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**Corporate Social Responsibility and Covid-19: Testing the Ethical
Viability and Social Responsiveness of Corporate Entities during a Health
Crisis**

Avishikta Chattopadhyay & Akanksha Goel

ABSTRACT:

The situation of the country and the world entails the proper utilization of the limited resources to ensure subsistence and sustainability. The idea of a corporate entity engaging in social service is daunting because it is contradictory to its innate nature.

The entity is torn between maintaining its stability and serving society. However, over time and with changing circumstances the accepted notion of a company has evolved. At present, corporate entities are expected to be responsible for the human society. The current situation in the world has aggravated the dilemma of choice for corporate entities. Several sectors of the economy are shutting down owing to the depleting financial conditions. Therefore, it is proposed that a crisis period is the best time for analyzing the social policy adopted by companies. This paper analyses whether indulging in health initiatives by companies is a suitable option for ensuring maximum benefit. The methodology is framed focusing on the study of the companies associated with healthcare in general and the different reactions of companies in India and across the world in the wake of different Pandemics. Elucidating the evolution of Corporate Social Responsibility governing the policy decisions of the corporate entities through the changing circumstances the paper tests whether the companies should indulge in CSR initiatives now and in the future.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Coronavirus Pandemic has ushered an age of tumultuous economic downfall. It was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization on 11th March 2020¹. This pandemic has the potential to destroy the mightiest of the economies. With countries shutting down their regular economic activities, development has come to a halt. Reports reveal the fact that the coronavirus pandemic has increased the level of uncertainty in the economy² and the global economy is said to face the worst recession since the Great Depression.³ There is stagnation of resources, loss of jobs, and an increase in unemployment, hunger, and poverty. Research indicates that the middle and the low-income countries will bear the brunt of this global economic slowdown.⁴

The situation poses a primary question ‘Which type of government is best to tackle a health crisis?’. It is reasonable to consider that instead of following the capitalist approach, there arises an immense need of adopting the socialist approach. However, the dichotomy over this question arises when countries predominantly socialistic like China as well as countries primarily capitalistic like the USA have not been successful in tackling the Pandemic. Therefore, this situation entails the removal of the public and private brackets in economic resource allocation and distribution. The public and the private sector have to work simultaneously to decelerate the spreading process.

With thousands of people losing their valuable lives due to lack of funds, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has resurfaced to help curb the paucity of funds. Though businesses are motivated by profit, it is now when it becomes evident ‘What matters more for a businessman, profit or humanity?’. Though concerns are relative and subjective, there has been an immense increase in the socialist practices followed by corporate houses, promoting sustainable development, and overall wellbeing.

¹ WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (Mar. 11, 2020), <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>.

² Hites Ahir, *Global Uncertainty Related to Coronavirus at Record High*, IMFBLOG (Apr. 4, 2020) <https://blogs.imf.org/2020/04/04/global-uncertainty-related-to-coronavirus-at-record-high/>.

³ *World Economic Situations and Prospects: April 2020 Briefing No. 136*, UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (Apr. 1, 2020) <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/publication/world-economic-situation-and-prospects-april-2020-briefing-no-136/>.

⁴ Carolina Sanchez-Paramo, *COVID-19 will hit the poor hardest. Here's what we can do about it*, WORLD BANK BLOGS (Apr. 23, 2020), <https://blogs.worldbank.org/voices/covid-19-will-hit-poor-hardest-heres-what-we-can-do-about-it>.

II. GENESIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to the company's accountability towards the society focusing on the three bottom-line approaches⁵ or the three-domain approach⁶ (environmental, legal, and ethical) thus benefiting both the company as well as the consumers. CSR includes elements of normative constraints, altruistic, and moral imperative.⁷ Though a corporation is treated as an artificial person lacking any "social responsibility"⁸ but in recent times with the emergence of the concept of "corporate citizenship"⁹ the companies have an increasing opportunity to engage in social initiatives. COVID-19 has proved to be a great opportunity for companies to showcase their responsibility towards society and help the world evade a global disaster.

The companies through their profit maximization motive can be lured to adopt measures that exploit the society as well as the resources of a country. The colonial period bears evidence of the exploitative nature of the industries. After the two great wars when society needed rapid transformation, it looked up at the private sector for improvement. Several scholars claim that CSR as a concept attained fame during the post-cold war period¹⁰. On the other hand, several sources state that the initialization of the concept of CSR can be traced back to the Industrial Revolution further accelerating during Globalization. Thus, we cannot deny the profit motive of the companies, but we cannot ignore the responsibility they bear towards society.

The concept of CSR has been evolving since the 1950s. Harvard Bowen, an American economist is considered to be the father of CSR. In his book *Social Responsibilities of the Businessman*, he supposedly coined the term. However, it was not till the 1970s that the term CSR became popular. Patrick Murphy

⁵ Mark S. Schwartz & Archie B. Carroll, *Corporate Social Responsibility: A Three-Domain Approach*, 13(4) BUSINESS ETHICS QUARTERLY 503 (2003).

⁶ Archie B. Carroll, *A Three-Dimensional Conceptual Model of Corporate Social Performance*, 4(4) ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT REVIEW 497, 500 (1979).

⁷ Thomas M. Jones *Corporate Social Responsibility Revisited, Redefined*, 22(3) CALIFORNIA MANAGEMENT REVIEW 59 (1980).

⁸ Milton Friedman, *The Social Responsibility of Business is to Increase its Profits*, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, <http://umich.edu/u/~thecore/doc/Friedman.pdf>.

⁹ Fifka MS, *Corporate citizenship in Germany and the United States—differing perceptions and practices in transatlantic comparison*, 22 (4) BUSINESS ETHICS: A EUROPEAN REVIEW 341-356 (2013).

¹⁰ Archie B. Carroll, *Corporate social responsibility: The centerpiece of competing and complementary frameworks*, 44 ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS 87 (2015).

had drawn a timeline consisting of four eras showing the development of CSR between 1950 till the 1970s.¹¹ Archie Carroll¹² analyzed the evolution of CSR through the 20th century into the 21st century. According to him, CSR activities accelerated in the 1970s through the 1980's, after which contemporary ideas started being associated with the concept of CSR which ultimately paved the way for evolved ideas at the beginning of the 21st century. Finally, it was accepted that the companies had a greater responsibility than just making money and obeying the law.¹³

Ever since the 21st century, investors have become aware of their rights. Their social consciousness has increased, and they have preferred to invest in places that reflect their values. CSR has its own benefits which include improvement in the quality of business, fuller utilization of resources and improved reputation, brand image, and customer loyalty. It also helps in innovation, cost-saving, brand establishment, customer engagement as well as employee engagement¹⁴. It assists in producing an item by taking the environmental concerns in its perspective and has helped in creating a 'win-win situation through synergistic value creations'¹⁵. CSR should, therefore, be encouraged since it is thus a two-edged sword; it impacts both the society and enhances the financial stability and reputation of a company.

Certain corporations have increased the benchmark for social responsiveness through their CSR initiatives. The Verdigris group, in the USA, is one such company that included CSR on a day to day basis, they have been a "carbon-neutral corporation since 2007"¹⁶ thus protecting the deteriorating health and environmental crises. In India, Reliance Industries Limited has "Project Jagruti" which aims at the social inclusion of the dyslexic students¹⁷.

¹¹ Patrick E. Murphy, *An Evolution: Corporate Social Responsiveness*, 30 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN BUSINESS REVIEW 19 (1978).

¹² Archie B Carroll, *A History of Corporate Social Responsibility: Concepts and Practices*, THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY 19 (2008).

¹³ Id. at 11.

¹⁴ FORBES, *Six Reasons Companies Should Embrace CSR*, (Feb. 21, 2012, 12:15 P.M.), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/csr/2012/02/21/six-reasons-companies-should-embrace-csr/#210a89a23495>.

¹⁵ Matteo Tonello, *The Business Case for Corporate Social Responsibility*, HARVARD LAW SCHOOL FORUM ON CORPORATE GOVERNANCE (June 26, 2011), <https://corpgov.law.harvard.edu/2011/06/26/the-business-case-for-corporate-social-responsibility/>.

¹⁶ VERDIGRIS GROUP, *Our Comprehensive Corporate Sustainability Plan*, <https://www.verdigrisgroup.com/our-sustainability-initiatives> (last visited Apr. 20, 2020).

¹⁷ *Corporate Social Responsibility*, RELIANCE INDUSTRIES LIMITED, <https://www.ril.com/OurCompany/CSR.aspx> (last visited on Apr. 19, 2020).

