

## Brief Report

Corporate Sustainability practices, as a concept, in practice and its place in businesses strategy is evolving rapidly. The journey has been a long one, from its focus on corporate philanthropy to CSR, to the current preoccupation with Sustainability as a holistic response to several looming threats. Indian businesses have been at the forefront of this journey, creating several pioneering models on the road to sustainability.

There is a strong need to share these experiences not only to shorten the learning curve but also to celebrate the various successes we have demonstrated with our engagement in the social environmental sectors.

CII provided such an opportunity to the stakeholders through this **CSR Meet, 2009: The Emerging Business Model: Engaging Society, Enhancing Competitiveness**, held on **3 December, 2009** at **Kolkata**

The Meet focussed on:

- Enabling business leaders to assess different strategies and practices that provide a competitive edge to businesses in the global market place, helping them in the long-term sustainability of the businesses
- Sharing successful real life case studies on how sustainability practices are becoming an integral part of business, and to learn as to how such initiatives provide competitive advantages
- Facilitating creation of replicable and scaleable models of growth and development in the social sector

- A database on sustainability practices of Corporates and the development expertise of NGOs would be released. This database is the first step towards facilitating partnership between various stakeholders.

The following issues came up from the deliberations in the Meet:

Senior executive confront today a more profoundly uncertain business environment, than most of them have ever faced. There is not only economic uncertainty but also in terms of global warming and in growing inequity in society.

CSR is increasingly becoming prominent in Indian business scenario because corporates have realized that besides expanding their business it is also important to maintain a sustainable relationship with the community at large. This is one of the key drivers of today's CSR initiatives. It is not new to big companies like TATA, Birla, Indian Oil etc. who are practicing this since long.

In spite of having such successful examples, CSR in India is still at its nascent stage. Large PSUs are the major practitioners. Handful of corporates, mainly with international shareholdings, take up CSR projects at the ground level. But the speakers proposed for a policy strongly which has to be implemented on the ground.

CSR in India, now a days, have gone far beyond charity and donations. It has become an integral part of the corporate strategy. The programmes, designed by the CSR wings of the corporates, are based on clearly defined social philosophy or a business policy. Employees become integral part of such initiatives and contribute their skills to implement these projects.

The Hon'ble Minister-in-Charge, SHG & Self-Employment Department, Government of West Bengal, Smt. Rekha Goswami requested CII to take up following activities to facilitate the forward market linkages for the SHG products:

- a. Choose a list of products produced by self help group
- b. Suggest ways to develop product for capturing market
- c. Establish link for further developing market for the select products
- d. Suggest ways for training and development to improve skills and technology of SHG members

Companies like ITC, Tata Steel, IBM, Telco Construction & Equipment Ltd shared their experience with the delegates.

The Meet also showcased few successful partnership models. ICICI Foundation shared their experience while working with their implementation partner CSO partner. Axis Bank shared their experience with their partner CINI.