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Social

# BE THE CHANGE YOU WANT TO SEE IN THE WORLD- THE CARVING OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AMONG THE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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**Abstract**

This paper focuses on integrating social responsibilities among its stake holders who are key persons involved in the operations of the university. Required challenges such as global warming, climate change, shortage of water, lack of good infrastructure, food safety and lack of renewable energy sources to lead a dignified human life. Universities play greater role in shaping the future citizens of the globe. Implementation of CSR programs enhances benefits to the share holders and stake holders. CSR influences the ethical validity and enhances reputation among the education vendors. Students active participation in CSR activities provides self-awareness, development, ethics and values. These activities enhances teamwork, event management, networking and interpersonal skills. This paper is focused on a real life journey of CSR practices in a private, comprehensive technical university of south India. It also demonstrates how a higher education institution can take up and get embedded CSR in the university system in tune with vision of the University.

*Keywords:* Social Responsibility; University Students; Carving.

## 1. Introduction

This is a practitioners paper. It observes the evolving need and significance of implementing, educating and research driven social activities in universities and calls for carving the collegiate social responsibility concept among the university students. This research also looks into the way in which the university could align itself in the exchange of ideas connected to social responsibilities in the community and how to facilitate the transformation of the campus into an ecologically, electrically, environmentally and socially responsible. Social responsibility is an ethical principle of an individual to perform in the direction of the furtherance of the society from where he or she draws resources throughout life. Being socially responsible means behaving ethically, taking responsibility and accountability for personal or group's behaviors. In other words

it's a sense of responsibility towards the nature, the environment, the fellow human beings, the natural resources and the community as a whole. It is demonstrated in the person's attitudes and actions either as an individual or as a group. Primarily the individual must rise beyond self-interest and core selfishness to commit themselves to the improvement of the society and its natural, economical and environmental resources. The main theme of community development is to eradicate mind-set of dependency and to change them with attitudes of independence, self-confidence, self-responsibility. We define Collegiate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a concept where the university integrates social responsibility in their operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders & the community along with the implementation of CSR policies, procedures & strategies in place. It also embraces boosting the staff welfare besides inspiring participation of employees.

## 2. Significance of CSR in Campuses

The intraorganisational issues that affect the accomplishment of CSR initiative do not relay entirely to the leaders ethical orientation in the creation of CSR policy. The intraorganisational factors can be categorized into two issues 1) strategically anchored factors- these issues focus on internal factors motivating the adoption of social responsibility practices, exploring the likelihood of adoption process: the presence of internal "champions" (Anderson and Bateman, 2000; Howard-Grenville, 2007), the importance of organisational values and context (Bansal, 2003; Ramus, C. A., & Steger, 2000), the role of managers in identifying social and environmental issues (Bansal, & Roth, 2000; Shama 2000), the influence of management system (Acquier, 2010; Boiral, 2007; Reverdy, 2005). The second issue is socially anchored factors – this issue is related to how CSR and sustainable development related practises are discoursed and is influenced by the firms identity, corporate values and managers conceptions (Basu & Palawzo, 2008; Howard-Grenville, 2007; Nash, 2008).

The responsibility of the universities can be summarized as transferring the knowledge to the new generations by teaching, training and doing research, shaping the balance between fundamental and applied research, between professional training and general education; meeting the priority requirements of their respective societies (UNESCO, 1991). In addition clear evidences demonstrate that higher education systems are expected to function as social institutions actively for the development of individual learning and human capital, the socialization and cultivation of citizens and political loyalties, the preservation of knowledge and the fostering of other legitimate pursuits for the nation and state (Gum port, 2000). Iinstitutions can be considered as social units purposely constructed to seek precise goals. In this direction organization which believes in principles and values can be successful on CSR principles and applications. The classical view of any business organization is to make every effort to be efficient and profitable keeping the best interest of the shareholders in mind (Barnett, 2010). The key goal of any business is to keep its cost low and to earn a maximum profit. Researchers have built a broad and solid theoretical framework around the concept of stakeholders, analyzing how the proper management and motivation of these groups can positively affect business competitiveness (Freeman, 2007; Alniacik, 2011).