CSR is interlinked with business and is not a diverse field. It is a strategy to enhance business. To maximize the effects of CSR, there should be coherent practices ('showcasing firm's values and purpose'¹⁸) with the involvement of the head to show the responsiveness that the company has towards the society. While taking into consideration CSR, it should not affect the economic viability of a company and therefore, such approaches should be undertaken that 'fits the needs and capacities of businesses'¹⁹.

Though CSR is a multi-faceted subject however, enhancing health has taken prime importance at present. Donations have flown in for augmenting healthcare facilities and filling the deficit supply of essentials. The following sections focus on healthcare initiatives by different companies through varied times. This includes companies engaged in healthcare initiatives in general, significant social participation of companies during pre-COVID-19 pandemics, and the donations of the companies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic till date.

III. GLOBAL HEALTHCARE INITIATIVES BY MULTINATIONAL COMPANIES: A MEASURE OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Healthcare has always been an important area of focus for companies worldwide and several foundations have been created for the same. The Disease Surveillance Networks (DSN) Initiative is an initiative by The Rockefeller Foundation. Launched in the year 2007 the initiative aimed at addressing the rapid emergence of new infectious diseases²⁰ having the potential of turning into a pandemic.

¹⁸ V. Kasturi Rangan, *The Truth About CSR*, HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW (Feb. 2015) <https://hbr.org/2015/01/the-truth-about-csr>.

¹⁹ *What is CSR?*, UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION, <https://www.unido.org/our-focus/advancing-economic-competitiveness/competitive-trade-capacities-and-corporate-responsibility/corporate-social-responsibility-market-integration/what-csr> (last visited on Apr. 19, 2020).

²⁰ *Disease Surveillance Networks Initiative*, THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION, <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/report/disease-surveillance-networks-initiative/> (last visited on Apr. 19, 2020).

Abbot fund engages in worldwide healthcare philanthropy initiatives. Although it is mostly concerned with non-communicable diseases yet recently, it is engaging actively in research for COVID-19.²¹ McKesson, one of the largest healthcare companies, has actively been fighting against Opioid abuse before the COVID-19 outbreak, but recently they are engaged in ensuring that the supply chain of PPEs and equipment does not break²². Abbvie foundation virology fund was associated with curbing the spread of Hepatitis C. In addition to the donations to the government it has reserved \$5 million to address near time commitments after the situation.²³ Microsoft has partnered with Phulukisa Health Solutions and has developed a cloud-based program and also AI facilities so as to improve health care in remote areas²⁴. AmerisourceBergen Foundation focuses launched in the year 2015 by the parent company aims at disseminating healthcare and education in the society.²⁵ Nestle has contributed through its wing Nestle HealthScience, since 2011 by providing its expertise in nutrition, and nutrition therapy for aging, gastrointestinal, cancer, critical care, obesity, food allergy, etc. They have also partnered with physicians, who are treating COVID-19 patients for developing a feeding protocol for critically ill patients²⁶.

Johnson and Johnson's Janssen Pharmaceutical Company, Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), and the Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) have partnered to search for a vaccine to cure COVID-19²⁷. Moreover, Janssen's technology has helped during the Ebola vaccines and HIV vaccines as well. Even before the outbreak of Corona, Novartis was actively involved in serving the health care needs of the underserved population. They've reached around 16 Million patients through access programs in 2019. During Corona, the company promised

²¹ See Press Release, ABBOTT, *Abbot launches COVID-19 antibody test*, (Apr. 27, 2020), <https://www.abbott.com/corpnewsroom/product-and-innovation/abbott-launches-covid-19-antibody-test.html>.

²² *Opioid Abuse - Fighting the Epidemic*, MCKESSON (Oct. 21, 2019), <https://www.mckesson.com/About-McKesson/Fighting-Opioid-Abuse/>.

²³ See Press Release, ABBVIE, *Abbvie Donates \$35 Million for COVID-19 Relief to Support Healthcare Systems, Patients and Communities*, (Mar. 31, 2020) <https://news.abbvie.com/news/press-releases/abbvie-donates-35-million-for-covid-19-relief-to-support-healthcare-systems-patients-and-communities.htm>.

²⁴ *Learn how the healthcare industry is innovating in new ways to deliver better healthcare outcomes*, MICROSOFT, <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/industry/health> (last visited on April 20, 2020).

²⁵ See Press Release, AMERISOURCEBERGEN, *AmerisourceBergen Announces the Launch of the AmerisourceBergen Foundation to Support Health and Community Causes*, (Aug. 6, 2015) <https://www.amerisourcebergen.com/newsroom/press-releases/amerisourcebergen-announces-the-launch-of-the-amerisourcebergen-foundation>.

²⁶ *Our response to COVID-19*, NESTLE, <https://www.nestle.com/aboutus/our-response-covid-19-coronavirus> (last visited on April 20, 2020).

²⁷ *Our Efforts to Develop a Vaccine and Identify Therapies for COVID-19*, JOHNSON & JOHNSON, <https://www.jnj.com/coronavirus/prevention-and-treatment> (last visited on April 20, 2020).

to supply around ‘130 million doses of Hydroxychloroquine to fight the battle against the virus’²⁸. The CSR activities undertaken at Merck is in line to its missions and values, they have provided a \$2 million grant to the American Cancer Society over a period of 5 years, they've also launched ‘HIV care connect’, project ECHO and various other initiatives before COVID-19²⁹.

Bosch has associated itself with healthcare specifically to children of the lower strata through its Health, Hygiene, and Education campaign. In the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, it has invented a rapid-test kit for detection.³⁰The American Express is making funds worth up to \$2 million to organizations helping them fight the crisis.³¹ Through the creation of Healthy Generations in 2000 Anthem aimed at targeting specific groups for providing healthcare.³² In addition to their original business schemes, Cardinal Health focuses on enhancing philanthropic activities by engaging in healthcare and community health which also extended during this crisis³³. Carrefour foundation has dedicated 3 million euros to ensure to enable and augment healthcare. Audi has been associated with the healthcare of orphaned children. The Coca-Cola Foundation has also associated itself with many health initiatives in different countries which include fitness, nutrition, and diseases like HIV AIDS and Malaria.³⁴ Comcast had been actively pursuing the health care initiatives with almost \$1.3 billion³⁵ per year to augment healthcare initiatives. Delta Airlines engages itself in robust healthcare policies aimed at uplifting the health of their workers. It pursues innovative methods to ensure the mental and physical health of the employees. For this reason, Delta has been winning excellence in Corporate

²⁸ *COVID_19 Novartis Report*, NOVARTIS, <https://www.novartis.com/coronavirus/response> (last visited on April 20, 2020).

²⁹ *Key Initiatives*, MSD, <https://www.msdrresponsibility.com/access-to-health/key-initiatives/> (last visited on April 20, 2020).

³⁰ *Combating the coronavirus pandemic: Bosch develops rapid test for COVID-19*, BOSCH, <https://www.bosch.com/stories/vivalytic-rapid-test-for-covid-19/> (last visited on Apr. 20, 2020).

³¹ *Supporting Efforts to Combat COVID-19*, AMERICAN EXPRESS, (Mar. 18, 2020), <https://about.americanexpress.com/press-release/supporting-efforts-to-combat-covid-19>.

³² *Healthy Generations*, ANTHEM. <https://www.anthemcorporateresponsibility.com/healthy-generations> (last visited on April 20, 2020).

³³ *COVID-19 | Cardinal Health Global Preparedness*, CARDINAL HEALTH, <https://www.cardinalhealth.com/en/cmp/ext/corp/cardinal-health-covid-19-response-plan.html> (last visited on Apr. 20, 2020).

³⁴ *The Coca-Cola Foundation Awards \$26 Million to 85 Global Organizations During First Quarter 2012*, BUSINESS WIRE, (June 11, 2012, 10:13 A.M.), <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20120611005924/en/Coca-Cola-Foundation-Awards-26-Million-85-Global>.

³⁵ *The Last Company You Would Expect Is Reinventing Health Benefits*, THE NEW YORK TIMES, (Aug. 31, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/31/health/comcast-health-insurance-employees.html>.

Social Responsibility Award for several years consecutively.³⁶ During this crisis, Delta has donated in several ways including face shields.

These MNCs have constantly been involved in the healthcare sector even before the outbreak of the pandemic. They have realized the importance of not only physical health but mental health as well. The contribution made by them through these philanthropic activities have shaped the healthcare system and provided them with a way forward.

