CII

Confederation of Indian Industry

EXPLORATORY STUDY ON CSR IN EDUCATION

ASSESSING IMPACT AND TRENDS IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT 2025

Contents

Exploratory Study on CSR in Education

Foreword

The Confederation of Indian Industry has long championed the role of the corporate sector in advancing national development goals through purposeful social investment. Education remains central to this effort. It is a key driver of inclusive growth and long-term competitiveness. Strong partnerships between Industry, civil society, and Government, have enabled CSR in education to make a significant contribution to India's human capital development.

CII's Education vertical engages closely with corporates, foundations, and policymakers to strengthen the CSR ecosystem. This is pursued through research, dialogue, and evidence-based advocacy. This report, titled "Exploratory Study on CSR in Education: Assessing Impact and Trends in the Indian Context", is a step in that direction. It examines how corporate engagement in education is evolving and how it can align more closely with national priorities, including NEP 2020 and Viksit Bharat@2047.

The report reflects CII's commitment to impactful, transparent, and sustainable CSR practices. By documenting experiences of leading corporates and identifying areas for collaboration, it aims to serve as a reference for both Industry and policymakers in shaping the future of education-focused CSR in India.

CII extend its appreciation to the organisations that shared their perspectives towards this important initiative. The insights presented here will encourage collective action to strengthen India's education ecosystem through meaningful CSR engagement.

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Research Report

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List of Abbreviations

Abbreviations	Expansions
FY	Financial Year
FLN	Foundational Literacy and Numeracy
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
YoY	Year-on-Year / Year-over-Year
MCA	Ministry of Corporate Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NSE	National Stock Exchange of India Limited
NEP 2020	National Education Policy 2020

Executive Summary

This exploratory study examines the evolving landscape of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in India's education sector, the largest thematic area of CSR investment since the formalisation of the Companies Act, 2013. Drawing on primary responses from corporates and implementing partners, supplemented by official secondary data, the study assesses how education-focused CSR has progressed in scope, strategic orientation, and alignment with national priorities. It highlights the shift from philanthropic contributions to structured, outcome-driven initiatives that support foundational learning, digital inclusion, teacher development, and employability.

The findings reveal a sector that is maturing steadily. Corporates report strong confidence in the impact of their education interventions, particularly in improving learning outcomes, digital access, and inclusivity. Most projects demonstrate clear alignment with the goals of NEP 2020 and respond to critical gaps across rural and aspirational districts. However, the study also uncovers persistent challenges: the difficulty of sustaining initiatives after CSR exit, variable teacher capacity, limited digital readiness, and operational constraints in remote regions. Monitoring and evaluation practices have improved, but translating programme-level gains into long-term, system-wide change remains an ongoing challenge.

The study concludes that the next phase of education CSR must prioritise scale, sustainability, and convergence. Multi-year commitments, stronger monitoring systems, and greater investment in teacher capability are essential for deepening impact. Enhanced collaboration among corporates, government agencies, NGOs, and communities will be vital to address workforce shortages, ensure continuity after exit, and strengthen implementation in underserved areas. By institutionalising evidence-based practices and aligning more closely with national frameworks, CSR can contribute significantly to improving educational quality, equity, and continuity, helping create a more resilient and future-ready learning ecosystem across the country.
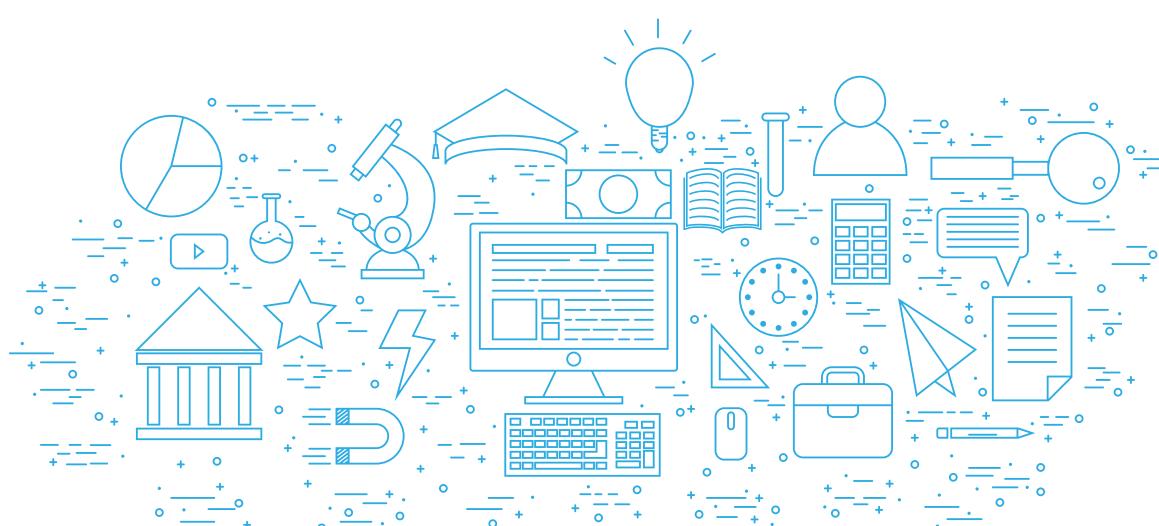
Introduction

Since the formalisation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) under Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013, CSR in India has moved from discretionary philanthropy to an institutionalised practice with clear compliance obligations and reporting expectations. This regulatory shift has encouraged companies to plan CSR as part of their strategic engagement with society, with education consistently emerging as a dominant area of investment.

Within this CSR framework, education has consistently emerged as the largest focus area of CSR spending in India. According to data from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs' National CSR Portal, education accounted for one-third of all CSR expenditure in FY 2023-24. Also, during this period, the total CSR spending by Indian corporates was approximately ₹34,000 Crore, with education's share standing at around ₹12,000 Crore. This sustained commitment reflects the strong belief among corporates that education is central to inclusive growth, productivity enhancement, and long-term social equity.

Over time, the nature of CSR interventions in education has broadened. Initial efforts primarily focused on school infrastructure, scholarships, and sanitation facilities. As CSR practice matured, corporate programmes began to address learning outcomes, teacher development, digital inclusion, and vocational skills. Increasingly, large companies are implementing education projects through their dedicated foundations, using structured monitoring frameworks and external evaluations. Mid-sized enterprises tend to collaborate with implementing agencies and non-profits to execute projects, often targeting underserved and rural geographies. These trends indicate a gradual shift from one-time charitable projects to impact-driven, programmatic approaches.

This study explores the evolving landscape of CSR in education, focusing on how companies plan, implement, and assess their initiatives in this critical sector. It examines trends in investment priorities, implementation models, and monitoring practices, while identifying shared challenges and opportunities for ensuring long-term sustainability. By combining quantitative evidence with qualitative insights from corporate experiences, the study aims to present a comprehensive view of the current state of education-focused CSR in India and outline pathways for strengthening its impact and alignment with national education goals.

Research Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to assess how corporates in India conceptualize, implement, and measure the impact of their CSR interventions in the education sector. The approach combines primary data, collected through a structured questionnaire, with secondary data from official CSR databases, published reports, and credible sector sources.

Study Design and Sampling

A purposive sampling method was adopted to focus specifically on companies that allocate a significant portion of their CSR expenditure toward education. The sampling frame was constructed using verified public sources, such as the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) CSR portal and other leading CSR-tracking platforms such as CSR-Box and India CSR. Based on cumulative data from FY 2019-20 to FY 2023–24, a list of 100+ organisations with consistent or large-scale CSR investments in education was identified.

Each company on this list was contacted through formal communication channels, inviting participation in the study and providing the structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was the primary tool for data collection, capturing information across eight dimensions: organizational profile, focus areas on education, modes of implementation, geographic priorities, duration of engagement, monitoring and evaluation practices, sustainability mechanisms, and future outlook. Also, pre-finalisation feedbacks were taken from select organisations wherein they gave their final perspectives, policy suggestions and inputs further enhancing the research.

Of the 100+ organisations approached, 23 organizations responded with complete submissions, forming the primary dataset for analysis. Respondents included a balanced mix of large corporates, corporate foundations, and implementing organizations, representing a wide range of sectors and CSR budgets.

Data Sources and Analytical Approach

- **Primary Data:** Questionnaire responses collected through email outreach and follow-up communications. Quantitative questions were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage distribution) to identify trends and patterns.
- **Qualitative Data:** Open-ended responses were thematically coded to capture recurring challenges, best practices, and respondent perspectives.
- **Secondary Data:** Supplementary information was drawn from MCA CSR filings, the India CSR Outlook Reports (2019–2024), and sectoral studies by think tanks and development agencies. These sources provided statistical context and validation for patterns observed in the primary dataset.

