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# Impact of Mandatory Corporate Social Responsibility on Beneficiary Institutions Satisfaction in Nepal

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## Abstract

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) became mandatory legislation since 2016/17, in Nepal. The aim of this study is to determine the beneficiary institutions satisfaction from the companies CSR activities in Nepal. Descriptive and causal comparative research design was applied. For that, structured questionnaires were used among 400 registered beneficiary institutions. Mean, standard deviation, correlation and regression analysis were performed by using IBM SPSS 25 version software. The results of this study showed a significant positive correlation between corporate CSR initiatives and the satisfaction of beneficiary institutions in Nepal. Out of eight parameters, three variables make a statistically positively significant contribution ( $p$ -value $<0.05$ ) in beneficiary institutions satisfaction. The concern variables are company routinely visits the community through different CSR projects (BEN-CV). In case of any tear, wear, or depreciation in the community, assure the local company of their involvement (BEN-CI) and, companies conduct CSR programs for the uplifting community, from problems to prosperity (BEN-PP), whose beta value are 0.178, 0.171, and 0.373 respectively. Moreover, these days companies CSR program is more effective to the beneficiaries that play a meaningful role in society for nation's sustainable development.

**Keywords:** CSR, Beneficiary, Satisfaction

## 1. Introduction

The legislation of the Nepalese government has made CSR mandatory for both industries and financial institutions since 2016/17. The Company Act provision stipulates that each registered company must contribute 1 percent of its funds to CSR activities (IEA Act, 2016). Similarly, the Rastra Banks of Nepal's Unified Guidelines for Banks and Financial Institutions (BFIs Act, 2017) required all financial institutions to contribute an equal 1% share of their profits to CSR activities. Corporate social responsibility has evolved rapidly in recent decades and is increasingly becoming a global norm of many sustainable development organizations (Nasieku et al., 2014). It has become a crucial organizational strategy employed by companies to create a sustainable global economy (Umoren et al., 2016) and generally to achieve competitive advantage (Lee et al., 2015). Today, CSR is growing in popularity as it is seen as a new and emerging approach to business management in recent years. The aim of the organization is to reconcile business activities with social, environmental and economic concerns (Branco & Rodrigues, 2006). Despite the abundance of CSR practices in business worldwide, it has

only just entered the discussion phase in Nepal (Adhikari et al., 2016). The perspective of CSR has shifted towards modern triple bottom line concerns (TBL): economic, social and environmental (Bremner, 2016). CSR practices towards customers and employees have always been quite good, while environmental and community status has not been as satisfactory as required (Chapagain, 2018). However, there is a positive correlation between CSR practices and a company's financial performance (Chapagain, 2019).

Businesses cannot exist in isolation; they are part of the society in which they work. Their goals are not only to generate profits, but also to ensure the well-being of society by contributing to social welfare activities. Nowadays, the social values for companies have changed dramatically through CSR. As mentioned above, CSR offers multiple benefits for business and society in a number of ways. However, the past literature shows that the relative importance of firms in terms of beneficiary satisfaction is the subject of extensive debate. There is relatively little literature on CSR and its satisfaction in Nepal. At the same time, it is widely recognized that there has been no significant change in corporate approaches after the introduction of CSR in Nepal (Chaudhary, 2017). This study conveys to the companies that CSR is the minimum right of the beneficiary companies. It is therefore important to determine whether communities are aware of and is benefited from companies CSR. This is a moot point. Whether companies are required to contribute the CSR activities as instructed or not. Against this background, the proposed study aims to examine the impact of corporate CSR initiatives on beneficiary institutions satisfaction in Nepal.

## **2. Literature review**

### **2.1 Stakeholder's theory of CSR**

This theory is used to estimate the order of performance outcomes that measure their fulfillment (Connolly et al., 1980; Hitt, 1988; Zammuto, 1984; Basuony et al., 2014). Organizations should balance a variety of stakeholder interests. According to this theory, a company has different stakeholders to whom it should be accountable. Shareholders, managers, employees, customers, suppliers, lenders, local communities, government, NGOs, environmental activities, etc. can be identified as stakeholders of an organization (Freeman et al., 2010). Shareholders are interested in how much profit the company makes. Managers worry about their salaries and equipment. Employees expect to earn better and secure their jobs. Likewise, customers want the company to produce quality products at an affordable price. Suppliers want the company to keep buying their products. Likewise, lenders are repaying on time and the community wants to respond to their needs as quickly as possible. The government wants the company to pay its taxes on time, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) want the company to support their social problems and causes (Sims, 2003).

### **2.2 Carroll's CSR Pyramid Model**

For a number of years prior to this, Carroll developed the company's economic and legal responsibilities (Carroll, 1979). Carroll later conceived of CSR as a pyramid

shape that explains business and legal obligations and describes a company's ethical and discretionary or philanthropic responsibilities (Carroll, 1991). If the company wants to act responsibly in society, it must fulfill all its obligations towards society and shareholders. Carroll's CSR pyramid models are divided into four areas of responsibility: economic, legal, ethical and philanthropic.