IV. SOCIAL SCHEMES UNDERTAKEN BY COMPANIES DURING THE H1N1 PANDEMIC AND THE EBOLA PANDEMIC

The world has been subjected to pandemics before the COVID-19 during which the companies had undertaken initiatives to augment healthcare. Through various initiatives by companies, we understand the level of social responsibility the entity is willing to undertake. A novel influenza A (H1N1) virus pandemic in the year 2009 had created fear in society. During the pandemic, GSK had signed an agreement with the WHO to donate 50 million doses of H1N1 influenza vaccine for distribution to developing countries.³⁷ Similarly, Microsoft had launched an online H1N1 flu response center in 2009.³⁸ Dettol had always been active in taking initiatives for the development of society. In 2009 when the world reeled from the H1N1 pandemic Reckitt Benckiser Healthcare (Thailand) Ltd. which is the distributor of Dettol products started an initiative called the ‘Dettol Cleaning Team’³⁹. The initiative was a sanitization program to help clean the schools and thereby protect the students from the spread of the virus. The initiative also aimed at spreading awareness regarding the preventive measures to be taken to restrict the spread of the virus.

³⁶ *Delta Wins Excellence in Corporate Social Responsibility Award for Third Time in a Row*, DELTA, (Aug. 29, 2018) <https://www.deltaww.com/news/pressDetail.aspx?secID=3&pID=1&TypeID=1;4;5&itemID=8353&tid=0&hl=en-US>.

³⁷ *GSK signs agreement with the WHO to donate 50 million doses of pandemic H1N1 vaccine for distribution to developing countries*, GSK (Nov. 9, 2009), <https://www.gsk.com/en-gb/media/press-releases/gsk-signs-agreement-with-the-who-to-donate-50-million-doses-of-pandemic-h1n1-vaccine-for-distribution-to-developing-countries/>.

³⁸ *Microsoft Launches Online H1N1 Flu Response Center to Support Consumers*, MICROSOFT (Oct. 7, 2009), <https://news.microsoft.com/2009/10/07/microsoft-launches-online-h1n1-flu-response-center-to-support-consumers/>.

³⁹ *Dettol team cleans up schools as part of “H1N1-Free” campaign*, RYT9 (July 20, 2009, 10:06 A.M.) <https://www.ryt9.com/en/prg/82692>.

Corporations worldwide actively engaged in social initiatives. For example, Walmart deliberated on giving vaccine shots⁴⁰ in their retail stores. The Bill and Melinda Gates foundation has been rigorous in its social development initiatives especially in relation to public health schemes. In the year 2018, the foundation had donated \$12 million for creating a universal flu vaccine for prevention of pandemic like situation.⁴¹ Reports reveal the fact that Roche, which is a pharmaceutical entity based in Switzerland had hiked its production of Tamiflu months before the H1N1 pandemic. It had also taken measures to distribute it in the developing economies, also giving donations to WHO. Furthermore, it created the Tamiflu Reserves Program (TRP) to ensure effective distribution.

In India as well the companies had taken to CSR initiatives to tackle the H1N1 pandemic. Crystal Hues Limited had launched a unique awareness campaign “Wash Away H1N1” to generate awareness of H1N1 at Nehru Place, the largest commercial center in Delhi.⁴² All of these initiatives taken by the corporations, even during H1N1 show how much change a single company can bring in preventing and reducing the number of active cases.

During the Ebola Pandemic, Bill and Melinda Gate Foundation contributed \$ 50 million so as to contain the virus in Africa itself, out of which \$ 5 million was given to WHO to commence the emergency operations⁴³. The contribution of this foundation towards all the three health crises cannot be ignored, due to the wide changes it has brought about in the outlook from the business perspectives.

Airtel had donated 100 handsets to Nigeria during Ebola and 150 phones to Sierra Leone so as to increase the communication and reduce the cases of the same⁴⁴. Coca Cola has ensured enough medical supplies, drinking water for the same, Ecobank has contributed \$50,000 to the Sierra Leone

⁴⁰ *H1N1 and the Limits of Corporate Social Responsibility*, THE ATLANTIC (May 21, 2009), <https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2009/05/h1n1-and-the-limits-of-corporate-social-responsibility/18041/>.

⁴¹ *Bill Gates is donating 12 million to help develop a universal flu vaccine*, QUARTZ (Apr. 27, 2018), <https://qz.com/1263599/bill-gates-is-donating-12-million-to-help-develop-a-universal-flu-vaccine/>.

⁴² David Reddy, *Responding to pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza: the role of oseltamivir*, 65 JOURNAL OF ANTIMICROBIAL CHEMOTHERAPY ii35 (2010).

⁴³ See Press Release, BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION, *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Commits \$50 Million to Support Emergency Response to Ebola*, (Sept. 10, 2014), [https://www.gatesfoundation.org/media-center/press-releases/2014/09/gates-foundation-commits-\\$50%20million-to-support-emergency-response-to-ebola](https://www.gatesfoundation.org/media-center/press-releases/2014/09/gates-foundation-commits-$50%20million-to-support-emergency-response-to-ebola).

⁴⁴ *Airtel response to Ebola outbreak*, U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION (Dec. 5, 2014), <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/airtel-response-ebola-outbreak>.

government, FedEx has sent a direct relief of \$620,000 in the form of medical aid⁴⁵. Google had launched a campaign to donate \$2 for every single dollar given by an individual, the same was started by a donation of \$10 million⁴⁶.

From China, 'Sihuan Pharmaceutical Holdings Group has sent around a thousand doses of an experimental Ebola drug to Africa'⁴⁷. Most of the contribution has been made by the Chinese government, but the aid from the corporate sector is quite less. China has contributed about \$120 million to fight the Ebola crisis, but the philanthropic activity by the world's business tycoons remain quite low⁴⁸.

As of 22 April 2016, WHO had received an amount of \$459 million to combat Ebola, out of which United States Agency of International Development has contributed \$73,898,897, the Wellcome trust from the UK has donated \$12,229, 355 whereas Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development have contributed \$21,193,146⁴⁹. During the Ebola crisis, the governmental departments of various countries showed active participation, but that of the corporate sector was much less than in the ongoing pandemic.

V. ANALYSING THE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY ETHIC IN INDIA AND SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION DURING COVID-19

CSR is enshrined under Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013, and has been a game-changer during this crisis. Notably, India is the first country to make CSR mandatory (2% of the net profits of the last three years) for companies having a 'net worth of Rs. 500 Cr or more, or turnover of Rs. 1000 Cr or

⁴⁵ *Ebola Outbreak- Corporate Aid Checker*, U.S. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE FOUNDATION (Dec. 5, 2014), <https://www.uschamberfoundation.org/ebola-outbreak-corporate-aid-tracker>.

⁴⁶ *Google launched Ebola campaign to donate 2\$ for every \$1 given by public*, CNBC (Nov. 10, 2014, 12:25 P.M.), <https://www.cnbc.com/2014/11/10/google-launches-ebola-campaign-to-donate-2-for-every-1-given-by-public.html>.

⁴⁷ *China's companies and billionaires lag behind in fight against Ebola, says WFP*, THE GUARDIAN (Oct. 20, 2014, 6:22 P.M.), <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/oct/20/china-companies-contributions-ebola-fight>.

⁴⁸ *Ebola crisis highlights China's philanthropic shortfall*, CNBC (Nov. 3, 2014, 6:52 P.M.), <https://www.cnbc.com/2014/11/03/ebola-crisis-highlights-chinas-philanthropic-shortfall.html>.

⁴⁹ *West Africa Ebola Outbreak: Funding*, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (Apr. 2016), <https://www.who.int/csr/disease/ebola/funding-requirements/en/>.

more, net profit of Rs. 500 cr or more⁵⁰. It is compulsory for both private as well as public companies. Taking such a commendable decision has marked the start of a new era for the economy. If we look at other economies, it has been seen that CSR is a highly philanthropic activity and not a compulsory one. The mandatory clause has caused significant change since global companies such as Coca-Cola, Citibank, Dell, and Deutsche Bank have increased social initiatives in India after CSR has been made mandatory.

For the financial year 2017-18, the total amount spent on CSR was observed to be 13624 Crores, wherein, Reliance Industries Ltd. contributed an amount of 745.04 Crores, ONGC Ltd. contributed 482.07 Cr. and TCS Ltd. Contributed 400 Cr for the same⁵¹. These amounts have been utilized in various activities such as the development of infrastructure, education, and healthcare. As aforementioned these companies run projects which are based on social inclusion and eradication of poverty in India.

A notification was released on 23rd March 2020, by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) encouraging corporate houses to give in a part of their profits under CSR so as to help defeat the viral Pandemic. They have clarified that activities (i) and (xii) as provided under Schedule VII if performed out of the CSR fund would qualify as 'eligible CSR'⁵².

