

# Can collaborative CSR model address societal issues?



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It has been close to 4 years since the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) rules were implemented in the country. This was done to give an impetus to CSR spending in the country. However a new recommendation by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs suggests that corporates can now collaborate with each other on social issues for a better outcome. In a move that could benefit the corporate sector at large, the government has allowed companies to enter into collaboration with each other to engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR).

“Collaborations, across sectors, for the achievement of a common cause, are usually beneficial as they result in a pool of resources and efforts,” says Pooja Murada, director, Communications, Sehgal Foundation. “The collective effort with a single objective can lead to its desired objective through structured planning, creative solutions, timely execution, and judicious use of all resources. On the corporate side, collaborations if are complementing and not competitive in nature happen between companies having a common development agenda, can bring about desired results. transparent,

, an action plan that leverages each stakeholder’s expertise and clear metrics to track impact can bring comprehensive programme for beneficiaries and achieve scale. The understanding and planning in the beginning should also plug expected challenges like competition, lack of attributable impact, insecurity about the brand strength of partners.”

According to her, for the implementation organisation, a clear reporting structure should be defined to avoid any ambiguity.

According to S Sathappan, Corporate Social Responsibility, Aspire Systems collaborative CSR model among organizations will definitely bring more expertise and resources to the table and will create a broad and structural impact to address key societal issues. “The scale and impact of CSR projects will definitely increase through this collaborative model. Organizations working on similar thematic areas like Education, Health, Environment etc can work together and contribute resources to develop and execute large & sustainable CSR projects.”

## Collaborative projects for corporates...

The S M Sehgal Foundation engages in strategic partnerships to build strong synergies and collaborate with organizations that help make a positive impact on the lives of rural people. The foundation continues to strengthen its knowledge base and expand village interventions by working with government, nonprofits, academia, media and corporate organizations.

“For example in the government sector, some of the esteemed partners are the Department of Science of Technology (DST), Government of India; National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), National Bank For Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). Multilaterally, we have partnered with the UNDP, UNICEF, Millenium Alliance (MA), UNESCO and others; bi-laterally with organizations such as the Embassy



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of Japan ('From the People of Japan') and the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany. Amongst corporates, projects have been initiated with: The Coca Cola Foundation, Mosaic, Bayer, Maruti Suzuki India Limited, Oracle, PI Foundation and others,” Pooja said.

Aspire Systems is not working on any collaborative models with other corporates but it does work with multiple stakeholders like non-profits, educational institutions, government agencies etc. in its CSR programs.

“We have worked with corporates on some of employee volunteering programs like coastal clean- up, tree plantation, support to sports event etc. In this case also, the program was conceptualized by non-profits and they forged partnerships with corporates from different regions and brought them together to realize project goals. Typically we see such partnerships during emergencies/natural disasters when lot of corporates come together to work/support rehabilitation efforts – food, shelter, clothes etc. We definitely have plans in mind to work with organizations having similar mind set like us and working on similar development projects,” Sathappan sums up.