vice President (Corporate Affairs) of firm 'A' proclaims:

It some way hits your ethics as in why I am doing this? It is against our value system.

However, the evidence in Table 8.1 confirms that most managers strongly believed that implication of good CSR programs on image and reputation are invariably positive through means of increased brand recognition in industry and government forum, increased brand recall and increased motivation and confidence of managers.

Importantly, CSR can have potentially damaging impact on company's image and reputation when company commits mistake in implementing CSR. As one HR Manager of firm 'C' recounts:

If your activities are not fruitful for the villagers and rather they are on destructive side... so obviously they will associate with your company. Ultimately a bad name will come to the company.

Evidence (see Table 8.1) indicates that CSR would spoil a firm's reputation in different situation, such as when (a) the firm's CSR program is not consistent; (b) the firm implements CSR badly; (c) the managers are accused of corruption; and (d) CSR programs take the religious overtone. The evidence indicates that both image and reputation are equally vulnerable.

Moreover, the evidence reveals that CSR does not help in mitigating inherent problems of the firm or its product such as manufacturing defects or product related issues. For example, one Marketing Manager of firm 'D' makes the following point:

The product rectification, the fault rectification is to be done and marketed it well... only then the perception of people can be changed and they will start buying the product. With the positive feeling people tend to buy the product.

Brand-CSR relation in Indian Agribusiness

Impact	Exemplary quotes/Instance	Firm
Company's recognition in government forum increases	'The impact of CSR is felt at many places/instances such as when seeking a government approval for a project, when speaking in a forum, when interacting with community and when seeking vendors or suppliers and when talking to the customer to sell company's product'.	A
Partnership with stakeholder improves	'Most of the stakeholder wants partnership with our company or their subsidiary NGOs for implementation of developmental activities. The company has very good image and recognition in a government department. Government think that apart from business they are supporting for the rural cause and they network also'	B
Increased motivation and confidence of managers	'You feel proud, you feel good, when you are. Speaking. In a forum, any government officer anybody recognises you. Company B is working on this issue'.	B
CSR creates positive image of the company	'By CSR company puts an impression in the mind of the people around who start thinking in a positive way about the company. The people think that they are being taken care not by the government but by a company which is nearby where their kin's and friends and family member are working. So that gives positive impact about the company in their mind'. 'On broad level CSR has many contributions' 'CSR creates goodwill' 'CSR creates a good atmosphere' 'non tangibles are... you know in terms of creating a good... feel good about the company' ... 'It does impact. People do view it differently now at least the external world. I am not too sure if consumers are still looking it that way. If you look at international investor community yes they do look at CSR, sustainability very seriously now. They do keep us asking questions what you are doing for the community, what are you doing for sustainability. So that is something which is getting into greater focus now'. 'Of course the reputation gets enhances hugely with CSR. The company becomes much more acceptable to people. And the company gets mileage in every sense.	D B A D A B C
benefit in market place	'You get the benefit in market place, in terms of selling your products & services and creating a good will around you with suppliers, with alliances with partners and community at large.	A
Increased brand recall	'If you will ask where is hospital of company B – people will tell that go 7 Km straight '.	B
Higher acceptance of product	'After you manufacture the product you are actually selling it to them. So acceptance of your product is higher because you have engaged with them even before the start of the plant'. 'So if engagement with the community is for long then the acceptance of the product also becomes higher'. If a consumer have choice and wants to explore various option and if a company is doing some CSR activity then it can help to induce trial of the product	A A A
Induce product trial	'But you can say that in that particular area in which you have done the CSR activity if you know... if your some production activity or your factory is falling in that area then you can gain some sympathy and you can better connect with the people of that area'.	A

Brand-CSR relation in Indian Agribusiness

<i>Impact</i>	<i>Exemplary quotes/Instance</i>	<i>Firm</i>
Limited impact in small catchment	‘No I don’t think that there is any role of CSR. Both the things are basically different. CSR activity is an activity which is different from commercial activity. I don’t think there is any linkage between CSR activities and branding. Or a ... To some extent it can help in the corporate branding but not in the brand image of our product’.	D
Damaged reputation	‘I now where CSR initiatives took a religious tone and they got really badly impacted. Because lot of people do that and they get really put off by the community. So these things do happen. It is very important that CSR is unbiased of caste creed religion, ethnicity and geography. It has to be as fair as possible and it has to stand for what it is supposed to do’. ‘Because you know the CSR activities are limited in a particular area ... it cannot help..... And our product spread or reaches or penetration is far more than the catchment of CSR activities and secondly we never link that we are doing this activity for this because according to me that is not ethical and right thing to do’.	C D

Table 8.1: CSR influence on corporate image/reputation

Last but not least, one interesting fact has become evident from the interviews. CSR managers and brand managers turned out to have slightly different viewpoints as far as influence of CSR on corporate image and reputation was concerned. While CSR managers attach more importance to CSR’s role in building corporate image and reputation, branding managers are sceptical about it. The tone of the conversation indicate that this could be because marketing manager do not want to underestimate the role of marketing and branding exercise in building brand. The inferences have been drawn based on the cross tabulation analysis in NVivo 10 that (the evidence) have been presented in Table 8.2

	<i>Exemplary quote</i>	<i>Inference</i>
CSR Manager	<p>‘CSR is directly related with image’</p> <p>‘When you invest money for the welfare of the community or around you that of course shareholder may not appreciate but company’s image gets a good uplift, boost’</p> <p>‘Intangible and long term benefits accrue in terms of increased brand reputation and brand image’.</p>	<p>CSR positively influences corporate image and reputation</p>
Brand Manager	<p>‘Company A has its image of strong heritage and value driven company. It has a powerful and strong image because of its historical values. The brand has been built due to these values’.</p> <p>‘The very strong historical and cultural lineage and the ethical value system it possess, are the key factors in the growth of brand’</p> <p>‘CSR only supports and give positive contribution in forming the corporate image’.</p>	<p>Corporate image is primarily driven by history, heritage and ethical value system of the company</p> <p>CSR is only a supporting element in building image</p>

Table 8.2 : Difference in perception of CSR and brand managers

Finding 2: CSR positively influences corporate image and reputation of Indian agribusiness firms on pre-conditions such as consistent CSR and a-priori reputation of firms.

This finding corroborates the research proposition 1 of the study.

8.4 CSR - corporate culture relation

In chapter three, we had conceptualised corporate culture from the perspective of sustainability culture (Serafeim *et al.*, 2011) and/or market culture (Cameron and Quinn, 1998). Accordingly, our analysis of CSR- corporate culture relation investigates the manifestation and implication of sustainability and market culture in Indian agribusiness context.

8.4.1 Sustainability culture

As described in chapter 2, a culture of sustainability is a feature of firms that have integrated social and environmental policies in their business model (Brochet *et al.*, 2012). These firms place more emphasis on long-term goals, care more about the impact of externalities from their operations on other stakeholders and the environment and focus more on the ethical grounds of their decision (Payne, 2006). The evidence indicates strong linkages between CSR and environmental sustainability, the latter being an integral part of CSR, one cannot visualize the existence of environmental sustainability without CSR.

There is linkage of CSR with sustainability. They are both go hand in hand. You cannot, distinguish the two. Environment is the key part entire scheme of thing. They also have to be sustainable in nature. Be it at your plant, be it in the ecosystem.

Hence in a broader sense the ‘culture of sustainability’ can also be termed as ‘culture of social responsibility’. Such firms design policies to undertake organisational activities that promotes CSR, possess a corporate culture which is conducive for CSR, environmentally sustainability, ethical and moral values and long term goals of the firm. These policies reflect the underlying culture of the organisation, in which environmental and social

performance, in addition to financial performance, is important that ensures long term organisational sustainability.

Content analysis reveals that firm 'A' and 'B' possess dominant culture of sustainability.

[Environmental] Sustainability is a first thing we keep in mind. It is not only in vision but is also translated on the ground. Whatever business opportunity we explore, we examine the business opportunity on three parameters. One is what they it is going to be socially beneficial, what way it going to be economically beneficial in terms of income and lifestyle of people and third is how it is going to impact the environment. If we find that this business opportunity is going to adversely impact the environment then we may decide not to go forward. So that is what ensures your brand to be sustainable.

(Associate Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Firm 'A')

We embrace environmental sustainability as part of our overall strategy and business values. Numerous initiatives have been put in place to ensure that we do our part to create a cleaner, healthier environment for future generations.

(Vice President, Corporate Communication, Firm 'B')

At 'B', we value nature's bounty. Without the fruits of nature, the vision of Firm 'B'— dedicated to health and well-being of every household - would never have been fulfilled.

(Brand Manager, Firm 'B')

Some manufacturing sites modified their boilers to use bio-fuels, resulting in significant environmental benefits by reducing the CO₂ emission. The company has also conducted water audit at some of its units and have initiated the process of conducting a water footprint study across other units to further improve our water management.

(Head of CSR, Firm 'B')

It is evident that firms 'A' and 'B' go beyond legal mandate in their commitment towards environmental sustainability. However, sometimes the firm 'B' use CSR to ensure environmental sustainability in decree of law. As the CSR head of firm 'B' informs:

Different laws have come up. You can't take herbs from forest. Every state has different law. Then to sustain this [CSR] activity you have to have partnership with the NGO. If a company is not doing CSR it [firm] will not be sustainable. In the long run it [firm] will have problem. Sure. That is required.

Consequently, the procurement of raw material and supply chain arrangements are influenced by the firm's deep commitment to the environmental sustainability within the existing legal framework.

The evidence indicates that Firm 'A' and 'B' not only have great concerns about environmental sustainability issues but also have conducive atmosphere to promote CSR activities. One such indicator of the existence of the culture of sustainability is the degree of volunteerism being present in the organisation (Table 8.3). Results indicate that the

volunteerism is present in higher degree in firm 'A' than 'B'. These firms have strong culture of employee volunteerism for CSR and environmental sustainability activities.

<i>Firm</i>	<i>Exemplary quotes of volunteerism</i>
A	<p>'Regular communications are made and volunteers are encouraged to participate in CSR programs. So it is like if I am agriculture expert and if there is some agricultural program as part of CSR program, I spend my Saturday and Sunday and go there try and communicate with farmers and benefit them. That type of thing is encouraged within the company and it is also recognised.'</p> <p>'When Uttarakhand tragedy happened last year, even I gave my name that in terms of re-establishing the agriculture and there is a need if I could be of help'.</p> <p>'Company offices have several special interest clubs, wherein employees sharing common passions and interests, get together and take the lead in planning activities around their area of interest'.</p> <p>'Encouragement in the sense that you will get letter of appreciation from MD or HR letter that kind of thing'</p>
B	<p>'Some people get opportunity to go and work there, so certainly it is recognized at the time of appraisals, but there is no direct linkage with money. If I say that I have attended 100 days or CSR programs enhance I should get this much money. No! It is not in our goal! Because the goal sheet have the goals which are only business related. There is no CSR related goals otherwise the purpose of volunteerism will get defeated'.</p> <p>'Few people are involved in the activity. Especially unit head, departmental heads they are engaged. HR department is engaged everywhere. Safety department is involved'.</p>

Table 8.3: Evidence of volunteerism as a part of organisational culture

In these firms employees who participate voluntarily in CSR activities are encouraged and receive public recognition. Sometimes the employee performance is also linked with his contribution in CSR. Thus these firms have strong commitment to CSR.

Your [Manager's] performance is in fact linked to CSR. It may not be very much, but it is part of that. It means that there is very much high level of involvement. (AGM, Sales and Marketing, Firm 'A')

Performance of the employee however and it is not part of the goal sheet. But in some places/departments like in manufacturing units these are part of their goal sheet. There is a weight age of CSR in the goal sheet.

(CSR Manager of Firm 'B')

Even in the goal sheet there is a section that you will do CSR activities voluntarily. So that kind of commitment is there.

(HR Manager, Firm 'A')

These findings demonstrate that firm 'A' and 'B' possess strong culture of sustainability wherein they provide a conducive culture to employee in which they can contribute meaningfully in CSR and environmental sustainability programs and care about the impact of externalities of their operation. These firms emphasise more on long term goals and ethical grounds of their decision.

The result shows that firms 'A' and 'B' actively engage in CSR programs irrespective of any pressure from stakeholder or media i.e. 'proactive CSR' (Du *et al.*, 2010). Stakeholders typically perceive proactive CSR positively (Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2006). Therefore, it can be concluded that firms possessing strong culture of sustainability can be expected to incorporate CSR in their future corporate branding strategy.

In contrast, the data reveal that firm 'C' and 'D' do not provide conducive atmosphere for promotion of CSR activities and have weak culture of sustainability.

I have seen good ideas being brought by employee which we do support. But do we aggressively go out promoting those objectives –
No! (Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Firm ‘C’)

Only few people are aware about CSR activities of the firm.

(Vice President, CSR, Firm ‘D’)

Since CSR is a voluntary work on the part of employee, so it is not a part of goal sheet or key result area (KRA). (HR Manager, Firm ‘C’)

However this is not to suggest that these firms do not have any commitment to environmental sustainability. For example, Vice President, Sales and Marketing of Firm ‘C’ says:

All the environmental laws and the safety laws norms we comply 100%. There is zero tolerance to deviation in any of these things in the organisation. There is no compromise at any point of time which is allowed or which is acceptable. It is just adherence to law. At this point of time it is just compliance.

Firm ‘D’ has planted trees in and around all its facilities. The environmental initiatives have been implemented in 35 locations across the sugar units. Firm ‘C’ runs environmental awareness campaign and plant trees. Thus, firm ‘C’ and ‘D’ follows environmental and safety norms for compliance and meeting statutory requirements. It may be noted that the CSR activities of firm ‘C’ and ‘D’ are not widespread. The analysis also brings out the fact that the awareness level regarding CSR activities is very low among employees of these

firms. Moreover both firms do not have a long term vision of sustainability linked to their business process or a very conducive organisational environment for promoting CSR and environmental sustainability activities. Therefore it can be concluded that firm 'C' and 'D' possess weak culture of sustainability.

The reasons why the difference in the degree of culture of sustainability of firms exist can be attributed to 'scope of CSR' earmarked for each firms (see section 7.4.4 in Chapter 7). Three important factors that determine the scope of CSR are the nature of agri-business, the degree of the environmental susceptibility and the net profit margin of the firm.

8.4.2 Market culture

The basic assumptions of 'market culture' are that the external environment is not benign but hostile, consumers are choosy and interested in value and the organisation is in the business of increasing its competitive position. As argued by Cameron and Quinn (1998) argued that when this type of organisational culture prevail, the interests of clients and consumers interests are often taken into account, but the interests of employees, trade unions and local communities are often ignored. The core values are competitiveness and productivity which are achieved through a strong emphasis on external positioning and control. Evidences reveal that in firms 'C' and 'D' corporate culture is primarily driven by market forces and competition. Firm 'C' follows a competitive strategy to build its corporate brand.

Because in automotive market, including tractor industry, the leader, the second and the third there is a huge gap in market share. So when there is such a huge difference then what drives you is the competitive spirit.

(Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Firm 'C')

Similarly firm 'D' relies on a low pricing strategy and following the market norms.

D is a highly competitive player and pays incentive to its employee in categories like pesticides and herbicides where lot of competition exists company is strongly governed by market norms'.

(General Manager, Marketing, Firm 'D')

We keep the price of our product very low. We give good product at low price. (Manager, Marketing, Firm 'D')

For these firms marketing activities are very important. A Marketing Manager of firm 'C' asserts:

Marketing becomes very important because again reaching out millions of the customer is a job of marketing. And as well to find out what it changing, what is the need of the customer is again the job of the marketing. What competition is doing is again the job of marketing.

Thus, evidence indicates that market culture seems to be more prevalent in firms 'C' and 'D'. However this is not to suggest that firm 'A' and 'B' do not have market culture.

Marketing function is heart and soul and we give incentives... absolutely. Sales incentives are given. But we do not compromise on

quality and ethics. For example we will never sell our fertilisers which are in red zone. We sell only those fertilisers which are in green and yellow zone. We do not adopt short term measures to increase our sales'

(Brand Manager, Firm 'A')

Marketing is an important function along with sales

(Brand Manager, Firm 'B')

These evidences suggest that though in firm 'A' and 'B', culture of sustainability is more dominant however, market culture is also present. Figure 8.1 depicts the dominance and varying degree of type of corporate culture present in Indian agribusiness context.

The above findings reveal that Indian agribusiness firms possess both type of culture in varying degree. When firms engage in proactive CSR practices then it helps to inculcate a culture within the organisation which promotes employee volunteerism and is also conducive for carrying out CSR and sustainability activities. This process results in better stakeholder management and satisfaction which in turn strengthens the corporate brand in the long run. The findings also highlight that when CSR practices become part of corporate culture then firm engage in regular CSR activities without any pressure from the stakeholders and such firms will generally practice proactive CSR. This corroborates the research proposition 2a and 2b. However, in contrast the results also indicates that in Indian agribusiness context, when a firm is guided primarily by competition, cost and market forces, then such firms will do minimal CSR only to the extent of meeting statutory and legal obligations. Such firms do not engage in regular CSR practices and pursue a

reactive CSR strategy whenever needed. This finding corroborates the research proposition 2c and 2d.