Furthermore, In General, Circular No. 15/2020⁵³, dated 10 April 2020, the MCA has made the following clarifications about CSR during COVID-19. Firstly, contributions made to the 'PM CARES Fund' would qualify as CSR but those made under the 'Chief Minister Relief Fund' would not qualify as CSR expenditure. Secondly, CSR is valid when made to 'State Disaster Management Authority'. Thirdly, the payments made from the CSR fund would qualify as CSR activities if it is related to activities (i) and (xii) as prescribed in Schedule VII of The Companies Act, 2013. Activities (i) and (xii) include 'health care, eradication of hunger, sanitation, disaster management, and reconstruction

⁵⁰ The Companies Act, 2013, No, 18, Acts of Parliament, 2013, §135 (India).

⁵¹ *FY 2017-18 CSR Spent: Top Companies*, NATIONAL CSR PORTAL, <https://www.csr.gov.in/index18.php> (last visited on April 22, 2020).

⁵² *Clarification on spending of CSR funds for COVID-19*, MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS (Mar. 23, 2020), http://www.mca.gov.in/Ministry/pdf/Covid_23032020.pdf.

⁵³ *COVID-19 related Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)*, MINISTRY OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS, (Apr. 10, 2020), http://www.mca.gov.in/Ministry/pdf/Notification_10042020.pdf.

activities⁵⁴. Fourthly, the ministry has also clarified that payment of wages and salaries to employees or daily wage workers will not qualify as CSR since they are the contractual obligations. Fifthly, if ex-gratia payment is made on the explicit declaration for fighting COVID-19 it would fall under the scope of CSR.

Even before the announcement to include PM CARES Funds in CSR was made, a lot of philanthropic activities were undertaken by companies such as Mahindra and Mahindra, Vedanta, and Reliance. CSR has also changed the Indian conditions and stands on isolation wards and medical testing labs. A lot of companies have provided their premises as isolation wards and have also helped in setting up testing labs.

The announcement that the funds donated to the Central scheme would only be considered as a CSR fund is criticized by many. It is alleged to be in contravention to the federal structure of the government. The Supreme court rejected to admit the matter in relation to the said decision of the Central Government when Mahua Moitra pleaded in the Supreme Court regarding the same. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs had reconfirmed the fact that since the Chief Minister's Relief Fund or the State Relief Fund for COVID-19 is not included in the 7th Schedule therefore any donation thereof would not be considered as a CSR fund.

After the announcement that the donations made to PM Cares would be considered as CSR, several companies have taken initiatives to donate through varied kinds to the Fund. Large corporations like Aditya Birla, Bright Star Investments Pvt. Ltd. (DMart), and Prosus have promised considerable amounts to the Relief Fund.

The mandatory CSR clause is applauded for the responses from corporations during this crisis. Notably, the funds so donated would be used for the protection of the needy. In addition to the above, CSR has also helped in procuring PPE and ensuring that there exists enough supply to protect our front-line workers⁵⁵. Companies have helped in spreading social awareness towards the contagious

⁵⁴ The Companies Act, 2013, No, 18, Acts of Parliament, 2013, Schedule VII (India).

⁵⁵ *Covid-19 & CSR: Time for India Inc to step up*, FINANCIAL EXPRESS (Apr 2, 2020, 8:36 A.M.), <https://www.financialexpress.com/opinion/covid-19-csr-time-for-india-inc-to-step-up/1916628/>.

nature of the outbreak and contributed not only through financial assistance but also by setting up isolation wards, hospitals, and providing food to the poverty-stricken.

Reliance Industries Limited which had contributed the highest amount of CSR in the financial year 2017-18 has marked the onset of 'Mission Anna Seva' through which they have aimed at providing around 3 crore meals to the marginalized part of the society. According to Nita Ambani, it would be the 'largest meal distribution programmed by any corporate foundation in the world'⁵⁶. Reliance has also set up a 100 bed COVID-19 hospital⁵⁷ and contributed 535 crores to the PM CARES fund. They have also decided to produce 1 Lakh masks per day and to provide free fuel to emergency vehicles. This initiative of Reliance shows how much change a single industry can make while fighting a global health crisis.

Even the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) have actively been involved in the fight against the ongoing health crises. The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has contributed an amount of Rs. 300 cr to the PM CARES Funds. They are also undertaking '35 projects worth Rs. 4.59 cr to fight against COVID-19'⁵⁸. Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has contributed Rs. 175 cr to the PM CARES Funds, apart from this, the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) beneficiaries are being provided with '3 free cylinders in 3 months'⁵⁹. To spread social awareness the logo of Coal India Limited (CIL) now wears a mask and they have also distributed 8.1 lakh face masks.⁶⁰

The initiatives undertaken by the PSUs have cleared out that indeed, 'all of us are in this together'. Not only has financial aid been provided, but there has been a constant effort to increase the position of the most vulnerable section of our society through social awareness and by providing them with

⁵⁶ *RIL's Response to COVID-19*, RELIANCE INDUSTRIES LIMITED (Apr. 19, 2020), <https://www.ril.com/ResponsetoCOVID-19.aspx>.

⁵⁷ *How Indian companies are contributing to the war against coronavirus*, BUSINESS STANDARD (Apr. 3, 2020, 3:20 P.M.), https://www.business-standard.com/podcast/current-affairs/how-indian-companies-are-contributing-to-the-war-against-coronavirus-120033001663_1.html.

⁵⁸ See Press Release, OIL AND NATURAL GAS CORPORATION LIMITED, ONGC stands with the Nation during Covid-19 crisis, (Apr. 7, 2020, 9:33 A.M.), <https://www.ongcindia.com/wps/wcm/connect/en/media/press-release/ongc-stands-nation-during-covid-19-crisis>.

⁵⁹ *As India Goes Indoors, BPCL Warriors are on Street Serving the Nation*, BHARAT PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED (Mar. 30, 2020), <https://www.bharatpetroleum.com/pdf/As-India-Goes-Indoors-BPCL-Warriors-are-on-Street-Serving-the-Nation-24d301.pdf>.

⁶⁰ *Coal India's logo wears face mask on social media*, THE ECONOMIC TIMES (Apr. 24, 2020, 10:34 P.M.), <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/metals-mining/coal-indias-logo-wears-face-mask-on-social-media/articleshow/75359702.cms?from=mdr>.

food and other essentials. The initiative taken by CIL is indeed commendable, as they are trying to spread awareness through social media platforms which serve as an important part of the 21st century. Even BPCL and the collaboration of the Indian government to provide free cylinders to a part of the society would bring a huge difference. The only question that arises is how much of these benefits are reaching the ground root level.

In Banking Sectors, State Bank of India (SBI) has committed to providing '0.25% of its annual profit'⁶¹ to help in fighting against coronavirus. The ICICI Group has pledged Rs. 80 cr to the PM CARES Funds and Rs. 20 cr for PPEs for state government, hospitals, health care workers, thus making it a total of Rs. 100 cr⁶². HDFC Group has provided Rs. 150 cr to the PM CARES Funds and is not charging extra costs on UPI or ATM withdrawals from other banks. Mobile ATMs have also been deployed by them. A musical tribute has also been launched by them on 1 May 2020 named 'Hum Haar Nahi Maanenge'⁶³.

The banks in India have tried to extend their support through online platforms as well, wherein UPI transactions don't bear an additional charge. Mobile ATMs have been the necessity in this time where a lot of banks have deployed them so that the idea of social distancing could be implemented. More and more tailored projects should be initiated so as to include the vulnerable sections and make cash easily available for them.

The Tata Group has extensively been involved in combating COVID-19. Its various subsidiaries have provided a lot of services in different fields to empower the government to fight against the virus. Tata Motors has not only focused upon providing essentials to the lower strata but has also been facilitating productions of protective equipment. Further, they have also provided 25,000 packets of cooked meals to the underprivileged communities and are following its E3 directives i.e. 'Essential

⁶¹ *SBI commits 0.25% of annual profit to help fight COVID-19*, THE ECONOMIC TIMES (Mar. 23, 2020, 10:41 P.M.), <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/sbi-commits-0-25-of-annual-profit-to-help-fight-covid-19/articleshow/74781148.cms?from=mdr>.

⁶² ICICI Group commits Rs. 100 crore to fight COVID-19 pandemic, ICICI BANK, (Apr. 14, 2020), <https://www.icicibank.com/aboutus/article.page?identifier=news-icici-group-commits-rs-100-crore-to-fight-covid-19-pandemic-20201404130016206>.

⁶³ *A.R. Rahman & Prasoon Joshi present #HumHaarNahiMaanenge*, HDFC BANK (May 1, 2020), <https://www.hdfcbank.com/content/api/contentstream-id/723fb80a-2dde-42a3-9793-7ae1be57c87f/56ac1d7c-9da0-4689-a6a6-b2e225eea99e?>

Supplies Provision, Equipping heroes on ground zero and Educating masses for containment and prevention⁶⁴. Tata Steel, through Tata Steel Foundation, has initiated a 10-point COVID CSR program, through which it has reached out to 3.15 lakh individuals. 18 Lakh meals have also been served to the underprivileged section; they have also been looking for a mechanism to solve the problems of the migrant laborer's⁶⁵.

