



## **Integration of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Digital Marketing**

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### **ABSTRACT –**

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become an increasingly important aspect of business in recent years, with companies recognizing the importance of their social and environmental impact on society. Digital marketing involves utilizing digital channels to promote and communicate a company's social initiatives and values at the same time, it works as a critical tool for businesses to engage with consumers and promote their products and services. There are many ways in which companies can integrate CSR in digital marketing, including cause-related marketing, green marketing, social media campaigns, and employee advocacy. This can also have a positive impact on society and the environment by promoting social and environmental causes and encouraging consumers to make more sustainable choices. So, this paper with the help of content analysis of available literature tries to find the chemistry between corporate social responsibility and digital marketing.

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**Keywords –** Corporate Social Responsibility, CSR, Digital Marketing, Green Marketing, CSR & digital marketing.

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### **Introduction –**

#### ***Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) –***

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), refers to the responsibility of companies towards society and the environment beyond their financial performance and profit-making activities. CSR involves a company's commitment to operate in an ethical and sustainable manner, minimizing its negative impact on society and the environment, and contributing to the welfare of the community in which it operates. Four different dimensions of orientation that companies leaders practice while fulfilling their responsibility and envisioning CSR are Utopian, Assimilator, Profit seeker and Goodwill seeker have been discussed in a study (Srivastava, Gupta, & Dixit, 2020).

As per the Schedule – VII of New Company Act – 2013 CSR activities can be undertaken in areas such as education, health, sanitation, environment, rural development, and social welfare etc. Some common areas where companies invest their CSR fund are environmental sustainability, community engagement, ethical labor practices, transparency and accountability.

According to the National CSR Portal, the total CSR expenditure by companies in India for the financial year 2020-2021 was INR 25714.65 crore. This is an increase from the previous year, where the total CSR expenditure was INR 24954.78 crore for the financial year 2019-2020. The top 10 sectors for CSR expenditure in Indian in the financial year 2020-2021 were education, healthcare, rural development, environmental management, hunger and poverty alleviation, gender equality, water and sanitation, sports, armed forces and women empowerment.

The top 10 companies in India by CSR expenditure in the financial year 2020-2021 were Reliance Industries Limited, Tata Consultancy Services Limited, ONGC Limited, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd, HDFC Bank Limited, Infosys Limited, Tata Steel Limited, Wipro Limited, NTPC Limited, ITC Limited and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation ([www.csr.gov.in](http://www.csr.gov.in)). The top 10 states in India by the number of companies registered on the National CSR Portal as of September 2021 were Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Delhi, Gujarat, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh.

#### ***Digital Marketing –***

Digital marketing is the practice of promoting products or services using digital channels such as search engines, social media, email, mobile apps, and websites. It involves creating digital content that is designed to attract, engage, and convert customers. Digital channels allow companies to engage with customers and prospects in a more personalized and targeted way, with the ability to track and analyze customer behaviour and preferences in real-time. It has become increasingly important in recent years as more and more people are spending time online. Businesses are leveraging digital marketing to reach their target audience, build brand awareness, generate leads, and drive sales. Some common digital marketing tactics include search engine optimization, social media marketing, email marketing, content marketing, pay-per-click advertising, and mobile marketing.

**CSR and digital marketing –**

The integration of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) with digital marketing in India is a strategic approach that involves leveraging digital channels to promote and communicate a company's CSR initiatives and values. It can create a powerful combination that can benefit both the company and society.

**Different tools of digital marketing used in promoting the corporate social responsibility –**

**Cause-related marketing:** Cause-related marketing involves partnering with a non-profit organization or social cause to promote a product or service. For example, a company may donate a portion of its sales to a charity or support a social cause such as education or environmental conservation. This approach can help to increase brand awareness, build trust, and attract socially conscious consumers.

**Green marketing:** Green marketing involves promoting a company's environmental initiatives and sustainability practices. This can include promoting the use of eco-friendly products, reducing carbon emissions, or supporting sustainable supply chains. Green marketing can help to differentiate a company from its competitors and appeal to environmentally conscious consumers.

**Social media campaigns:** Social media can be an effective channel for promoting CSR initiatives and engaging with stakeholders. A company can use social media to share information about its CSR initiatives, encourage customers to share their own experiences, and participate in social conversations. Social media campaigns can help to create a sense of community around the company's CSR initiatives and build brand loyalty.

