



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY MADRAS  
Office of Alumni and Corporate Relations

# THE SOCIAL IMPACT CLUB

An IIT Madras Initiative

***Topic: Establishing reliable metrics and assessment frameworks for measuring impact of CSR Projects***

**August 3rd, 2024 | Chennai Edition**

## THE SOCIAL IMPACT CLUB

The Social Impact Club is an IIT Madras initiative aimed at creating a forum for CSR professionals where key focus areas and challenges faced by the CSR community are discussed, shared and collaboratively addressed. This Club, a congregation of impact-driven CSR leaders, offers a unique opportunity to share insights, exchange ideas with industry experts, and contribute to shaping the future of CSR in our country.

The Social Impact Club also seeks to provide a platform for like-minded CSR leaders to connect, network, and build relationships that could lead to future collaborations and shared successes in the CSR domain.

## OBJECTIVES

During the inaugural meeting of The Social Impact Club, the CSR leaders joined hands to address these objectives:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the importance of impact measurement in CSR
- Participate in a focused group discussion on reliable metrics and assessment frameworks
- Network with like-minded professionals over breakfast

## **MODERATOR**

### **Mr. Nikhil Pant**

Nikhil Pant, a leading CSR expert in India, significantly contributed to CSR's 2013 rollout and has since worked with governments, corporates, and civil society on CSR impact and compliance. Active in the development sector since 1992, he has led CSR projects with REACHA, managed grants at Tech Mahindra Foundation, and shaped CSR policy at IICA. As the founder of LAKSHYAA, he advises on CSR and sustainability. Pant also trains professionals through the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India and HCL Foundation Academy and engages with major clients like HCL Foundation and ONGC. His work with the Indian Army in Kashmir is highly regarded.

## **PARTICIPANTS**

1. Mr. Narendra Kumar, AVP, Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Ltd
2. Mr Hemant Lohiya, CSR Head, Redington Foundation
3. Mr Henry Mesia, DGM Govt Relations, Health & Safety, RNTBCI
4. Mr Nagraj, VP Interrise Group
5. Mr Vignesh, Lead Interrise Group
6. Mr Vigneshwaran Ramalingam, Senior Manager, Sustainability and CSR, Axis Bank Ltd
7. Mr Ravi Bhatkal, MD, Macdermid Alpha Electronic Solutions
8. Mr Jibby Mathew, Lead CSR, Ford Motors Pvt Ltd
9. Mr Shankar Iyer, Director VBU, Transportations, Smart Cities, Johnson Controls India Pvt Ltd
10. Mr S Thomson, Manager - Public Affairs, Communications and Sustainability, Hindustan CocaCola Beverages
11. Mr Nithyanandhan S, Tamilnadu CSR Lead, Capgemini Technology Solutions Pvt Ltd
12. Mr Prakash B, Manager, Indian Oil Corporation Ltd

## **TEAM IIT MADRAS**

1. Prof Ashwin Mahalingam, Dean-designate, Office of Alumni and Corporate Relations
2. Mr Kaviraj Nair, CEO, Office of Institutional Advancement
3. Ms Vasudha Narasimhan, VP Corporate Relations, Office of Institutional Advancement

## DISCUSSION SUMMARY

Mr Nikhil Pant started off the discussion with inspiring thoughts about his experience in the CSR space and an interesting expansion for **CSR (C - Compassion, S - Serenity & R - Reflection)**.

Emphasizing the importance of self-reflection, he elaborated on how the last ten years have gone by for the CSR regulatory framework and how the next five years will shape up in terms of legislation opportunities. He elucidated on how it is critical that the proof of concept of the various CSR projects need to be highlighted to government agencies like the NITI Aayog which can in turn help in redefining the regulatory framework wherever required.

The in-depth discussion began with each participant introducing themselves and speaking about the unique CSR projects of their organizations. They also elaborated on the challenges they faced in project implementation, impact assessment and structuring the framework to measure the impact.

Mr. Ravi Bhatkal spoke about setting up of the Centre of Excellence for the electronics manufacturing project at IIT Madras to train young engineers and make them employment-ready and how it will have an impact on the per capita GDP. Mr. Narendra Kumar mentioned about the projects that his organization had supported to cater to the vision of the truck drivers that lead to fatal road accidents. This project aimed at establishing physical vision centers all over India for eye testing and making spectacles accessible to them. This also led to further initiatives like monitoring their general health and also highlighting the importance of meditation and other techniques to manage their stress. They had also built an app to optimize the ability of the trucks carrying the loads to various parts of the country.

Later, Mr. Jibby Mathew pointed out the need for a baseline study which will help in impact assessment of CSR projects and how currently because of the absence of a baseline study, impact measurement is done relying largely on perceptions and thoughts. The lack of KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) to measure impact can pose a serious challenge.

Prof. Ashwin Mahalingam spoke on 'Social Return on Investment', also mentioning the need to create a platform where metrics can be calculated and put across in the public domain. This led to Mr. Shankar Iyer talking about the need to structure a framework for the Social Return on Investment and how to bring a regulation/policy for greenwashing. Mr. Vigneshwaran Ramalingam spoke about how even minimal interventions in the lives of the people could make a major impact on their livelihood citing the example of the floods in the river Brahmaputra. Finally, Mr. Nagaraj mentioned Interrise Group's interest in partnering through CSR on road safety projects.

## SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- » Take CSR Success Stories as proof of concept to Government bodies to scale up at policy level.
- » The narrative of impact needs to be documented in a visual and easily understandable manner to enhance the reach of the message and assessment.
- » Social Return on Investment (SRoI) is to be measured along with the Qualitative and Quantitative measurements to assess the impact in a more meaningful manner. Basic standards for SRoI metrics need to be set up by the CSR Community.
- » Capacity building at the grassroots level will help eliminate gaps in assessing the baseline study and in bringing clarity in impact measurement.
- » Integration of outcomes at the proposal stage, scoping out the proposal based on KPIs and outcomes.

## CONCLUSION

The inaugural meeting of the Social Impact Club provided a valuable platform for CSR leaders to exchange ideas, address key challenges, and explore collaborative opportunities. Key discussion points included the need for robust impact measurement frameworks, the importance of baseline studies, and the potential for scaling successful CSR initiatives through government partnerships. These insights and recommendations offered a strong foundation for advancing meaningful CSR initiatives and enhancing their impact on society.