In technological sectors, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has pledged \$200 million to protect all the communities working closely with COVID-19. They are also applying their expertise in technology to protect the interests of students through an app named "TCS iON Digital Glass Room"⁶⁶. Larsen and Toubro have developed an e-learning platform ATL Next through which employees can learn new skills, technology has also been provided they have donated Rs. 150 cr to the PM CARES Funds. They've also set aside an amount of Rs. 500 cr per month to support the contract workers⁶⁷.

More and more drone services can be provided to the state governments by the companies having expertise in technology, to keep an eye on the lockdown. More video calling apps should also be developed by Indian companies to enable online learning through Indian platforms and not through apps like Zoom. More free skill development programs could also be launched so as to help the college students as well to gain a virtual tour of the working of a company.

The Mahindra and Mahindra Group along with Ford Motors joined hands to produce low-cost ventilators and face shields. The ventilators cost as low as Rs. 7,500 which is a staggering fall from the expensive ones with prices worth Rs. 5lakh.⁶⁸ Azim Premji Foundation, Wipro, and Wipro Enterprises

⁶⁴ *Tata Motors adopts a 3 pronged CSR approach to combat Covid-19*, TATA MOTORS (Apr. 8, 2020) <https://www.tatamotors.com/press/tata-motors-adopts-a-3-pronged-csr-approach-to-combat-covid-19/>.

⁶⁵ See Press Release, TATA STEEL, *Tata Steel reaches out to 3.15 lakh people during the COVID-19 lockdown period through TSF's ten-point #CombatCOVID19 programme* (May 2, 2020) <https://www.tatasteel.com/media/newsroom/press-releases/india/2020/tata-steel-reaches-out-to-315-lakh-people-during-the-covid-19-lockdown-period-through-tsfs-ten-point-combatcovid19-programme/>.

⁶⁶ TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES, *Our Response to COVID-19*, <https://www.tcs.com/company-overview/tcs-response-covid-19> (last visited on Apr. 24, 2020).

⁶⁷ *L&T Supports India's Fight Against COVID-19 Commits to donate ₹150 Crore to the PM-CARES Fund*, LARSON AND TURBO, <https://corpwebstorage.blob.core.windows.net/media/41833/2020-03-30-lt-supports-india-s-fight-against-covid-19.pdf> (last visited on Apr. 24, 2020).

⁶⁸ *Covid-19 fight: Mahindra & Mahindra to make face shield for health workers, Pawan Goenka reveals design*, THE ECONOMIC TIMES (Mar. 29, 2020) <https://auto.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/passenger-vehicle/cars/covid-19-fight-mahindra-mahindra-to-make-face-shield-for-health-workers-pawan-goenka-reveals-design/74869559>.

together have promised financial aid of Rs. 1125 crores⁶⁹ to fight against the ongoing health crises. Azim Premji Foundation is covering 1000 Cr, while Wipro and Wipro enterprises are covering Rs. 100 cr and Rs. 25 cr respectively. This fund would be helpful for the frontline and healthcare warriors and for the underprivileged section of the society. Jindal Steel & Power considers the ‘triple bottom line approach i.e. people, planet and profit’⁷⁰. They have contributed a number of Rs. 25 cr to the PM CARES Funds and have also committed to upgrading their hospitals to fight corona through increasing ventilators and PPEs⁷¹. They have also committed to producing masks through the help of Self-Help Groups to prevent the spread.

The production of ventilators and health care equipment is another important aspect that CSR has helped upon. In Italy, there had been a shortage of ventilators and life-supporting mechanisms which further contributed to the problem. In India also there exists a shortage of ventilators, but few corporate firms have been engaged in the production of the same to ensure no shortage soon. More transparent data as to the shortage of medical equipment shall be available so that companies can timely involve in the productions of the same.

Till 2nd May 2020, Vedanta has contributed Rs. 201 crores towards CSR activities such as Rs. 101 cr to the PM CARES Funds, preventive healthcare facilities wherein they have distributed around 2.5 lakh masks, approximately 5.5 lakh free meals to daily workers⁷². ITC while focusing on social inclusiveness has set up a fund of Rs. 150 cr for the neediest and vulnerable section of the society⁷³. The fund would also be used to provide district and rural healthcare services.

⁶⁹ See Press Release , WIPRO, *Wipro-azim-premji-foundation-commit-rs-1125-crore-to-tackle-covid-19-crisis* (Apr. 1, 2020) <https://www.wipro.com/newsroom/press-releases/2020/wipro-azim-premji-foundation-commit-rs-1125-crore-to-tackle-covid-19-crisis/>.

⁷⁰ See Press Release , JINDAL STEEL & POWER, *The company is committed to integrate its business values and operations to meet the expectations of all its stakeholders CSR Approach*, <https://www.jindalsteelpower.com/sustainabilities/csr-approach.html#> (last visited on April 25, 2020).

⁷¹ COVID-19: JSPL announces Rs 25 cr contribution to PM-CARES Fund, THE ECONOMIC TIMES (Mar. 31, 2020) <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/indl-goods/svs/steel/covid-19-jspl-announces-rs-25-cr-contribution-to-pm-cares-fund/articleshow/74907505.cms>.

⁷² See Press Release, VEDANTA, *Vedanta doubles its contribution to 201 crores to fight COVID -19* <https://www.vedantaresources.com/SiteAssets/Images/Final%20press%20release%2002%20april%202020.pdf> (last visited on Apr. 25, 2020).

⁷³ See Press Release, ITC, (Mar. 27, 2020), <https://www.itcportal.com/media-centre/press-releases-content.aspx?id=2236&type=C&news=ITC-COVID-Fund>.

A lot of companies have also provided preventive equipment such as masks and sanitizers, and the demand for the same has therefore been decreasing. Despite monetary help, companies have been catering to the food needs of the vulnerable section and this should continue till a permanent solution for the same has been found. Moreover, a lot of funds have been donated to the PM CARES Fund, but there has been no transparency for the same yet. The transparency of the same would enable corporate houses to decide as to which direction to proceed in.

In the food delivery industries, Zomato has started contactless delivery as well as grocery delivery to ensure that people follow the lockdowns as prescribed by the Indian government. Zomato has also provided face masks and insurance coverage to its employees, 'Feed the daily wagers' is another initiative taken by them where they deliver rations so as to help the underprivileged sections. Even Swiggy has a similar initiative called 'Hope not hunger' where it is providing 75,000 meals to feed the needy⁷⁴.

Online platforms have in fact helped individuals from going to overcrowded places such as vegetable markets. These initiative of contactless delivery further reduces the rate of transmission of the virus from an individual to another. Social distancing is thus encouraged in the best way possible. Furthermore, these delivery platforms have also been catering to the needs of the economically backward section by providing them rations and food packets.

Corporations such as PhonePe⁷⁵ Paytm⁷⁶ have initiated donation drives to contribute to the PM CARES Fund. Furthermore, RazorPay has opened its online paying platform to serve as the platform for the effective collection of funds from companies like YesBank, Urban Company, Narayan Seva, etc. These online payment mechanisms have fulfilled two purposes, the first is of social distancing and the second is of achieving the aim of digital India. Through the donation drives the contribution from

⁷⁴ *Swiggy, Zomato launch initiatives for people, restaurants hit by Covid-19 lockdown*, HINDUSTAN TIMES (Apr. 3, 2020) <https://www.hindustantimes.com/tech/swiggy-zomato-launch-initiatives-for-people-restaurants-hit-by-covid-19-lockdown/story-Mw5uNPabwhx0d1VtZN7KZM.html>.

⁷⁵ *COVID-19: PhonePe launches donation drive, aims to contribute Rs 100 cr to PM Fund*, OUTLOOK (Mar. 29, 2020, 8:44 P.M.) <https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/covid19-phonepe-launches-donation-drive-aims-to-contribute-rs-100-cr-to-pm-fund/1784295>.

⁷⁶ *Paytm collects Rs 100 cr contributions for PM-CARES Fund*, THE ECONOMIC TIMES (Apr. 11, 2020, 12:47 P.M.) <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/small-biz/startups/newsbuzz/paytm-collects-rs-100-cr-contributions-for-pm-cares-fund/articleshow/75093399.cms?from=mdr>.

an individual towards the funds to fight coronavirus has definitely increased and has helped the concerned authorities to tackle the medical issues from a better watchpoint.