### **2.3 Corporate social responsibility practices in Nepal**

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) practices are not a new phenomenon in Nepalese corporate history. Traditionally, the belief that business should benefit sellers, buyers and society has prevailed in the Nepali business and industrial community. CSR in Nepal focuses on philanthropic contributions, building a Dharamshala, a temple, a school or health post, a small hospital, digging a drinking water well, etc. Likewise, the number of guesthouses, balmandirs, student hostels, eye clinics, Satya Narayan temples and child care centers have contributed and been built by various business houses. In the past 100 years, historically, few Nepalese companies have contributed their wealth to build educational institutions, temples and Dharamshala. Hundreds of acres of Guthi land were donated by some landowners on behalf of gods and goddesses. Organizations are distinguished by the fact that their supporters believe that they have a social obligation to donate, and that their beneficiaries believe it is worthy to donate. It is possible to create win-win situations for both organizations and beneficiaries (Gee, 2012). Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are major beneficiaries, which are non-profit voluntary civic groups organized at the local, national or international level. They serve their community with the intention of eradicating illiteracy, poverty, and social and political prejudice among all disadvantaged groups. In addition, humanitarian aid is provided by NGOs. As shown by past surveys, NGOs enjoy a high level of public trust, which makes them important representatives of societal concerns. They are considered key players in the socio-economic development of many countries. Therefore, the government has accepted NGOs as development partners (Singh, 2013).

Based on the Nepalese study by Upadhyay and Dhungel (2013) the main areas of CSR intervention concerned education/training and contributing to the well-being of disadvantaged people, which were given higher priority than arts/heritage/culture, associations/clubs/trusts/organizations and healthcare. Similarly, the results of Adhikari et. al. (2016) that the commercial dimension of CSR was an emerging problem in Nepalese companies shifting from philanthropic to a focus on their strategic intentions. Similarly, Pant and Piansoongnern (2017) show that organizations have become increasingly positive about CSR as a result of globalization; therefore, they were more connected to society and other CSR related activities. The people in the community have been trusted to be suitable for the CSR implemented company. Likewise, the results of Chaudhary (2017) confirmed that corporate reputation was the first benefit of introducing CSR activities in an organization. In second, third, fourth and fifth place came improving the institution and the community of employees,

increasing efficiency, acquiring commercial advantages and identifying reputational risks. Likewise, the study by Kandel (2018) concluded that the most important CSR activities of banks were education, health and environment, from the highest to the least individual needs. Furthermore, the association between CSR and the financial performance of organizational outcomes was separately positive (93.33%), negative (0%), and unresponsive (6.67%). Nepalese organizations did not place more value on CSR activities than on mere profit-making. Finally, the study by Chapagain (2018) which examines the connection between CSR and company performance well, goes in the same direction. However, there was no homogeneity in their results. Most of them confirmed positive, some negative and few neutral statements about said relationship. Mandatory corporate social responsibility and the satisfaction of its beneficiary institutions have generated great excitement among researchers at the dawn of the mandatory legislation era in developing countries, including Nepal. The question is whether mandatory CSR has an impact on the satisfaction of the beneficiary institutions is still unanswered. In the context of Nepal, there are only limited studies that deal extensively with CSR initiatives and status. There are no studies on the effects of mandatory CSR on the satisfaction of the beneficiary institutions after the legislation. With this in mind, the proposed study aims to explore the relationship between mandatory CSR activities and the level of satisfaction of beneficiary institutions in Nepal. Based on the current gap, this study begins by examining such hypothesis.

*H1: Mandatory corporate social responsibility activities have a significant positive impact on beneficiary institutions satisfaction in Nepal.*

### **3. Methodology**

In this study, a questionnaire survey was conducted. For this purpose, a descriptive and causal comparative research design was used. As it was difficult to find all beneficiaries at individual and societal level, it was considered to select only the registered beneficiaries. The researcher confirmed that the listed companies had authorized bodies to implement government-mandated laws. Therefore, they carry out their CSR activities through registered beneficiaries to ensure accountability and certification of their contribution. Furthermore, this selection was based on the researchers' assumption that the CSR contribution made by these beneficiaries is also observable and verifiable. Therefore, only those beneficiaries who have registered with the Social Welfare Council (SWC) in Nepal were selected. Thus the target population is the entire list of positions, i. e. 20313 beneficiaries were registered in the Social Council (SWC) in the last ten years (July 17, 2010 to July 16, 2020). From them, 1000 respondents were randomly selected and the questionnaire was distributed to them. Of these, only 400 respondents received a questionnaire in a usable form. During the personal visit, 169 samples were taken; 137 from emails, ie docs.google.com, and the remaining 94 from the phone call. Three-page questionnaires consisting of nine questions were distributed to the beneficiary institutions. The questionnaire was prepared for them in both English and



