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## Misuse of CSR in Bangladesh

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Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a step towards the society by the corporate world. But what does CSR exactly mean? What should be the real intention behind the practice of CSR? Is the society actually happy with CSR?

CSR is defined as a form of self-regulation integrated into a business model. Again, it is a management concept by which companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operation and interaction with their shareholders. CSR is a part of business and its strategies but it is not only what it is formally defined as or thought of by the organizations. Misconception about CSR, failure to understand and practice its core values has been a prime factor towards its misuse in Bangladesh.

CSR goes beyond charity, donations and sponsorships. The intention towards CSR should not be only to donate or give charity for good causes. The corporate organizations should recognize their responsibility to serve its internal and external environment including its community and as well as employees. It is a year round responsibility and must integrate with the corporate values, cultures, business strategies and above all, add to future sustainability.

Organizations allot huge amounts of money as yearly expense for CSR. They are seen to make charity payments, donations, etc. and feel that they are fulfilling their responsibilities towards the society. It is often found that the expenses are just about attractive reports and public relations. Some organizations look at CSR as business opportunities and a tool to improve brand value.

The main objective of an organization is to increase its shareholders' wealth. Certainly CSR can be a contributing factor towards attaining the objective but it cannot be used as an influencing tool. The bigger is the number in the annual report against its CSR expenses, the more people start to build trust towards the organization by judging its dedication towards the society from the numbers. But, the appropriate use of the CSR fund remains questionable.

Expense made for different political parties and ministries to maintain political favour towards the organization are often seen to be disbursed from the CSR fund. Donating a vehicle to an educational institute, writing a check to the city museum, donation for constructing an auditorium of a singing and dancing school, sponsoring different sport teams and events, O & A level performance awards, inter-school soccer tournament, donating to Bangladesh Wintering Water Fowl Census and Bird Festival cannot be considered as CSR activities. Rather they are marketing strategies. But unfortunately all these activities and many more as such are in the CSR account's list of many very well-known organizations of Bangladesh.

Now the question remains, why do organizations increase their CSR expense with irrelevant activities? Is it the outcome of the prevailing misconceptions about CSR or intentional?

Bangladesh Government has implemented the policy that states that all corporations have to spend minimum 5% of its profit for CSR. Thus, following the policy, the amount is not only being used but rather misused. Various irrelevant expenses are being named as CSR. CSR reporting and auditing are also failing to identify and penalize such practice.

Bangladesh government also has the policy of tax exemption over the percentage of profit used in any sector as CSR activity. This policy heavily attracts the organizations to make the number against the CSR account flashy and shiny.

The policies initiated by the Bangladesh government are also followed round the world and they are important to make sure that the organizations realize and execute their responsibilities towards the society. The misuse and improper advantage of CSR taken by the organizations can only be reduced through appropriate and fair auditing. But fair auditing is also being difficult to be maintained.

CSR is a concept introduced to the world for its betterment. But the loopholes that corporation has found within it is putting the future of the society at stake. The corporations benefit more from CSR than the society and its people. The government is hold at ransom by the indirect threat that removing CSR policies will harm the positive activities that the society and people are getting from CSR. And thus CSR has become a source which helps the corporations to avoid regulation. People are being deceived by the tampered information provided by the organizations and are building high hopes. A wrong image is built in the mind of investors and they end up investing at a wrong place. The shiny cover of CSR does not reveal what is within. People are incurring loss and disappointment. Thus the big question still remains, is the society actually happy with CSR?

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