

# **Status of Corporate ..... Responsibility in India, 2018**

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**Do Businesses Respect Human Rights?**  
.....

# Preface

Growth, measured through Gross Domestic Product, is hegemonic as a narrator of progress in today's India. It is facilitated in a context where businesses pursue profits, while doing comparatively little to integrate themselves within a holistic framework of social and environmental responsibility. Since the passing of the Companies Act 2013, the narrative of the two per cent spends on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been narrowing the wider accountability of India Inc. CSR is now assuming an increasingly important and strategic role given its ability to act as an enabler of basic human rights within communities. Given its extensive role in public goods delivery, what begs questioning is the approach to development that characterises companies' CSR efforts. The reality is that while businesses have been engaging across multiple domains of community development in India, they have negligible formal guidance on what to do, and how to do it.

Yet it is through their core business that corporations have their greatest impacts, and where, therefore, the most critical attention must be focused. There are a number of cases that stand testimony to gross failures on the part of corporations to respect human rights at the workplace and across supply chains. Last year, in one of the country's worst industrial accidents that claimed 43 lives, media reports suggested inadequate safety measures that could have been responsible for the explosion at the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC)'s Unchahar plant in Rae Bareilly. In another instance, clearly contravening Principle 1 of the NVGs, a diamond merchant made a safe exit from India after swindling and allegedly defrauding Punjab National Bank (PNB) of over Rs 12,000 crore in one of the worst bank scams in recent times. Recently, thirteen casualties were reported when Anti-Sterlite protests seeking the closure of the heavily polluting Sterlite Copper's smelter plant in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, turned violent. With its disregard for environmental rights and health impacts on communities, the Sterlite Copper unit has been in the centre of controversy for a while now.

Corporate Responsibility Watch (CRW) is an initiative that is attempting to unpack, track and monitor corporate responsibility as well as clearly separate it from the overpowering CSR narrative that tends to absolve companies of their responsibilities to the nine basic principles defined in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs' National Voluntary Guidelines (NVG) for responsible business. After having published analyses of Business Responsibility Reports (BRRs) through the series Disclosure Matters and three editions of the India Responsible Business Index, this is the third in the series of Status of Corporate Responsibility in India reports. The authors, all experts in their respective fields, have built on the analyses of the BRRs to unpack and nuance ground realities of corporate responsibility in India on issues as diverse as the dilution of environmental norms, corporate control of the media, bonded labour in the corporate sector and businesses and human rights defenders, among others. The report uses information available in the public domain, largely put across by companies themselves through their business responsibility reports, annual reports and annual CSR reports.

This report would not have been possible without valuable contributions by the organisations and networks associated with Corporate Responsibility Watch. We would also like to place on record our sincere thanks to the distinguished authors Digvijay Singh Bisht, Joyjeet Das, Lara Jesani, Malini Aisola, Matthew Jacob, Rajavelu K., Sowmya Bharadwaj, S. Srinivasan and Vijay Prakash. We would also like to thank Deepti Menon for providing overall support in data analysis and Anusha Chandrasekharan and Rohan Preece for report production and finalisation.

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# List of Abbreviations

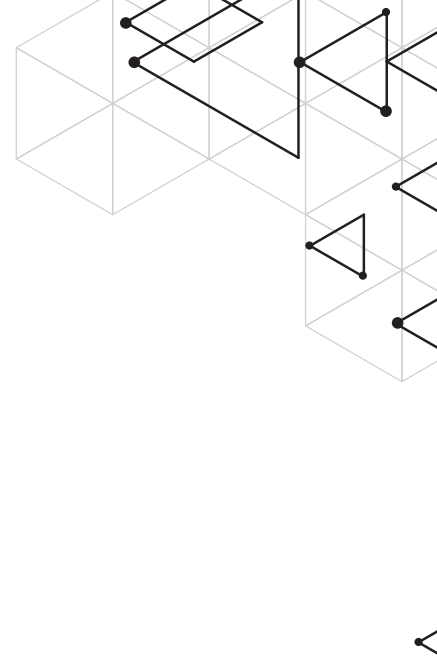
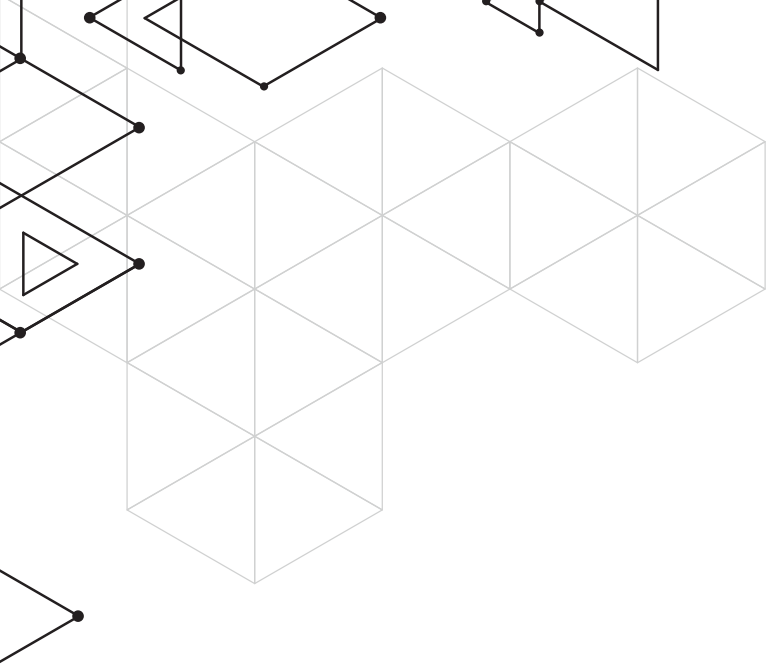
ABC	Audit Bureau of Circulations
AIUFWP	All-India Union of Forest Working People
API	Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient
BARC	Broadcast Audience Research Council of India
BCCL	Bennett Coleman and Company Limited
BIFR	Board of Industrial and Financial Reconstruction
BR	Business Responsibility
BRR	Business Responsibility Report
BSE	Bombay Stock Exchange
CAG	Comptroller and Auditor General
CDSCO	Central Drugs Standard Control Organization
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
CrPC	Criminal Procedure Code
CRZ	Coastal Regulation Zone
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
DCGIs	Drug Controller Generals
DEIAA	District Environment Impact Assessment Authority
DPCO	Drug Price Control Order
EAC	Expert Appraisal Committee
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMP	Environment Management Plan
EU	European Union
FDC	Fixed Dose Combinations
FICCI	Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
FSSAI	Food Safety and Standards Authority of India
HAL	Hindustan Antibiotics Limited
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus Infection and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HRD	Human Rights Defenders
HRDA	Human Rights Defenders Alert – India
IDPL	Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Limited
IICT	Indian Institute of Chemical Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOCL	Indian Oil Corporation Limited
IRBF	India Responsible Business Forum
IRBI	India Responsible Business Index
IRS	Indian Readership Survey
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KMSS	Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti
MAPE	Maximum Allowable Post-manufacturing Expenditure
MCA	Ministry of Corporate Affairs
MHA	Ministry of Home Affairs