Nielsen groups (2008) conducted a worldwide investigation which revealed that 51% of the consumers were under the opinion that it was very important for the organizations to commit on

social environmental causes. Herbst & Lloyd (2009) proposed that CSR schemes improve the employees morale & their sense of satisfaction of working in a responsible company and increases the effectiveness of the employee to a greater extent. In CSR a mutual benefit of relationship within the stakeholders and shareholders are deliberately constructed to look for definite goals. In the university the stakeholders are the key people involved in its operations and they represent the groups that are subjected to potential benefits or harm by the actions and decisions made by business firm (Church Hill, 1982; Buddy 2011). Evidences show that if implemented properly, CSR strategies can be profitable and create value propositions such as competitive advantage and corporate proposition (Smith, 2007; Portar & Kramer, 2006). CSR can create valuable and at the same time a strong and unique competitive advantage (Filho, 2010).

Universities have incampus issues such as high student turnover, range of old buildings, equipment & spaces, the student - staff lodging amenities, food preparation units and other management systems. In addition they are faced with a variety of challenges from the stakeholders, the government, the controlling bodies, the community and so on. Universities are considered as supreme performers in a global system driven by knowledge, attitude, skills, resources, ideas and progressive technologies. They are multi-faceted organizations capable of innovations & discoveries that spearhead appropriate technologies and solutions to these tenacious concerns and thus make the world a better place to live in. Academias have the opening to craft ethics and values. They are talented to instil the practice of sustainability and development in their stakeholders who are tomorrow's leaders. Institution of higher education can provide more liberal and practical education that reshapes the world through re-examining, re-inventing and re-considering global challenges beyond boundaries. Promoting and developing social responsibility strategies and adapting to the best CSR practices are essential tools to overpower these global challenges such as inequality, deprivations, gender bias, discriminations, poverty, climate change, global warming, food security, air pollution, new health problems, and water shortages etc.

The role of university management has been reinforced with the development of entrepreneurial tradition within universities. The acceptance of quality assurance and performance indicators comes with competition among universities for revenues and resources and the application of business principles and practices in university administration (Currie & Newson, 1998; Peters, Marshall, & Fitzsimons, 2000; Stromquist, 2003; Stromquist & Monkman, 2000; Taylor, Rizvi, Lingard, & Henry, 1997). In the course of moving towards this changing phase, some universities are discovering the importance of corporate image, corporate identity, and corporate reputation and mainly choose CSR as a reputation and an advantage building strategy (Atakan & Eker, 2007; Porter & Kramer, 2006). The behavior and action of such institutions replicate back to the community through their daily operations and alumni. Thus they can create value propositions. The future of the universities lies in their ability to anticipate the changes that society currently demands and turn them into opportunities for creating value their stakeholders. To meet these challenges universities inculcate students with the right knowledge, values, and principles they need when they become future professionals, entrepreneurs and managers. Social responsibility values, ethics, and sustainability have been gradually introduced in the university syllabus, generating a greater awareness among students about what behaviours must be developed to be acceptable by companies (Huang & Wang, 2013). This type of education also helps students to shape and prioritise within the market among the ideal companies for which to work, with reference to the social, ethical, and environmental practices they offer (Waddock, 2009;

Baumgartner & Winter, 2013). Following this argument and on the basis of academic research, two types of explanatory factors were identified that may affect the valuation given to CSR practices by college students: personal factors (Arlow, 1991; Furrer et al., 2010; Michalos et al., 2011) and social integration factors (Classon, 2006; Ásványi, 2010).

India has a highly developed higher education system with 789 universities (2017) and 3500 Colleges. With a population of 1.342 billion (2017) which is equivalent to 17.86 % of world's total population, India has around 8.15% of the population as students in the higher education domain. India's Knowledge Commission recently observed "Education is a key enabler for the development of an individual and for altering the social environmental landscape of a country". However setting up CSR in the Indian universities and colleges would result in greater positive influence on the national as well as global challenges. Subsequently India can create valuable, strong and unique competitive advantage by reaching self-development, self-sufficiency and maturity in individuals. To attain this goal, universities, departments and academicians must be in contact with each other and proceed with a developed association culture. Service comprehension must be a basic approach. Thus there is a great for need for the universities to adopt and practice CSR and SD in the campuses.

### 3. Methodology, Results and Discussion

The approach used for the implementation of CSR activities is eclectic. Assessment & prioritizing the community need as well as in campus needs and activities for the upcoming year were done with the volunteers in the general body meeting at the end semester. Calendar of events for the CSR activities of the year was prepared during summer vacation in compliance with the academic calendar. Induction of fresh volunteers began with orientation to fresh men in classes by the faculty coordinators and senior leaders, followed by Google form registration.