Triangulation of primary and secondary data enabled a more comprehensive understanding of the CSR-in-education landscape, linking individual corporate practices to national trends and policy frameworks.

Limitations of the Study

While the study provides rich insights, certain limitations must be acknowledged:

- **Sample Size:** The 23 responses, though valuable, represent a small subset of India's active CSR contributors and may not fully capture the diversity of approaches across the sector.
- **Self-Reported Data:** Information was provided voluntarily by respondents, which may introduce bias or over-estimation of outcomes.

- **Comparability:** Variations in how companies define or categorize "education" within their CSR portfolio limited data standardization.

- **Data Access:** Certain financial details and impact metrics were not publicly available or disclosed. Additionally, some organisations may have chosen not to share internal data or strategic information, which could have contributed to the limited number of responses received.

- **Scope of the Study:** The study is confined to the education segment of CSR and does not assess the overall CSR landscape across other thematic areas. Its focus is limited to analysing how corporates engage with education through CSR initiatives.

- **Data and Representation:** The analysis is based on publicly available secondary data and primary responses received through the survey. The findings are indicative and should not be interpreted as representing the entire universe of CSR initiatives in education across India.

- **Secondary Data Scope:** Given the fragmented and varied nature of secondary CSR data, only official government sources were used for reference.

- **Primary Data Reliance:** The analysis and findings are based on primary responses collected through the questionnaire.

Results and Findings

Respondents' Profile

The analysis is based on 23 valid responses from organisations selected purposively from a pool of over 100 organisations identified through MCA and CSR-tracking platforms. Respondents include large corporates, corporate foundations and implementing partners. This sample provides a focused, practice-level view of how established CSR actors design, implement and measure education programmes.

While their core business sectors span manufacturing, energy, IT, mining, and consumer goods, nearly all the respondents listed education and skill development among their top CSR priorities. Headquarters are spread across major metros and industrial states, with establishment years ranging from early-century conglomerates to newer enterprises.

This diversity underscores that investment in education CSR transcends industry type, it is viewed as both a social responsibility and a strategic investment in human capital. The sample thus offers a representative snapshot of established CSR practitioners actively contributing to India's education ecosystem.

Education Level and Geographic Focus
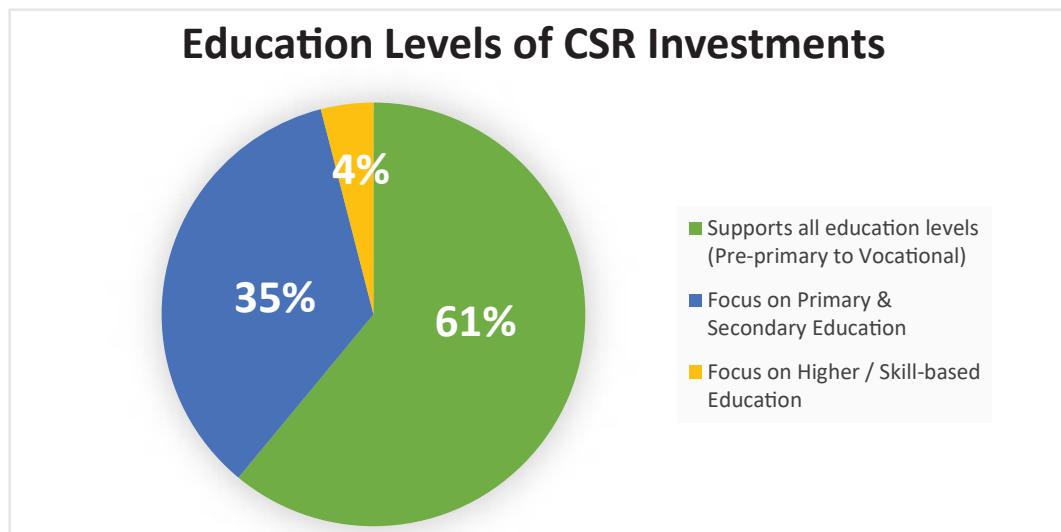
Figure 1.1: Education Levels of CSR Investments (n = 23)

A majority of organisations (around 60%) fund initiatives that span all education levels, from early childhood education to vocational training, reflecting an integrated approach to education CSR. About 35% of respondents focus primarily on primary and secondary education, indicating continued emphasis on foundational learning. A smaller share (around 5%) supports higher or skill-based education, through targeted employability or scholarship programmes.

## Geographic Focus of CSR Investments
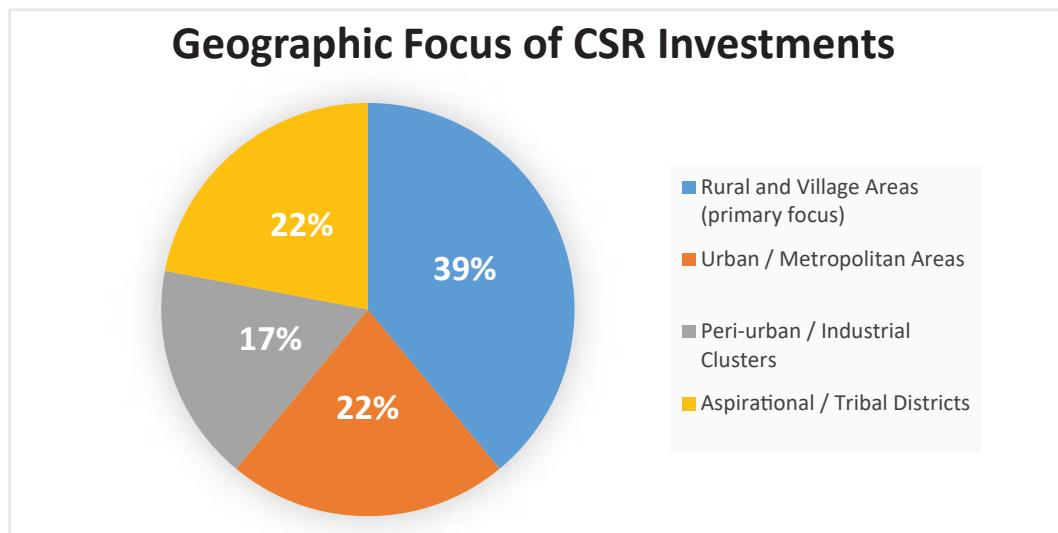
Figure 1.2: Geographic Focus of CSR Investments (n = 23)

Geographically, CSR investments are largely rural-oriented, with over one-third of respondents prioritising villages and aspirational districts as their main focus areas. This reflects a strong alignment with national inclusion goals and the need to strengthen rural schooling infrastructure. Another notable segment of organisations invests in urban and peri-urban schools, particularly those located near company operations or industrial zones.

Overall, the data suggests that CSR efforts in education are broadly distributed across all levels, yet skewed toward foundational learning and rural inclusion, underscoring the corporate sector's recognition of early-stage education as a key driver of long-term socio-economic impact.

Focus Areas of CSR Investments in Education
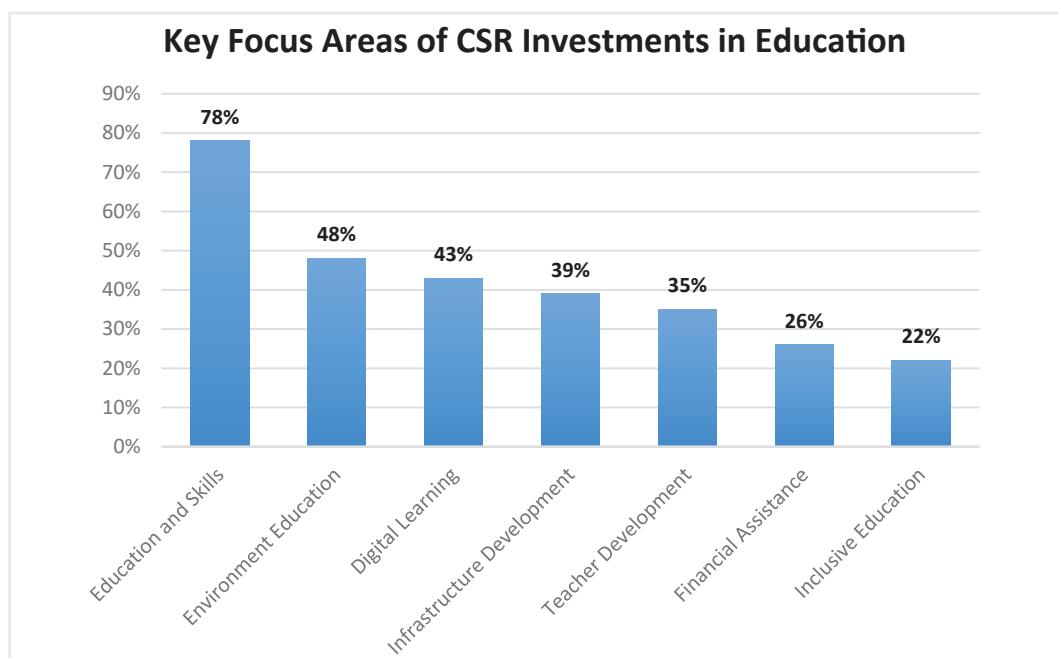
Figure 1.3: Key Focus Areas of CSR Investments in Education (n = 23)

[Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one option; therefore, each respondent could contribute multiple selections, leading to total responses greater than the sample size.]