**Employee advocacy:** Employee advocacy involves encouraging employees to promote a company's CSR initiatives on social media and other digital channels. This approach can help to increase the reach and impact of the company's message and create a more authentic connection with consumers.

**Influencer marketing:** Influencer marketing involves partnering with social media influencers to promote a company's products or services. Companies can also partner with influencers who share their values and support their CSR initiatives. Influencers can help to amplify the company's message and reach a wider audience.

**Objectives of study –**

Two fold objectives of this study are –

- To Study the chemistry between corporate social responsibility and digital marketing.
- To explore the concept of CSR communication and digital marketing.

**Methodology Used –****Content Analysis:**

This literature review is the result of content analysis combined with other qualitative methodologies including interpretation of current literature on CSR and Digital Marketing. Content analysis is a scientific and systematic way to observe and analyze information.

**Selection of Journal and Article:**

This literature review is prepared by following the approach of Laplume et al. (2008) to select articles, using Harzing's (2011) list of journal quality to select journal papers based on monitoring their impact factors (Srivastava, Gupta, Singh, & Srivastava, 2017).

**Analysis of Objectives –****Analysis of Objective – 1****To Study the chemistry between corporate social responsibility and digital marketing.**

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) refers to the actions that companies take to address social and environmental concerns in their business operations and supply chains, and to contribute to sustainable development. Digital marketing involves the use of digital media, such as social media, websites, and mobile applications, to promote products, services, or ideas, and engage with customers and stakeholders. As companies strive to become more socially responsible, digital marketing has emerged as a powerful tool for promoting and communicating CSR initiatives.

**Relationship between CSR and Digital Marketing –**

It has been observed in many studies that integrating CSR into digital marketing can help companies connect with their consumers and appeal to their values. CSR activities can provide companies with unique and meaningful content that can be used to engage with consumers on social media and other digital platforms. This study has tried to find out the relationship between CSR and digital marketing in three different phases (Melvin Braide, 2023).

**Marketing Perspective of CSR –**

If we observe the marketing perspective then it represents CSR can help companies to –

**Build brand reputation and loyalty** - By demonstrating a commitment to social and environmental issues, companies can enhance their reputation and build brand loyalty among consumers and other stakeholders.

**Differentiate from competitors** - CSR activities can help companies stand out from their competitors and create a unique positioning in the market.

**Attract and retain employees** - Companies that engage in CSR activities can become more attractive to job seekers and can help to retain current employees by creating a positive work environment.

**Enhance customer relationships** - Companies that are perceived as socially responsible can improve their relationships with customers and increase

customer loyalty.

**Create new business opportunities** - CSR activities can open up new business opportunities, such as partnerships with like-minded organizations and access to new customer segments.

### **Digital Marketing Perspective of CSR –**

If we observe the marketing perspective then it represent CSR can help companies to know the –

**Consumer Attitudes:** Many consumers, especially younger generations, are becoming increasingly concerned about ethical and environmentally friendly business practices. Integrating CSR into digital marketing can help companies connect with these consumers and appeal to their values.

**Content Generation:** CSR activities can provide companies with unique and meaningful content that can be used to engage with consumers on social media and other digital platforms.

**Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** Implementing CSR initiatives can help companies improve their search engine rankings by demonstrating their commitment to sustainability, ethics, and other important issues.

**Increased Visibility:** CSR initiatives can generate positive media coverage and brand exposure, which can drive more traffic to a company's website and improve its digital footprint.

**Competitive Advantage:** Companies that invest in CSR can differentiate themselves from their competitors and establish a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

**Brand Reputation:** Companies with strong CSR initiatives tend to have a better reputation, which can increase brand recognition and trust among consumers.

### **3. Digital Marketer Perspective of CSR –**

Many studies are suggesting the best digital marketers understand that there is more to marketing than learning to use a couple of tools. Marketing involves a lot more than interpreting metrics and setting dimensions on analytic tools. Intangible elements such as incorporating CSR into digital marketing strategies can enhance brand image, improve consumer attitudes, and generate positive exposure for companies. Marketing teams within companies should be involved in optimising the company's CSR strategy in line with modern trends for the best outcomes in brand perception (Melvin Braide, 2023).