An introductory meeting was held with the senior leaders and faculty coordinators. The CSR head for the year was elected by voting. The activities were designed on event based leadership. Successively leaders responsible for each of the activities were elected amongst the seniors from different domains. Sub heads such as leader for operations, creativity, finance, hospitality, media and reports were identified for each of the event as and when the events were charted. Further the leaders and sub leaders were instructed and guided on responsibilities and management of their respective domains. Volunteers were requested to register themselves via whatsApp either as volunteers in their interested domain or as participants. Scheduled activities were sphere headed. Subsequently an evaluation of the program was conducted by taking feed backs from volunteers within in a weak. Copies of the reports were submitted to the Vice Chancellor and to the medias after each activity.
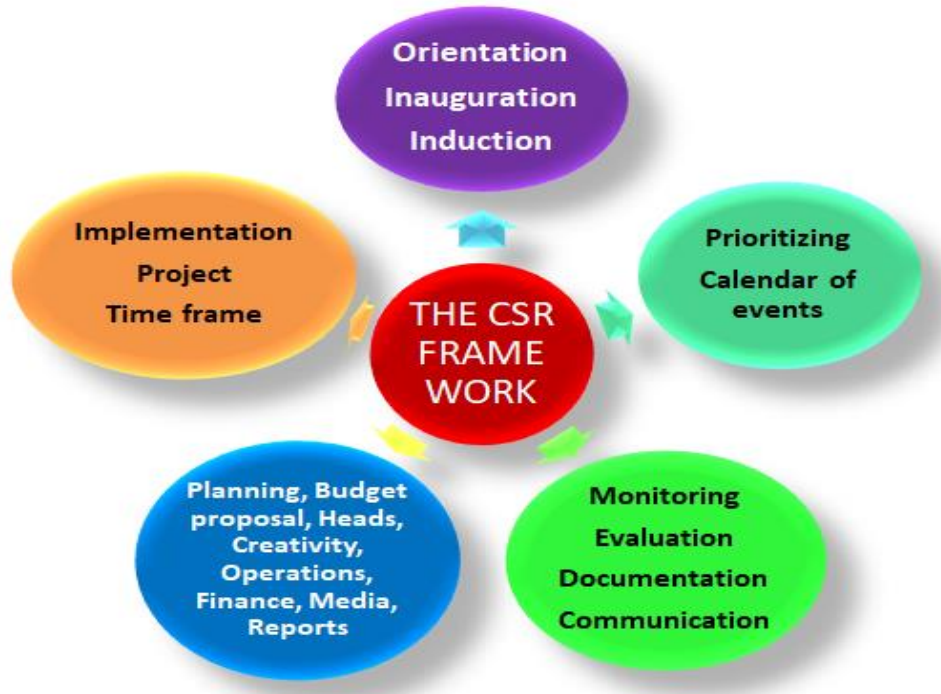
**Activities 2016-2017**

The activities carried out in the academic year 2016-2017 were as follows. Piloted a general body meeting prior to inauguration where the coordinator spoke on the significance of enrolment, commitment, CSR objectives, policies and expectations from the volunteers and what the volunteers can expect from their commitment and so on.
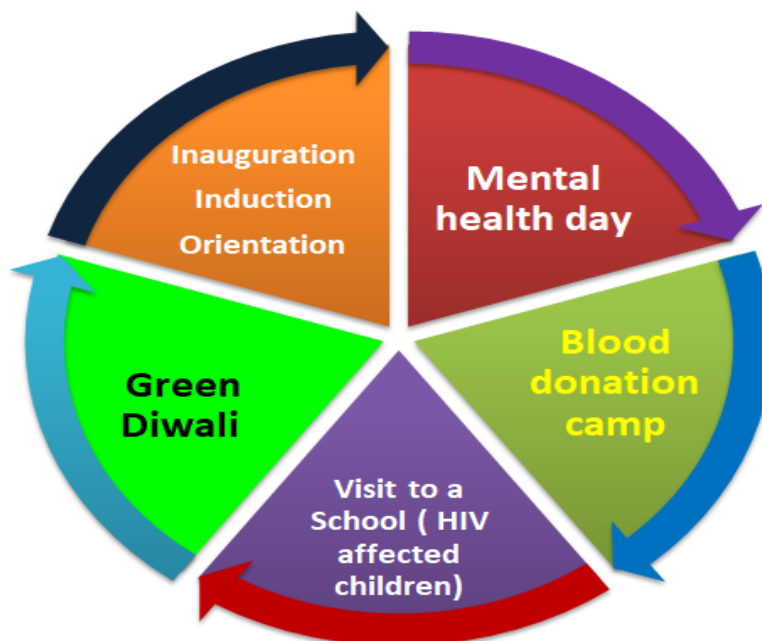