Education continues to dominate CSR priorities, with nearly 80% of respondents directing significant portions of their CSR spending toward education, skilling, and training programmes. Alongside this, a substantial share of companies invests in digital learning and infrastructure creation, highlighting the post-pandemic push for technology-enabled access.

Teacher training and capacity-building initiatives feature prominently, reinforcing the growing focus on quality rather than mere access. While scholarships and inclusion-oriented projects appear less frequent, they represent targeted interventions aimed at supporting disadvantaged learners.

Overall, the pattern indicates that CSR in education has evolved beyond infrastructure support toward a comprehensive learning ecosystem, integrating technology, teacher quality, and inclusivity.

Modes of Implementation
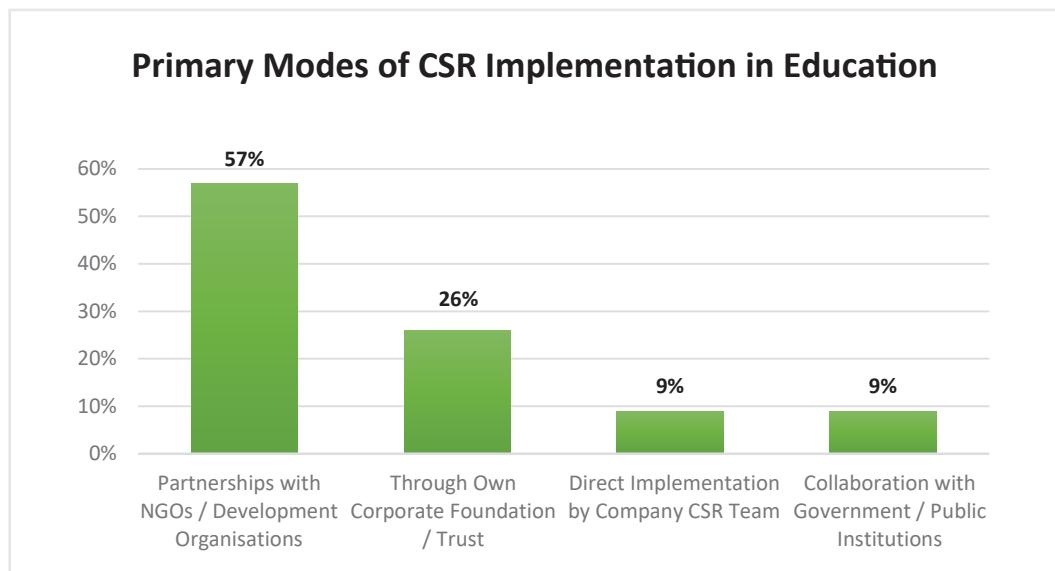
Figure 1.4: Primary Modes of CSR Implementation in Education (n = 23)

CSR projects in education are implemented predominantly through partnerships with NGOs and specialised implementing agencies, reported by over half (56%) of respondents. This approach enables corporates to leverage field-level expertise, ensure last-mile delivery, and manage projects across diverse geographies.

Around one-fourth (26%) of organisations channel funds through their own foundations or trusts, reflecting a preference for integrated, in-house models among large corporates. A smaller share engages in direct execution or government collaboration, often for flagship or pilot programmes.

Overall, the findings reveal that partnership-based delivery remains the cornerstone of education CSR, combining corporate oversight with social sector execution capacity.

Investment Trends and Growth

**CSR Investment in Education:
Trends and Year-on-Year Growth**

(line chart)
- No Significant Change: 9%
- Steady YoY Growth (10 – 20 %): 48%
- Moderate Growth (0 –10 %): 39%
- High Growth (> 20 %): 4%
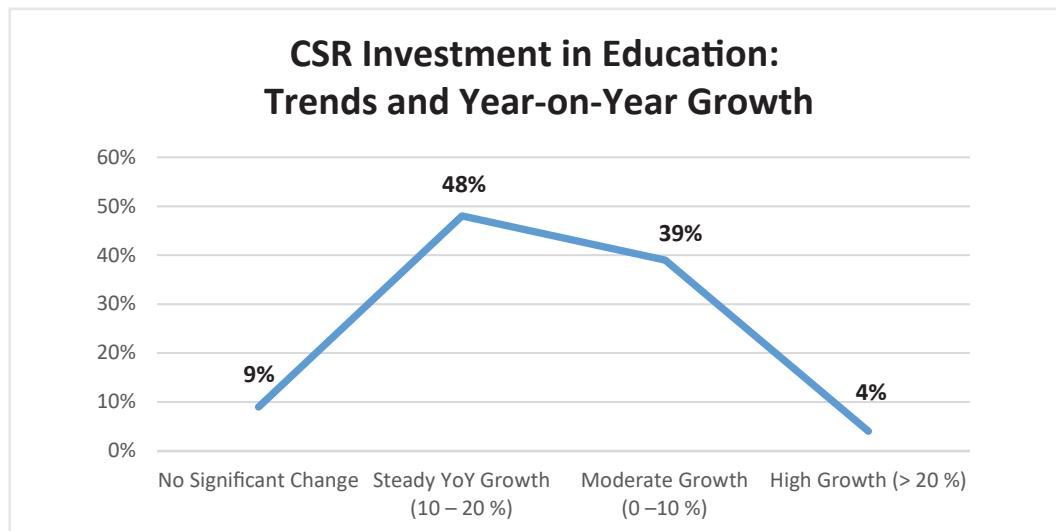
Figure 1.5: CSR Investment in Education: Trends and Year-on-Year Growth (n = 23)

The majority of organisations (nearly 90 %) report positive year-on-year growth in CSR expenditure on education, signalling its sustained priority within overall CSR portfolios. Almost half of the respondents (48 %) record steady 10–20 % annual growth, while another 39 % indicate moderate increases. Only a small fraction noted stagnation or decline.

This upward trend reflects the growing strategic value attributed to education CSR—viewed not merely as philanthropy but as a long-term social investment aligned with workforce readiness and community development goals. The findings confirm that education continues to attract expanding and resilient corporate funding, even amid shifting economic contexts.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Impact Assessment

Approaches to Monitoring and Impact Assessment

(bar chart)
- Continuous Internal Monitoring & Periodic Reviews: 30%
- Third-Party / External Impact Evaluation: 30%
- Partner-led Reporting & Evaluation: 17%
- Mixed / Multi-layered Approach: 13%
- Not Formally Assessed / Under Development: 9%
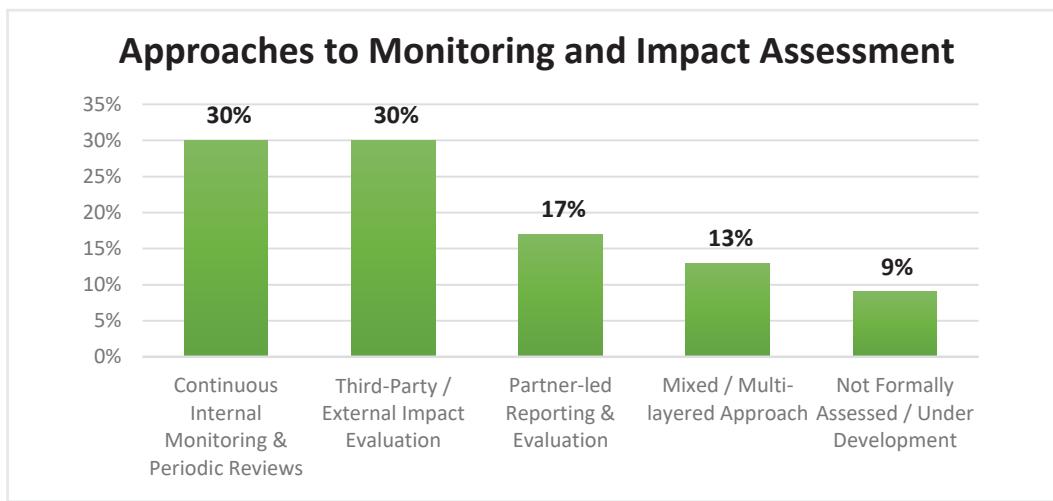
Figure 1.6: Approaches to Monitoring and Impact Assessment (n = 23)

A clear majority of respondents (around 60 %) report having formal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms—either continuous internal tracking or third-party impact assessments. Partner-based reporting remains a common practice among mid-sized CSR programmes, while a few corporates combine both internal and external evaluations.