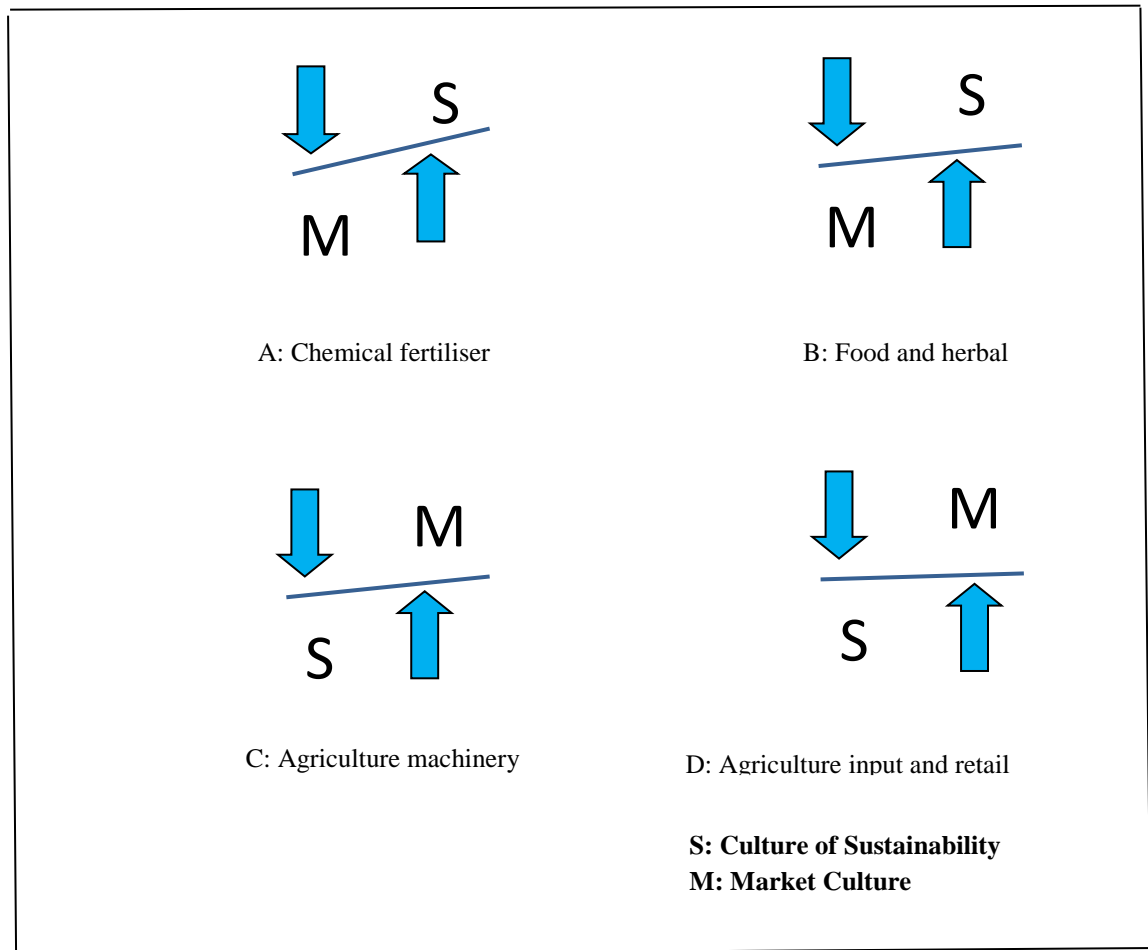


Figure 8.1: Type of corporate culture dominance in Indian agribusiness firms

In addition, an interesting observation is that the CSR department gets less attention from the top management as compared to other core departments. As CSR manager of firm 'B' laments:

No! No! No! In comparison to other department, there is some deference between CSR and other department. Say, in terms of salary, promotion and incentive.

These evidences point towards presence of market culture in all sampled firms, though in varying degree. The findings of the study supports the notion that market culture driven firms generally tend to adopt reactive CSR programs only to protect the image of the organisation (i.e. mitigate harm) after some irresponsible action has been reported (Murray and Vogel, 1997; Wagner, 2010). However, sometimes reactive CSR may lead to negative and skeptical attitudes of the consumers towards the company (Ricks Jr, 2005).

This brings to the next finding of this research:

Finding 3: Indian agribusiness firm possessing culture of sustainability are more likely to pursue proactive CSR programs and incorporate CSR in their corporate branding strategy and vice versa whereas firms that possess market culture will adopt reactive CSR programs and are less likely to embrace CSR in its corporate branding strategy.

This finding corroborates research proposition 2a, 2b, 2c and 2d of the study.

In addition, it may also be noted that a number of key factors were identified that allowed to broadly categorise agribusiness firms into sustainability dominant, market dominant and sustainability-market mixed corporate culture. These factors are:

(a) sensitivity towards sustainable development; (b) market and competition; (c) the degree of volunteerism; (d) the reward and recognition system; (e) CSR in performance appraisal of managers.

The identification of these factors in this research may provide important guidelines to individual firms in drawing their own firm specific CSR-corporate culture framework as part of corporate CSR strategy. This is a significant contribution to the extant literature.

8.5 Impact of CSR on corporate communication

The literature is emphatic that the impact of CSR on firm's value depends on the ability of CSR to influence the stakeholders of the firms (Barnett, 2007). This study, by contrast, shows mixed results.

8.5.1 External communication

External communication of CSR is generally intended to influence stakeholders' perception with the intention of protecting and strengthening firm's image and reputation.

In order to facilitate effective external CSR communication, firm 'A' and firm 'B' have separate corporate communication department, whereas firm 'C' and 'D' rely on a few designated managers. Analysis brings to the notices that firm 'A' uses a corporate communication mechanism that includes annual reports, public relation activities, press releases etc., to communicate firm's activities to external stakeholders. Managers of firm 'A' also participate in appropriate industry forums where CSR is discussed. Firm 'B' has a separate corporate communication department which takes care of advertising, public relation and other communication activity of the firm along with CSR. Vice President (Corporate Communication) of firm 'B' informs:

So whatever, be it to the media, to investors, stakeholder, shareholder
... and talking about our development within the company and also

internally to our employees. External and internal both -Yes we do press conferences, press meet, briefing, advertisements, annual reports, brochures, other communication, and newsletter.

Though external communication is intended to influence the perception of stakeholders but it is characterised by low intensity of CSR promotion in India. Literature (e.g., Barnett, 2007) maintains that CSR activities may prompt firms to augment their CSR communication in order to influence stakeholders. This would result in increased communication activities, thereby positively impacting the brand. However, analysis provides contradictory findings. This study has established that Indian agribusiness firms do not aggressively promote CSR activities externally (Table 8.4). The *raison d'être* of this observable fact could be traced to the cultural and ethical value system of India where managers reproach promotion of any kind of philanthropic activity (see Table 8.4). Besides, managers are apprehensive that the whole concept of 'philanthropy' would be compromised if firms aggressively promote CSR.

Content analysis reveals further that advertising is not done aggressively due to cost issues. Managers believe that instead of spending on advertising the money can be ploughed back in CSR activities (see Table 8.4). For instance, Senior Vice President (Sales and Marketing) of firm 'C' admits that the inherent problem and inefficiency in the system increases its manpower cost and therefore managers are under pressure to cut down cost. Consequently, firms do not spend much on advertising and consumers are often not aware of a firm's CSR activities (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Du *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, advertising CSR would imply that firm is trying to get marketing advantage out of CSR. For instance, Head of CSR of firm 'C' states:

We don't do it [advertising CSR] because then it becomes a part of marketing. We will do CSR for branding... not marketing. We don't promote.

The interview data reinforces the notion that the firm does not promote its CSR programs because of cultural and ethical issues. To this extent, firms fail to leverage the branding advantage of CSR. On the contrary, the literature emphasises that Western firms engage in active CSR communication on the premise that CSR is most effective with those who are already familiar with the brand (Cone, 2007). Furthermore, the literature affirms (Servaes and Tamayo, 2013) that high consumer awareness about CSR can enhance firm value. However, this study suggests that such conditions do not prevail in the Indian agribusiness sector. Generally, consumers are not aware about firm's CSR activities. In this context, this study subscribes to the position of Servaes and Tamayo (2013) who argue that, when stakeholders are not fully aware of firm's CSR activities, the CSR effect on firm's value is moderated or reduced. Therefore, it is difficult to corroborate the prediction of McWilliams and Siegel (2001) that a positive co-relation exists between advertising intensity and the provision of CSR in the context of Indian agribusiness.

However, strikingly, the non-promotion of CSR increases the motivation and confidence level of managers as Associate Vice President (Corporate Affairs) of firm 'A' confirms:

I see it [non promotion of CSR] as very positive because when ... I go to the government, I keep my head very high because people know that no such activities [showcasing of CSR] are allowed in Firm 'A'. So you hold your head very high and talk to any bureaucrat with

confidence and he also respects you for that. There is a big value of that.

It represent that non promotion of CSR is linked with ‘giving importance to the ethical and moral values of managers’ that boosts their confidence and motivation to face government authority for any project approval. It fetches respect and admiration to the manager and the firm. Thus contrary to the notion that CSR promotion is always eulogised by managers, the state of affairs in typical Indian condition present a different picture altogether.

Brand-CSR relation in Indian Agribusiness

Factors	Exemplary quotes	Firm
Ethics	'If you are publicising then the whole motive of it actually gets violated. Somewhere it hits your ethics. Why I am doing this'?	A
Philanthropy	'We do not advertise.... Because we feel that then the whole purpose of philanthropy is lost'.	A
Reluctance for showcasing	'We keep away from press. We keep away from media and we generally don't encourage. We are not there to call them [media] up and show that we are doing this because it is done since last 30 years. We don't have to showcase'.	A
	'We don't do Tom about our CSR activities'.	A
	'We have been doing CSR activities since 1994 but we have never spoken about it.	B
	'Yes the government brought a regulation so we also started publishing report every year now for the past two years. Otherwise we were very happy just doing the stuff and forgetting it that we have done it'. We don't promote CSR except from participating in some forums where we need to be there'	B
	'We do not promote or advertise CSR programs. <i>Nahi karte hai, Paise ki baat nahi. Wo phir marketing me aata hai.</i> [We don't do it because then it becomes a part of marketing]. We will do CSR for branding, not marketing. We don't promote '.	C
	'Even if there is an opportunity because of government regulation to book some of the sales promotion activity into CSR activity and get benefit out of it, at least in Company A, very clearly there will be stiff opposition and nobody will allow that'.	A
Reluctance to spend	'I spend few lakhs on putting an ad. Why not? That few lacks can be put in for helping the community'.	B
	'Our manpower cost is the biggest burden which we have. So, if the industry standard is about 4 % manpower, we are about 10 % manpower. So, our manpower costs are very high. All this has impact on advertising spend of the company. Because of that we are under tremendous pressure and advertisement and promotion of my budget are one fourth of what our leaders does. So we are very choosy about advertisement'.	C

Table 8.4: Reasons for low external CSR communication

However, firm uses traditional and local media to create awareness in the community regarding CSR (Table 8.5). Local media could be banners, leaflets and loudspeaker on auto rickshaws. These are very low cost medium intended to physically reach the community.

Mass media is not used because of limited geographical location in which CSR activity takes place. For example, one Senior Marketing Manager of firm 'D' points out:

Actually... No... No... I don't think we need advertising of CSR...we don't need this. This will be too...too much. The geographical area which we cater to is restricted.

<i>Media</i>	<i>Exemplary quotes</i>	<i>Firm</i>
Word of Mouth	'We do not promote our CSR activities, but if some newspaper or TV channel wants to cover our activities then we do not deny it. We get some word of mouth publicity and some publicity from the media'.	A
Pamphlets, Media advocacy workshop, Community radio	'We distribute pamphlets. We organise media advocacy workshop. We are trying to make a small documentary based on any new success, case story. Community radio is another one which is also very effective'.	B
TV	'A few years back, 5-6 years ago, we used to advertise on TV. We donate 10 paise per packet to the NGO for educating and to developing slum people'.	A
Print	'If something gets published automatically we don't mind about it, but there is no design as such, we don't have any approach as such to publicise the CSR that we are doing great, this and that'.	A

Table 8.5: Media used for external communication

However, Indian agribusiness firms acquire some advantages in terms of increased brand image and reputation by way of getting unsolicited media coverage of their good work. Needless to say that firms do not resist such free publicity and brand visibility. Moreover, when CSR is linked with marketing and sales activities, it gets promoted through product

advertising, indirectly helping the firm to increase sales of its products. As Vice President (corporate communication) of firm 'B' says:

We go to school and we educate kids about how to boost immunities and fight a varieties of... diseases.

With these mixed evidences, finally this study posits that communication and advertising of CSR can help strengthening the relationship with stakeholders and the brand; however such situation does not exist in totality in Indian agribusiness context.

8.5.2 Internal communication

Findings of the study inform that firm's CSR engagements are internally disseminated within the organisation, on firm's website, annual report, in – house newsletter, intranet, company magazines and brochures and internal meetings to communicate to internal stakeholder (see Table 8.6).

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Exemplar quotes</i>	<i>Firm</i>
Internal media	'There is a culture of promoting CSR activities within the organisation. Regular communications are made and volunteers are encouraged when they are rewarded, respected and recognized for their voluntary work. Employee get corporate communications based on sustainability and on CSR on regular basis. People get e-mail and their photos are also pasted on the blog'.	A
Meetings	'We have regularly quarterly meeting with our management team for achievement. Secondly our HR department they have quarterly HR magazine for internal communication in HR magazine we also have CSR matter within that quarter'.	B

Table 8.6: Indicators of Internal CSR communication

Particularly, firms ‘A’ and ‘B’ aggressively promote CSR to internal stakeholder (Table 8.6), which indicates that these firms are making necessary effort to create a CSR friendly atmosphere within the organisation.

Thus, external and internal communication in the four firms can be summarised as in Table 8.7. While firms A and B internally promote CSR aggressively, firms C and D too are not passive. However, all four firms have similar attitude of low external promotion of CSR with the exception of firm ‘C’ which occasionally promote CSR at industry association’s forums in the interest of brand enhancement.

Type of Firm	External Communication	Internal Communication
A	Passive/Low external promotion	Active/Aggressively Promote
B	Passive	Active/Regular Promotion
C	Partially Active	Not Passive
D	Passive	Not Passive

Table 8.7: External and internal communication in Indian agribusiness firms

Thus, the findings of the study highlights that in contrast to low external promotion, agribusiness firms actively publicise CSR within the organisation, and for this reason it has a marginal impact on corporate branding. This brings to the next finding of this research:

Finding 4: Indian agribusiness firms are reluctant to advertise CSR due to cultural issues and hence majority of stakeholder are not well aware about CSR but firm communicate CSR well inside the organisation and therefore it has only marginal influence on corporate branding.

This finding is contradictory and partially corroborates to research proposition 3.

The major findings of the study can be expressed in the form of a conceptual framework as depicted in Figure 8.2. According to this framework, CSR positively influences corporate image and reputation of Indian agribusiness firms. However, CSR does not influence the communication and advertising practices of firms and plays a neutral role in building corporate brand. Powerful CSR activities of the agribusiness firms tend to influence the corporate culture of firms in order to skew it towards culture of sustainability whereas weak and infrequent CSR activities tend to be characterise by market culture. While culture of sustainability strengthens the corporate brand, market culture weakens the corporate brand.

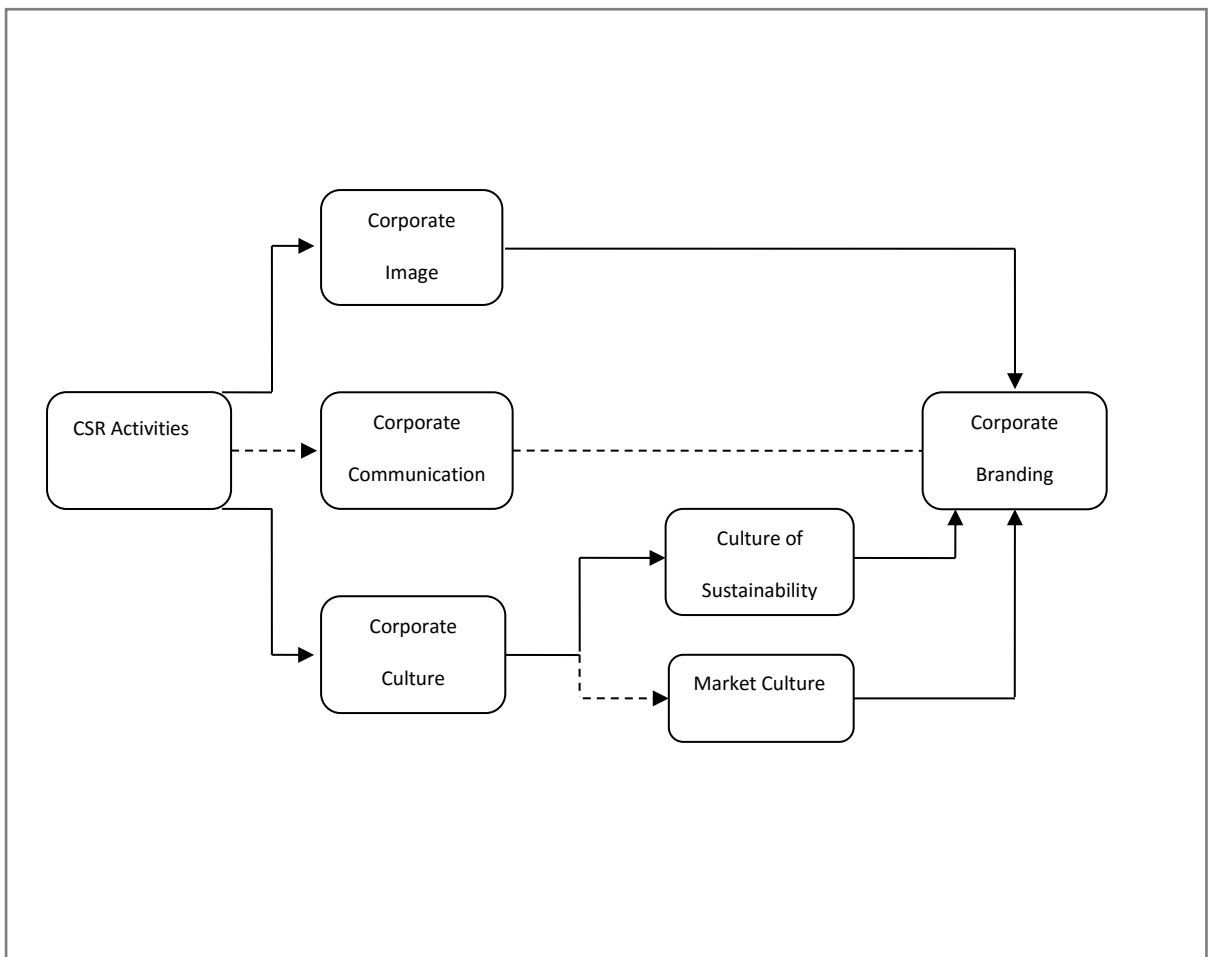


Figure 8.2: Summary of the study

8.6 CSR as future strategy for strengthening brand

This section highlights some of the contemporary concerns and thoughts regarding future use of CSR in the corporate branding strategy of Indian agribusiness firms. The analysis indicates that currently CSR is not a part of Indian agribusiness firm's strategy but it is within the business process of firms. However, nowadays firms are gearing up to make CSR as part of their corporate strategy.