**Activities 2016-2017**

### 3.1. Orientation, Inauguration & Induction

The programme was conducted on the third week of August 2016. Around 250 students' filled Google registration forms, 223 of them enrolled themselves for the program. The chief guest, senior HR manager WIPRO delivered a very motivating speech and inspired the volunteers. The University registrar encouraged the volunteers with his speech. More color to the program was added by alumni and a best volunteer of the year 2014, who shared his four years of experience in CSR. The university musical team (Saarang) acted up on a theme song. The talented mime group of the campus performed an environment protection mime which was mind blowing.

### 3.2. Mental Health Day 2016

Mental Health Day was celebrated on 7th October 2016. Good mental health offers "a feeling of well-being and inner strength". One can do things to keep the mind healthy like how one cares for the right life style and exercising to maintain good physical health. The theme of this year's World Mental Health Day covers "psychological first aid" which involves stretching out a helping hand to another person in psychological distress and learning what not to say when a person is suffering. The CSR club works to improve the mental health of individuals and society at large including the promotion of mental well-being, the prevention of mental disorders, the protection of human rights and the care of people affected by mental disorders.

**Aim**

1) To raise awareness about mental health & issues related to mental health.
2) To reach out and provide a helping hand to those affected.
3) To identify daily stress among students and to learn techniques to cope up with it.
4) To strengthen information systems, evidence and research for mental health.
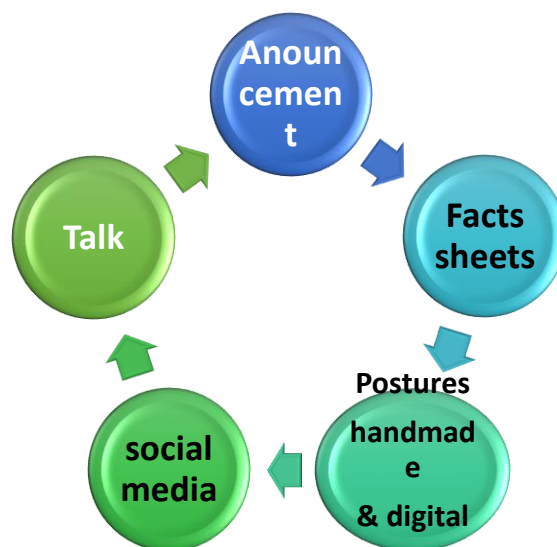


**Activities Mental health day 2016**

**Methodology**

The campaign for world mental health day was begun on the first day of October. Volunteers were wearing theme badge which indicated the mental health day theme for the whole week. Facts sheets & postures on mental health, various symptoms of mental illnesses, available treatment and support options were zoomed across the campus. Ms. Vani Subramaniam, counseling psychologist and trainer from Azim Premji Foundation, Bangalore was the chief guest for the event. She gave an intriguing hour-long talk on 'student's daily stress and coping'. It was a fun-filled and interactive session which pursued interest and attention of the audience. Her talk ended with an interactive question and answer round, for which we saw a huge response from the audience. Then, a video by team Nautanki was played pertaining to the very same topic. The programme ended with the vote of thanks.

**Learning outcome**

1) Gained awareness on mental health, mental illness and its prevention .
2) Gained some ideas on how to help people in psychological distress.
3) The participants could learn on various forms of stress during the teen age.
4) Few interesting coping strategies were taught, which could be practiced in life.
5) Learned how significant it is to support others when faced with emotional difficulties in life.

### 3.3. Green Diwali

Diwali is one of the most main celebrations in India. This carnival takes in millions of illuminations on roof tops, outdoors, around temples and houses. Since Diwali is also a celebration of abundance and wealth people go out and buy new items even when they don't need them. Advertisements and display boards yell to people offerings sales and discounts encouraging people to buy more and more.  Be it cloth, metal, plastic or paper - resources that are non renewable cause threat to save natural environment. It also includes large scale bursting of crackers.  According to Karan Deep Singh air pollution in Delhi arrived at frightening levels during Diwali 2016. The level of particulate matter in the air was twofold that of the previous year.  The city was covered by thick toxic smog having adverse effect on people especially on children (20% of world population), elderly and those suffering from heart and lung diseases. The particulate matter was 2.5 and tiny particles that can cause disease crossed 500 mark (WHO says anything above 25 is harmful to health).