About 9% of respondents indicated their M&E systems are still evolving, pointing to capacity gaps, especially among smaller CSR units. Overall, the data underscores a growing institutionalisation of impact assessment in education CSR, with corporates increasingly prioritising measurable outcomes and data-backed reporting to validate their social investments.

Implementation Challenges

**Key Challenges in CSR Implementation for Education**
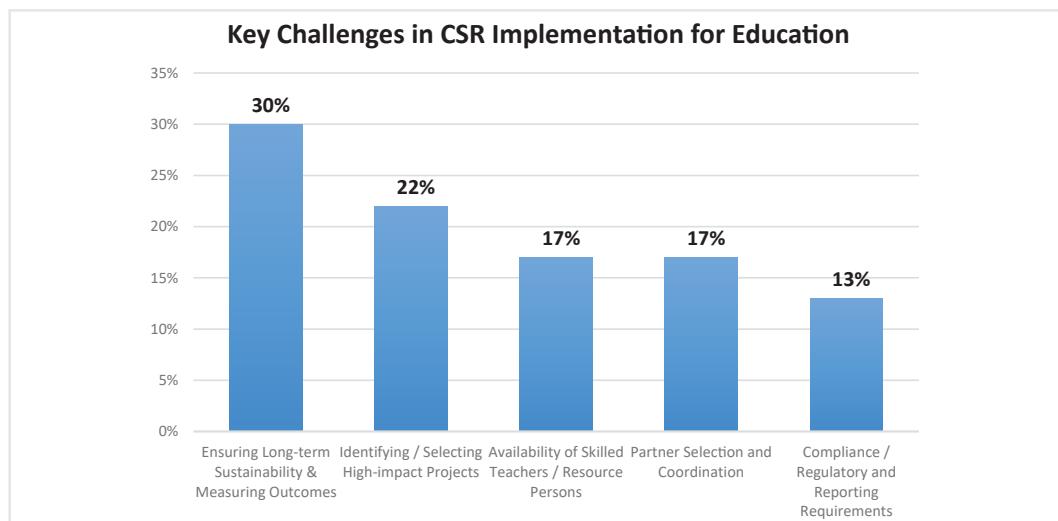
Figure 1.7: Key Challenges in CSR Implementation for Education (n = 23)

The most common challenge identified by corporates is sustaining impact beyond the project cycle—reported by 30% of respondents. Many organisations find it difficult to ensure continuity once CSR funding ends, especially in rural or government-dependent schools.

Challenges in project identification and partner coordination also feature prominently, underscoring the need for better due diligence and local ecosystem mapping. A number of respondents cite shortage of skilled educators and trainers as a persistent barrier to effective delivery.

Overall, the findings highlight that CSR in education faces implementation and sustainability bottlenecks, rather than funding constraints—suggesting the need for longer project horizons and stronger institutional partnerships.

Perceptions on Outcomes (Likert Insights)
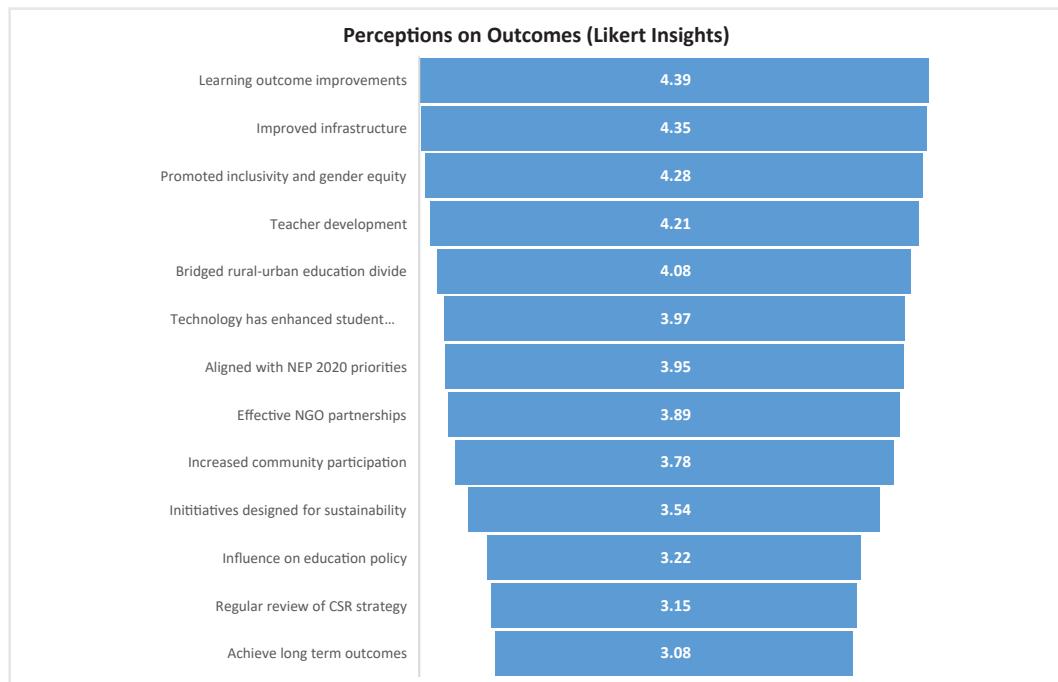
Figure 1.8: Mean Agreement Scores on CSR Outcomes and Practices
(Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree)

The Likert analysis reveals high overall satisfaction and confidence in CSR-led educational outcomes. Corporates most strongly agree that their investments have enhanced learning outcomes, digital access, and inclusivity, with mean scores above 4.2, reflecting tangible results at the ground level.

Moderate scores (3.5–4.0) in areas such as sustainability, rural–urban parity, and stakeholder collaboration indicate ongoing progress but uneven depth across projects. The lowest ratings relate to policy influence (3.22) and strategic review mechanisms (3.15), underscoring that corporates view their role as project-level enablers rather than policy shapers.

Overall, the responses suggest that education CSR in India has matured operationally but now needs stronger institutional frameworks and ecosystem linkages to drive systemic impact.

Thematic Evidence from Open-ended Responses
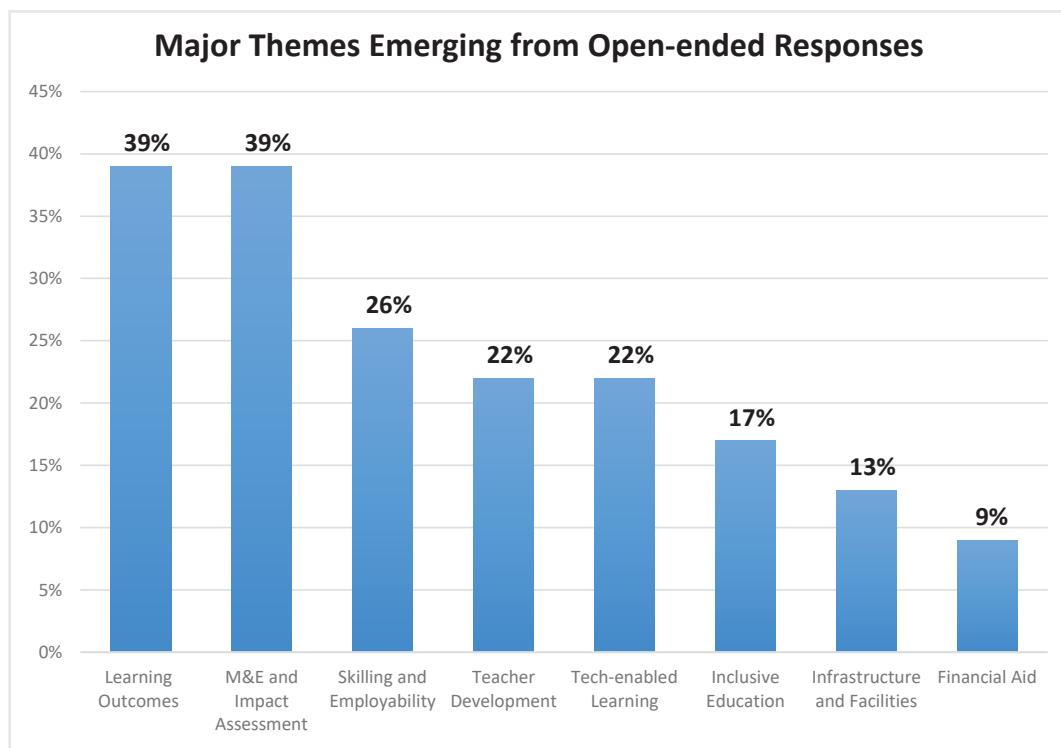
Figure 1.9: Major Themes Emerging from Open-ended Responses (n = 23)