This pandemic has been exposing all the faults that have been present in our democratic set up since time immemorial. On a Right to Information filed to reveal the details of donations made to PM cares fund to fight COVID-19, it was held by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) that the "PM Cares Fund is not a public authority"⁷⁷. Thus, revealing the lack of transparency and accountability in a democratic country like India.

All these initiatives taken by the various sectors of the economy have helped us to fight against the COVID-19 in a much better way than the other economies. It has also helped in ensuring that no person dies due to hunger or lack of financial abilities. CSR is helping India to achieve the goal of social inclusiveness as well as sustainable development during these difficult times. By contributing so much back to society at this time of crises, these companies have somehow shown that "lives matter more than profit". CSR in India has thus played an indispensable role in enhancing the medical system of the country.

VI. ANALYSING THE HEALTHCARE ASSISTANCE BY MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS (MNCs) DURING COVID-19

COVID-19 has sent shock waves throughout the world. The lockdown situation at different places does not help in solving the problem either. ISO 2600 considers health as an important aspect of the international standard for social responsibility. To ensure maximum social participation by the companies' organizations like the World Economic Forum are of the view that companies and corporations should support the society and their employees in three ways. Firstly, by encouraging

⁷⁷Coronavirus | PM CARES is not a public authority under RTI Act: PMO, THE HINDU (May 31, 2020, 8:30 A.M.)
<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/coronavirus-pm-cares-is-not-a-public-authority-under-rti-act-pmo/article31712146.ece>.

mental well-being, secondly by providing financial security and thirdly by supporting small businesses⁷⁸.

The companies in different countries have adopted different methods to ensure maximum social dissemination of resources to the global community. The Kuwait and Japan governments have contributed the largest amount to the tune of \$60 million and \$47.5 million respectively.

In the United States of America, it is not mandatory for companies to contribute to social upliftment. Though in the USA and UK the countries do not intend on portraying a very socially responsible image⁷⁹ the companies have become accustomed to voluntary social contributions. Johnson and Johnson through a commitment of \$ 50 million aimed to ensure that the disease is curbed. It is releasing an eight-week series so as to help the viewers to understand the COVID-19 crisis and the efforts to develop a vaccine against the same. This would help the viewers psychologically and spread awareness about the gravity of the situation.

The Green paper⁸⁰ published in 2001 was one of the significant measures taken by the European Union to codify the parameters of CSR. In the UK, Microfocus, a software company, has announced that all its funds for the “North American Flagship Virtual Customer Event would be donated for the noble cause of fighting COVID-19”⁸¹. They would also help the local community by a combination of the sponsorship funds and company funds. AstraZeneca had committed to donating 9 million facemasks for protection against the virus. They’ve also collaborated with GSK and the University of Cambridge to boost testing against COVID-19⁸².

⁷⁸ *COVID-19: How companies can support society*, WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (Mar. 19, 2020) <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/03/coronavirus-and-corporate-social-innovation/>.

⁷⁹ I. Maignan & D.A. Ralston, *Corporate Social Responsibility in Europe, and the U.S.: Insights from Businesses' Self-Presentations*, (33) J. OF INT. BUIS. STU, 497-514 (2002).

⁸⁰ *Promoting a European framework for Corporate Social Responsibility*, COMMISSION OF EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2001/EN/1-2001-366-EN-1-0.Pdf> (last visited on April 26, 2020).

⁸¹ See Press Release, MICRO FOCUS, micro focus launches its corporate social responsibility initiative to further support global communities and drive change (Apr. 21, 2020) <https://www.microfocus.com/en-us/press-room/press-releases/micro-focus-launches-its-corporate-social-responsibility-initiative-to-further-support-global-communities-and-drive-change>.

⁸² See Press Release, ASTRAZENECA, *AstraZeneca/GSK/University of Cambridge collaborate to support UK national effort to boost COVID-19 testing* (Apr. 7, 2020) <https://www.astrazeneca.co.uk/media-press-releases/2020/astrazeneca-gsk-university-of-cambridge-collaborate-to-support-uk-national-effort-to-boost-covid-19-testing.html>.

China, in the recent past, has become infamous for being responsible for this huge debacle. In the wake of criticisms sprawling up from every corner regarding the state-controlled media spreading misinformation and the alleged biological weapon in the form of coronavirus it is trying to cope up through ensuing global funding operations and is urging the companies to undertake the same. Companies in China like Charoen Pokphand Group⁸³ have donated to support the government's effort. In addition to the government's mask dispensing campaign, the companies are trying to keep their supply chains active. Furthermore, several joint ventures have been initiated to fund government initiatives to prevent COVID-19. Alibaba Group Holding, Tencent Holdings, and Meituan Dianping have donated more than 3 billion yuan (US\$432.5 million).⁸⁴ Following this several other donations were undertaken by Alibaba and the Jack Ma Foundation for helping the governments worldwide to fight the coronavirus.⁸⁵

Spain, the second worst-hit country after the USA, Endesa has launched an action plan against COVID 19 which initially has 25 million euros⁸⁶ so as to procure the most essential and urgent needs such as PPEs, food, energy supplies to retirement homes, etc. Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentina (BBVA) has raised its commitment from 25 to 35 million euros to combat COVID-19 to ensure ventilators⁸⁷. Further, Naturgy has donated more than 1 million euros to ensure medical supplies, they are also providing free gas to IFEMA, free medical assistance to their clients, and fun and enjoyable teaching resources⁸⁸.

In Italy, the third most affected country, Eni despite a monetary commitment of 35 million euros has imported electromedical equipment and PPE from China to fulfill the demand for the same. They've also sent around 600 ventilators to various cities. It is also the sole partner for the establishment of

⁸³ *C.P. Group Donates Babt 222 Million to Support China's Efforts in Combating the Coronavirus*, CHAROEN POKPHAND GROUP CO., LTD., (Jan. 27, 2020) <https://www.cpgroupglobal.com/News/nDetail/articleid/182>.

⁸⁴ *Wuhan coronavirus: tech firms including Alibaba, Tencent donate US\$432 million to boost frontline efforts in Hubei province*, SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST (Jan. 30, 2020) <https://www.scmp.com/business/banking-finance/article/3048280/wuhan-coronavirus-tech-firms-including-alibaba-tencent>.

⁸⁵ BBC, *Alibaba's Ma donates coronavirus test kits to US*, (Mar. 16, 2020) <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-51904379>.

⁸⁶ ENDESA, *Endesa's plan for the health emergency*, <https://www.endesa.com/en/advice/endesa-covid-19> (last visited on Apr. 27, 2020).

⁸⁷ BBVA, *BBVA raises its worldwide donation for the fight against Covid-19 to € 35 million* (Apr. 3, 2020) <https://www.bbva.com/en/bbva-raises-its-worldwide-donation-for-the-fight-against-covid-19-to-e35-million/>.

⁸⁸ *Initiatives in response to the outbreak of COVID-19 virus*, NATURGY, https://www.naturgy.com/en/naturgy_initiatives_covid-19_virus (last visited on April 27, 2020).

COVID 2 hospital in the city of Rome⁸⁹. Generali is another company that has started global initiatives in France, Italy, Switzerland, Greece, Turkey, etc so as to win the battle against COVID-19⁹⁰.

In Russia, Gazprom Neft has started an ‘antivirus’ program to succor against the virus, it has been distributing free supplies of PPE, they are also providing free fuel to emergency vehicles⁹¹. They’ve also started the production of sanitizers so as to curb the shortage of it.

In Canada, Wheaton Precious Metals, a mining company has committed to a fund of US\$ 5 million⁹² as a response fund to tackle the ongoing health crises. It would be helpful to satisfy the needs of the communities in which the company works. Manulife has donated \$1 million to support the most vulnerable section of the society, the health benefits provided in the insurance scheme has also been extended⁹³. The Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) has committed \$2 million to support the vulnerable sections inclusive of food banks and the WHO solidarity response fund⁹⁴.

In the Philippines, the Aboitiz group has contributed P100 million to project Ugnayan to fight COVID, P900 million to help its team members, and has also donated PPEs such as N95 masks, surgical masks, etc⁹⁵. SM Investments Corporation has donated medical supplies to various hospitals, they have also donated testing kits⁹⁶. BDO Unibank’s life insurance wing has announced to pay an extra sum of P20,000 in case the insured individual passes between 1st March to 1st July 2020.⁹⁷

⁸⁹ *Covid-19: A challenge we must overcome together*, <https://www.eni.com/en-IT/media/a-challenge-we-must-overcome-together.html> (last visited on April 28, 2020).

⁹⁰ See Press Release, ‘*Generali’s global action against COVID-19*’, <https://www.generali.com/media/News/covid-19-emergency/Generali-s-initiatives-all-over-the-world/march/Generali-s-global-action-against-Covid-19> (Last visited on April 28, 2020).