Crackers even with the least noises disturb the dogs and they tremble with fear. Dogs have 67 Hz to 45 kHz frequency range which can detect sounds that are too faint for the human ear whereas the human ear's upper hearing limit is 20 kHz. Fireworks often exceed auditory threshold 150 - 170 decibels. Excessive noise pollution caused by the fire crackers leads to: High blood pressure, heart attack and sleeping disturbances, temporary deafness or permanent relative deafness and loosing vision especially of children.

**Aim**

1) To develop the idea of an eco-friendly Diwali celebration among the people.
2) To create awareness to "Say 'No' to Fire Crackers and 'Yes' to Life!"
3) To save animals from getting sick and disturbed due to crackers.
4) Reuse, Recycle, Reduce, Refuse and Rethink the 5 principles of nature conservation were emphasized through out the process.
5) To join hands and support the University Grants Commission's call to all the Universities of the country to promote and celebrate Green Diwali.

**Methodology**

Ten days before Diwali a campaign was organized in the campus. Posters both handmade and digital and paintings were displayed in all the departmental notice boards. Preceding day of celebration candles were lit on the windows of each class rooms to mark the occasion. The slogan the "Say 'No' to Fire Crackers and 'Yes' to Life!" reduce, reuse, recycle, reform and rethink were screamed in PiR$^3$ and OAT (Student lounges) at the end of classes. The coordinators held campaigns at the nearby government school. The head master, teachers and student representatives gave speeches in the assembly. A pledge to observe and promote Green Diwali was taken in the assembly of school.
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|---|---|
| Green Diwali campaign | Lighting candles in each classrooms |
| Reduce, Recycle, Reuse, Reform and Rethink | Awareness to Students(school & campus) |
| Pledge | |

**Learning outcome**

1) In the school 60% of students had already purchased crackers, 45% of them committed to give up crackers following the awareness talks.
2) Creating awareness changes behavior to a great extent.
3) Green Diwali saves environment and saves lives.

### 3.4. Visit to Shining Star School – A Residential School for Hiv Affected Children

Visited the school located at Carmalaram, Sarjapur road, Bangalore in two batches. As there were 170 registries the programme was scheduled for two weekends. This residential school provides shelter to about 84 children within the age group of 7-14 years who are from diverse backgrounds and are affected with HIV. This institution ensures the provision of proper basic facilities to all its children. It has a big mess hall, clean washrooms, beautifully painted classrooms, a library, huge playgrounds and an all-time ambulance. All the children there have a strict sense of discipline. Any rule laid out to them is obediently followed.

### Objectives

1) To give age-appropriate, culturally relevant, scientifically accurate and non-judgmental education and information about HIV/AIDS and HIV affected children.
2) To understand life style and the challenges faced by HIV affected children /people.
3) To become more responsible and committed towards them.
4) To help student volunteers to develop skills like organizing, mobilizing, leadership, and skill training etc.

### Methodology

Interested students were asked to register for volunteering the event. Though 170 students were registered initially, only 90 students participated totally as there was a holiday during the week end. Registered participants were made in to different groups and were assigned different responsibilities. A master plan was prepared for the visit. The visits were planned on two subsequent Saturdays (21$^{st}$ and 28$^{th}$ January 2017). On 21$^{st}$ January 80 students and on 28$^{th}$ January 35 students participated in the event. Each day all the students were made into ten groups and the following activities were carried out.