Open-ended responses provide qualitative depth to the survey findings, underscoring how corporates define success and sustainability in education CSR. The two most recurring themes, learning outcomes and impact assessment systems, reflect a sector-wide shift from input-based to outcome-oriented interventions.

Several respondents highlight skilling programmes and teacher development as key areas of measurable improvement, while others report digital adoption as a catalyst for equity and reach, particularly in rural and low-resource schools.

A few companies shared examples of replicable models, such as integrating ICT tools, setting up digital labs, and providing community-based teacher mentoring. These insights indicate that corporates are not only expanding reach but also embedding quality and accountability metrics into their education initiatives.

Synthesis of Findings

The findings from this Survey paint a comprehensive picture of how corporates in India are approaching education as a long-term social investment. While CSR in education has expanded in both scale and sophistication since the enactment of Section 135 of the Companies Act, the nature of engagement is now clearly shifting from charity-driven giving to strategic, impact-oriented programming.

A majority of respondents (around 60 %) fund initiatives spanning multiple levels of education, from early learning to skilling, indicating a holistic lifecycle approach. Primary and secondary education remain the core focus, with increasing attention to vocational learning and employability pathways. The rural orientation of most CSR investments highlights a strong alignment with inclusion and access priorities, complementing government schemes such as Samagra Shiksha and PM SHRI Schools.

The dominant mode of implementation continues to be partnerships with NGOs and specialist implementing agencies, although a growing number of corporates operate through dedicated foundations, reflecting a trend toward institutionalisation of CSR functions. The steady year-on-year growth in spending (10–20 % for most respondents) underscores the sector's financial resilience and the continued centrality of education in corporate CSR portfolios.

From a performance standpoint, corporates express high confidence that CSR programmes have improved learning outcomes, digital access, and inclusivity, but show moderate confidence in sustainability and policy influence. Impact assessment practices are gradually formalising, with many organisations combining internal monitoring systems with third-party evaluations.

Shared challenges include ensuring post-project sustainability, availability of skilled educators, and maintaining consistent M&E frameworks across partners. Yet the qualitative evidence reveals encouraging examples of data-driven models, integrating digital learning, teacher upskilling, and measurable learning gains that can serve as replicable best practices.

Overall, the synthesis suggests that CSR in education in India is transitioning into a mature, evidence-based ecosystem, driven by partnerships, technology, and alignment with national education priorities, but now requires deeper focus on scale, sustainability, and systemic impact.

Discussion and Insights

The survey findings reflect a maturing landscape of CSR in education — one where corporate priorities are expanding from access and infrastructure toward measurable learning outcomes, teacher capacity, and digital inclusion. The following discussion synthesises insights that emerge across thematic dimensions, revealing both progress and persistent gaps in India's education-focused CSR ecosystem.

Education CSR as a Broad-based but Uneven Investment

The data shows that around 60% of respondents support all education levels, while 35% prioritise primary and secondary education. This broad coverage signals a shift toward lifecycle-based educational engagement, where corporates recognise continuity between school education, vocational pathways, and employability.

However, a cross-view of education level with geography reveals that most respondents supporting all education stages are also those with rural or semi-rural focus, implying that corporates view comprehensive education CSR as a tool for rural upliftment. Conversely, respondents investing mainly in higher or skill-based education are typically urban-based firms, reflecting their proximity to industrial clusters and technical institutions.

This bifurcation underscores an important insight: urban CSR is increasingly skill-oriented, while rural CSR remains foundational and access-driven. For future strategy, balancing both through integrated rural–urban models could create stronger systemic continuity between schooling and employability outcomes.

Diversification of Focus Areas: From Inputs to Impact

Nearly 80% of respondents invest in education, skilling, and training, supported by complementary investments in digital learning, teacher training, and infrastructure. Thematic cross-tabulation shows that manufacturing and heavy-industry corporates are more likely to fund infrastructure development and scholarships, whereas IT and service-sector companies tend to emphasise digital access, EdTech, and employability.

This reflects a gradual diversification of CSR portfolios, from input-heavy spending (classrooms, buildings) to impact-oriented interventions focused on learning, technology, and teacher capacity. The qualitative responses further support this shift, with multiple organisations citing quantifiable improvements in literacy, attendance, or assessment scores.

However, smaller firms and those with limited CSR staff continue to rely on infrastructure-based giving, pointing to an ecosystem where capacity, not intent, defines strategic maturity. Encouragingly, even these actors express willingness to adopt impact assessment frameworks, signalling a collective move toward evidence-led practice.

Partnership Models and Institutionalisation of CSR Delivery

Implementation patterns reveal that partnership-based delivery dominates, with nearly 60% of respondents executing projects through NGOs or development organisations. A quarter of respondents operate via their own foundations or trusts, and this subset correlates strongly with higher levels of M&E sophistication and longer project horizons.

This finding suggests two complementary pathways emerging in India's CSR architecture:

- Collaborative Model (NGO-driven): Widely used by corporates seeking reach, diversity, and agility. Works well for rural outreach and community-led interventions.

- Institutional Model (Foundation-driven): Common among large enterprises with dedicated CSR arms. Enables multi-year programming, stronger data systems, and alignment with organisational values.

Cross-analysis between implementation model and M&E type shows that corporates with internal foundations are more likely to employ third-party or hybrid evaluations, while those using external partners rely on partner-led reporting. This confirms that institutionalisation strengthens accountability and data governance.

Measuring Outcomes and Addressing Sustainability Gaps

The findings on monitoring and evaluation mark one of the most important transitions in India's CSR practice. Nearly 60% of respondents have formal assessment mechanisms, and another 30% conduct periodic internal reviews. However, this also means that about one in ten corporates still operate without structured evaluation, particularly among smaller contributors.

Cross-analysis between M&E practice and project focus reveals that organisations prioritising digital learning and skilling tend to adopt more advanced monitoring systems, often using dashboards and third-party validation. By contrast, projects centred on infrastructure or scholarships report weaker data systems, typically limited to financial or beneficiary counts.

A related gap concerns sustainability beyond funding cycles, identified as the top implementation challenge. Many corporates acknowledge that while their programmes achieve immediate improvements, maintaining outcomes after project closure remains difficult. This issue is particularly acute for initiatives dependent on external human resources, such as contracted teachers or short-term training providers.

The implication is clear: sustainability requires capacity creation within public systems, not parallel CSR delivery. Corporates can therefore focus future CSR strategies on co-ownership models with schools and local administrations, thereby ensuring continuity, scaling, and long-term impact.

From Philanthropy to Systemic Change: The Next Phase of CSR in Education

The Likert analysis provides perhaps the most compelling insight into corporate self-assessment. Respondents express high confidence (mean scores >4.0) in their ability to improve learning outcomes, digital access, and inclusivity, but relatively low confidence (≈3.2–3.4) in influencing education policy or achieving systemic change.

This reveals the next frontier for CSR in education: moving from isolated project impact to ecosystem-level collaboration. Corporates already investing in digital learning, teacher training, and monitoring systems are well positioned to contribute to state or district-level reforms under frameworks like NEP 2020 and Samagra Shiksha.

The survey's cross-cutting evidence also shows a positive relationship between scale of CSR spend and strategic alignment with policy priorities i.e., larger CSR budgets correlate with greater integration of NEP themes such as foundational literacy, skill-based education, and inclusion.

Yet, smaller contributors, though fewer in resources, often demonstrate innovation and contextual agility, particularly in remote regions. A shared platform that connects these efforts could help the ecosystem mature faster.