It is not in the strategy. I think, in most of the organisation CSR is not part of strategy. But now things will change, but it will take another 4-5 years. Now company will have to show.

(Vice President, CSR, Firm 'C')

CSR has always been part of our DNA rather than strategy. I would not say CSR as such, but community has always been our focus. With the new regulation coming in, lot of new developments are likely to take place. Firms will have to get out of the complacent mode and seriously get into doing some work.

(Vice President, Corporate Communication, of Firm 'B')

On exploring the reasons for CSR being not part of strategy, the Vice President of firm 'C' had the following explanation:

CSR is not a business strategy, and I have not seen it in any Indian companies. I have not seen anywhere for a very simple reason that the

companies are too small and they have to grow. System, processes and investment, which is to be done in the core businesses, and the priority to get the core business processes right itself are so stubborn and so difficult you will not be able to find too much of focus ... that you start devoting time and energy to do something different because it is always said '*Bhuke Pet Na Bhajan Goapala*' [You cannot worship even God, empty stomach]. Most of the Indian companies are focussed on HERE and NOW. So, that is where most of the Indian companies are. CSR and marketing have not been together in that sense. CSR has not been a marketing strategy, to put it very simply.

On being asked as what is the current status of 'consideration of CSR as strategy', Vice President, Corporate Communication, of Firm 'B' replies:

CSR has already become a part of strategy now. Since regulation has come you have to now prepare a whole action plan, give it to the board, so the strategy has to be in place.

The above excerpts probably capture a glimpse of current trend and deliberations with regard to 'CSR as a strategy' in the context of Indian agribusiness. The researcher also took this opportunity to explore the perceptions of managers regarding firm's view on the future of CSR as a strategy. Three key points may be identified. First, the managers are of a view that marketing people must take a central role in designing strategy, as evident in the words of Vice President (CSR) of firm 'C':

I don't want the CEO to drive CSR, I don't want HR to drive CSR, I engage sales and marketing team, and I want them to get involved in CSR when they will work with the society. They will be able to leverage better than anybody else in terms of commercial activity. Marketing people are linked with product as well as public also. They should be part of the CSR. They should not be left behind. CEO may give strategic thinking. But operationally the people on ground should drive— That is why I am saying that when your key team will be involved... when sales and marketing team is involved then they give the actual feedback that what is the situation at the ground. Then your activity will be more aligned... and your investment in the CSR will be more appropriate. Yes, but it should be bottom to top'

This opinion unfolds the covert outlook of managers regarding future CSR activities. Interestingly, the idea of bottom to top approach of CSR has been a matter of great debate in the literature (Kitchin, 2002). By unfurling this mind-set, this study adds an important chapter to the current debate on the topic.

The second key point is the firm's preparedness in the light of new Indian CSR legislations. When asked how managers are gearing to meet the recent requirement of CSR law, the Vice President, Corporate Communication, firm 'B' had the following to say:

Today, when government has made it mandatory to spend 2 % of net profit, we are also exploring how can we reach out and what we should do which can benefit the community and as well as which is related with our business.

The Vice President (CSR) of firm 'C' adds on:

We are working on it. One of our directors is taken charge of that. One company secretary is also involved. I am also there. Now the money will be available so things will be much smoother. That is the change. Earlier I used to justify why I am doing this, what will be benefit from this activity.

The evidence indicates that firms are on the verge of embracing CSR as strategy in the light of new CSR law. Two implications of this development are evident: (a) It will open a plethora of job opportunities in CSR domain and (b) Through CSR; it will put the developmental agenda of the country on fast track.

Finally, the research identifies 'skill development' as a major key focus area for future CSR activities as CSR Head of firm 'B' substantiates:

Skill development is one of the areas where we are working seriously. Skill development centre in every sector, every industry....is required...automation or mechanical... there is lack of skills. There is a huge gap. What we are doing is... we are making a board on skill development. Skill development should be huge area in CSR.

8.7 Conclusion

This chapter initially reveals the preconditions for experiencing impact of CSR in the typical Indian agribusiness condition. It then highlights the three key findings of the research. One, CSR positively influences corporate image and reputation of agribusiness firms irrespective of the firm possessing culture of sustainability or market culture on the condition that firm possess a prior image and reputation. Two, Indian agribusiness firm which are prevalent on culture of sustainability are more likely to pursue proactive CSR programs and incorporate CSR in their corporate branding strategy whereas firms which are prevalent on market culture will adopt reactive CSR programs and are less likely to embrace CSR in its corporate branding strategy. Three, Indian agribusiness firms are reluctant to advertise CSR due to cultural issues and hence majority of stakeholder are not well aware about CSR but firm communicate CSR well inside the organisation and consequently it has only marginal influence on corporate branding. Finally, the chapter highlights that, although currently CSR is not part of strategy, Indian agribusiness firms are on the verge of embracing CSR as a future strategy for corporate branding purpose in the light of new law mandating CSR for big firms.

CHAPTER 9

PROCESS OF CSR IMPLEMENTATION:

BARRIERS AND MEASUREMENT

9.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on identifying key barriers to CSR practices of Indian agribusiness firms. The chapter begins with describing the process of CSR implementation in Indian agribusiness and characterises different approaches of firms. A conceptual framework is developed which provides the insights in the process of CSR implementation. The chapter then identifies key barriers to CSR implementation in three broad categories. This chapter through empirical findings provides firm ground for future research in the light of the paucity of literature on the topic. Finally, a commentary on the measurement of CSR is also presented.

9.2 The process of CSR implementation

Content analysis reveals that all sample firms follow four common steps when they implement CSR activities. Key words relating to these steps are ‘engagement’, ‘participatory’, ‘ownership’ and ‘feedback’. The KWIC technique provides insights regarding the process used by the firms to implement CSR activities. The data reveal that the sample firms try to engage with the community by adopting a slow and gradual communication process that begins with an interaction between managers and key opinion leaders and other influential people in the community. This is because initially communities tend not to welcome speedy change of any kind in their day-to-day life. This conservative reaction forces firms to employ communication processes aimed at persuading the community of the benefits of the project.

Process of CSR implementation: Barriers and Measurement

In order to bring down that aggressive attitude we[managers] start working with them[the community] and taking them along and you know... communicating with them. That is important because then you start engaging with them... then lot of unnecessary hurdles are already negotiated. You start communicating; you start telling them that you have not come here to make an investment and earn money and take it away from here. ... We are here to set up this [plant] and after making investment there would be opportunity for you [the community] for employment and to conduct business ...and this area will grow and your name will grow. All these benefits will come to you and society overall will develop... your generation to come will be benefited of it. That type of engagement and communication is done so that is that is how we communicate.

(Associate Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Firm 'A')

The initial objective is to convince the community about the benefit the community will be having if the project is commenced in that area.

(Head of CSR, Firm 'B')

CSR is a platform where they [firm's managers] can interact with the society to understand their [society] requirements and come up with the proposal for ... development of society as well as align the product with the community need. You [firm's managers] will connect to the masses...; I am very strongly connecting every time wherever I have gone. (Vice President, CSR, Firm 'C')

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We see ...who are influential people in the local population? We talk to *Panchayat* (local village body). Now, this communication process is a slow and gradual process where one-to-one interaction with the community, meetings with the opinion leaders and influential people of the village and community meetings are done.

(Head of CSR, Firm 'D')

The evidence shows that firms try to win the trust of the community through gradual interaction and building a rapport with the community. The communication process helps to develop a connection between the firm and the community leading to an active *engagement* in terms of getting suggestions and support from the community for operating the plant and a successful implementation of CSR projects. This *engagement* encourages the community to participate in the implementation of CSR projects.

9.2.1 Participatory rural appraisal

Interviews reveal that the participation of the community usually starts with firms implementing a research technique called Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). PRA is employed in order to understand the needs of the community and leads to designing a mechanism for addressing those needs.

We start with Participatory Rural Appraisal. That is the involvement of community itself. The leaders of the community like *Sarpanch* (Head of village body) and all – they are involved. So, once they are involved, so community is involved. (Head of CSR of Firm, 'A')

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Yes, PRA! During whole process during all stages of implementation at all level, at all stage we do PRA. If we want onus of them, we should go for participatory program. Without participatory program we don't go forward. In all program we try to build ownership of community. Without their participation we do not move forward.

(CSR Manager of Firm 'B')

For rural people, PRA refers to 'a family of approaches and methods ... to share, enhance, and analyse their knowledge of life and conditions, to plan and to act'; for firms it is a way to learn 'about rural life and conditions from, with and by rural people' (Chambers, 1994, p. 953). However, PRA is more than just learning. It is a process that extends into analysis, planning and action.

Although PRA is not a formal requirement of a CSR project, it is commonly and widely used by Indian firms that are engaged in large-scale CSR activities. Rural development professionals and NGO's workers are generally trained in PRA. Since PRA refers to a family of appraisal and analytical techniques, different firms uses PRA differently, depending upon their specific requirements. PRA is participatory and empowering to the community in the sense that outsiders act only as a facilitator who enable communities to undertake and share their own investigations and analysis of the developmental issues of the village. Sometimes, the PRA that begin as need assessment lead on to planning, analysis, action, participatory monitoring and evaluation of a CSR project. However, most of the time, once the need analysis is over through PRA then the community participates in CSR project through making contribution of labour, money, land or other resources.

9.2.2 Involving financial and other resources of the community

One of the interesting features of CSR in India is that donors try to involve the local community as partners in the implementation of CSR projects. The relevance of involving community members in development projects has been stressed in few studies (Arnstein, 1969; Cook, 1994). The findings reveal that in the sample firms, the community involvement in CSR program was substantial prompting the researcher to posit that the current and next big beckon of CSR in Indian agribusiness is ‘community and its resources involvement’. This type of participation is sometimes referred as the ‘highest level of participation’ in the literature where community members are seen as partners and have control over management and functioning of projects (Arnstein, 1969). This notion is also to some extent in line with Moon’s (2002) proposition in the context of Asian firms that ‘community involvement’ is the next wave in CSR. This distinctive characteristic of Indian agribusiness firms has been detailed out below.

Most of the time the participation of the community in the CSR projects takes the form of supplying financial, labour, land or other resource.

We also make it a point that CSR activity is participatory. What ‘participatory’ defined by us is if I am investing, let us say, 100 rupees then at least 20 rupees should be contributed by the community or beneficiaries. If they don’t have money then we say give labour.

(Associate Vice President, Corporate Affairs of Firm ‘A’)

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We go for a participatory approach. For example, additionally the community has to provide four notebooks to each child. So that is the participatory approach. For education, we don't charge anything.

(Head of CSR of Firm 'B')

If some people of the *Panchayat* say that we do not have electricity in the village, then we say...ok... we will put solar lights... Electricity...we cannot give, so solar light is a good option. For that we need land, infrastructure, and money. Money...we will give but you [the community] give the land. We will do the installation, but you do the maintenance. Tomorrow if any bulb broke down... you replace it.... Nobody should damage it... or we say that if one solar panel costs Rs one lakh, then we pay Rs seventy five thousand and you [the community] pay Rs twenty five thousand.

(Head of CSR, Firm 'D')

Further evidence indicates that the participation and financial contribution ensures that the community starts owning the project in terms of its operation, maintenance and safety.

We want them to participate so that the electric poles are owned by them and consider it as their property.

(Associate Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Firm 'A')

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Community must pay. Those who can....must pay. That will bring more participation and ownership. (Head of CSR, Firm 'B')

It may be construed that there could be multiple reasons for such involvement of community. One, firms are under pressure to reduce cost and increase profit; hence firms want to offload some of their financial burden to the beneficiaries. When amenities and services under CSR programs are utilised free-of-charge then there is neither cost recovery nor funds for maintenance. As a result, firms need to carry the additional burden of financing repairs and maintenance of projects. Two, many experiments of offering freebies have failed in India. Government programs aimed at poverty reduction by giving subsidy and direct benefit to the poor have been misappropriated. In recent years governments and public organisations have frequently withdrawn from providing resources. Three, agribusiness firm realise that community are the key stakeholder and ultimate beneficiaries of the project and hence without their support the CSR activities may not be successful. The collaboration with the community in the form of financial and resource contribution is considered as an undertaking for offering co-operation and support. Since, 'community' as a stakeholder is critical for agribusiness this phenomenon may be typical of such sectors (such as mining, manufacturing etc.) that are dependent largely upon the community for their survival and operation.

Such stakeholder engagement and collaborative design probably corroborates to Arnstein's (1969, p. 216) idea of 'real citizen participation' that 'it is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes to be deliberately included in the future'.

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If the community is financially involved then it will bring ownership of the project to the community. It means that the ownership of assets under a CSR program (such as rural roads, solar panels, water harvest ponds etc.) is transferred to the community by the firm. Hence, for example, initially the installation of a solar panel may involve partial financial contribution or making availability of land from the community. Later on responsibility of operating and maintaining a solar panel will lie with the community in the long run, once it is handed over to them. Therefore financial and other resource contribution by the community is an important element in 'participation' and it acts like a bridge between 'participation' and 'ownership'. Thus financial contribution can be construed as a mediating factor in transferring the participation to ownership.

This *ownership* is critical for making a project sustainable because firms only intend to provide handhold support and expects the community to carry CSR projects over a long period of time, themselves.

Finally, firms employ some mechanism of getting feedback or evaluating the impact of CSR to ensure that the project is on the right track. This feedback mechanism could be internal, external or both.

It [Feedback] is third party as well as internal and external. Like, we do impact study, we do community satisfaction index, we do need assessment. All this report we compile and then we get the various projects. (Head of CSR, Firm 'A')

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We have regular feedback mechanism which helps to measure and guide our CSR activities.

(Vice President, Corporate Communication, Firm 'B')

For feedback, we ask the community... our team ...Some time we do survey, some time we also write success stories and case studies.

(Head of CSR, Firm 'D')

This feedback mechanism helps managers to take a decision to either close, continue or modify a CSR program (see section 8.4 for more detail).

In a nutshell it can be concluded that Indian agribusiness firms start the process of CSR implementation through *engagement* (achieved through effective communication) with the community that encourages the latter to participate in the implementation of CSR projects. The *participation* ensures that the community starts owning the project. This *ownership* is critical for making the project sustainable. Finally, a *feedback* mechanism ensures that CSR project is on right track. The process of the implementation of CSR is illustrated by Figure 8.1.

As all sample firms conform to this process, this study posits that Figure 8.1 represents a common process of implementation of CSR programs by Indian agribusiness firms wherein the firm adopts a process that begins from the engagement with the community and ends or continues after receiving feedback from the community. In the process, community actively participates in the project and the firm transfers the ownership of the project to the community so that the project could continue in the long run.

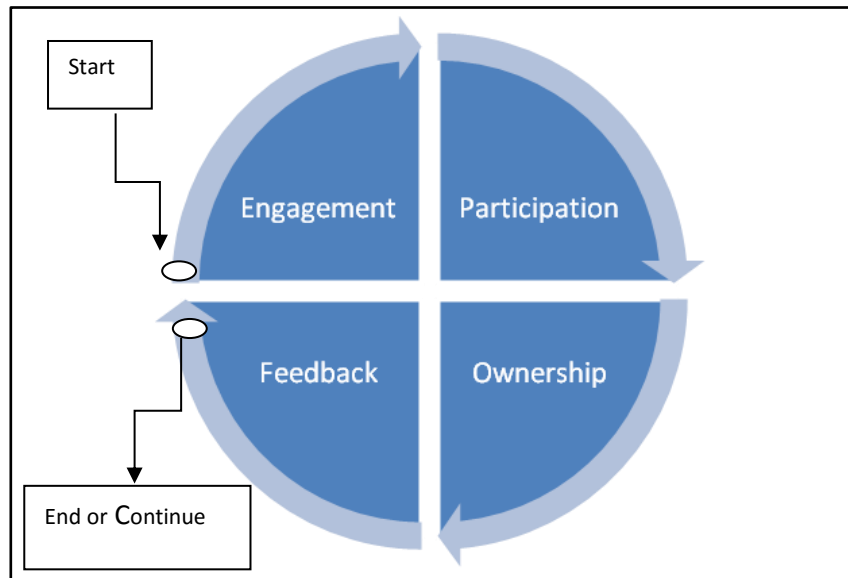


Figure 9.1: Process of CSR implementation

It may be noted that the entire process has been split up in four broad steps that are critical for a successful CSR implementation. The framework is a significant contribution to knowledge in the absence of explicit literature on the process of CSR implementation in India and provides a foundation for identifying the key barriers in CSR implementation.

Also, non-involvement of the ordinary community members in the decision making and implementation processes created a sense of dependency and paternalism as the company was seen as the ‘provider’ instead of a ‘partner’. This confirms the idea that community participation is essential in ensuring sustainability of projects (Cook, 1994).

This ownership leads to empowerment of the community which is the central to sustainability.

9.3 Different approaches of CSR implementation

The content analysis reveals that there are broadly four ways, in which Indian agribusiness firms implement CSR activities as described below.

(a) Through a company-owned development society

Firm 'A' and 'B' have their own separate organisation (development societies) that is responsible for implementing large scale community development programs of these firms. The society employs a variety of people depending upon the type of projects it handles, including specialists in social issues, agriculture and rural development activities. There are two advantages in this approach. First, it helps in implementing community development programs that are intended to be converted into long-term sustainable CSR projects. Such projects are possible because this approach relies on community participation, resulting in ownership of the project by the community leading to a long-term sustainable project. Second, firms get an opportunity to engage in regular CSR programs because of the society provides an appropriate organisational structure and a dedicated set of people to carry out CSR implementation work.