**Master plan**

| Time | Activity |
|------|----------|
| 07:30 - 08:00 AM | Assembling in front of MRD  Block, PES University |
| 08:00 - 09:30 AM | Commutation to Shining Star School by university bus |
| 10:00 - 10:30 AM | Orientation & HIV awareness program (by School Co-ordinator) |
| 10:30 - 11:00 AM | Birthday Celebration (PESU + School students) |
| 11:00 - 12:00 AM | Cultural programme – School students |
| 12.00 - 01:00  PM | Cultural programme – PESU Students |
| 01.00 - 01:30  PM | Lunch along with inmates |
| 01:30 - 03:00  PM | Skill Development Programme – PESU Students |
| 03:00 - 04:30  PM | Sports – (School students vs PESU Students) |
| 04.30 - 05:00  PM | Valedictory function |
| 05:00 - 06:30  PM | Commuting back to PESU |

### Skill development programme on 21st January 2017
Our day started with a brief introduction by the coordinator about the place, children staying there and about HIV infection, its spread and prevention. He spoke to the volunteers about the societal

outlook and significant other's approach towards this stigmatized community and also the problems that come along while taking care of them. He also explained about their everyday schedule and how strong, powerful and active they are growing into. After orientation, time was given to volunteers for asking questions. Volunteers asked questions related to HIV/AIDS. The program coordinator gave clarification for most of the questions.

Soon we started with the activities as per our plan for the kids. It started with birthday celebrations of all the kids who had their birthdays in the month January along with the PES volunteers who shared the birthday on the same month. There were 10 kids with 2 volunteers who celebrated their birthdays by cutting cake and singing. After this, the kids and the volunteers were split into 10 groups to participate in various activities planned beforehand and were as follows:
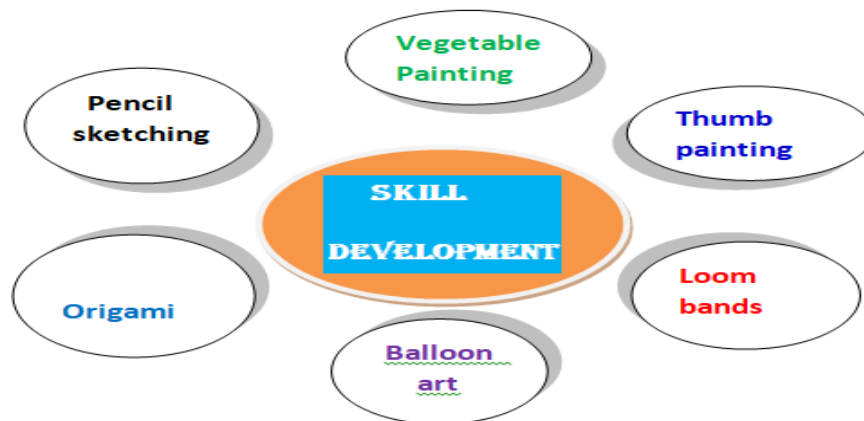


**Visit on 28th January 2017**
The activities planned were packed with fun and action. After a brief orientation on what Shining star school is about and what exactly HIV is, volunteers were allowed to interact with the children. Despite various differences, all these children had immense love for each other and considered each other to be family members. Each of the children were so inquisitive and knowledgeable that volunteers had to keep in pace with them. Activities planned for the day were as follows:
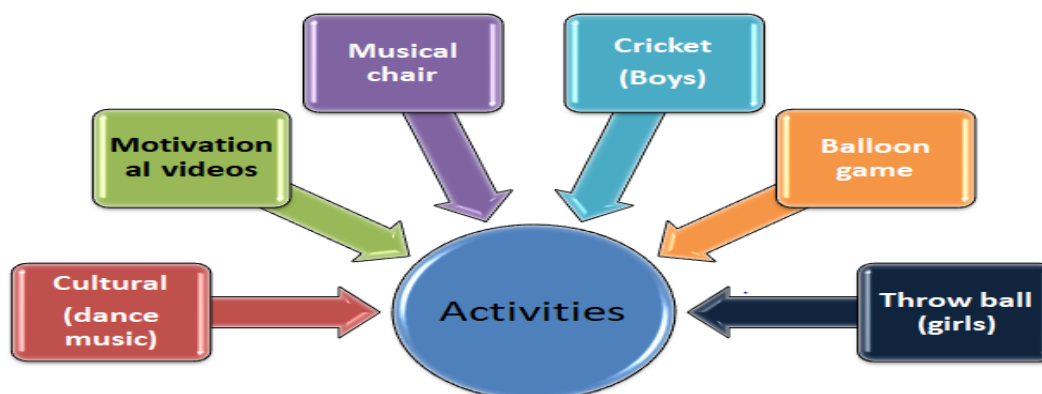


**Learning outcome**

Volunteers learnt various skills such as creative thinking, mobilizing, leadership, team work, and event management etc. Skill development programs conducted were successful which were enjoyed by the children and volunteers and were well appreciated by program coordinators. Volunteers became more aware of HIV and AIDS and, were able to understand life style and challenges faced by them in life. Thus, the entire visit was successful in helping student volunteers to apply social responsibility skills.