In short, the evolution of education CSR is now at a threshold: from project-based giving to structured, collaborative investment in systemic reform.

Operational Sustainability and Post-Exit Continuity Remain Persistent Gaps

A recurring insight from respondents is the difficulty in ensuring that CSR-supported initiatives continue effectively after project completion or corporate exit. Corporates highlighted that community ownership models are still weak, and local bodies often lack the capacity or resources to maintain infrastructure, digital assets, or pedagogical interventions once CSR funding ends. This creates a discontinuity in impact and reduces the long-term value of CSR investments. The feedback underscores the need for structured transition planning, stronger engagement with School Management Committees, and clearer coordination mechanisms with government authorities to sustain gains beyond the CSR lifecycle.

Capacity Constraints, Remote Accessibility, and Workforce Shortages Limit Programme Quality

Participants also pointed to systemic constraints that affect programme delivery—particularly the shortage of trained teachers, facilitators, and resource personnel. Many intervention geographies struggle with limited digital literacy among teachers and students, inadequate monitoring of teacher performance, and challenges in finding capable partners willing to operate in remote districts. Corporates noted that the lack of skilled manpower and the difficulty of implementing programmes in geographically isolated schools restrict the scale and effectiveness of CSR efforts. These insights highlight the importance of investing in teacher capability, building local resource pools, improving digital readiness, and using localised delivery models to address workforce and access gaps.

Rising Corporate Profits Are Expanding CSR Commitments, Reinforcing Education as a Long-Term Priority

A recent study by PRIME Database Group (PRIME), a prominent market intelligence organisation indicates that CSR spending by most of the NSE listed companies has increased proportionately with higher profitability. Many companies spent close to their mandated amounts, with some exceeding requirements, indicating a shift towards more deliberate and longer-term development commitments rather than minimal compliance. Education continues to receive the largest share of CSR funds year after year, maintaining its position as the most preferred thematic area. These trends suggest that corporates increasingly view education as a strategic investment with high social returns, reinforcing the potential for deeper, multi-year engagement and expanded programme scopes in the years ahead.

Prioritise Teacher Capability and Foundational Learning

While respondents highlighted several priority areas for CSR investment such as digital learning, infrastructure support, vocational exposure, and community engagements, it needs to be noted that strengthening teacher capacity and targeted support for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) are critical for sustained learning gains. Focusing CSR resources on these core learning areas, particularly in tribal, rural, and semi-urban regions can significantly enhance learning outcomes and overall programme effectiveness.

Conclusion

The study reaffirms that education remains the single largest focus area within India's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) landscape both in terms of expenditure and strategic significance. Since the formalisation of CSR under the Companies Act, 2013, corporates have increasingly viewed education not only as a social mandate but also as an investment in human capital development and national progress.

Findings indicate that CSR in education is entering a phase of maturity, moving steadily beyond infrastructure and access-based interventions toward deeper engagement with learning outcomes, digital inclusion, teacher capacity, and employability. Many corporates demonstrate alignment with the priorities of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, with clear emphasis on foundational literacy, vocational exposure, and equitable access, including in rural and aspirational districts.

At the same time, the study surfaces persistent systemic challenges. Corporates highlight difficulties in sustaining projects after exit, limited community ownership, and capacity constraints within local administrations. Shortages of trained teachers, digital literacy gaps, and the complexity of operating in remote locations continue to affect programme quality and scalability. While monitoring and evaluation practices have strengthened, translating programme-level improvements into long-term system-wide gains requires consistent collaboration with government and education partners.

Overall, the study concludes that CSR in education has moved from philanthropy to purpose-driven, outcome-oriented engagement. The sector is now poised for its next phase, one marked by greater scale, stronger standardisation, and deeper alignment with national priorities. With evidence-based planning, long-term investment horizons, and collaborative approaches, CSR can play a pivotal role in strengthening educational quality, equity, and continuity, contributing to more resilient institutions and sustainable learning ecosystems across the country.

Recommendations and Way Forward

India's CSR engagement in education has entered a phase of consolidation and sophistication. To sustain momentum and achieve long-term systemic impact, coordinated action among corporates, policymakers, and implementing partners is essential.

- **Shift to Multi-Year CSR Commitments**

  Longer 3 to 5-year programmes allow continuity, deeper engagement, and better management of delivery challenges.

- **Strengthen Project Delivery Mechanisms**

  Adopt structured implementation plans with clear milestones, accountability frameworks, and periodic reviews to ensure timely execution.

- **Plan for Post-Exit Sustainability from the Start**

  Build exit strategies early, including maintenance plans, capacity-building, handholding and community participation to avoid project discontinuation.

- **Enable Community Handover Models**

  Train School Management Committees (SMCs), parents, and local volunteers to manage and sustain activities once CSR support ends.

- **Address Government Capacity Constraints**

  Support local authorities through training, resource support, and coordination to ensure they can maintain CSR-created facilities.

- **Enhance Monitoring & Evaluation Systems**

  Introduce simple but robust M&E tools such as baseline, midline, and endline assessments to track progress and outcomes reliably.

- **Improve Impact Measurement Practices**

  Use clear performance Indicators, third-party reviews, and digital dashboards to overcome the challenge of limited impact visibility.

- **Strengthen Teacher Capacity and Continuous Support**

  Provide ongoing training, mentoring, and classroom observation to improve teaching quality and performance consistency.

- **Prioritise Filling Teacher and Trainer Gaps**

  Collaborate with government and NGOs to strengthen the pipeline of trained teachers, resource persons, and facilitators.

- **Improve Digital Literacy Before Deploying Technology**

  Train teachers, students, and staff on basic digital skills to ensure effective use of digital education tools.

- **Build Local Resource Pools for Remote Regions**

  Develop locally trained facilitators and volunteers to overcome challenges of remoteness and limited manpower.

- **Design Delivery Models for Hard-to-Reach Areas**

  Use cluster-based approaches, mobile units, and hybrid models to ensure consistent programme implementation.

- **Blend Infrastructure with Quality Interventions**

  Pair physical improvements with pedagogy, digital content, or teacher support to ensure meaningful educational outcomes.

- **Introduce Standard, Easy-to-Use Reporting Formats**

  Reduce reporting burden and ensure comparability through simple, standard templates aligned with national priorities.

- **Promote Co-Investment Models**

  Encourage partnerships involving CSR, government, and philanthropic organisations to scale successful programmes.

- **Strengthen Institutional Capacity of NGOs and Schools**

  Support partners in project management, documentation, and financial governance to improve implementation strength.

- **Use Evidence-Based Decision-Making**

  Select locations and interventions based on data such as district gaps, teacher availability, and student learning needs.

- **Encourage Community Ownership for Sustainability**

  Engage local leaders, teachers, and parents regularly to enhance accountability and support project continuity.

- **Align CSR Programmes with NEP 2020 and Samagra Shiksha**

  Ensure initiatives complement national priorities, improving long-term relevance and system-level integration.

- **Promote Scalable, Low-Resource Innovations**

  Support models suited for resource-poor contexts—offline learning tools, peer tutoring, and community-led support systems.

Education-focused CSR in India is poised to move from standalone projects to coordinated, high-impact ecosystem building. The way forward lies in sustained partnerships, shared measurement standards, and alignment with national priorities. By institutionalising evidence-based practices and enabling stronger collaboration among corporate, government, and educators, CSR initiatives can drive measurable improvements in educational ecosystem of the country.