(b) Partnering with NGOs

All firms in the sample partner with NGOs to implement CSR programs in addition to any other approach they adopt to carry out CSR. This approach is useful when firms practice CSR on an irregular basis or when a firm does not have expertise in a given social activity. For example, firm 'D' primarily relies on this approach because it implements CSR program as and when the managers feel the need of it or when the firm does not have specialised people and requisite expertise to carry out social and community development works. Firm 'A' and 'B' use NGOs for those types of CSR activities that do not feature in their regular CSR programs.

(c) Collaboration with industrial associations

Some firms collaborate with industry associations and networks to implement its CSR programs. One of the main reasons to associate with these forums is to pool the money and share the resources to run a collective CSR program. This is a less costly form of participation in CSR activities. Firm 'C' primarily relies on this method. One advantage is firms get brand visibility wherever the industry association is implementing any CSR program. For example, the Head of CSR of firm 'C' states:

This is an easiest way to increase brand visibility in an industry forum.

(d) Directly through employee volunteerism

All sample firms encourage employee volunteerism in varying degree (see section 8.4.1 in Chapter 8) to implement small scale CSR activates like eye check-up camp, blood donation camp, health check-up camp, animal health check-up camp, conducting farmer's training programs, etc.

Volunteerism' is a choice for employee to do social work without bothering about any reward. The word volunteering implies commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society and the community, the environment or individuals outside one's immediate family. It is undertaken freely and by choice, without concern for financial gain. It's all about to make a positive impact in the workplace, community and environment.

(Associate Vice President, Corporate Affairs of Firm 'A')

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One of the marketing advantages of using this approach is that CSR programmes can be carried out in the market place or in the supply chain process where firms try to link CSR activities with marketing and branding activities and improve brand visibility.

We [employees] go to these markets around festive season, for instance, from *Rakhi* to *Diwali* [the names of Indian festivals]. So, during that period we go to the market, setup small camps in the markets, and there we talk to shoppers and families, and there we tell that we are running this nutrition campaign for undernourished kids. We take the signature from public. He need not be a customer. So if you support this, all we need is your signature and from your signature we have one pack to the kids. And this is done through food banking network... so through them we gets the kids around and distribute the packs so if we get 10,000 signature we will distribute 10,000 packs so if we gets 50,000 signature we will distribute 50,000 packs.

(Vice President, Corporate Communication, Firm 'B')

Thus, this method of increasing brand awareness is directly linked to CSR activity of the firm. However, the evidence also indicates that firm 'A' and 'B' have more instances of employee volunteerism than firm 'C' and 'D' (see section 8.4.1 in Chapter 8 for more details).

Thus, this study identifies four distinct approaches to the implementation of CSR in India as presented in Figure 9.2. However, it has been found that an Indian agribusiness firm may adopt more than one approach at any given time. Identification of these distinct

approaches may facilitate the managers to evaluate and take decisions regarding different options of CSR implementation strategy on the basis of its cost and impact. This also provides rich avenues for future researchers to investigate the nature of CSR practices in four distinct approaches. This is again an important contribution to the literature.

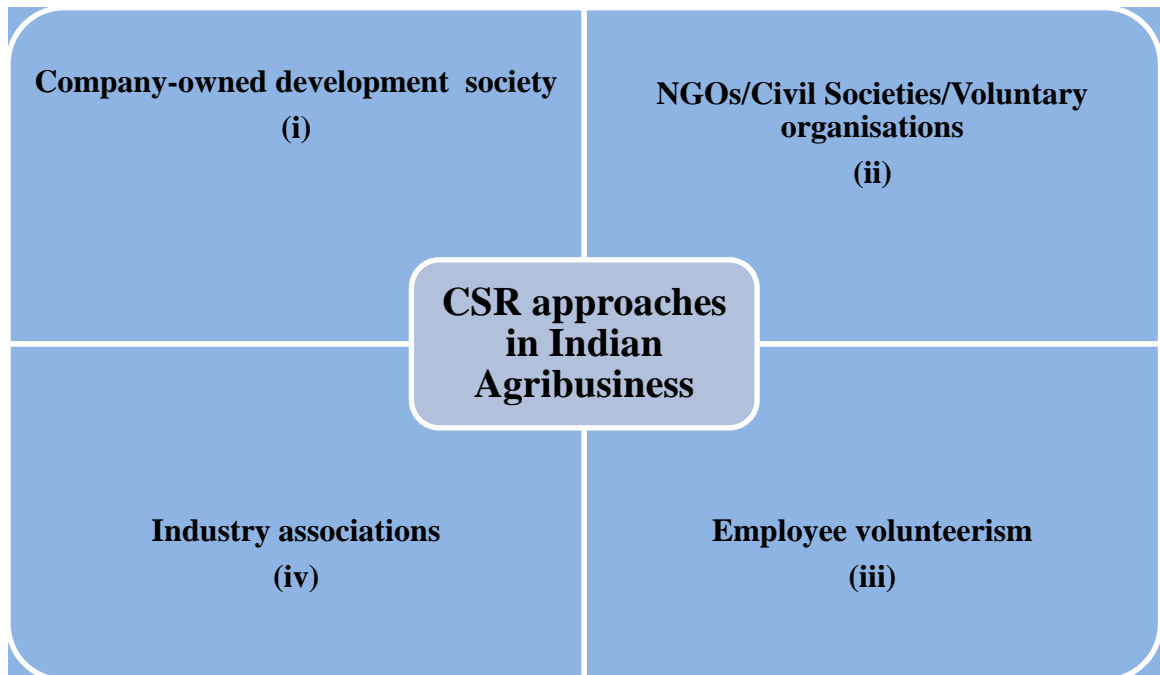


Figure 9.2: Distinct approaches of CSR implementation in Indian agribusiness firms

As explained earlier, it may be noted that while firm 'A' uses all four types of approaches at times, firm 'B' primarily relies on (i) and (ii) and sometimes on (iii). Firm 'C' implements its CSR program through (ii) and (iii). Firm 'D' uses only (ii).

9.4 Barriers to CSR

The content analysis indicates a distinctive departure from the earlier study on the topic. For simplicity the barriers to CSR implementation can be classified in three broad categories: (a) firm's operational barriers, (b) barrier within the community, (c) barriers related to the external environment.

9.4.1 Firm's operational barriers

The content analysis reveals that one of the key reasons for operational problems is the lack of planning of CSR activities. The analysis indicates that firms face at least two important barriers during a planning stage. First, the data reveal that managers do not have a clear-cut guideline about CSR activities and as a result firms still do not have a well-structured financial and operational plan to implement its CSR activities.

In a quarter, employee have to focus 2-3 days on CSR activities, but nobody knows exactly what time and when or 2-3 days is enough or not, or whether the CSR activities is right or wrong , very less or very high. So, no clear-cut guideline is available to managers.

(Assistant General Manager, Marketing, Firm 'A')

This was evident in other firms as well.

Second, at times, due to ill-managed prioritisation of CSR activities as well as inappropriate and poorly designed needs assessment, firms fail to recognize the requirements of the community or the firm is not able to strike a balance between its own priorities and those of the community. If the firm implements its own agenda then it faces a lot of resistance and protest from the community.

If you start implementing something on your own according to your need, then there will be clash and it will be total failure. Because people don't want it, if you are giving people a particular thing.

(Marketing Manager of Firm 'C')

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Sometimes you will find they want something else. In one village we found that health is a priority in a village. Then someone from the community told us – few girls are going to attain the marriage age of 17-18 years and within two years they are going to be married. So we want to give additional skill to them. At last they clearly told that we need a cutting tailoring centre. That is our priority. In another case, they [the youth of villages] told: we are preparing for the government job exams and we need books and then we started looking for a place to start a library. And after one and half months, during meeting they suggested for the vermin compost activity. (Head of CSR of Firm ‘B’)

Thus, the data reveals an interesting finding that initially firms may carry out CSR activities based on community priorities and after some time implement its own priority activity. For example, the Head of CSR of firm ‘B’ narrates how their programme of launching mobile health services and setting up vermin compost units as CSR activities took place. On the community’s demand, initially they set up a ‘stitching and tailoring centre’ and a ‘library’ to build a rapport with the community and finally launched CSR activities according to firm’s own interest. The CSR manage of firm ‘B’ reveals:

In first case, stitching a tailoring centre was an entry point for mobile health services and in second case library was an entry point for vermin-compost activity.

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Content analysis reveals that, in the case firms, shortage of internal resources and an apathetic attitude of the management also pose challenge to implement CSR programs.

There is a problem of resources. I am alone handling this large area.

I am asking for more people. But in-vain.

(CSR Manager of Firm 'B')

However, most of the barriers to CSR activities relate to day-to-day operational problems such as lack of co-ordination, skilled manpower and adequate resources. For example, if a firm wants to set up a health check-up camp, then sometimes it is not easy to find a good doctor and arrange medical equipment in time. The findings are in line with the study by Aravelo and Aravind (2011) who indicate that the most significant obstacles to CSR implementation are those related to lack of resources.

Last but not least, a CSR department gets less attention compared to other revenue oriented departments, and motivation of CSR manager needs to be boosted as pointed out by the CSR manager of firm 'B' and endorsed by CSR managers of firm 'A' and 'D':

CSR department is not as important as other department. We are paid less than other departments' manager.

9.4.2 Barriers within the local community

The content analysis reveals that most of the barriers to CSR implementation originate from within the community (see Table 9.1). The evidence indicates that community

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pressure on firms exist in different forms (see Table 9.1). Some of these have been mentioned below:

(i) Conflicting interest of the community

There exists disparity (in terms of income, profession, caste etc.) among different sections of the community. Due to such disparity, some sections of the community may resist benefits of CSR accruing to any other section (Table 9.1). Such conflicts tarnish firm's image among discontented section of the community.

(ii) Identification of beneficiaries

There could be situations, in which the firm cannot expand its CSR project to include all fractions of a community. For example, at times, the firm may be willing to provide the benefits of CSR only to the most disadvantageous section of the community. This may create problems. The evidence (Table 9.1) indicates that firms do not possess expertise in selecting the beneficiaries for the CSR projects. There remains a danger of alienating one faction of the community or the other (Table 9.1). Many a time, firms are forced to expand the scale of CSR activities to encompass a larger number of fractions within the community that escalate the expenditure of a CSR activity. Sometimes it may also force the firm to change the preferences or priorities of CSR programs (Table 9.1).

One of the most common solution to the problem of the identification of the beneficiaries is to leave it at the discretion of the *Mukhiya* (Head of village) to choose the members of the community to be benefitted by CSR programs. However, this option may not always yield desirable result because the *Mukhiya* might be biased and may favour particular group or section of the community and ignore others. It can lead to dissatisfaction among the community members resulting in tarnishing company's image and reputation.

(iii) Community pressure for employment and other benefit

The data show that one of the important community pressures takes the form of a request of employment and other benefits in the manufacturing unit (Table 9.1). Such demands may induce the firm to abandon a CSR program or move to other location.

(iv) Resistance to change

The evidence indicates that firms may encounter hostile reaction on the part of the target community when CSR interventions are first initiated. Often communities oppose any intrusion and this resistance to change poses a challenge to the firm (Table 9.1). Communities are generally sceptical about the firm's intention because they do not trust firms and fear that proposed CSR activities may threaten their rights on land and resources.

For example, CSR head of firm 'B' reveals:

They [the community] are very good observer. Initially they observe each and everything... are you a political party or back the company with vested interest or what? They will analyse it. If some doubt... they will not allow... they will resist.

A community may also not be ready for adopting modern influences associated with CSR activities due to prevailing illiteracy and orthodox traditions (see section 9.4.2, vi).Some may consider any change as intrusion in their day-to-day life, while other might consider it as loss of control of natural and human resources of the village. However, probably the most important dimension is that the local tradition and culture is so strongly embedded in the lives of the community that any new initiative is considered as a disruption in the usual

complacent lifestyle and secured feeling of the community within the fore wall of the village.

(v) *Low community participation and lack of ownership of the project*

The content analysis reveals that one of the main hurdles identified by managers is ‘unwillingness of community to contribute financially’. Firms attempt to enforce financial contribution to ensure ownership of the CSR project. However, the community poses resistance on account of the notion that non-government societies get enough financial assistance from the firm and the funding agencies. This conflict between the community and the firm poses challenge to ensure active participation of the community in CSR projects. Managers perceive that CSR program can be sustainable only when community contribute financially. For example, Vice President (Corporate Communication) of firm ‘B’ states:

When you will put money then you will take care of the plant and irrigate also.

Head of CSR of firm ‘D’ agrees:

Community having paying capacity should pay or take a contribution from community.

Managers are also of the view that if the activity is important for the community then only the community is willing to financially contribute and participate. Like Head of CSR firm ‘B’ narrates:

We started popular plantation, we clearly told – 50% you [community] have to contribute 50 % we [firm] will contribute. Initial first year... only 10- 15 people came forward. Next year 25% farmers came forward. Ultimately 50 % contribution- after 5 years they sell out the one tree at 1500 Rs. That will be their income-not mine.

(vi) *Lack of awareness on the part of the community*

The awareness level of the community that resides in a remote location regarding social issues such as importance of literacy and good health may be very low, as Head of CSR of firm ‘D’ describes:

There is low awareness level in community in interior place... regarding education and health. In health care, in rural areas people still believe in *Jhaad Phuk*[A kind of age old practice to treat patient by *Mantras*].When we say that see a doctor when you are ill, then they[the community]resist saying that here we get well by *Jhaad Phuk* only. So this kind of orthodox or traditional thing we need to remove.

Thus, low awareness of communities residing in undeveloped areas regarding modern practices in healthcare and education and orthodox and dogmatic believes in unscientific traditions also pose challenges to CSR implementation.

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<i>Barriers</i>	<i>Exemplar Quotes</i>	<i>Firm</i>
Conflicting interest with the community	‘When you want to benefit a certain segment of people the other segment which is not benefitted at same level because they probably don’t need it, so they become a major hurdle. They also become hurdle when you are distributing, reaching out to these people’.	A
Issue gets politicized	‘The local political leader may try to influence the place and scale of CSR intervention’.	D
Identification of beneficiary	‘This is not in the company personnel skill to select beneficiaries. It is the community who decides on the beneficiaries’.	C
Community Pressure	‘The community whose land was taken by the company wants employment in the company. The company is providing skill development training so that they can be employed somewhere they can do business themselves but the community have a feeling that they should get the employment in the company. So while the expectation of the community rises, the company is not in a position to give employment to everybody in the community’.	A
Resistance to Change	‘There is a lot of aggressive behaviour of local community when someone starts doing something different’. ‘If you go with new idea and new things there might be some resistance to change’.	A
Project benefits not reaching to the really needy people	‘What happens here- all communities are rich. They have scope to work, they have favourable climate. I personally find that they are not the most needy person for the community development. There are other people in faraway villages that are more vulnerable’.	B
Minority community not interested in education	‘I am also trying to get permission from my senior that we should implement our project there, because, though they are faraway places may be 20 km away, but they are the most needy person. We want to implement.’ ‘Especially in minority community or caste community you will see that they don’t have interest for education. That is the basic problem. We have to first sensitise the community’.	B

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<i>Barriers</i>	<i>Exemplar Quotes</i>	<i>Firm</i>
Overlap of CSR activities	‘From the start we have activity in this region because it is near the plant and because we will also get benefit from the community, and we will get the brand image and also public relation. We are not too much concerned with the far away community. This is the case with all the companies here. All are implementing their project in this region only’.	B
Community not concerned for change	‘They are not much concerned about social change. They have already sustainability activity in the region. When we go for other activity like awareness program we don’t see their time for it. They are not having time. They are quite busy in their own work’	B
Financial contribution	‘Generally what they [community] feel- government institution – NGO is also a government funded institution. They are getting lots of fund. Then why they [firms] are charging... ’.	D

Table 9.1: Barriers in implementation of CSR

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The analysis reveals that firms devise their own mechanisms to deal with the barriers and although they do not have any standard process in this regard, yet most of the problems are sorted out through the involvement of *Panchayat* (a village body) and getting consensus of the local community.

Senior manager and top management get involved - they talk with the community to sort out the issues.

(CSR manager of Firm 'A')

We talk to them. We amicably sort all the issues. We all sit together and sort it out. (Head of CSR of Firm 'B')

We don't face any major problem. We solve our day to day problem. (Vice President, CSR 'Firm 'C')

We talk to them. In *Panchayat* (Village body) most of the problems are sorted out. (Vice President, CSR, Firm 'D')

9.4.3 Barriers associated with the external environment

The extant literature (e.g., Balasubramanian *et al.*, 2005) does not go beyond providing a general list of barriers. This study is a step forward and the content analysis reveals that there are some generic problems caused by the external environment such as interference of local politicians, corruption in firms and bureaucracy, anti-social elements etc. CSR issues become politicised at the local level and a firm has to make a great effort to deal with

it. Political issues are complicated and firms find it difficult to cope with them.

The whole thing gets politicised. So in order to get your job done and keep away from the local politics you have to invest lot of time and your energy in that and try and tackle the situation before getting the hit. And this is the biggest problem, and typically in any society, not only in rural area, when you want to benefit a certain segment of people the other segment which is not benefitted at same level because they probably don't need it so they become a major hurdle.

(Associate Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Firm, A)

This finding is in line with the study of Aravelo and Aravind (2011) who attribute complexity and difficulty of implementing CSR as an important barrier.