⁹¹ See Press Release, GAZPROM NEFT, *Gazprom Neft distributes medical PPE throughout Russia’s regions in fight against COVID-19* (Apr. 21, 2020) https://www.gazprom-neft.com/press-center/news/gazprom_neft_distributes_medical_ppe_throughout_russia_s_regions_in_fight_against_covid_19/ (Last visited on April 28, 2020).

⁹² See Press Release, WHEATON PRECIOUS METALS, (Apr. 20, 2020) <https://www.wheatonpm.com/news/pressreleases/News-Releases-Details/2020/Wheaton-Precious-Metals-Announces-US5-Million-Community-Support-and-Response-Fund-to-Combat-COVID-19/default.aspx>.

⁹³ *Manulife is here for you*, MANULIFE (Mar. 19, 2020) <https://www.manulife.ca/personal/support/update-on-covid-19/ensuring-you-are-supported-and-informed.html>.

⁹⁴ See Press Release, RBC, *RBC commits \$2-million in support of COVID-19 community response efforts* (Mar. 18, 2020), http://www.rbc.com/newsroom/news/2020/20200318-covid-19-donations.html?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=85736&utm_content=1348269.

⁹⁵ *Aboitiz Group allocates aid for government COVID-19 frontliners*, ABOITIZ GROUP (Apr. 13, 2020) <https://aboitiz.com/aboitiz-group-allocates-aid-for-government-covid-19-frontliners/>.

⁹⁶ See Press Release, SM FOUNDATIONS, *SM Foundation donates medical supplies to Batangas-based hospitals* (Apr. 29, 2020) <https://www.sminvestments.com/media/covid-19/sm-foundation-donates-medical-supplies-batangas-based-hospitals>.

⁹⁷ *BDO Life gives clients add’l benefits amid COVID-19*, BDO (Apr. 2020) <https://www.bdo.com.ph/cn/node/61722>.

In Singapore, the banking sectors have taken up a very different initiative. DBS Bank has “partnered with Chubb Insurance Singapore Limited to offer its 5 million customers complimentary insurance coverage to fight against COVID-19.”⁹⁸ OCBC Bank has introduced customer support measures for those affected, which allows them to restructure their borrowings and has also extended bridging loans⁹⁹. UOB has provided 1000 care packages to help disadvantaged families, further they have also provided S\$ 3 billion to help clients with the impact of COVID-19¹⁰⁰.

The World Health Organisation (WHO), as on 1st May 2020, has received a funding of \$408,142,656 from various governments and organizations to fight against the global health crises¹⁰¹. Tencent Holdings Limited has contributed \$10 million to the Solidarity Response Fund against COVID-19 initiated by WHO and an additional \$ 90 million global anti pandemic fund to support the international efforts against the virus¹⁰².

The following paragraph analyses the contributions given by Top 10 companies in the Fortune Global 500 list of 2019.

1. Walmart and its foundation have promised \$25 million¹⁰³ for health, food security, it has also associated itself with rapid testing and helping to detect and manage the disease. Furthermore, Walmart and Flipkart¹⁰⁴ have also contributed not only to their originating country but also in different developing nations.

⁹⁸ See Press Release, DBS BANK (Feb. 17, 2020) https://www.dbs.com/newsroom/DBS_to_offer_free_COVID19_relief_insurance_coverage_for_all_five_million_DB_SPOSB_customers_and_families.

⁹⁹ See Press Release, OCBC GROUP, *DBS to offer free COVID-19 relief insurance coverage for all five million DBS/POSB customers and families*, (Feb. 13, 2020) https://www.ocbc.com/group/media/release/2020/coronavirus_measures.html.

¹⁰⁰ See Press Release, UNITED OVERSEAS BANK, *UOB announces S\$3 billion in relief assistance to help clients cushion the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak* (Feb. 12, 2020) <https://www.uobgroup.com/web-resources/uobgroup/pdf/newsroom/2020/UOB-relief-assistance.pdf>.

¹⁰¹ *Contributions to WHO for COVID-19 appeal*, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (May 1, 2020) <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/donors-and-partners/funding>.

¹⁰² *WHO and Tencent Deepened Collaboration to Fight Against COVID-19*, TENCENT (Apr. 3, 2020) <https://www.tencent.com/en-us/articles/2201024.html>.

¹⁰³ See Press Release, WALMART (Mar. 17, 2020) <https://corporate.walmart.com/newsroom/2020/03/17/walmart-and-the-walmart-foundation-commit-25-million-to-global-covid-19-response-effort>.

¹⁰⁴ *Walmart, Flipkart commit Rs 46 cr to support India's Covid-19 fight*, THE ECONOMIC TIMES (Apr. 18, 2020) <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/small-biz/startups/newsbuzz/walmart-flipkart-commit-rs-46-cr-to-support-indias-covid-19-fight/articleshow/75217550.cms>.

2. Sinopec contributed 10,256 tonnes¹⁰⁵ of bleaching powder as a disinfectant to countries with necessity and 10,000 masks to Sri Lanka.
3. Royal Dutch Shell has been working in different ways to improve the situation. It has donated in monetary terms mainly in Nigeria¹⁰⁶ and donated sanitizers of 2.5 tonnes to Dutch healthcare and 125,000 liters Canadian healthcare.¹⁰⁷
4. China National Petroleum Corporation is working towards increasing the mental health of its employees and taking targeted measures to increase pandemic awareness and its prevention. It has augmented its mask production and has aimed at producing 1,500,000 masks on a daily basis.¹⁰⁸
5. State Grid Corporation of China is purported to have contributed towards increasing the power sector of China.¹⁰⁹
6. A donation campaign of SR5 million was launched by Saudi Aramco to support the ones in need. Furthermore, it has announced donations of worth SR200 million¹¹⁰ in the Health Endowment Fund. Globally it has promised \$3.5 million¹¹¹ to organizations, masks, and a lot more.

¹⁰⁵ See Press Release, SINOPEC, *Sinopec joins global fight against COVID-19, shipping over 10,000 tonnes of disinfectant* (Mar. 25, 2020) http://www.sinopecgroup.com/group/en/Sinopecnews/20200327/news_20200327_696607861362.shtml.

¹⁰⁶ *COVID-19: Shell's global response*, SHELL (May 1, 2020) <https://www.shell.com/covid19/covid-19-shells-global-response.html>.

¹⁰⁷ See Press Release, SHELL GLOBAL, (Mar. 31, 2020) <https://www.shell.com/business-customers/chemicals/media-releases/2020-media-releases/shell-chemicals-supports-supplies-for-soaps-and-sanitisers-to-help-the-response-to-covid-19.html>.

¹⁰⁸ See Press Release CNPC, *CNPC puts into operation of its new production lines for surgical masks*, (Mar. 10, 2020) <http://www.cnpc.com.cn/en/nr2020/202003/56047f85fcab4f1aa8adf77206eb0cf7.shtml>.

¹⁰⁹ David Akiman, *Five ways Chinese companies are responding to coronavirus*, WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (Feb. 20, 2020) <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/02/coronavirus-chinese-companies-response>.

¹¹⁰ *COVID-19 Response*, SAUDI ARAMCO (Apr. 15, 2020) <https://www.saudiaramco.com/-/media/publications/arabian-sun/2020/2020-16-2.pdf>.

¹¹¹ Id, 109.

7. BP Foundation has promised \$2million¹¹² to WHO's Solidarity Response Fund. In addition to it, BP detailed a three-pronged approach in this crisis, which is to support its employees, the community, and strengthen finances.
8. ExxonMobil is producing face shields (through the mask ambition) and IPA hand sanitizers at augmented rates and extending monetary donations to different regions for ensuring better food quality, e-learning, and health facilities.¹¹³
9. Volkswagen has contributed through the distribution of masks and gowns along with personal protective instruments.¹¹⁴
10. Toyota has undertaken certain support measures such as the production of masks, improvement in productivity of medical equipment, transportation for patients who are mildly affected¹¹⁵. They have also made a monetary donation to the Red Cross Society of China so as to ensure medical supplies.

Other companies like Amazon¹¹⁶ has consumers spread wide across the nation and therefore has a moral and social obligation towards all those countries as well. Amazon has allowed its persons whose work can be done from home to do so at least until 2 October, it has also planned to spend its profit of the 2nd quarter of around \$4 billion as a response to COVID-19¹¹⁷. Samsung is yet another

¹¹² See Press Release, BP, *BP foundation donates to covid19 solidarity response fund* (Mar. 21, 2020) <https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/news-and-insights/press-releases/bp-foundation-donates-to-covid19-solidarity-response-fund.html>.