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Appendix I:
Survey Questionnaire

Respondent Profile

1. Name of Company: [Text Response]

2. Head of the organization: Name and designation [Text Response]

3. Location of Headquarters (City & State): [Text Response]

4. Year of Establishment: [Numeric Response]

5. Sectors of interest of your company: (Select all that apply)

    a. Manufacturing & Infrastructure

    b. Services & Financial Sectors

    c. Technology & Digital Economy

    d. Any other (Please specify)

6. Areas where your CSR Funds are invested: (Select all that apply)

    a. Education, Training, Skill Development

    b. Healthcare, Well-being, Sanitation

    c. Environment, Sustainability, Climate Action, Green Initiatives

    d. Rural Development, Community Welfare, Women Empowerment

7. Contact Details of the CSR Head of your company:

    a. Name: [Text Response]

    b. Designation: [Text Response]

    c. Email: [Text Response]

    d. Phone Number: [Numeric Response]

8. Primary Contact Person for the Survey:

    a. Name: [Text Response]

    b. Designation: [Text Response]

    c. Email: [Text Response]

    d. Phone Number: [Numeric Response]

Section 1: Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

(Select the most appropriate option)

1. Which education level does your organization primarily support through CSR projects?

    a) Early childhood education

    b) Primary and secondary school education

    c) Higher education and vocational training

    d) All of the above equally

2. Which type of institutions are you primarily working with in your CSR projects?

    a) Schools owned and operated by Government (Centre/State/Local)

    b) School aided by Government (Centre/State/Local)

c) Schools owned and operated by Private enterprise

d) Colleges/universities owned and operated Government (State/Centre)

e) Colleges/universities aided by Government (State/Centre)

f) Colleges/universities owned and operated by Private enterprise

3. Which area of school education receives priority CSR funding from your organization?

a) School technology & infrastructure development

b) Teacher training and capacity building

c) Scholarships, financial aid, textbooks and learning materials to students

d) Environment Education and campaigns (such as swachhata hi seva campaign)

e) Nutritional Education and Health Initiatives (such as No Tobacco drives)

f) Any other (please specify)

4. What is the primary geographical focus of your company's CSR investments in education?

a) Metropolitan and Tier 1 Cities

b) Tier 2 and Tier 3 Cities/Towns

c) Rural Areas (Villages/Gram Panchayat Areas)

d) Tribal Areas and Aspirational Districts

e) Schools / Institutions nearby company or in the state of operation

5. What is the primary mode of CSR investments in education in your organization?

a) Direct financial support to schools/colleges

b) Investments in Education projects of Government (State/Centre)

c) Implementation through NGOs and development organizations

d) Implementation through own foundations/trusts/implementation arms

e) Any other (please specify)

6. What is the key motivation behind your company's CSR investment in education?

a) To follow company's philosophy

b) To achieve the company's vision

c) Any Other (please specify)

7. What is the total CSR investment in education of your company over the past 10 (2015-2025) years?

a) ₹1 – ₹50 crore

b) ₹50 – ₹100 crore

c) ₹100 – ₹500 crore

d) ₹500 crore & above

e) Prefer not to disclose

8. What has been the Year-on-Year (YoY) growth rate of your company's CSR investment in education over the past 10 (2015-2025) years?

a) More than 20% annual increase

b) 10–20% annual increase

c) 0–10% annual increase

d) No significant change

9. How does your company measure the success of CSR initiatives in education?

a) Improved student learning outcomes (e.g., test scores, engagement)

b) Increased access to education (e.g., infrastructure, digital tools)

c) Effectiveness of teacher training and development programs

d) Community engagement and long-term sustainability of interventions

e) Any other (please specify)

10. What type of impact assessment mechanism does your organization use for CSR education programs?

a) Internal audits

b) External or Third-party evaluations

c) Continuous impact monitoring systems and periodic reviews

d) Reports from Implementing partners

e) Any other (please specify)

11. What is the biggest challenge your organization faces in CSR implementation for education?

a) Identifying and selecting impactful projects

b) Limited Institutional capacity of beneficiaries to utilise funds

c) Ensuring long term sustainability and measuring outcomes

d) Navigating regulatory and policy requirements

e) Selection of NGOs for impactful implementation

12. Which policy level changes would encourage greater CSR investments in education?

a) Greater flexibility in CSR funding regulations and enhanced tax incentives

b) Simplified and streamlined reporting and compliance

c) Recognition and Awards for CSR Excellence

d) Enhanced Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for education projects

e) Any other (please specify)

Section 2: Likert Scale Questions

(Rate each statement on a scale of 1- Strongly Disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly Agree)

1. Our CSR-funded education initiatives have led to measurable improvements in student learning outcomes.

2. Our CSR investments has led to meaningful infrastructure and digital access improvements.

3. Our CSR investments has significantly promoted inclusivity and equitable access to education for all sections of society

4. Our CSR investments has promoted employability and industry readiness of students.

5. Our CSR investments in education have successfully contributed to teacher training and professional development.

6. Our CSR investments in education has promoted strong parent and community engagements.

7. Our CSR investments in education has helped to bridge the rural-urban divide in education.

8. Investing CSR funds in digital learning and technology integration have been effective.

9. Our organization actively collaborates with key stakeholders (government, NGOs, academia) for education CSR programs and prioritises transparent communication about the impact of these initiatives.

10. Our CSR investments have significantly influenced government policies.

11. Our CSR education programs are designed to sustain impact even after corporate funding ends.

12. Our organisation has a structured framework to assess implementation and impact of our initiatives.

13. Our organization regularly reviews and updates its CSR education strategy based on impact assessments.

Section 3: Open-ended Questions (Max 300 words per response)

1. What key measurable outcomes does your company use to evaluate the impact of its CSR investments in education? What specific measurable outcomes have your CSR investments achieved so far? [Text, Numeric]

2. What are the key success stories or best practices from your company's CSR initiatives in education? (Max 2 success stories/ best practices). Share Reports. [Text]

3. How do you see the future of CSR investments in education evolving in the next five years? [Text]

Appendix II:
List of Respondents and their Headquarters

1. Amara Raja Energy and Mobility Ltd (Rajanna Foundation - CSR Arm of Amara Raja Group) – Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh

2. Ambuja Foundation (formerly Ambuja Cement Foundation) – Mumbai, Maharashtra

3. Australia And New Zealand Banking Group Limited – Bengaluru, Karnataka

4. Bharat Forge Limited – Pune, Maharashtra

5. Cadila Pharmaceuticals Limited - Ahmedabad, Gujarat

6. CBRE South Asia Pvt Ltd – Gurugram, Haryana

7. Danfoss – Chennai, Tamil Nadu

8. Godrej Industries Ltd & Associate Companies (Godrej Industries Group – Good & Green Dept) - Mumbai, Maharashtra

9. Happiest Minds Technologies Limited – Bengaluru, Karnataka

10. HCL Tech (HCL Foundation) - Noida, Uttar Pradesh

11. Industrial Energy Ltd (Joint Venture of The Tata Power Company Ltd and Tata Steel Ltd) – Jamshedpur, Jharkhand

12. ITC Limited - Kolkata, West Bengal

13. Mastek Foundation – Mumbai, Maharashtra

14. Pehlay Akshar Foundation - Mumbai, Maharashtra

15. Praj Industries Limited - Pune, Maharashtra

16. Rajratan Global Wire Limited – Indore, Madhya Pradesh

17. Shapoorji Pallonji & Company Pvt Ltd - Mumbai, Maharashtra

18. SRF Foundation (CSR arm of SRF Ltd) - Gurgaon, Haryana

19. TATA Steel Ltd - Jamshedpur, Jharkhand

20. TVS Euro Grip Tyres (TVS Srichakra Ltd) - Madurai, Tamil Nadu

21. UPL Limited - Mumbai, Maharashtra

22. Wheels India Limited - Chennai, Tamil Nadu

23. Wipro (Wipro Foundation) - Bengaluru, Karnataka

Snapshots of Impact: CSR in Education

A brief snapshot of impactful initiatives undertaken by a few of our respondents.

Amara Raja Energy and Mobility Ltd
(Rajanna Foundation - CSR Arm of Amara Raja Group)

Fig 2.1, 2.2, & 2.3: As a part of its CSR initiatives, Rajanna Foundation set up 60 smart classrooms with TeachNext in three schools in Tirupati and Chittoor districts, Andhra Pradesh. These classrooms, equipped with smart projectors, PCs, whiteboards, and green boards, aim to create a better learning environment, and increase enrolment, attendance, and student interest. The programme, targeting LKG to 12th-grade students, enhances learning with graphical and animated digital content, fostering skills and interest in science and mathematics.

Ambuja Foundation
(formerly Ambuja Cement Foundation)

Fig 2.4: After School Program: Promote physical education and sports by identifying student talents, training youth with certified coaches, and preparing them for district, state, and national competitions through structured programs and skill development.

Fig 2.5: Promotion of STEM Learning: Promote experiential learning in Science and Mathematics to spark interest, eliminate fear, and strengthen concepts, preparing students for advanced technical education such as Engineering and Pure Sciences.

Australia And New Zealand Banking Group Ltd

Fig 2.6 & Fig 2.7: ANZ's CSR initiatives transformed three government schools in Bengaluru. Built & renovated 55 classrooms along with multipurpose hall & toilet blocks. Improving access to education & quality for 3,058 marginalized students and boosting enrolment by 46%. Building futures, not just buildings!