Another macro issue relates to a poor public infrastructure in rural and hilly areas:

There was no industry. Now it is industrial area. Actually, this is a site where there is no rail connectivity. You can think how a village or a city region can be developed if it has no rail connectivity. (CSR Manager of Firm 'B')

In addition to such macro environment issues, scholars on social issues (Sharma, 2013) point out barriers related to social structure (such as the caste, an inter religious strife,

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poverty, unemployment, malnutrition, illiteracy, gender issues and corrupt bureaucracy, etc.) and social organisation (NGOs, voluntary organisations etc.). Though many scholars have highlighted about social structural issues, concerns regarding social organisations remains critical in the context of agribusiness. Sharma (2013) points out that there is a dearth of good NGOs and trained manpower in remote locations where CSR interventions are mostly carried out, and NGOs are struggling to build manpower capacities there. This study corroborates these views. In addition, interestingly, it was also observed that there is a lack of consensus amongst CSR implementing agencies (NGOs) of different firms often resulting in duplication of CSR activities prohibiting firms to undertake impact assessment of their initiatives.

Finally, there are concerns and apprehensions about the new CSR law too. Practitioner and academicians are debating the need for such a law and pointing at its shortcomings.

The law defines CSR activities as those that ‘promote poverty reduction, education, health, environmental sustainability, gender equality and vocational skills development’ in the vicinity of the firm’s location. A newspaper article (Hindustan Times, 31st December, 2013) argues that the new law ignores the needs and requirements of far-flung locations. Supporting this argument a web articles (CSR Times, 2015) asserts that the ‘CSR Act should enable firms to go beyond their physical reaching out to the far-flung areas and intensify implementation of CSR. It would certainly help in addressing the issue of regional imbalances, both social and economic’.

Similarly, another newspaper article (Hindustan Times, 17 September, 2013) reports that the Companies Act does not mention ‘senior citizens’ as one of the beneficiaries of the

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corporate social responsibility (CSR). Hence, public and private sector firms have no obligation to serve senior citizen under CSR programs. This may have adverse implications for society as a World Health Organisation report in 2010 indicated that, with an increase in affluence, the old were getting marginalised both socially and economically as India does not have a social security and health system for senior citizens.

This section brings out that macro environment challenges for agribusiness sector are not unique to the sector barring challenges originating from policies related to Indian agriculture. However, one cannot deny that agriculture sector is still a comparatively more protected sector by the Indian government.

The above three categories of barriers have implications on branding efforts of agribusiness firms. Operational barriers (such as mismanagement and non-coordination of CSR activities), if not sorted out timely can have negative impact on corporate image and reputation. Barriers within the community may result in less effective implementation of CSR activities or alienate a particular section of the community against the brand. The community's ill feeling about the brand may spread through word of mouth and trigger antipathy against firm's image and reputation. Similarly challenges posed by external environment may also directly and indirectly affect the firms' CSR implementation programs. Often firms do not have much control over the barriers posed by external environment affecting the brand negatively.

A comparative analysis of the types of barriers associated with type of business agribusiness firms are engaged in, has been presented in the Table 9.2.

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It may be noted that firms which are engaged in large scale CSR projects or work in a difficult geographical terrain face day to day operational, co-ordination and management problems. Such firms also face lack of skilled manpower and resources to effectively implement CSR programs.

Operational barriers	Barriers within community	Barriers due to external factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Chemical Fertiliser (A)•Food and herbal products (B)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Chemical Fertiliser (A)•Food and herbal products (B)•Agriculture Machinery (C)•Agri input and Retail (D)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Chemical Fertiliser (A)•Food and herbal products (B)•Agriculture Machinery (C)•Agri input and Retail (D)

Table 9.2: Categorisation of barriers in Indian agribusiness firms

However, all firms face problems within the community at varying degree. While the chemical fertiliser firm faced stiff resistance from the community, other firms had problems regarding the identification of beneficiaries or resistance due to poor implementation of CSR programs. However, all sampled Indian agribusiness firms faced similar problems in respect to the external macro environment and government regulations and bureaucratic problems.

9.5 Measuring the impact of CSR

The measurement and evaluations of CSR programs are of interest to various stakeholders, because they usually reveal a firm's real commitment to CSR (Maignan *et al.*, 2005). There is no single approach to measure CSR. Maignan and Ferrell (2000) recognise three categorises of approaches: (1) expert assessment (2) single or multiple indicators, and (3) surveys of management. In expert assessment, the information is provided by both industry expert and experts in the business or society area. In single or multiple indicators,

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indexes such as Fortune reputation index and the KLD index are popular. In surveys of management, respondents are asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement with statements about CSR.

To assess the implementation of CSR programs, many firms make use of various standards measuring mechanisms, evaluation systems, audits and report systems (Harila and Petrini, 2001). In recent years a large number of sustainable development and CSR evaluation methods have emerged (Becker, 2004), including Social Accountability 8000, the ISO 14001 and the Life Cycle Assessment (Harila and Petrini, 2001). A popular 'Global Reporting Initiative' (GRI) has formulated a framework and guidelines for disclosing information about corporate sustainability programs, and encourages firms to report on their economic, environmental, and social performance in the manner they are accustomed to doing for their financial performance. Such mechanism are being adopted by many a firm nowadays. Some firms also use a 'reputation index' that rates firms according to their social dimensions, impact on the environment, and a set of other criteria such as 'content analysis' when key words are counted to assess the level of CSR. However, literature emphasise that there can be biases in the way data are collected, analysed and reported and hence though there are ways to measure CSR but all have some problem. Considering that there are problems and limitations associated with all the methods, Cramer (2005) observed that companies struggle with picking the right performance measures for their monitoring and reporting activities.

The finding of this study is that the sample firms do not use any standard mechanisms to measure the impact of CSR. For instance, the Vice President (Corporate Communication) of firm 'B' says:

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It is very difficult to measure the impact of CSR activities, but in our survey we do ask the consumer/community about CSR activities and invariably the responses are positive.

Instead, the firms employ tailor-made approaches for measuring the impact of CSR on a community. These include surveys, feedback sessions, qualitative and quantitative reports, etc., prepared by internal teams and third parties. The outcome of these studies provides direction for future CSR activities. Head of CSR of firm 'A' explains:

We do it externally and we do it internally. We do third party impact assessment, and is done internally by us also. And it is not the end of project, it is ongoing project like the certain projects are ongoing and we do impact assessment so we come to know whether we are on the right track or we got to deviate.

Firm 'B' relies solely on external evaluators to measure the CSR impact. The Vice President (Corporate communication) of firm 'B' reveals:

We want the third party to come and tell me that weather we have been... successful or whether it has met the requirement or not... So they will study like what was the influence then ...what is the situation now, pre and post kind of study. There is proper survey and they come back to us with some statistical analysis and all that.

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Another approach of evaluating CSR is by comparing with the benchmark of similar CSR activities previously carried out as CSR head of firm 'D' discloses:

In health, we have fixed targets and every year targets are increased 2-3%. In self-help group (SHG) every year we have to form additional 40 SHGs. Out of these we have to link 50% of the group to the bank. We do this kind of measurement.

Such mechanisms for impact measurement were also found in other firms. For example, in Firm 'A', the measure used for evaluating the impact of a CSR program was 'number of girls trained or per centage girls employed from those trained' (Annual Report, 2012-13) for a women empowerment program that has an objective of training of *Aanganwadi* workers for more enrolment in Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) centre.

In addition, firms also adopt a few qualitative mechanisms (case studies, success stories) to assess the impact of CSR. Head of CSR of firm 'B' explains:

We measure the impact - whatever finance we have provided to the bank- has the beneficiary started any business? Where they put in the money- in which activity and how much economic impact has happened – whether their income has increased or not and whether they are using the income in appropriate activity- education of the children, construction of house or health etc., or not ? We do not have exact measuring tool but we shape it up in the form of a case study or a success story.

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Firms also modify its CSR activities based on the evaluation and feedback as is evident from the words of Vice President (Corporate Communication) of firm 'B':

Yes, if impact assessment survey will come around...and tell that whatever you have done is all waste... then there is no point in continuing that.

In summary, the content analysis reveals that Indian agribusiness firms do not adopt any standard measuring mechanism for CSR impact. While firm 'A' evaluates its CSR program through its internal department and external agencies, firm 'B' uses only external agencies to evaluate its CSR programs. Firms use survey, case studies, success stories and feedback to assess the impact of CSR. Internally, firms assess CSR programs with the help of measuring indicators such as targets numbers achieved comparison with past performance and growth income level of beneficiaries as means to assess the success of CSR activities. Firm 'C' and 'D' do not measure their CSR programs on the pretext that measurement makes sense only if large scale CSR projects are implemented in a big catchment area. Hence there is no standard formula to measure impact of CSR.

Table 9.3 provides a summary of the different approaches being used by Indian agribusiness firms to measure CSR.

<i>Item</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>D</i>
Measurement of CSR	Measure internally and by external agencies- survey, case studies, feedback	By external agencies-survey and case studies, feedback	No measure	No measure, but takes feedback from the community

Table 9. 3: Measurement of CSR

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A newspaper article reports that the central government has formed a committee to suggest a framework to assess CSR activities implemented by corporations under the Companies Law (Economic Times, 4 February, 2015). The committee will work on a framework for assessing the CSR activities, including money spent on such activities/ committee to suggest measures for proper assessment and progress of CSR initiatives by companies including government companies.

The overall analysis in this chapter leads to the next finding of the research:

Findings 5: Indian agribusiness firms have a propensity to adopt participatory approach in implementing CSR in spite of facing community pressure and tend to employ non-standard mechanism to measure impact of only large scale CSR projects.

It may therefore be emphasised that the findings of this study support the view of those scholars who stress the difficulty of evaluating and measuring CSR performance (Cramer and Loeber, 2004; Fenwick and Bierema, 2008; Tudor *et al.*, 2008). The reasons for non-measurement can be attributed primarily to cost issues (Pederson and Anderson, 2006) considering Indian firm are extremely cost conscious. Moreover, there is no effective means of capturing all relevant data for economic, social and environmental impact and often irrelevant factors are taken into consideration while evaluating CSR programmes.

To sum up, this researcher endorses the view expressed by Mellahi (2013) that measuring CSR is difficult and is not always desirable because incorrect results may sometime misguide CSR programme or create doubt in the mind of the community about the real motives of CSR activities. Moreover, this study shares the view that it may not be prudent to measure the firm's portfolio of CSR activity on single or few parameters because each

CSR activities may not have same purposes, and hence should be evaluated on different parameters. Instead, a project-based tool to measure impact would be more useful because CSR can possibly be measured more reliably on short-term impact. As many factors could be involved and changed during a course of long terms CSR project, tracking such changes could be very difficult.

9.6 Conclusions

The chapter presents the detailed process of CSR implementation by Indian agribusiness firms and conceptualise a framework which provides insights into the typical process. According to this framework, Indian agribusiness firms start the process of CSR implementation through ‘engagement’ with the community that encourages the latter to participate in the implementation of CSR projects. The ‘participation’ ensures the ‘ownership’ of the project by the community. Finally, a ‘feedback’ mechanism is employed to ensure that CSR project is on right track. This framework is a significant contribution of the chapter. In addition, it also identifies different approaches being adopted by Indian agribusiness firms to implement CSR activities. Then the chapter identifies three broad categories of key barriers to CSR implementation and the prevailing practices to address them. In the process it also outlines the implications of barriers on branding efforts of agribusiness firms. Finally the chapter shed light on the existing non-standard practices of impact measurement of CSR that are typical to Indian agribusiness conditions. and draws conclusions that have their own value in designing firms’ CSR strategy. Moreover, through empirical findings, this chapter provides firm grounds for future research on the topic.

CHAPTER 10

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

10.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the merits of this thesis in the light of existing research. It has been structured as follows. It begins with outlining the main aims of this thesis and highlights the significance of this study. Subsequently it highlights the advantages of the methodology being adopted for the research. Then it presents a commentary on the study's findings in the light of existing research. It analyses the study's findings on the key areas of interest namely firms' specific motivation to pursue CSR, CSR relation with corporate image/reputation, corporate culture and corporate communication and barriers in CSR implementation. Subsequently the chapter discusses the study's implications for research, policy makers and practitioners. Finally, the chapter evaluates the study's limitations and highlights future research directions.

10.2 Aim of the thesis

The main purpose of this thesis has been to explore empirically and analyse conceptually the role of CSR in corporate brand building in the context of Indian agribusiness firms. Despite the importance of agribusiness in developing countries, relations between agribusiness and society are not well researched (Grunert, 2005; Poetz *et al.*, 2013). There is a paucity of empirical studies investigating the interrelation of CSR and corporate branding within the agribusiness sector. This study aims to contribute significantly in closing the existing gap by investigating the influence of CSR on corporate branding strategy with a view to both advance theory and make practical recommendations regarding CSR and branding in emerging markets.

Specifically this study aims at exploring managerial perceptions of the impact of CSR on corporate branding in the context of Indian agribusiness firms with a view to contribute significantly to academic and practical understanding of the importance of branding consideration as a motive of CSR in Indian agribusiness firms, the impact of CSR involvement on corporate branding and the barriers to CSR implementation.

10.3 Importance of this thesis

There are many factors which makes this thesis significant and distinct. Most importantly, the study contributes to the expansion of knowledge and the understanding of the nature of relationship between CSR and corporate branding in the context of agribusiness in a developing country. The study produces a conceptual framework for firms and practitioners with the intention of facilitating the firms in terms of developing a corporate branding strategy that takes into account the impact of CSR factors. More precisely, the study illuminates the specific motivation of agribusiness firms to pursue CSR and the means through which CSR influences branding. Significantly, this thesis produces a model for describing the process of CSR implementation in the Indian context. So far, such study has not been conducted in India, making this effort a pioneer attempt in the field. Moreover, considering that India has shortly become the first nation to mandate CSR by law, firms are in urgent need of studies such as this one that could guide their CSR initiatives. This makes this research, very timely.

10.4 Advantages of the methodology

The research questions and the theoretical framework provide necessary direction to the study to adopt the most appropriate methodology for the research. The study follows an inductive approach and implements an exploratory case study research design. To this end, four large Indian agribusiness firms were selected for study. Considering that managers

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are among key stakeholders and are the most knowledgeable and most relevant informant for the research issues at hand, this study focuses on managers' perceptions. Accordingly, the empirical data was collected through semi-structured interviews of twenty eight managers responsible for branding and CSR programmes. The data analysis followed a thematic approach and, through the categorization of data, key themes and sub themes were identified.

Qualitative data offered many advantages over other methods. It provided natural occurring information that contained some inherent 'richness and holism, with strong potential for revealing complexity' (Miles and Huberman, 1994), allowing deeper understanding of phenomena under investigation. The qualitative data, which often centre on peoples lived experiences, allowed the researcher to study phenomena and strive to make sense of or interpret them with respect to the meaning people bring to them (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

A semi-structured interview was chosen as the most appropriate technique to achieve the aims of this project. This type of interview enables the researcher to cover specific topics and at the same time to encourage respondents to talk openly and provide a greater breadth of data in comparison with structured interviews (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). They also allow the researcher to make respondents explain the meanings that they ascribe to different phenomena (Saunders *et al.*, 2011).

Data was collected using a key informant method that involves interviewing individuals who are likely to provide needed information, ideas and insights on a particular subject (Kumar, 1989). Accordingly, in the four firms company executives in charge of CSR and branding and relevant senior and middle level managers were selected as informants. One

advantage of using key informant interviews is that information comes directly from the knowledgeable people; hence it can provide data and insights that cannot be obtained from other methods (Kumar, 1989). Another advantage was that it provided flexibility to explore new ideas and issues that had not been anticipated in planning the study but that are relevant to its purpose.

10.5 Commentary on the study's findings in the light of existing research

10.5.1 Drivers of CSR

The study reveals six motives for Indian agribusiness firms to pursue CSR. First, firms pursue CSR mainly for removing barriers to smooth operation of their manufacturing units and plants. For hazardous business such as chemical, fertiliser and pesticides, CSR is a means of gaining legitimacy to operate (Hiss, 2009) and the findings of the study supports the prevalent notion in the literature (Rondinelli and Berry, 2000) that CSR can be used to reduce the negative externalities of the operation.

Second, firms use CSR for building good relation with the community in the anticipation of gaining support from the community at the time of crisis. The instrumental aspect of the CSR theory deals with the ways in which the firm can manage its relationship with its various stakeholders and with designing a strategy through which this relationship can ultimately benefit business performance (Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Jones *et al.*, 2012). The findings of this study seem to be in agreement with this theory. This also corroborates the existence of an implicit social contract that makes business act in accordance with society's expectations or demands (Kuznetsov and Kuznetsova, 2012).

Third, firms that depend on nature, forest and agriculture plantation for its raw materials have to pursue CSR to secure long-term access to resources. This phenomenon is unique

to such firms and this is an important finding considering its implication on firms' corporate branding strategy.

Fourth, less hazardous industries pursue CSR for compliance with the law and for the purpose of tax exemption.

Fifth, Indian agribusiness firms seem to be motivated by the concept of good corporate citizenship that leads them to philanthropic giving aimed at giving back to society (Jamali and Mirshak, 2007). This philosophy lies in the belief that business and society are intertwined in an organic way (Frederick, 1994).

Sixth, all firms had an implicit motive of branding while implementing CSR activities. This implicit motive could be in the form of firms' effort to improve brand visibility by creating awareness, inducing product trials, aligning CSR activities with firm's core business, advertising and public relation activities, internal promotion to employee, maintaining good relation with the community for goodwill generation. This finding is in line with the extant literature that CSR helps in building brand equity (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2001).

10.5.2 CSR- brand relation

This study explores the relationship between CSR and three elements of corporate branding: corporate image/reputation, corporate culture and corporate communication.

10.5.2.1 Impact of CSR on corporate image/reputation

This study contributes to branding literature by presenting the meaning attached to the 'corporate image' and 'corporate reputation' constructs by practicing managers. The study

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demonstrates that there are divergent views of managers on the meaning of 'corporate image' and 'corporate reputation'. The study reveals that the distinction between 'image' and 'reputation' may be of little importance for marketers in a short term because it might be difficult to assess the difference in impact of any marketing initiative separately on image or reputation. The unclear distinction between image and reputation also leads to ambiguity between short-term and long-term strategy for the brand, posing challenge particularly to the firm's long-term branding strategy.