So, in nutshell analysis of this objective in three different phases concludes that there exists a positive relationship between corporate social responsibility and digital marketing through which companies can create a positive brand image, build customer loyalty, and enhance their reputation in the market by maintaining the sustainability in the triple bottom line (TBL) i.e. people, planet and profit. Philosophy of triple bottom line is very relevance in maintaining the sustainability.

### **Analysis of Objective 2:**

#### **To explore the digital marketing as a tool of CSR communication.**

This objective has been analysed with the help of content analysis of available literature in the following manner –

#### **Digital media can increase the visibility and reach of CSR initiatives:**

It has been observed in the many studies that by leveraging social media platforms, companies can reach a wider audience and engage with stakeholders in a more interactive and engaging way. Digital media also allows for the creation of multimedia content such as videos, infographics, and interactive tools that can be used to communicate CSR initiatives in a more accessible way.

According to Christina and Noormohamed (2014), digital marketing, specifically social media marketing, can be used to promote CSR initiatives and engage stakeholders in dialogue, enabling companies to demonstrate their commitment to sustainability and social responsibility. It suggests that social media can be used to enhance CSR communication, improve stakeholder engagement, and promote sustainable and responsible business practices.

Ettinger, Grabner-Kräuter, Okazaki, & Terlutter, (2021), have explored how companies communicate their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives on Twitter. This study examined 452 tweets from 29 Fortune 500 companies and analysed the content of all tweets to identify the nature of their CSR communications. It also presents several interesting findings, such as the predominance of non-commercial messages in CSR tweets, and the use of different themes depending on the industry of the company.

#### **Digital media can enhance the credibility and reputation of companies:**

Effective CSR communication can enhance the credibility and reputation of companies. By being transparent and honest in their CSR communication, companies can build trust with stakeholders and enhance their reputation as responsible and ethical organizations. Digital media can be a powerful tool for promoting CSR initiatives and communicating the positive impact that they are having on society and the environment.

Camilleri, (2021), has highlighted the importance of transparency and authenticity in CSR communication, which are essential for effective CSR communication. Transparency in CSR refers to the openness and honesty in a company's communication regarding its CSR initiatives, policies, and performance, which is essential for building trust and credibility with stakeholders.

Cheng, Cherian, Sial, Mentel, Wan, Álvarez-Otero, & Saleem, (2021), have examined the relationship between CSR communication on social media, purchase intention, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) in the banking sector of an emerging economy. In their study authors argued that CSR communication on social media can positively influence purchase intention and e-WOM. Their study has also highlighted the importance of trust and transparency in CSR communication.

Dasgupta, & Ghatge, (2015), have identified the use of digital media in CSR reporting by multinational automobile companies in India and suggested that effective CSR communication can enhance brand reputation and customer loyalty. CSR reporting on digital platforms can increase stakeholders' awareness and engagement with a company's CSR initiatives, which can enhance its reputation and brand image.

### Companies are communicating their CSR initiatives through digital platform –

For the purpose of analysing the CSR communication by the companies through digital marketing this study has selected the five different companies and make a critical analysis of their contents available on their different digital platforms –