Fig 2.8 & Fig 2.9: The ANZ CSR education initiative supports students from marginalized rural communities in Karnataka through a mentorship program, aiming to uplift them from poverty and promote access to higher education. Through this initiative, more than 600 students have received direct benefits, while a total of 1,800 students and parents have received indirect benefits. As of February 2025, counseling has been provided to 200 students.

CBRE South Asia Pvt Ltd

Fig. 2.10: Orientation on SMART Classrooms & BLES.

Fig 2.11: Kitchen Volunteering & Interactive Learning.

Fig 2.12: Children actively participate in a blended classroom session combining academic exercises with extracurricular tasks.

Fig 2.13: Nutrition Kits & Poshan Maah.

Danfoss

Fig 2.14: Danfoss India, in collaboration with Project Puthri conducted a career orientation session at D.G. Vaishnav College, Chennai, for young girls to equip themselves with employability training and skills requisite for creating self-sustainable careers.

Fig 2.15: Reaffirming our commitment to Engineering Better Future and nurturing the skills of young RAC technicians, Danfoss India unveiled the latest Danfoss Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Training Centre at the Skill Development and Vocational Training Centre in Adyar.

Fig 2.16: Over 40 children enthusiastically hand-printed paper bags in vibrant colours, expressing their creativity while learning about the harmful impact of plastic on the environment and the importance of adopting sustainable, eco-friendly living practices.

Fig 2.17: Danfoss India, in partnership with AVTAR Human Capital Trust, organized a yearlong 'Puthri' career support program at Govt. High School, Panrutti, empowering under-privileged girl students with career skills, grooming, and employability training for self-sustainable futures.

Godrej Industries Ltd & Associate Companies (Godrej Industries Group – Good & Green Dept)

Fig 2.18 & Fig 2.19: Agriculture Leaders of India (FALI) is a not-for-profit program promoting modern agriculture among rural students, serving 16,000+ students annually, with 45,000+ alumni, changing attitudes towards agriculture since 2014. Godrej Agrovet has been a steadfast supporter of FALI over the years and continues to champion its mission of shaping the next generation of agricultural leaders.

HCL Tech
(HCL Foundation)

Fig 2.20: Empowering Girls at KGBV:
A Holistic Educational Intervention by HCL Foundation.

Fig 2.21: Digital Inclusion in Education:
ICT Classrooms Under Project Samuday.

Fig 2.22: STEM Education for Future Readiness in
Hardoi District.

Fig 2.23: DLCC: Equipping Students
for a Digital Tomorrow.

ITC Limited

Fig 2.24: Learning levels improvement: Programme aims to bring about significant improvements in the learning levels of children in reading, number recognition and basic maths.
17 lakh+ children covered.

Fig 2.25: Education intervention for Secondary and Higher Secondary children: Retaining students in secondary and higher secondary grades in schools to complete secondary education, especially girls from marginalized communities, by building career intentionality and developing 21st century skills through mentoring and coaching.
2,500+ girl children covered.

Fig 2.26: Model Schools with Solar Panels: Aligned with the PM School for Rising India (PM-SHRI) initiative, 25 schools are implementing demonstrate best practices of NEP with four components – Child and Climate Friendly Infrastructure; Learning Quality; Social and Mental Well-being; and Community Engagement.

Fig 2.27: Sustained Operation and Maintenance (O&M): The programme strengthened 1,480 School Development Management Committees (SDMCs) to ensure community ownership of school infrastructure. Additionally, 1,370 Child Cabinets and WATSAN Committees were empowered for hygiene promotion, with capacity building, soap banks, and O&M contributions supporting sustained sanitation and maintenance.

Shapoorji Pallonji & Company Pvt Ltd

Fig 2.28: Chotte Scientist Program.

Fig 2.29: Ashramshala after Intervention.

Fig 2.30: Mentoring Program.

Fig 2.31: Vocational Training.

Shapoorji Pallonji undertakes comprehensive education initiatives through long-term school adoption, literacy and numeracy programmes, vocational skilling, and employee-led mentoring. Their interventions support academic improvement, personality development, digital and science learning, and foundational skills across multiple schools. These initiatives have reached thousands of students and consistently delivered strong outcomes, including over 95% pass rates in Class 10 examinations year after year.

SRF Foundation
(CSR arm of SRF Ltd)

Fig 2.32: Students are enthusiastically participating in a Crochet Art guest session at Govt. Primary School in Bharuch, creatively learning a new vocational skill through hands-on practice of basic single chain crochet.

Fig 2.33: Girls at a Govt. School in Mewat are actively engaged in building a smartphone-controlled car in the Tinker Coding Lab, creatively exploring robotics and enhancing their vocational STEM skills.

Fig 2.34: Children at Anganwadi in Bharuch are joyfully threading colourful beads, enhancing their ability to recognize colours and count, while learning through fun and hands-on play.

Fig 2.35: Students in a school science lab in Dhar, Madhya Pradesh are attentively learning about the human body through interactive demonstrations, enhancing their scientific curiosity and practical understanding of concepts.

TATA Steel Ltd
(TATA Steel Foundation)

Fig 2.36: Masti Ki Pathsala - Class in progress at Residential Bridge Course centre.

Fig 2.37: Masti Ki Pathshala: Deputy Commissioner, East Singbhum felicitating the students of Residential Bridge Course who passed Matriculation in 2024.

Fig 2.38: Education Signature Program (ESP): The learning initiatives shifted to Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) with reach experience of LEP to meet the urgent call of NIPUN Bharat Mission to ensure every child in the project area achieves Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) at primary level (end of grade III).

Fig 2.39: Education Signature Program (ESP): The entire community capacity building culminates in celebrating Child Labour Free Zone (CLFZ) at Gram Panchayat and block level. By celebrating this the community vows to maintain the CLFZ status.

TVS Euro Grip Tyres
(TVS Srichakra Ltd)

Fig 2.40: Creating Safe and Student-Friendly Learning Spaces through Infrastructure Support - Double Class room at Panchayat Union Primary School, Sathurmadangan, Madurai.

Fig 2.41: Empowering Government School with Sports Resources for Holistic Education development in Government Higher Secondary School, Therkkutheru, Madurai (School St).

Fig 2.42: Empowering Merit through Special Coaching for NMMS Success in Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Melur, Madurai (School Strength-2667).

Fig 2.43: Fostering Environmental Responsibility through Green Club Initiatives at Panchayat Union Primary School, Therkkutheru, Madurai (School Strength-146).

Wipro
(Wipro Foundation)

Fig 2.44 & Fig 2.45: Launched in 2015–16, the Santoor Scholarship Program supports young women from underserved communities who aspire to pursue higher education after completing grade 12. To date, the program has benefited nearly 10,000 students, with a total support of ₹50 crores.

Fig 2.46 & Fig 2.47: Wipro launched the TalentNext program in 2016 as a nationwide CSR initiative aimed at enhancing the quality of engineering education in India. Through this program, around 4,500 professors from 650 engineering institutions have been trained in digital skills using a Project-Based Learning approach. The program offers three-week courses in industry-relevant digital technologies, culminating in certification.

Notes

Notes

Confederation of Indian Industry

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering Industry, Government and civil society through advisory and consultative processes.

CII is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led and industry-managed organisation, with around 9,700 members from the private as well as public sectors, including SMEs and MNCs, and an indirect membership of over 365,000 enterprises from 318 national and regional sectoral industry bodies.

For more 130 years, CII has been engaged in shaping India's development journey and works proactively on transforming Indian Industry's engagement in national development. CII charts change by working closely with the Government on policy issues, interfacing with thought leaders, and enhancing efficiency, competitiveness, and business opportunities for industry through a range of specialised services and strategic global linkages. It also provides a platform for consensus-building and networking on key issues.

Through its dedicated Centres of Excellence and Industry competitiveness initiatives, promotion of innovation and technology adoption, and partnerships for sustainability, CII plays a transformative part in shaping the future of the nation. Extending its agenda beyond business, CII assists industry to identify and execute corporate citizenship programmes across diverse domains, including affirmative action, livelihoods, diversity management, skill development, empowerment of women, and sustainable development, to name a few.

For 2025-26, CII has identified "Accelerating Competitiveness: Globalisation, Inclusivity, Sustainability, Trust" as its theme, prioritising five key pillars. During the year, CII will align its initiatives to drive strategic action aimed at enhancing India's competitiveness by promoting global engagement, inclusive growth, sustainable practices, and a foundation of trust.

With 70 offices, including 12 Centres of Excellence, in India, and 9 overseas offices in Australia, Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Singapore, UAE, UK, and USA, as well as institutional partnerships with about 250 counterpart organisations in almost 100 countries, CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.

Confederation of Indian Industry

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