Nepali, taking into account the educational level of this community. This data has been collected using a phased approach to ensure the information is provided at the right time. Before submitting the questionnaire, the researcher communicated with these 1000 respondents via phone calls and emailed to encourage them to participate in the research and to obtain their verbal consent. The link to the questionnaire was then sent via bulk SMS and e-mail together with a cover letter. When first contacted, few took it seriously and responded via email. Several follow-up calls, sending reminder emails and text messages, in-person visits, and finally phone calls were required to get the completed 400 questionnaire back in timely. A pilot test was conducted using a random sample among 40 beneficiary communities of target respondents. Questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale from 1 to 5, with 1 for “strongly disagree”, 2 for “strongly disagree”, 3 for “neutral”, 4 for “agree” and 5 for “strongly agree”. All data collected was checked manually for completeness and consistency. The collected data was then entered into MS Excel. IBM SPSS 25 software was used for statistical analysis. Frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to understand their opinions on the overall constructs. Correlation and multiple regression analyzes were used to examine the level of significance of the hypothesis.

The Cronbach’s alpha cut-off value of 0.7 and above is considered acceptable reliabilities in most social science research (Gerrard et al., 2006, as cited in Raihan & Karim, 2017). F statistic and the p-values were used to test the statistical significance of independent variables from the regression results.

To test the hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) indicating the relationship between mandatory CSR activities and beneficiary institutions satisfaction (BEN-C):

$$\text{Model 1: BEN-C}_i = \alpha + \beta_1\text{BEN-CV}_i + \beta_2\text{BEN-CB}_i + \beta_3\text{BEN-IN}_i + \beta_4\text{BEN-WW}_i + \beta_5\text{BEN-RW}_i + \beta_6\text{BEN-AR}_i + \beta_7\text{BEN-CI}_i + \beta_8\text{BEN-PP}_i + e_i$$

#### 4. Data analysis and results

A pilot test is used to validate and check the reliability of the research instrument, analyze its efficiency and applicability, and usually obtain 1 to 10% of the sample size (Sweeney, 2009) to perform the validation. Based on the maximum percentage of the sample size, 40 beneficiary institutions respondents were selected randomly from the sampled population. By this test, the somehow ambiguous questionnaires were addressed, and finally, it succeeded to make the questionnaire adequately responsive. On that process by statistically, the Cronbach’s alpha, which was also found as adequate that shows in Table 1.

**Table 1 Reliability check of pilot test questionnaire**

Variables	No of Questionnaire	Cronbach’s alpha value
Questionnaire to Beneficiary Institutions	40	0.727

#### 4.1 Demographic profile of respondents

Socio-demographic information of respondent’s results of beneficiary institutions

In Table 2 revealed the majority, 71.75% (287), were male, and 28.25% (113) were female. Regarding the age, the most, 52.25% (209) of the respondents were between 31-45 years, and the least one, 1.25% (5), were aged over 61. Regarding the caste, 41.50% (166) the majority from the Brahmin community, and 80.25% (321) the top majority were from the Hindus religion. The respondents, 11% (44), were followed by the Buddhist community and the least 2% (8) from Muslim. This outcome shows that the middle-aged male in gender from the Hindu community was handled registered beneficiaries in Nepal.

**Table 2 Socio-demographic information of beneficiary institutions respondents**

Variables	Number	Percent
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	287	71.75
Female	113	28.25
Total	400	100
<b>Age Group</b>		
18-30	78	19.50
31-45	209	52.25
46-60	108	27
Above 61	05	1.25
Total	400	100
<b>Caste</b>		
Brahmin	166	41.50
Chhetri	92	23.00
Adivasi/Janjati	83	20.75
Dalit	23	5.75
Madhesi	30	7.50
Other	06	1.50
Total	400	100
<b>Religion</b>		
Hindu	321	80.25
Buddhist	44	11.00
Muslim	08	2.00
Christian	27	6.75
Total	400	100

*Source: Questionnaire survey*

## 4.2 Correlation analysis

Table 3 exhibits the Pearson correlation coefficient between the beneficiary's related activities and their satisfaction leading to the performance of firm. Except the Statement II, all the firm's beneficiary related activities and their satisfaction are highly positively correlated. Beneficiaries related activities in details, consulting beneficiaries (NGOs)

on community problems/issues and their satisfaction have negative relationship which states that inverse relationship between the variables however, statistically that is insignificant.