### 3.5. Blood Donation Camp - 2017

Donating blood is not only beneficial to the recipient but to the donor as well, having a greater impact on the recipient's life by giving them new hope and a new chance each day. Along with a feeling of satisfaction that they have impacted a life, the donor also receives medical benefits like prevention of hemochromatosis, lowering the risk of cancer, reducing heart and liver diseases and, production of new cells helps in maintaining good health. The aim of hosting BDC is to encourage students and staffs to donate blood, so as to aid the poor and under privileged when the need arises. The Blood Donation Camp is the yearly flagship event of the CSR club. It has been consistently hosted with passion by this club for the past five years. BDC 2017 was hosted on 20th March. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between CSR and blood banks. The MOU makes the blood banks compulsory to use 40% of the donated blood to meet the needs of the under privileged.

**Method**

The CSR whatsapp group profiling was done and the volunteer leaders were identified. The domains were operations, creativity, finance, hospitality, media and reports. Nearly 15 to 20 sub leaders were registered under each domain. Meetings were held and master plans for each domain activities were charted. The volunteers put all their efforts during breaks and let offs and during few class hours to make their group the best. The financial domain prepared a proposal for budget discussing with other domain heads.
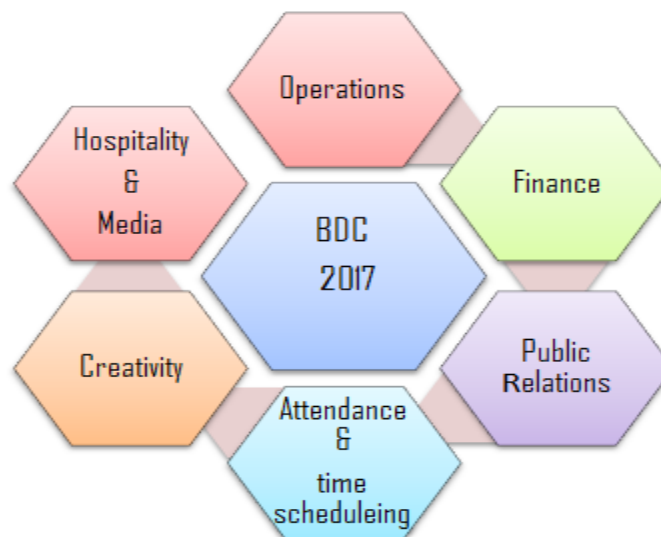
The operation team made the floor plan of the auditorium, the placement of blood banks, procuring of equipment and safe drinking water, setting up of chairs in the auditorium, arranging parking place for ambulances and delivered the numbers of ambulance and names of blood bank at the security gate. The attendance and time scheduling group had a huge responsibility of procuring time table of the entire classes in the campus and allocating time for the potential donors excluding their lab periods and submitting the same to the HODs & pasting the same information in the class notice boards for the donor's reference. The public relations group worked at the registration counters registering and assigning donors to respective blood banks. They also had a sign in & sign out system. The creativity team used all their talents to create awareness among people in the campus. Videos, posters (both handmade & digital) banners and class announcements were few among them. The hospitality team did vast research to give healthy and cost effective food to the blood bank staffs as well as to the volunteers. There were about 100 staffs and 75 volunteers. Scheduling the time for lunch by these people without breaking the donation was done well. The media people contacted televisions and other medias for coverage of the event so that other campuses can model the behaviour. Finally the event was published in The Times of India news paper.