¹¹³ See Press Release, EXXONMOBIL, *Exxon Mobil joins Global Center to expedite medical innovation for PPE* (Apr. 2, 2020) https://corporate.exxonmobil.com/News/Newsroom/News-releases/2020/0402_ExxonMobil-joins-Global-Center-to-expedite-medical-innovation-for-PPE.

¹¹⁴ See Press Release, VOLKSWAGEN, *Volkswagen drives bigger to fight the covid-19 outbreak* (Apr. 16, 2020) <http://newsroom.vw.com/community/volkswagen-drives-bigger-to-fight-the-covid-19-outbreak/>.

¹¹⁵ See Press Release, TOYOTA, *Toyota Group Announces Support Measures for the Frontlines of the Medical Sector and Medical Products Strengthening corporate structure with a view to taking the lead in COVID-19 recovery* (Apr. 7, 2020) <https://global.toyota/en/newsroom/corporate/32232533.html>.

¹¹⁶ *Amazon's COVID-19 blog: daily updates on how we're responding to the crisis* (June 9, 2020) <https://blog.aboutamazon.com/company-news/amazons-actions-to-help-employees-communities-and-customers-affected-by-covid-19>.

¹¹⁷ Jen Geller, CNBC, *Here's what every major company is doing about the coronavirus pandemic* (Mar. 13, 2020) <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/03/13/workforce-wire-coronavirus-heres-what-every-major-company-is-doing-about-the-pandemic.html>

company that has donated around “\$29 million worth funds and goods”¹¹⁸ to governments that have been affected the most by COVID-19. They have also donated smartphones to people in quarantine to help them communicate with family members and friends. They’ve also donated tablets so as to enable online learning. Samsung is providing help through its expertise in technology.

The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has invested a total amount of \$250 million¹¹⁹ to fight against the pandemic. This would also help African and South Asian health systems to develop vaccines against the virus. They also aim at providing equitable access to treatments and health care systems. Similar such initiatives were taken up by the Rockefeller Foundation.¹²⁰

The Ford Fund had initiated two specific measures to show solidarity during this situation. Firstly, the COVID-19 Donation Match program was initiated by the Ford Fund and Bill Ford with the net worth of \$500,000 through donations aimed at helping specific communities during COVID-19. Secondly, the “Read and Record” which created a virtual library for the employees and the students affected due to the pandemic.¹²¹

Hyundai Motors is helping people throughout Asia, America, and Europe in fighting against the pandemic. They have helped India by donating testing kits from Korea, further they have been providing free disinfection services to all cars in Korea¹²². They have provided cars and supplies to medical teams in Brazil. Various financial aid has also been provided by Hyundai.

¹¹⁸ See Press Release, SAMSUNG, *Our Response to COVID-19* (Apr. 2, 2020) <https://news.samsung.com/global/our-response-to-covid-19>.

¹¹⁹ See Press Release, BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION, *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Expands Commitment to Global COVID-19 Response, Calls for International Collaboration to Protect People Everywhere from the Virus* (Apr. 15, 2020) <https://www.gatesfoundation.org/Media-Center/Press-Releases/2020/04/Gates-Foundation-Expands-Commitment-to-COVID-19-Response-Calls-for-International-Collaboration>.

¹²⁰ See Press Release, THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION, *The Rockefeller Foundation Commits \$20 million in COVID-19 Assistance*, <https://www.rockefellerfoundation.org/news/the-rockefeller-foundation-commits-20-million-in-covid-19-assistance-to-strengthen-global-pandemic-preparedness-and-support-vulnerable-communities/> (Last visited on Apr. 30, 2020).

¹²¹ See Press Release, FORD MOTORS, *Ford Motor Company Fund Announces Donation Match, New Virtual Opportunities for Employees to Help Fight COVID-19* (Apr. 2, 2020) <https://media.ford.com/content/fordmedia/fna/us/en/news/2020/04/02/ford-motor-company-fund-announces-donation-match-covid-19.html>.

¹²² See Press Release, HYUNDAI MOTORS, *Hyundai Motor’s Response to COVID-19* (Apr. 8, 2020) <https://www.hyundai.com/worldwide/en/company/news/news-room/news/hyundai-motor’s-response-to-covid-19-0000016435>.

Even the world's most valuable fashion brands have contributed some amount to the ongoing crisis. Nike has committed around \$17.5 million for the response efforts and it recently contributed \$600,000 to help organizations in New York City to procure the most urgent needs of PPEs and food¹²³. Hermes has committed to contribute 20 million euros to the public hospitals in Paris, despite the sanitizers and 31,00 masks provided by them¹²⁴. Gucci has made 'two separate donations of 1 million euros each to crowdfunding campaigns'¹²⁵. Adidas has decided to donate \$2 for every purchase of every item over \$20 from its online stores¹²⁶.

All of the initiatives undertaken by these diverse organizations show the increasing sensitivity of companies towards society. Social inclusiveness is promoted through CSR and global interaction helps in advancing the technological arena of a country. Further Globalization has also helped in allocating income in places where it is more required. The various initiatives taken by the companies have helped in ensuring continuous supplies of PPEs and testing kits to the frontline and healthcare workers. Even in the countries worst hit such as the USA, Spain, and Italy, the companies have helped in ensuring constant support to the medical facilities. This has somehow helped in reducing the fatality rate and improving the health of critical patients.

VII. CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has helped us in testing the concept of CSR. It helped us in measuring the responsiveness and responsibility of a company towards society. The Coronavirus Pandemic has allowed active participation of the companies in tackling the world's rising global problems. The intensity of the health crisis could have been worse if support was not extended by the corporations. Non-availability of resources would have increased the number of casualties. The massive response of the entities during this crisis ensure that the concept of making the corporation's responsible citizens was a success.

¹²³ See Press Release ,NIKE, *COVID-19 Response Efforts* (Apr. 28, 2020) <https://purpose.nike.com/covid-19-response-efforts>.

¹²⁴ See Press Release, HERMES PARIS, *Covid-19 crisis : Hermès united and responsibility* (Mar. 30, 2020) <https://finance.hermes.com/var/finances/storage/original/application/3ca935d5fcad69a9655e16584215c307.pdf>.

¹²⁵ See Press Release ,GUCCI ,*#GucciCommunity for COVID-19*, <https://www.gucci.com/us/en/st/stories/inspirations-and-codes/article/gucci-donation-covid-19> (Last visited on May 1, 2020).

¹²⁶ See Press Release, ADIDAS, *COVID-19 Response is a Team Effort*, https://www.adidas.com/us/covid-19_response (Last visited on May 1, 2020).

Creating synergies between health and healthcare the corporate entities ensure that it gives back to the society from where it receives resources. The administration on the other hand should ensure that there is proper machinery to publish the records of donations given by the companies so that the society acknowledges their philanthropic contributions. Proper maintenance and publication of records further warrant funding in the scarcity sectors. To increase accountability transparency should be maintained in the utilization of the funds donated to various governments by organizations and individuals. Thus, there should be mutual understanding and trust between the government and the corporations to ensure the highest possible utilization of the CSR funds for augmenting welfare.

The tertiary sector in general and the aviation industry in particular has been the worst affected during the current crisis. The uncertainty looming over the aviation industry and other similar industries requires the government to be considerate and soften the CSR clause requiring mandatory contribution for social upliftment. In India where there is a mandatory deposition for profit-making industries, it is far more difficult. The government should ensure that the companies are not burdened to undertake social initiatives and that they can engage in social activities with vigor and utmost altruism.

CSR should be encouraged in the daily functioning of the business and also in annual spending. This would alleviate the problem of the vulnerable sections and would also promote customer loyalty and brand image. One of the important aspects of CSR is that since it is open-ended companies can combine profit, production, and social responsibility. Through innovative initiatives, companies can thrive. The company has the option of maximizing their CSR by choosing any option among the three ethics-based approaches to CSR- virtue, consequentialist, and deontological approaches. Research suggests that virtue-based CSR which is based on moral considerations is the most useful. However, through the consequentialist approach, the companies can ensure the maximum utilization of their funds to create sustainable development. Through spending in research and development companies can ensure maximization of resources in the future enabling growth of the company in the future.

Contribution to the society in any form not only foretells the importance that the company gives to the people but also ensures that the company is based on moral and ethical values which increases the confidence of the people on the company thus enhancing growth and overall development. The data

collected clearly elucidates the importance given to CSR initiatives by global companies. Engaging in robust social initiatives during the coronavirus pandemic therefore will lead to a greater reputation in the market and among customers. The companies should, therefore, ensure maximum participation in social initiatives. The response properly recorded and disseminated would enable customers to realize the value system of the company. This would in turn increase customer responsiveness towards the company. Ultimately, the company which indulges in social initiatives would benefit in the long run.