**Table 3 Correlation between firm's beneficiaries related activities and their satisfaction**

Variables	Statement I	Statement II	Statement III	Statement IV	Statement V	Statement VI	Statement VII	Statement VIII
Statement I	1							
Statement II	0.003	1						
Statement III	0.305**	0.014	1					
Statement IV	0.271**	-0.117*	0.550**	1				
Statement V	0.265**	-0.20	0.592**	0.701**	1			
Statement VI	0.429**	-0.108*	0.552**	0.650**	0.701**	1		
Statement VII	0.185**	0.003	0.542**	0.571**	0.694**	0.673**	1	
Statement VIII	0.362**	-0.115*	0.462**	0.494**	0.501**	0.619**	0.545**	1

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level,

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Statement I=Visits community through different CSR projects, Statement II=Consulting beneficiaries (NGOs) on community problems/issues, Statement III=Providing clear and accurate CSR, Statement IV=Performing CSR activities by willingly, Statement V=Help to reduce waste and pollution in the environment, Statement VI=Likely to buy products/services from those, which employ a CSR positioning, Statement VII=In case of any tear, wear, how you assure to rate local company's involvement, Statement VIII=CSR programs for the uplifting community from problems to prosperity.

### 4.3 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is used to determine the impact of independent variables (IVs): CSR activities on the dependent variables (DVs) that the beneficiary institutions satisfaction.

**Table 4 Coefficients<sup>a</sup> table indicating the contribution of the independent variable in explaining the variation in beneficiary institutions satisfaction**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		p-value	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T		Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)	1.256	0.214	-	5.880	0.000	-	-
BEN-CV	0.151	0.040	<b>0.178</b>	3.787	<b>0.000</b>	0.777	1.287
BEN-CB	-0.014	0.037	-0.016	-0.370	0.711	0.945	1.059
BEN-IN	0.052	0.045	0.064	1.157	0.248	0.570	1.754
BEN-WW	-0.087	0.059	-0.091	-1.470	0.142	0.451	2.219
BEN-RW	-0.138	0.059	<b>-0.164</b>	-2.330	<b>0.020</b>	0.348	2.871
BEN-AR	0.134	0.070	0.136	1.931	0.054	0.345	2.895
BEN-CI	0.155	0.058	<b>0.171</b>	2.684	<b>0.008</b>	0.425	2.353
BEN-PP	0.379	0.055	<b>0.373</b>	6.846	<b>0.000</b>	0.578	1.729
R-Square	0.328						
F-Statistics	23.887						

<sup>a</sup>Dependent Variable: Beneficiary Institutions Satisfaction

Table 4 presents the contribution of each independent variable (beneficiary activities) to the dependent variable, i. e., beneficiary institutions satisfaction. By observing the p-value column of Model 1, three variables make a statistically positively significant contribution (p-value<0.05) in beneficiary satisfaction. The concern variables are company routinely visits the community through different CSR projects (BEN-CV). In case of any tear, wear, or depreciation in the community, assure the local company of their involvement (BEN-CI). Furthermore, companies conduct CSR programs for the uplifting community, from problems to prosperity (BEN-PP), whose beta value is 0.178, 0.171, and 0.373. In separation, the one variable, i.e., companies CSR activities, helps to reduce waste and pollution in the environment (BEN-RW) that makes statistically significant with beta value, -0.164. It denotes that for every unit, increases in such activities decrease the beneficiary satisfaction by 0.164. Additionally, the third and the sixth variables, providing clear information to the beneficiary (BEN-IN) and likely to buy the product/service from those companies which employ a CSR positioning (BEN-AR) both are in a positive direction however, that does not found the result to be significant. Moreover, the second variable, i. e. consulting to the beneficiary (BEN-CB), and the fourth variable, i.e., work willingly for the beneficiary well (BEN-WW) beta value, are negative; however, they both are statically insignificant.

## 5. Conclusions and discussion

The beneficiary institutions are satisfied with the companies' CSR initiatives. Most importantly, these relationships can be improved by regularly visiting various CSR projects dealing with societal problems and running other CSR programs to take society from crisis to prosperity. In addition, clear and accurate CSR information/awareness of

the beneficiary communities. Likewise, the beneficiary institutions appeared to be more enthusiastic about purchasing goods and services from the companies participating in the CSR program. The results of this study are consistent with stakeholder theory. In addition, it supports Carroll's CSR model. It defines a company's explicit responsibility to local communities and businesses, which must act in accordance with societal expectations. This model of philanthropic responsibility focuses on societies that expect companies to contribute to various social projects. These results are in line with previous studies, which also found a significant correlation between CSR activities and the satisfaction of the beneficiary institutions. Bhattacharya et. al. (2009) concluded that the beneficiaries of CSR initiatives always develop strong relationships with donor companies. According to Agarwal (2014) the beneficiary community buys goods and services from companies that are gracious to them. The notable variable in this study is that the company's CSR activities generate waste and pollution (BEN-RW), which is statistically significant. In fact, the beneficiaries have yet to be reassured on this matter.

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