The study establishes three preconditions for CSR to make an impact on corporate image and reputation. First, firms should pursue regular CSR activities. Second, a CSR activity should be distinguishable and influence substantial population of community. Third, the firm should have a prior positive image and reputation. These pre-conditions imply that firm should consider CSR as a form of investment (Mc Williams and Siegel, 2001) in which 'optimum' level of CSR, acquires critical importance for the firm.

This study asserts that in the Indian agribusiness context CSR positively influences corporate image and reputation irrespective of the type of corporate culture (the culture of sustainability or a market culture) the firms possess, supporting the existing research (Robert and Dowling, 2002) conducted in other locations.

These findings have important implications for the corporate branding strategy of agribusiness firms. The most important implication is that firms are encouraged to adopt strategic CSR as opposed to ad-hoc CSR if firms want to reap branding benefit from CSR. This is because the findings emphasise on the importance of regular and above threshold level of CSR activities. Moreover, the study cautions firms not to pursue CSR if prior image and reputation is at stake or firm have lost its image and reputation due to some

undesired events. Finally, the study persuades the firms to integrate CSR with branding strategy in order to make best use of the goodwill generated out of CSR activities.

This study also points out a lack of alignment and co-ordination of marketing and CSR departments within the organisation. This is because currently CSR is not a part of branding or marketing strategy of Indian agribusiness firms. The benefit accrued from CSR in terms of improved image and reputation is a derivative of the CSR activities done for the critical purpose of removing the barriers for smooth operation of business and manufacturing units or for getting community support at the time of crisis.

10.5.2.2 CSR- corporate culture relation

‘Corporate culture’ is a broad topic particularly in organisational studies. This research views corporate culture from the perspective of CSR and branding. In this regard, categorizing corporate culture into sustainability culture and market culture proves to be useful. A firm’s organisation culture may be described as the ‘culture of sustainability’ if it is responsive towards CSR (Serafeim *et al.*, 2011) and as a ‘market culture’ if the firm is more inclined towards marketing and branding activities (Cameron and Quinn, 1998). By adopting this approach, the study maintains its focus on CSR-brand relation issues only.

The existing literature (e.g., Brochet *et al.*, 2012; Cameron and Quinn, 1998) maintains that firms might possess either culture. Accordingly, it is expected that firms will pursue either proactive or reactive CSR respectively. Contrary to the views expressed by some authors (Serafeim *et al.*, 2011), this study establishes that Indian firms possess both culture of sustainability and market culture within the same organisation to a varying degree. This has implications for CSR practices of agribusiness firms. Regular CSR activities are

practiced in firms in which the culture of sustainability prevails whereas firms with dominant market culture adopt CSR on an ad hoc basis. An impromptu attitude to CSR is particularly dangerous because it might backfire and undermine trust in the firm, thereby weakening the brand. Regular and consistent CSR activities strengthen the brand. Firms that possess strong culture of sustainability may possess a strong market culture as well, but firms, in which the market culture prevails, generally have a weak culture of sustainability. It has been found that firms with weak culture of sustainability are generally inefficient, struggling to reduce manpower cost and manage losses. By comparing the two set of organisations, this study induces the troubled firms towards embracing a culture of sustainability for gaining long term benefit to the brand. However, a detailed scrutiny of the financial implications on the firm could be an interesting area of research for upcoming researchers.

10.5.2.3 CSR - corporate communication relation

Corporate communication is a large and independent area of scholarship and this research focuses only on those aspects of corporate communication that are most widely used by firms in the context of promoting CSR for branding purpose in Indian agribusiness. Impact of CSR on the firm's value depends on the ability of its CSR activities to influence the stakeholders of the firms (Barnett, 2007). For creating such influence, firms engage in corporate social reporting (e.g. Brown and Deegan, 1998; Neu *et al.*, 1998; Zadek, 1997). Indian agribusiness firms operationalise 'corporate social reporting' through a separate 'CSR department', 'corporate communication' department or an organisational structure in the form of a 'development society'. The literature emphasises that social and environmental disclosures are responses to public pressure (Patten, 1992; Walden and Schwartz, 1997). Attracting media attention (Brown and Deegan, 1998; Deegan *et al.*, 1999) and social disclosure 'represent a strategy to alter the public's perception about the

legitimacy of the organisation' (Deegan *et al.*, 1999, p.4). The proponents of this view argue that corporate social reporting is aimed at providing information that legitimises the company's behavior by influencing the perception of stakeholders and members of society about the company (e.g. O'Donovan, 1997; Neu *et al.*, 1989). In this respect, corporate social reporting is a public relation vehicle aimed at influencing people's perceptions. For example, firm 'A' using Global Reporting Initiative (GRI- G4) guidelines for CSR reporting, informs that the company's achievement due to CSR include being recognized at different forum for business excellence, responsible care, safety management systems, environmental sustainability, corporate social responsibility and corporate communication (Sustainability report of Firm A, 2014-15). Similarly, firm 'B's sustainability report (2014-15) mentions that 'We believe that community development makes sense only when the approach is right and the efforts are dedicated. Our stakeholder engagement and consultation process, coupled with baseline studies and need-assessments help us develop and shape our programmes for better tomorrow. In each community in which we live and work, firm 'B' is today recognised as a good citizen, working towards improving their health and lifestyle'. These examples explain how CSR contributes to the identification of brand identity through corporate reporting.

The literature (e.g., Barnett, 2007) maintains that CSR activities may encourage the firms to increase its communication activities with respect to CSR in order to inform the stakeholders. This could result in increased level of communication activities and thereby affect the brand positively. However, this study reports conflicting results. Indian agribusiness firms do not aggressively promote CSR activities externally as managers perceive it as against cultural, ethical and philanthropic values. The study reveals that 'culture of Indian society' has a major role in determining the attitude of firms towards promotion and advertising of CSR. There is an inherent cultural belief that noble work

should be done and not talked about. From a cultural perspective advertising is considered close to propaganda. Advertising and public relation are integral to marketing activities but Indian agribusiness firms seek not to showcase CSR and marketing activities together. Indian agribusiness firms, therefore, are reluctant to advertise CSR. For example, Head of CSR of firm 'C' states 'We don't do it [advertising CSR] because then it becomes a part of marketing'. Similarly CSR Head of firm 'A' says 'I am sure in my company nobody will like it [advertising of CSR] because it somewhere hits your ethics – why I am doing this'. Amaladoss and Manohar (2013) link this attitude shown by Indian firms to certain cultural characteristics of Indian society: it is believed that doing good deeds in a discreet way is more desirable and rewarding than doing them for publicity. In turn, Chaudhary (2014) notes that CSR communication has a low profile in India because of the perception that CSR is often associated in the minds of the people with the desire by firms to cover up the negative impact of their previous activities. For this reason firms avoid publicising even when no such activities takes place.

Analysis also reveals that advertising of CSR is not done aggressively due to cost issues. Most managers believe that instead of spending on advertising the same money can be ploughed back in CSR activities. They admit that the inherent problems and inefficiency in the firm's organisational process increases its manpower cost and hence managers are under pressure to cut down cost. Therefore often consumers are not aware of a firm's CSR activities (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Du *et al.*, 2010). Servaes and Tamayo (2013) argue that firms enjoying a high level of consumer awareness about CSR can be expected to have higher value and when stakeholders are not fully aware of firm's CSR activities then the CSR effect on firm's value is moderated or reduced. This study supports this view because Indian managers perceive that communication and advertising of CSR can help strengthening the relationship with stakeholders and the brand. However, in reality such

situation does not fully exist in India. To this extent, Indian agribusiness firms fail to leverage the branding advantage of CSR.

However, at times firms advertise and promote their CSR programs at the local level and link product promotion activity with CSR. This trend is increasing day by day. It provides some clue about the upcoming strategy of Indian firms to increase the promotion of CSR. The new company law mandates Indian firms to spend 2 % of the net profit on CSR activities. The firming up of legislation clutches on Indian firms are compelling firms to spend more on CSR and in the process look for opportunity to gain marketing advantage by promoting CSR.

Nevertheless, this study shares the view of Cone (2007), who affirms that CSR as a branding tool is most effective with those who are already familiar with the brand and of Servaes and Tamayo (2013), who maintain that firms possessing high level of consumer awareness about CSR can be expected to have higher value. Accordingly this study recommended that firms work on increasing CSR awareness levels among stakeholders if CSR is to be a profitable strategic investment.

The main findings of the study have been expressed in the form of a conceptual framework. According to this framework, CSR positively influences corporate image and reputation of Indian agribusiness firms. However, CSR does not influence the communication and advertising practices of firms and plays a neutral role in building corporate brand. Powerful CSR activities of the agribusiness firms tend to influence the corporate culture of firms in order to skew it towards the culture of sustainability whereas weak and infrequent CSR activities tend to be characteristic of firms with market culture. While culture of sustainability strengthens the corporate brand, market culture weakens the corporate brand.

10.5.3 Process of CSR implementation: barriers and measurement

This study delineates the process of CSR implementation in Indian agribusiness. Indian agribusiness firms start the process of CSR implementation through *engagement* (achieved through effective communication) with the community that encourages the latter to participate in the implementation of CSR projects. *Participation* ensures that the community starts owning the project. This *ownership* is critical for making the project sustainable. Finally, a *feedback* mechanism ensures that CSR project is on right track. This framework is a very important contribution of this study to the CSR literature.

This study reports that Indian agribusiness firms pursue CSR through various means such as firm's own developmental society, partnering with NGO, collaborating with industrial association or employee volunteerism. Firms usually adopt a participatory approach of the community to implement CSR. However, when a firm seeks financial contribution from the community it faces a lot of resistance. Next, a major barrier is the selection of beneficiaries for CSR programs because failure to do so leads to frictions within the community and politicisation of the issue. Third, sometimes there is a mismatch between the priorities of the community and those of the firm. Fourth, firms do not have a specific and structured action plan of CSR and adopt impromptu measure to implement and evaluate CSR programs instead. Consequently, CSR departments in firms are not as robust as other department and CSR professional face disparity in terms of salary and facilities. Finally, the external environment such as poor infrastructure, corruption and malpractices, accessibility to interior places and local support also poses challenges in implementing CSR.

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This study adds to the extant literature by pointing out some generic problem from the external environment such as interference of local politicians, low awareness on the part of the community and corruption. The study also reveals barriers faced by the duplicity and concentration of CSR activities in a limited geographical area. In this situation, firms face the challenge of distinguishing its CSR activities from others. Another barrier in implementing CSR programmes relate to public infrastructural issues such as road and rail connectivity to the target location. In addition, the study supports the view of Arevalo and Aravind (2011) who found that lack of resources (skilled manpower and financial) and lack of management support are major obstacles in implementing CSR in India.

Thus, this study through empirical evidences brings out important and subtle barriers to CSR implementation in Indian agribusiness and contributes to the literature by informing that CSR implementation must be planned carefully to avoid impending problems in implementation.

Further the study reveals that Indian agribusiness firms do not adopt any standard mechanism measuring the CSR impact. Some firms evaluates CSR programmes through own internal departments and external agencies. Firms use surveys, case studies, success stories and feedback to assess the impact of CSR. However, there is no standard formula to measure impact of CSR. Many firms do not measure their CSR programs at all on the pretext that measurement makes sense only if large scale CSR projects are implemented in a big catchment area. The findings of this study support the view of those scholars who stress the difficulty of evaluating and measuring CSR performance (Cramer and Loeber, 2004; Fenwick and Bierema, 2008; Tudor *et al.*, 2008) mainly because quantifying social objectives and CSR performance indicators are often regarded as problematic (Carlisle and Faulkner, 2004; Werner, 2009, Vilanova *et al.*, 2009). Accordingly, this study endorses

the view expressed by Mellahi (2013) that measuring CSR is difficult and is not always desirable because there is no effective means of capturing all relevant data for economic, social and environmental impact and upholds that ultimately CSR should be done as a commitment to society.

10.6 Implications for research

Investigation of CSR in the Indian context remains largely an unexplored topic (Agarwal, 2009). Moreover, there has been no analysis of CSR–brand relationship in Indian agribusiness context. This research helps to fill this important gap, by bringing together ideas from several disciplines: CSR, brand management and organisation studies and the contextual peculiarities of Indian management and business systems. Subsequently, this investigation helps to understand important links between CSR and corporate branding, the knowledge of which will also help in identifying ways to make CSR more effective in terms of strengthening the corporate brand in agribusiness, particularly in an emerging market's context.

The study's findings have important implications for research and advancing brand-CSR theories in several ways. By conceptualizing brand and CSR as a business-processes oriented construct this study attributes great importance to the social and environmental impacts of business operations and to the policies/ tools that companies use to mitigate the negative impacts. In so doing, the study responds to calls from scholars (Wood, 2010; Godfrey and Hatch, 2007) to invigorate CSR research by focusing on processes and outcomes of business operations. The results of this study forge a strong empirical basis on which a practical direction into the analysis of brand-CSR relation can be built.

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The study contributes to brand-CSR literature in three ways. First, by focusing on image and reputation dimension, this study affirms that CSR helps a brand through building good image and reputation. This empirical foundation is of great importance to steer the research to explore linkage between CSR, image and the brand. Next, this study extends the debate of brand-CSR relation to CSR communication and observes that Indian conditions are different from the Western world and the existing brand-CSR communication frameworks do not hold good. The study emphasises that the 'cultural dimension' should be considered more seriously to draw conclusions in this regard. Finally, the study lays foundation for exploring brand sustainability issues in the context of emerging markets by focusing on the type of corporate culture a firm is possessing. This study encourages investigating the corporate culture in a more elaborate way to establish culture-CSR and brand relations.

This research contributes not only to the branding literature in a significant way, but it also contributes to CSR literature by diverting the attention from linking CSR with financial performance to linking CSR with corporate brand performance, which is not only central to the business, but also provides a long-term perspective for firms to be successful. Results of this study reveal that the analysis of CSR activities requires the pursuit of a holistic approach that allows identifying how CSR is really implemented by firms. By analysing why, how and in which context agribusiness firms practices CSR, this study provides a fertile ground for a new line of inquiry into the analysis of such activities.

The results further reveal that corporate branding strategy of agribusiness firms fail to incorporate CSR in a structured way. This evidence advances existing knowledge on the effectiveness of CSR, reinforcing the view expressed by previous studies that the development of CSR as a voluntary framework reflects the attempts of corporations to satisfy own interests (Campbell, 2007). Obtained evidence indicates the need to abandon

the rhetoric approach that claims that firms will voluntarily implement social and environmental practices. In other words, within the constraints imposed by society, firms will always put profit maximization first.

Significantly, this study has produced only limited support for the so-called ‘business case’ for CSR. This finding has serious implications because it reinforces the view that the analysis of CSR through the lens of financial performance fails to grasp some important aspects of CSR practices and does not have much to offer in terms of explanation. The limitation of the business case as a framework for CSR research has also been recently noted by other scholars who argue, somewhat hesitantly, that ‘this may not be the most fruitful avenue for research at this time’ (Wood, 2010). In this context, the findings of the present thesis may assist in shifting the analysis of implementation of CSR practices away from the narrow perspective of the business case.

10.7 Implications for policy makers and practitioners

This research has important policy implications. First, it recommends firms to follow a structured approach of CSR implementation. Second, it highlights the importance of adopting culture of sustainability in order to build a sustainable brand. This research disproves the proposition that the CSR should be pursued only by the leading firms and that CSR is only a cost element for firms. On the contrary, the findings suggest that non-practice of CSR could be a costly proposition for firms because it may result in antagonism, huge public resentment and opposition to the business. Thus the study persuades firms to scale up CSR activities for accomplishing strategic benefit. In this context, firms considering CSR only as a cost element have a lesson to learn.

Discussions and Conclusions

This study also highlights the inter-departmental conflict within organisations and recommends that firms that have separate CSR and marketing departments should align their activities in order to complement each other and work together. Moreover, the role of marketing professionals in the implementation of CSR activities is highlighted by this research because these professionals are involved with the grassroots of the community and the consumer, and are capable of bringing constructive feedback and suggestions of the community. Therefore, involving marketing professionals in CSR planning and implementation would be a smart step. In this context, it may be worth noting that the top to bottom approach to CSR implementation is disparaged as it takes precedence of the community's need. It is indicated through the evidence that only those CSR programs are successful which are based on prior need assessment of the community. This finding encourages the firms to conduct exhaustive needs assessment before undertaking any CSR activity.

The study's findings have important implications for governments that have mandated Indian firms to spend 2 % of the net profit on CSR. Due to this, the government is under criticism from the proponents of volunteerism in CSR who argue that this law has distorted the very essence and spirit of CSR. Moreover, by delineating activities that could be considered as CSR activities, government has tried to direct the firm's independence of choosing CSR activities.

This study shows that firms pursue CSR only in the vicinity of the manufacturing locations. This finding may assist the government to explore the possibility of working out a framework through which the benefits of CSR activities could also reach community located in distant regions. The government may also decide to specify the threshold

number of beneficiaries and geographical spread in which firm should undertake CSR activities.

Firms also join industrial associations to implement CSR programs. The findings of this study suggest that the government may also encourage likeminded firms to collaborate and work on large developmental projects through a mechanism in which governments collaborate with industry associations and work towards improving existing self-regulatory tools. Thus the results of this study have significant implications for industry associations and policy-makers in terms of the architecting a prospective voluntary CSR self-regulatory tools.

10.8 Limitations and future research directions

There are a number of limitations to this study pointing to interesting avenues for future research. First, exploring the study's propositions in the context of a single country enabled the analysis to keep any influences exerted by the environment constant, but weakened the generalisability of the results. Due to cultural influences on organisations and on CSR implementation in various countries, an interesting extension of this study could be a cross-country research analysing institutional and cultural influences on: (a) brand- CSR relation by; (b) the way firms adopt CSR i.e. approach of CSR; (c) the process of CSR influence on the brand; and (d) public relation – CSR linkages. Such research would assist in testing further the robustness of the prevailing theoretical predictions and investigate whether brand- CSR relation, the approach of CSR and the process of CSR influence vary in different cultural contexts.

Second, the present investigation is based on interview research, which provides limited longitudinal evidence on how firms use CSR practices in their everyday activities. Future

Discussions and Conclusions

studies with access to longitudinal data will be able to address questions concerning temporal changes in CSR implementation and its consequences on branding.