**Table: CSR Communication by Companies**

Company	Social Media Campaign	CSR Section on Website	Digital Events	Influencer/NGO Partnership
<b>1. Infosys</b>	Infosys ran a campaign on Twitter and LinkedIn with the hashtag <i>#InfySalutes</i> to showcase their CSR initiatives during the COVID-19 pandemic such as providing support to healthcare workers, partnering with NGOs to distribute essential items, and contributing to relief funds	Infosys has a dedicated CSR section on their website where they highlight their initiatives and impact <b>Example-</b> " <i>Corporate Sustainability</i> " where they showcase their CSR initiatives such as environment sustainability, education, healthcare and rural development	Infosys organizes digital events such as <i>virtual hackathons and conferences</i> to promote CSR initiatives <b>Examples-</b> Infosys organized a virtual hackathon called " <i>Infy Maker Awards 2021</i> " to encourage innovation and creativity among students.	<b>Example-</b> " <i>AkshayaPatra Foundation</i> " to provide mid-day meals to children in government schools
<b>2. Reliance</b>	Reliance uses its social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to promote its CSR initiatives. <b>Example-</b> in 2021, <i>Reliance Foundation</i> used Twitter to promote its vaccination drive for employees and their families.	Reliance has a dedicated CSR section on its website that provides detailed information about its CSR initiatives. <b>Example-</b> the website highlights Reliance Foundation's " <i>Mission Anna Seva</i> " program, which aims to provide meals to underprivileged communities	Reliance Foundation participated in the India CEO Forum's virtual conference on " <i>Sustainable Business and Impact Investing</i> ," where its representatives discussed the company's efforts towards sustainability and CSR. The company also organized a virtual event called " <i>Mission Vaccine Suraksha</i> ," where it shared information about its vaccination drive.	Company partnered with Bollywood actor <b>SonuSood</b> to distribute food and essential supplies to vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The company also partnered with cricketer <b>SachinTendulkar</b> to promote its <i>Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Clean India Campaign)</i> ,
<b>3. Tata Group</b>	Tata Power ran a social media campaign called <i>#SwitchOff2SwitchOn</i> to promote energy conservation. As part of this campaign, the company urged people to switch off non-essential lights and appliances for an hour every day to conserve energy.	Tata Group has dedicated sections on their corporate websites to showcase their CSR initiatives. Example: Tata Chemicals has a sustainability section on its website that provides details on the company's environmental and social initiatives.	<b>Online Donation Drives:</b> Digital events can be used to drive online donations for CSR causes. <b>Webinars and Workshops:</b> The Tata Group can host webinars on specific CSR themes, inviting subject matter experts to share insights and best practices. They can also conduct virtual workshops to educate participants on various social and	Tata Group has partnered with influencers to promote their CSR initiatives. For instance, Tata Motors has associated with Bollywood actor <b>Akshay Kumar</b> to promote road safety through campaigns like <i>#NeverDrinkAndDrive</i> . Through this campaign, Tata Motors aims to create awareness about the dangers of drunk driving and encourage people to make responsible choices on the road.

			environmental issues	
<b>4.HDFC Bank</b>	HDFC Bank launched a social media campaign called <b>#HDFCBankSafetyGrid</b> on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to raise awareness about cyber safety. They launched a Twitter campaign called <b>#GreenDiwali</b> to promote their CSR initiative of encouraging eco-friendly celebrations during Diwali.	HDFC Bank has a dedicated section on their website called <b>'Parivartan'</b> that showcases their CSR initiatives and impact. They have also included a <b>'Sustainability'</b> section on their website that provides information on their efforts towards reducing their carbon footprint, energy consumption, and waste management.	HDFC Bank organizes various digital events, such as webinars and virtual town hall. For example, they hosted a virtual town hall on <b>World Environment Day</b> , where they discussed the need for sustainable development.	HDFC Bank collaborates with influencers to create awareness and promote their CSR initiatives. They have partnered with influencers such as <b>DiipaBüller-Khosla</b> to promote their <b>#Parivartan</b> initiative, which aims to empower women and create a <b>gender-equal society</b> .
<b>5.Adani Group</b>	Adani Group has launched several social media campaigns to create awareness and promote various CSR initiatives. One such campaign is <b>#AdaniAct4Farmers</b> , launched to support farmers and promote sustainable agriculture.	Adani Group has a dedicated CSR section on its website. The website also has a section for volunteers where interested individuals can register themselves and contribute to various social causes.	Foundation has also organized several digital events. Example company organized a virtual walkathon called <b>"Dare to Care"</b> to raise awareness about breast cancer and support cancer patients.	Adani Foundation has collaborated with several NGOs and influencers to promote its CSR initiatives. Example Company partnered with <b>Smile Foundation</b> , an NGO working for child education, to launch a campaign called <b>"Education Cannot Wait"</b> . The campaign aimed to raise funds and support education for underprivileged children.

(Source: Author)

## Conclusion –

This study concludes that digital media is a way which facilitates two-way communication and engagement between companies and their stakeholders. It enables companies to receive feedback and input on their social initiatives, and to respond in a timely and transparent manner. This can help to build trust and credibility with stakeholders, and demonstrate a company's commitment to responsible business practices. It can also enable companies to target specific audience segments with personalized CSR messages that resonate with their values, interests. It also provides opportunities to companies to effectively communicate and promote their social initiatives, engage with stakeholders, and enhance their reputation and brand image. Overall, integration of CSR with digital marketing is a win-win strategy for businesses and society as a whole. By leveraging their marketing efforts to promote positive social and environmental impact, companies can enhance their reputation while contributing to a more sustainable and equitable world.

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