**The process of donation**
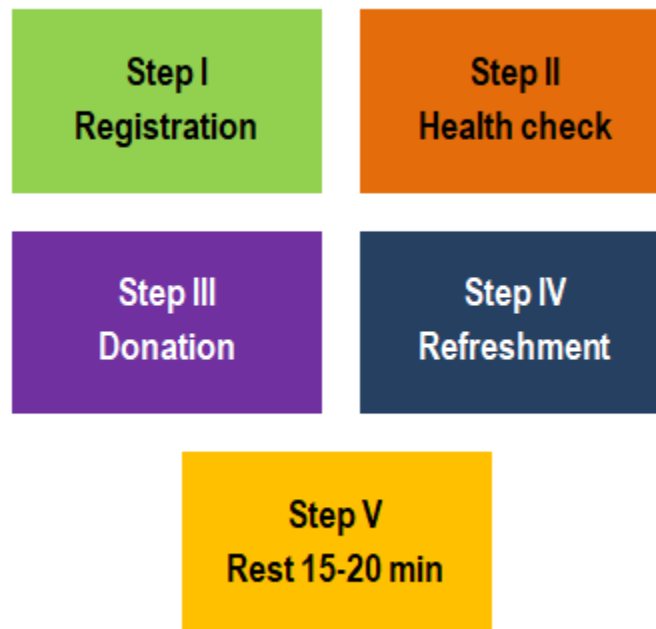


**Out comes**

Though everything was planned and scheduled well, one of the government blood banks arrived 2 hours late. Totally 887 units of blood were collected. The most units of blood were collected by the blood bank who initiated the donation on time (8.00 AM). They collected 276 units of blood in 8 hours. Another remarkable achievement is that our sister concern (The PES Medical College) joined us this time and collected 178 units of blood. From the statistics it is evident that about 11 to 12 % of students were open for voluntary blood donation which is similar to the last year's

statistics. The fear of needle and blood were one of the most important factors which prevented voluntary donation.

### 4.  Conclusions and Recommendations

**Key issues**

- Many universities do not have appropriate programmes, policies, strategies and guidelines on CSR initiatives and implementation.
- Lack of awareness, motivation, and interest among majority of the students, staff and managements in participating and contributing towards CSR.
- Faculties are considering, compensations such as self-recognition, acknowledgement or other incentives beyond their pay checks for their added responsibility towards CSR.
- Weak or lack of management's commitment and support to develop policies, procedures and guidelines on CSR and its implementation in the campuses (Mintzberg & Quoin,1991).
- Conflict of individual interest versus organizational obligations (Mintzberg and Quin (1991).
- Poor coordination and sharing of responsibilities related to CSR (Alexander, 1985).
- Lack of non existence or understanding of common fort folio among various departments, absence of communication and sharing.
- Lack of necessary exposure to some heads of departments on how to influence colleagues to undertake CSR activity in the University.
- Absence of communication and sharing among members or groups who volunteer on philanthropic activities in the campuses.
- Endeavour to uphold CSR activities often face organizational resistance and disinterest despite of the assurance by the top management.

**Recommendations**

- Implementation of CSR initiatives in the campuses is a key factor to compete with top universities in the world.
- Universities engaged in promoting CSR need to connect and collaborate with each other and learn best practises from each other.
- Hypothesis portfolio of successful CSR programmes to be published and made known to other Universities.
- Shareholders need to motivate and give time to implement socially responsible behaviours and community development programs involving stakeholders.
- Stakeholders need to utilize CSR as an opportunity for self development and development of their nation as well as the universe.
- Universities need to engage in writing projects in collaboration with other universities, business and non profit organisations.
- Initiate CSR as a special topic in the universities curriculum.
- Conduct competence building sessions in CSR in the campuses.
- Recognize and reward the faculty's commitment and extra effort in CSR and its implementation as a token of his/her social responsibility approach and attitude.

**Implications**

Initially though seven faculties showed interest in committing themselves without additional rewards for taking up additional responsibility, only two were truly participated in the CSR programs consistently for the past five years. Though during freshmen orientation around 25% students enrolled themselves for the CSR programme, due to various factors like academic pressure, new relationships, attraction towards other fun clubs and group politics among students only 4 to 5 % of the enrolled students continued till the end of their course. In addition we were able to note that few former volunteers continued demonstrating socially responsible behaviours. Yet another observation made was that the students who volunteered in CSR also performed better in their academics. In addition it was evident that those who were actively participated in the process improved their personal development and social skills. Effective participation further resulted in better placements in tyre 1 and tyre II companies. Regular engagement in CSR activities procured admissions in reputed universities across the world. Systematic CSR engagement and practices resulted in presenting papers and sharing experiences and expertise in various international conferences and publications. However challenges like resistance to change, culture, absence of structure, procedures and policies, non interested staff and students, corruption, mismatch between personnel and workload. Further inadequate information, scanty communications were noticed in systems of CSR. It was difficult to obtain certain information like finance related information and most activities were not documented many a times. Though the sustainable initiative was started with top level support it has not grown to be an institutional policy in these 5 years.

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