Third, in interviews, individual biases in reporting are bound to exist. Hence, quantitative and other qualitative methods may also be employed to increase the generalisability of the research.

Fourth, this research was limited to only very large firms. However, recent government legislation mandates that all firms having profit more than Rs. 5 Crore should spend on CSR. Drawing on previous research (Cambra-Fierro *et al.*, 2008), which suggests that CSR is less size sensitive than it is believed, a similar study can be conducted in the context of smaller agribusiness firms.

Fifth, India is vast country with geographical diversity and cultural differences. This study was limited to one state, but similar study can be conducted in other state as well to increase the generalisability of the study.

Sixth, similarly to agribusiness, there are other sector that are potentially harmful to environment such as mining, petrochemicals, energy and automobile sector. Further research may be conducted in the context of these sectors to get a holistic picture of CSR influence on the brand.

Seventh, the measures used in this study are by no means exhaustive. The operationalisation of the corporate image, culture and communication may not have fully captured the various facets of these three areas. Nonetheless, given that, to the best of our knowledge, the approach this study adopts is the first of its kind it provides as it stands the

basis for a new line of inquiry into CSR and its influence on branding. Future studies should introduce additional measures to test the robustness of the theoretical suggestions.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the study's results are important considering the size and importance of India as an emerging economic power. Moreover, the fact that data were collected from a single, large country not influential in terms of defining CSR implementation at least for Asian countries, these results can be expected to hold true for CSR practices across a wide range of country.

10.9 Conclusion

This study sought to investigate the perception of managers regarding influence of CSR implementation on corporate branding strategy of Indian agribusiness firms. To succeed in its aim, this study focused on a less explored institutional environment of developing country (India) and adopted a holistic approach.

Drawing on arguments made in the literature this research expands existing knowledge by paying particular attention to: (a) firms' motives for adopting CSR in relation to branding (b) influence of CSR on corporate image/corporate reputation (c) influence of CSR on communication and advertising activities (d) influence of CSR on corporate culture (e) barriers to CSR implementation.

In particular, the study built its conceptual framework by adopting a cross-disciplinary approach, which drew on CSR and branding theories and frameworks. The research followed a multi case study based qualitative research design. This thesis understood the managers responsible for the implementation of CSR in each firm as the most knowledgeable and appropriate persons for semi structured interviewed. Data was

Discussions and Conclusions

collected through 28 semi-structured interviews of managers of branding, marketing and CSR and the research employed cross case analysis method for holistic understanding. In addition, in order to increase the validity and reliability of the analysis, the study employed the multiple sources of data such as, annual reports, observations and field notes.

The findings suggest that CSR practices objectively influence corporate branding strategy and there is latent motive of increasing brand visibility, brand reputation and support for brand at the time of crisis. In particular, the results reveal that CSR practices are participatory in nature and are mainly done for smooth operations of manufacturing plant, resource sustainability, competitive and legitimacy reasons. Lastly, the results reveal that agribusiness firms face many typical barriers in CSR implementation. There are some generic barriers such as community pressure, corruption, political interference, illiteracy of the community and poor infrastructure. Overlap of different firm's CSR activities have also come to light. Moreover, there is no standard measuring mechanism of CSR.

In conclusion, this study makes several important contributions to the literature in the implementation of CSR practices. It provides new and interesting insights in such topics as why firms engage into CSR practices, whether there is any branding motive or not and how firms implement CSR practices. The framework presented in this study is designed to be a crucial first step in conducting rigorous empirical and theoretical research on this poorly understood but significant aspect of CSR research. In this sense, the study has not only provided an explanation for the five areas of analysis, but also has opened up a new line of inquiry for future research on implementation of CSR practices in relation to branding. However, much work remains to be done in identifying and examining other factors that influences CSR practices and thereby its influence on branding.

APPENDIX -2



9th February 2012

Andrei Kuznetsov & Anup Raj

Lancashire Business School

University of Central Lancashire

Dear Andrei & Anup

Re: BAHSS Ethics Committee Application

Unique Reference Number: BAHSS 026

On the basis of the information contained in the Research Degrees Application form, the BAHSS ethics committee does not envisage any insoluble ethical issues arising that might make the proposed project non-viable for MPhil/PhD. The committee therefore has no objection to the project 'Influence of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on corporate branding (CB) of agribusiness firms in India' proceeding to registration.

However, before any data collection from research participants commences, a full proposal application will need to be submitted to and approved by BAHSS Ethics committee. When you make this application, please ensure that you quote the unique reference number (above) on your application form.

You may find it convenient to make separate proposal applications for different stages of the project, especially if the design of the later stages is highly dependent on the findings from the earlier stages.

Yours sincerely

Megan Knight

Deputy Vice Chair

BAHSS Ethics Committee



APPENDIX – 3

To whom this may concern.

This is to confirm that Mr Anup Raj is a part-time research student with Lancashire Business School, part of University of Central Lancashire, UK. He does PhD research on corporate social responsibility and branding in Indian agribusiness under my supervision. As a part of his programme of study he is undertaking a series of interviews to collect data for further analysis. Your support for this academic project is much appreciated.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need any further information regarding Anup's project. My e-mail is akuznetsov@uclan.ac.uk. Personal web-page http://www.uclan.ac.uk/staff_profiles/professor_andrei_kuznetsov.php

Sincerely

Andrei Kuznetsov

Professor

Lancashire Business School

University of Central Lancashire

UK



APPENDIX- 4

Interview Guideline

The impact of managerial perception of corporate social responsibility on corporate branding in Indian agribusiness firms

I will ask following semi-structured questions. I hope that each interview will last around 30-40 minutes.

Research Propositions 1: CSR activities create a positive influence on the corporate image through gaining reputation and legitimacy with the stakeholders.

1. What kind of CSR activities your company has been doing since last few years?
2. What kind of benefits you see of these CSR activities? Do you think that there is short term or long term advantages of using CSR on brand?
3. What kind of image (explain if needed) your company has? Does CSR influence the image of your company? How?
4. What kind of reputation (explain if needed) your company enjoys? How will you relate CSR with the reputation of your company?
5. Has your brand grown over last few years? How much and what kind of contribution do you think, CSR has on your brand?
6. Do you think that CSR activities have any impact on your brand? If yes, how does this influences your brand?
7. Do you measure the impact of CSR on the brand?

8. How the implementation of CSR activities takes place (directly by company or indirectly through NGOs, foundation etc.)? How much money is spent on CSR activities?
9. What problem do you face while implementing CSR activities?

Research Proposition 2a: Engagement in CSR activities helps in inculcating the culture of sustainability leading to strengthening the corporate brand within Indian agribusiness firms.

Research Proposition 2b: Indian agribusiness firms possessing culture of sustainability will adopt proactive CSR.

Research Proposition 2c: Due to competition, cost and market pressure some Indian agribusiness firms are practicing CSR only to the extent of fulfilling legal obligations.

Research Proposition 2d: Firms possessing market culture will adopt reactive CSR.

1. How you will describe about the organisational culture of your firm.
2. What is your CSR strategy
3. Do you think that the top management encourages CSR practices?
4. Does employee and managers are concerned about CSR activities? Do they actively take part or voluntarily contribute for CSR activities?
5. Does organisation provides any kind of incentive for employee who devotes their time and resources in CSR?
6. How your company meets environmental norms? Do you follow national/international environmental standards?
7. How will you describe about sustainable business practices of your organisation?
8. How important is marketing function in your organisation compared to other functions?

9. Are employee given sales incentives to meet the target or penalised for not meeting targets.

Research Proposition 3: Communication and advertising of CSR helps strengthening the relationship with stakeholders and the brand.

1. Do you think that CSR should be promoted? Does your company promote/advertise CSR programs?
2. Which advertising medium (print, TV, radio, outdoor, internet etc.) is used to promote CSR activities? How much you spend on these medium?
3. Which advertising medium you believe is the most effective in creating awareness about CSR or building community participation in CSR programs?
4. Do you evaluate your advertising/ promotional campaigns? If yes, how?
5. What type of public relation activities (explain if needed) are done for promoting CSR? How much you spend on these kinds of programs?
6. Which one do you think is more effective – advertising or public relation? Why?
7. Do you think that promoting CSR helps in strengthening the brand?

APPENDIX - 5

Companies Act 2013, Clause 135

135. Corporate Social Responsibility

(1) Every company having net worth of rupees five hundred crore or more, or turnover of rupees one thousand crore or more or a net profit of rupees five crore or more

during any financial year shall constitute a Corporate Social Responsibility Committee of the

Board consisting of three or more directors, out of which at least one director shall be an

independent director.

(2) The Board's report under sub-section (3) of section 134 shall disclose the composition of the Corporate Social Responsibility Committee.

(3) The Corporate Social Responsibility Committee shall,—

(a) formulate and recommend to the Board, a Corporate Social Responsibility Policy which shall indicate the activities to be undertaken by the company as specified in Schedule VII;

(b) recommend the amount of expenditure to be incurred on the activities referred

to in clause (a); and

(c) monitor the Corporate Social Responsibility Policy of the company from time

to time.

(4) The Board of every company referred to in sub-section (1) shall,—

(a) after taking into account the recommendations made by the Corporate Social

Responsibility Committee, approve the Corporate Social Responsibility Policy for the

company and disclose contents of such Policy in its report and also place it on the

company's website, if any, in such manner as may be prescribed; and

(b) ensure that the activities as are included in Corporate Social Responsibility Policy of the company is undertaken by the company.

(5) The Board of every company referred to in sub-section (1), shall ensure that the company spends, in every financial year, at least two per cent. of the average net profits of

the company made during the three immediately preceding financial years, in pursuance of

its Corporate Social Responsibility Policy:

Provided that the company shall give preference to the local area and areas around it where it operates, for spending the amount earmarked for Corporate Social Responsibility

activities:

Provided further that if the company fails to spend such amount, the Board shall, in its report made under clause (o) of sub-section (3) of section 134, specify the reasons for not

spending the amount.

Explanation.—For the purposes of this section “average net profit” shall be calculated in accordance with the provisions of section 198.

Word Frequency Query

csr	community	think	term	need	like	business	giving	nahin	part	project			
			reputation	bhi	escorts	long	taking	village	way	coming	done		
	people	kind	time	helps	problem	kar	seeing	farmers	impact	woh	developm		
activity		image	one	promote	something	important	health	educatio	make	using	karte	program	
	product	good	years		strategy	tata	yeh	level	directly	tractor	aur	many	
company			area	hum	corporate	advertising	want	may	society	well	person	building	
	yes	benefit	much		main	organisatio	dabur	first	support	camps	particula	ap	every
			now	know	differently	whatever	koi	plant	money	implem	kuch	contri	provid
brand	thing	marketing				lot	training	positive	talk	measur	aware	govt	liye

Themes and Number of Nodes

<i>Themes/Sub Themes</i>	<i>No. of References/Nodes</i>
Understanding of CSR	51
Corporate branding strategy	177
Communication of CSR	92
Corporate Culture	38
Culture of sustainability	55
Market Culture	30
CSR influence on brand	189
CSR influence of corporate image	57
CSR influence on Reputation	48
CSR activities	418
Types of CSR activities	74
Process of CSR implementation/Approach	50
Participatory approach	19
Community	49
Priorities of CSR activities	28
Legitimacy of operation	16
Barriers in CSR implementation	61
Fund allocation	27
Measuring impact of CSR	30

APPENDIX – 7
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF FIRMS

Sr. No	Theme	A	B	C	D	Key Inference
1	Corporate branding strategy	CSR part of business process	Community is focus	Competitive Strategy	Market driven	CSR not part of branding strategy
2	Corporate Image	Very good	Good	Good	Average	Good
3	Corporate Reputation	Very high	High	Not very high	Average	High
4	Corporate Communication	Low	Average	Low	Low	Low
5	Corporate Culture	Sustainability+ Market	Sustainability + Market	Market	Market + Sustainability	Mix
6	Understanding of CSR	Linked with sustainability and community development	Community development	Charity and philanthropy	Welfare of society	Giving back to society
7	Approach of CSR	Through NGO	Through NGO	Direct and partnership with NGO	Direct and partnership with NGO	NGO and direct
8	Benefits of CSR	Smooth operation	Resource sustainability	Brand visibility	Smooth operation	Smooth operation
9	Measure of CSR	Internal and external Mechanism in place	External agency	No measure	No measure	No measure
10	Funding of CSR	Internal and External	Internal and external	Internal	Internal	Internal
11	Problems in implementation of CSR	Identification of beneficiaries	Contribution from beneficiaries	No problem	Prioritisation of CSR	Contribution from beneficiaries
12	Impact of CSR on CI/CR	+ve	+ve	+ve	+ve	+ve
13	Impact of advertising of CSR	No effect	+ve effect	No effect	+ ve effect	Marginal effect
14	Impact of corporate culture	+ve	Neutral	-ve	-ve	Mix
15	CSR in corporate branding strategy	Yes	No	No	No	No

APPENDIX- 8

NEW AGRICULTURE POLICY (Department of Agriculture, 2012)

Agriculture is a way of life, a tradition, which, for centuries, has shaped the thought, the outlook, the culture and the economic life of the people of India. Agriculture, therefore, is and will continue to be central to all strategies for planned socio-economic development of the country. Rapid growth of agriculture is essential not only to achieve self-reliance at national level but also for household food security and to bring about equity in distribution of income and wealth resulting in rapid reduction in poverty levels.

Indian agriculture has, since Independence, made rapid strides. In taking the annual food grains production from 51 million tonnes in early fifties to 206 million tonnes at the turn of the century, it has contributed significantly in achieving self-sufficiency in food and in avoiding food shortages.

Over 200 million Indian farmers and farm workers have been the backbone of India's agriculture. Despite having achieved national food security the well-being of the farming community continues to be a matter of grave concern for planners and policy makers. The establishment of an agrarian economy which ensures food and nutrition to India's billion people, raw materials for its expanding industrial base and surpluses for exports, and a fair and equitable reward system for the farming community for the services they provide to the society, will be the mainstay of reforms in the agriculture sector.

The National Policy on Agriculture seeks to actualise the vast untapped growth potential of Indian agriculture, strengthen rural infrastructure to support faster agricultural development, promote value addition, accelerate the growth of agro business, create employment in rural areas, secure a fair standard of living for the farmers and agricultural

workers and their families, discourage migration to urban areas and face the challenges arising out of economic liberalization and globalisation. Over the next two decades, it aims to attain:

The salient features of the new agricultural policy are:

1. Over 4 per cent annual growth rate aimed over next two decades.
2. Greater private sector participation through contract farming.
3. Price protection for farmers.
4. National agricultural insurance scheme to be launched.
5. Dismantling of restrictions on movement of agricultural commodities throughout the country.
6. Rational utilisation of country's water resources for optimum use of irrigation potential.
7. High priority to development of animal husbandry, poultry, dairy and aquaculture.
8. Capital inflow and assured markets for crop production.
9. Exemption from payment of capital gains tax on compulsory acquisition of agricultural land.
10. Minimise fluctuations in commodity prices.
11. Continuous monitoring of international prices.
12. Plant varieties to be protected through legislation.
13. Adequate and timely supply of quality inputs to farmers.
14. High priority to rural electrification.
15. Setting up of agro-processing units and creation of off-farm employment in rural areas.

Sustainable Agriculture

The policy will seek to promote technically sound, economically viable, environmentally non-degrading, and socially acceptable use of country's natural resources – land, water and genetic endowment to promote sustainable development of agriculture. Measures will be taken to contain biotic pressures on land and to control indiscriminate diversion of agricultural lands for non-agricultural purposes. The unutilized wastelands will be put to use for agriculture and afforestation. Particular attention will be given for increasing cropping intensity through multiple-cropping and inter-cropping.

Rational utilization and conservation of the country's abundant water resources will be promoted. Conjunctive use of surface and ground water will receive highest priority. Special attention will be focused on water quality and the problem of receding ground-water levels in certain areas as a result of over-exploitation of underground aquifers. Proper on-farm management of water resources for the optimum use of irrigation potential will be promoted.

Erosion and narrowing of the base of India's plant and animal genetic resources in the last few decades has been affecting the food security of the country. Survey and evaluation of genetic resources and safe conservation of both indigenous and exogenously introduced genetic variability in crop plants, animals and their wild relatives will receive particular attention. The use of bio-technologies will be promoted for evolving plants which consume less water, are drought resistant, pest resistant, contain more nutrition, give higher yields and are environmentally safe. Conservation of bio-resources through their *ex situ* preservation in Gene Banks, as also *in situ* conservation in their natural habitats through bio-diversity parks, etc., will receive a high priority to prevent their extinction. Specific measures will also be taken to conserve indigenous breeds facing extinction.

There will be a time bound programme to list, catalogue and classify country's vast agro bio-diversity.

Sensitization of the farming community with the environmental concerns will receive high priority. Balanced and conjunctive use of bio-mass, organic and inorganic fertilisers and controlled use of agro chemicals through integrated nutrients and pest management (INM and IPM) will be promoted to achieve the sustainable increases in agricultural production. A nation-wide programme for utilization of rural and urban garbage, farm residues and organic waste for organic matter repletion and pollution control will be worked out.

Agro-forestry and social forestry are prime requisites for maintenance of ecological balance and augmentation of bio-mass production in agricultural systems. Agro-forestry will receive a major thrust for efficient nutrient cycling, nitrogen fixation, organic matter addition and for improving drainage. Farmers will be encouraged to take up farm/agro-forestry for higher income generation by evolving technology, extension and credit support packages and removing constraints to development of agro and farm forestry. Involvement of farmers and landless labourers will be sought in the development of pastures/forestry programmes on public wastelands by giving financial incentives and entitlements to the usufructs of trees and pastures.

The history and traditional knowledge of agriculture, particularly of tribal communities, relating to organic farming and preservation and processing of food for nutritional and medicinal purposes is one of the oldest in the world. Concerted efforts will be made to pool, distil and evaluate traditional practices, knowledge and wisdom and to harness them for sustainable agricultural growth.

Food and Nutritional Security

Special efforts will be made to raise the productivity and production of crops to meet the increasing demand for food generated by unabated demographic pressures and raw materials for expanding agro-based industries. A regionally differentiated strategy will be pursued, taking into account the agronomic, climatic and environmental conditions to realize the full growth potential of every region. Special attention will be given to development of new crop varieties, particularly of food crops, with higher nutritional value through adoption of bio-technology particularly genetic modification, while addressing bio-safety concerns.

A major thrust will be given to development of rain fed and irrigated horticulture, floriculture, roots and tubers, plantation crops, aromatic and medicinal plants, bee-keeping and sericulture, for augmenting food supply, exports and generating employment in rural areas. Availability of hybrid seeds and disease-free planting materials of improved varieties, supported by a network of regional nurseries, tissue culture laboratories, seed farms will be promoted to support systematic development of horticulture having emphasis on increased production, post-harvest management, precision farming, bio-control of pests and quality regulation mechanism and exports.

Animal husbandry and fisheries also generate wealth and employment in agriculture sector. Development of animal husbandry, poultry, dairying and aqua-culture will receive a high priority in the efforts for diversifying agriculture, increasing animal protein availability in the food basket and for generating exportable surpluses. A national livestock breeding strategy will be evolved to meet the requirements of milk, meat, egg and livestock products and to enhance the role of draught animals as a source of energy for farming operations and transport. Major thrust will be on genetic upgradation of indigenous/native

cattle and buffaloes using proven semen and high quality pedigreed bulls and by expanding artificial insemination network to provide services at the farmer's doorstep.

Generation and dissemination of appropriate technologies in the field of animal production as also health care to enhance production and productivity levels will be given greater attention. Cultivation of fodder crops and fodder trees will be encouraged to meet the feed and fodder requirements and to improve animal nutrition and welfare. Priority will also be given to improve the processing, marketing and transport facilities, with emphasis on modernization of abattoirs, carcass utilization and value addition thereon. Since animal disease eradication and quarantine is critical to exports, animal health system will be strengthened and disease-free zones created. The involvement of cooperatives and private sector will be encouraged for development of animal husbandry, poultry and dairy. Incentives for livestock and fisheries production activities will be brought at par with incentives for crop production.

An integrated approach to marine and inland fisheries, designed to promote sustainable aquaculture practices, will be adopted. Biotechnological application in the field of genetics and breeding, hormonal applications, immunology and disease control will receive particular attention for increased aquaculture production. Development of sustainable technologies for fin and shell fish culture as also pearl-culture, their yield optimization, harvest and post-harvest operations, mechanization of fishing boats, strengthening of infrastructure for production of fish seed, berthing and landing facilities for fishing vessels and development of marketing infrastructure will be accorded high priority. Deep sea fishing industry will be developed to take advantage of the vast potential of country's exclusive economic zone.

Generation and Transfer of Technology

A very high priority will be accorded to evolving new location-specific and economically viable improved varieties of agricultural and horticultural crops, livestock species and aquaculture as also conservation and judicious use of germplasm and other bio-diversity resources. The regionalization of agricultural research, based on identified agro-climatic zones, will be accorded high priority. Application of frontier sciences like bio-technology, remote sensing technologies, pre and post-harvest technologies, energy saving technologies, technology for environmental protection through national research system as well as proprietary research will be encouraged. The endeavour will be to build a well-organized, efficient and result-oriented agriculture research and education system to introduce technological change in Indian agriculture. Upgradation of agricultural education and its orientation towards uniformity in education standards, women empowerment, user-orientation, vocationalization and promotion of excellence will be the hallmark of the new policy.

The research and extension linkages will be strengthened to improve quality and effectiveness of research and extension system. The extension system will be broad-based and revitalized. Innovative and decentralized institutional changes will be introduced to make the extension system farmer-responsible and farmer-accountable. Role of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Farmers Organisations, Cooperatives, corporate sector and para-technicians in agricultural extension will be encouraged for organizing demand-driven production systems. Development of human resources through capacity building and skill upgradation of public extension functionaries and other extension functionaries will be accorded a high priority. The Government will endeavour to move towards a regime of financial sustainability of extension services through effecting in a phased manner, a more realistic

cost recovery of extension services and inputs, while simultaneously safeguarding the interests of the poor and the vulnerable groups.

Mainstreaming gender concerns in agriculture will receive particular attention. Appropriate structural, functional and institutional measures will be initiated to empower women and build their capabilities and improve their access to inputs, technology and other farming resources.

Inputs Management

Adequate and timely supply of quality inputs such as seeds, fertilisers, plant protection chemicals, bio-pesticides, agricultural machinery and credit at reasonable rates to farmers will be the endeavour of the Government. Soil testing and quality testing of fertilisers and seeds will be ensured and supply of spurious inputs will be checked. Balanced and optimum use of fertilisers will be promoted together with use of organic manures and bio-fertilisers to optimize the efficiency of nutrient use.

Development, production and distribution of improved varieties of seeds and planting materials and strengthening and expansion of seed and plant certification system with private sector participation will receive a high priority. A National Seed Grid will be established to ensure supply of seeds especially to areas affected by natural calamities. The National Seeds Corporation (NSC) and State Farms Corporation of India (SFCI) will be restructured for efficient utilization of investment and manpower.

Protection to plant varieties through a *sui generis* legislation, will be granted to encourage research and breeding of new varieties particularly in the private sector in line with India's obligations under TRIPS Agreement. The farmers will, however, be allowed their traditional rights to save, use, exchange, share and sell their farm saved seeds except as

branded seeds of protected varieties for commercial purpose. The interests of the researchers will also be safeguarded in carrying out research on proprietary varieties to develop new varieties.

Integrated pest management and use of biotic agents in order to minimize the indiscriminate and injudicious use of chemical pesticides will be the cardinal principle covering plant protection. Selective and eco-friendly farm mechanization through appropriate technology will be promoted, with special reference to rain fed farming to reduce arduous work and to make agriculture efficient and competitive as also to increase crop productivity.

Incentives for Agriculture

The Government will endeavour to create a favourable economic environment for increasing capital formation and farmer's own investments by removal of distortions in the incentive regime for agriculture, improving the terms of trade with manufacturing sectors and bringing about external and domestic market reforms backed by rationalization of domestic tax structure. It will seek to bestow on the agriculture sector in as many respects as possible benefits similar to those obtaining in the manufacturing sector, such as easy availability of credit and other inputs, and infrastructure facilities for development of agri-business industries and development of effective delivery systems and freed movement of agro produce.

Consequent upon dismantling of Quantitative Restrictions on imports as per WTO Agreement on Agriculture, commodity-wise strategies and arrangements for protecting the grower from adverse impact of undue price fluctuations in world markets and for promoting exports will be formulated. Apart from price competition, other aspects of marketing such as quality, choice, health and bio-safety will be promoted. Exports of horticultural produce and marine products will receive particular emphasis. A two-fold

long term strategy of diversification of agricultural produce and value addition enabling the production system to respond to external environment and creating export demand for the commodities produced in the country will be evolved with a view to providing the farmers incremental income from export earnings. A favourable economic environment and supportive public management system will be created for promotion of agricultural exports. Quarantine, both of exports and imports, will be given particular attention so that Indian agriculture is protected from the ingress of exotic pests and diseases.

In order to protect the interest of farmers in context of removal of Quantitative Restrictions, continuous monitoring of international prices will be undertaken and appropriate tariffs protection will be provided. Import duties on manufactured commodities used in agriculture will be rationalized. The domestic agricultural market will be liberalized and all controls and regulations hindering increase in farmers' income will be reviewed and abolished to ensure that agriculturists receive prices commensurate with their efforts, investment. Restrictions on the movement of agricultural commodities throughout the country will be progressively dismantled.

The structure of taxes on food grains and other commercial crops will be reviewed and rationalized. Similarly, the excise duty on materials such as farm machinery and implements, fertilisers, etc., used as inputs in agricultural production, post-harvest storage and processing will be reviewed. Appropriate measures will be adopted to ensure that agriculturists by and large remain outside the regulatory and tax collection systems. Farmers will be exempted from payment of capital gains tax on compulsory acquisition of agricultural land.

Investments in Agriculture

The agriculture sector has been starved of capital. There has been a decline in the public sector investment in the agriculture sector. Public investment for narrowing regional

imbalances, accelerating development of supportive infrastructure for agriculture and rural development particularly rural connectivity will be stepped up. A time-bound strategy for rationalisation and transparent pricing of inputs will be formulated to encourage judicious input use and to generate resources for agriculture. Input subsidy reforms will be pursued as a combination of price and institutional reforms to cut down costs of these inputs for agriculture. Resource allocation regime will be reviewed with a view to rechannelizing the available resources from support measures towards assets formation in rural sector.

A conducive climate will be created through a favourable price and trade regime to promote farmers' own investments as also investments by industries producing inputs for agriculture and agro-based industries. Private sector investments in agriculture will also be encouraged more particularly in areas like agricultural research, human resource development, post-harvest management and marketing.

Rural electrification will be given a high priority as the prime mover for agricultural development. The quality and availability of electricity supply will be improved and the demand of the agriculture sector will be met adequately in a reliable and cost effective manner. The use of new and renewable sources of energy for irrigation and other agricultural purposes will also be encouraged.

Bridging the gap between irrigation potential created and utilized, completion of all on-going projects, restoration and modernization of irrigation infrastructure including drainage, evolving and implementing an integrated plan of augmentation and management of national water resources will receive special attention for augmenting the availability and use of irrigation water.

Emphasis will be laid on development of marketing infrastructure and techniques of preservation, storage and transportation with a view to reducing post-harvest losses and

ensuring a better return to the grower. The weekly periodic markets under the direct control of *Panchayat Raj* institutions will be upgraded and strengthened. Direct marketing and pledge financing will be promoted. Producers markets on the lines of Ryatu Bazars will be encouraged throughout the width and breadth of the country. Storage facilities for different kinds of agricultural products will be created in the production areas or nearby places particularly in the rural areas so that the farmers can transport their produce to these places immediately after harvest in shortest possible time. The establishment of cold chains, provision of pre-cooling facilities to farmers as a service and cold storage in the terminal markets and improving the retail marketing arrangements in urban areas, will be given priority. Upgradation and dissemination of market intelligence will receive particular attention.

Setting up of agro-processing units in the producing areas to reduce wastage, especially of horticultural produce, increased value addition and creation of off-farm employment in rural areas will be encouraged. Collaboration between the producer cooperatives and the corporate sector will be encouraged to promote agro-processing industry. An interactive coupling between technology, economy, environment and society will be promoted for speedy development of food and agro-processing industries and building up a substantial base for production of value added agro-products for domestic and export markets with a strong emphasis on food safety and quality. The Small Farmers Agro Business Consortium (SFAC) will be energized to cater to the needs of farmer entrepreneurs and promote public and private investments in agri-business.

Institutional Structure

Indian agriculture is characterized by pre-dominance of small and marginal farmers. Institutional reforms will be so pursued as to channelize their energies for achieving

greater productivity and production. The approach to rural development and land reforms will focus on the following areas:

- Consolidation of holdings all over the country on the pattern of north-western States;
- Redistribution of ceiling surplus lands and waste lands among the landless farmers, unemployed youth with initial start-up capital;
- Tenancy reforms to recognize the rights of the tenants and share croppers;
- Development of lease markets for increasing the size of holdings by making legal provisions for giving private lands on lease for cultivation and agri-business;
- Updating and improvement of land records, computerization and issue of land pass-books to the farmers, and
- Recognition of women's rights in land.

The rural poor will be increasingly involved in the implementation of land reforms with the help of Panchayati Raj Institutions, Voluntary Groups, Social Activists and Community Leaders.

Private sector participation will be promoted through contract farming and land leasing arrangements to allow accelerated technology transfer, capital inflow and assured markets for crop production, especially of oilseeds, cotton and horticultural crops.

Progressive institutionalization of rural and farm credit will be continued for providing timely and adequate credit to farmers. The rural credit institutions will be geared to promote savings, investments and risk management. Particular attention will be paid to removal of distortions in the priority sector lending by commercial banks for agriculture and rural sectors. Special measures will be taken for revamping of cooperatives to remove institutional and financial weaknesses and evolving simplified procedure for sanction and

disbursement of agriculture credit. The endeavour will be to ensure distribution equity in the disbursement of credit. Micro-credit will be promoted as an effective tool for alleviating poverty. Self Help Group – Bank linkage system, suited to Indian rural sector, will be developed as a supplementary mechanism for bringing the rural poor into the formal banking system, thereby improving banks outreach and the credit flows to the poor in an effective and sustainable manner.

The basic support to agriculture has been provided by cooperative sector assiduously built over the years. The Government will provide active support for promotion of cooperative-form of enterprise and ensure greater autonomy and operational freedom to them to improve their functioning. The thrust will be on:

- Structural reforms for promoting greater efficiency and viability by freeing them from excessive bureaucratic control and political interference;
- Creation of infrastructure and human resource development;
- Improvement in financial viability and organisational sustainability of cooperatives;
- Democratisation of management and increased professionalism in their operations, and
- Creating a viable inter-face with other grass-root Organisations.

The legislative and regulatory framework will be appropriately amended and strengthened to achieve these objectives.

Risk Management

Despite technological and economic advancements, the condition of farmers continues to be unstable due to natural calamities and price fluctuations. National Agriculture Insurance Scheme covering all farmers and all crops throughout the country with built-in provisions

for insulating farmers from financial distress caused by natural disasters and making agriculture financially viable will be made more farmer-specific and effective. Endeavour will be made to provide a package insurance policy for farmers, right from sowing of crops to post-harvest operations, including market fluctuations in the prices of agricultural produce.

In order to reduce risk in and impart greater resilience to Indian agriculture against droughts and floods, efforts will be made for achieving greater flood-proofing of flood prone agriculture and drought-proofing of rain fed agriculture for protecting farmers from vagaries of nature. For this purpose, contingency agriculture planning, development of drought and flood resistant crop varieties, watershed development programmes, drought prone areas and desert development programmes and rural infrastructure development programmes, will receive particular attention.

The Central Government will continue to discharge its responsibility to ensure remunerative prices for agricultural produce through announcement of Minimum Support Prices policy for major agricultural commodities. The food, nutrition and other domestic and exports requirements of the country will be kept in view while determining the support prices of different commodities. The price structure and trade mechanism will be continuously reviewed to ensure a favourable economic environment for the agriculture sector and to bring about an equitable balance between rural and urban incomes. The methodology used by the Commission on Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) in arriving at estimates of cost of production will be periodically reviewed. The price structure of both inputs and outputs will be monitored to ensure higher returns to the farmers and bring about cost effectiveness throughout the economy. Domestic market prices will be closely monitored to prevent distress sales by farmers. Public and cooperative agencies undertaking marketing operations, will be strengthened.

The Government will enlarge the coverage of futures markets to minimize the wide fluctuations in commodity prices as also for hedging their risks. The endeavour will be to cover all important agricultural products under futures trading in course of time.

Management Reforms

Effective implementation of policy initiatives will call for comprehensive reforms in the management of agriculture by Central and State Governments. Central Government will supplement/complement the State Governments' through regionally differentiated Work Plans, comprising crop/area/target group efforts specific interventions, formulated in an inter-active mode and implemented in a spirit of partnership with States. Central Government will move away from schematic approach to Macro-Management mode and assume a role of advocacy, articulation and facilitation to help States in their efforts towards achieving accelerated agricultural development.

The Government will focus on quality aspects at all stages of farm operations from sowing to primary processing. The quality of inputs and other support services to farmers will be improved. Grading and standardization of agricultural products will be promoted for export enhancement. Application of science and technology in agriculture will be promoted through a regular system of interface between science and technology institutions and users/potential users, to make the sector globally competitive.

The database for agriculture sector will be strengthened to ensure greater reliability of estimates and forecasting which will help in the process of planning and policy making. The objective will be to engage in a meaningful continuous dialogue with the external environment in the changing scenario and to have on-line and real time system of 'Agriculture on-line' capacity to analyze signals emanating from the farms and markets for the benefit of farmers. (Adopted from NIC, 2012)

APPENDIX – 9

Food Safety and Standard Act, 2006

Till the year 2005, thirteen different laws were applicable on the food and food processing sector. Multiple laws/ regulations prescribe varied standards regarding food additives, contaminants, food colours, preservatives and labelling. In order to rationalize the multiplicity of food laws, a Group of Ministers (GoM) was set up to suggest legislative and other changes to formulate integrated food law, to be a single reference point in relation to regulation of food products. Based on the recommendations of the GoM the ministry of food processing enacted the Food Safety and Standard Act (FSSA), 2006.

Salient features of the act:

- FSSA will be aided by several scientific panels and a central advisory committee to lay down standards for food safety. These standards will include specifications for ingredients, contaminants, pesticide residue, biological hazards and labels.
- The law will be enforced through State Commissioners of Food Safety and local level officials.
- Everyone in the food sector is required to get a license or a registration which would be issued by local authorities.
- Every distributor is required to be able to identify any food article to its manufacturer, and every seller to its distributor. Anyone in the sector should be able to initiate recall procedures if he finds that the food sold had violated specified standards.

APPENDIX 10

Branding from commodity: Pioneering Indian companies

Sr. No	Year of Inception	Name of company	Commodity	Turnover in Crore Rs (year 2015)
1	1788	EID Parry	Sugar, bio products, fertiliser	2265
2	1815	Rallis India	Fertiliser and pesticides	1800
3	1884	Dabur	Herbs, natural products	7806
4	1892	Brittania Industries	Bakery and Dairy products	7868
5	1909	DCM Shriram	Textiles, Sugar	6050
6	1910	ITC	Tobacco, paper, soyabean, pulses	53748
7	1930	The Himalaya Drug Companies	Ayurvedic Herbs	2000
8	1939	Tata Chemicals	Salt, pulses, water, fertiliser, pesticides	10650
9	1946	Amul	Milk	20733
10	1964	Tata Global Beverages	Tea, Coffee, dairy products, plantation crop, pepper, water	8111

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