MNC	Multinational Companies
MoEFCC	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NAP	National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights
NBA	Narmada Bachao Andolan
NCI	National Chemical Laboratory
NCST	National Commission of Scheduled Tribes
NG	National Guidelines on the Economic, Social and Environmental Responsibilities of Business
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NGT	National Green Tribunal
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission of India
NHSRCL	National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited
NLEM	National List of Essential Medicines
NPA	Non-Performing Assets
NPPP	National Pharmaceutical Pricing Policy
NSA	National Security Act
NSE	National Stock Exchange
NSS	Niyamgiri Suraksha Samiti
NVG	National Voluntary Guidelines on the Social, Environmental and Economic Responsibilities of Business
PPSS	Posco Pratirodh Sangram Samiti
PSU	Public Sector Undertakings
RBI	Reserve Bank of India
RJMSC	Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation
RRI	Rights and Resources Initiative
RRL	Regional Research Laboratory
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCB	Schedule Commercial Banks
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEBI	Securities and Exchange Board of India
SEIAA	State Environment Impact Assessment Authority
SIPCOT	State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu
SLA	State Licensing Authorities
ST	Scheduled Tribe
ToR	Terms of References
TRIPS	Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
TNMSC	Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation
UAPA	Unlawful Activities Prevention Act
UN	United Nations
UNGC	United Nation Global Compact
UNGP	United Nations Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
WHO	World Health Organization
WPT	World Press Trends
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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*\*The views of all authors are personal and do not necessarily represent the views of their organisations.*



Part 1

# The Big Picture

## Chapter 1:

# Will National Guidelines Provide the Much Needed Boost to Business and Human Rights?

- Amita Joseph<sup>1</sup>, Karandeep Bhagat<sup>2</sup>, Subhash Mittal<sup>3</sup>, Dheeraj<sup>4</sup>, Rohan Preece<sup>5</sup>, Deepti Menon<sup>4,6</sup>

2017-18 saw India overtake France to become the world's sixth largest economy by GDP<sup>7</sup>, gain thirty places from the previous year in the international Ease of Doing Business Ranking to place it in the top-100<sup>8</sup> and some stunning earnings for India Inc. Indian Oil Corporation posted a record net profit of Rs. 21,346 crore, among private sector companies, Reliance Industries achieved a highest-ever net profit of Rs. 36,075 crore,<sup>9</sup> and in April to June 2018, the economy grew at 8.2 per cent - the highest in two years<sup>10</sup>. Many across Government, business and the media, have warmly received these developments, But is this all good news?

As some economists pointed out, the per capita GDP presents a very different picture where India ranks a lowly 126 globally<sup>11</sup>. At the same time, profits in general are evidently not being distributed equally: in 2017, 73 per cent of the wealth generated went to the richest one per cent; and the wealth of this elite group increased by Rs. 20,913 billion<sup>12</sup>: an amount equivalent to the total budget of Central Government in 2017-18. To put things in perspective, India's top 10 per cent of population holds 73 per cent of the wealth and it would take around 17.5 days for the best paid executive at a top Indian garment company to earn what a minimum wage worker in rural India will earn in their lifetime (presuming 50 years at work)<sup>13</sup>. Another face of inequality is the millions not able to access work – 31 million counted this year – the highest figure in two years<sup>14</sup>, and a reminder that the high rate of economic growth does not necessarily lead to universal employment. Among those in work, there are severe inequities: women's participation in the workforce – at just 27 per cent - is significantly below the average for Asia-Pacific, and there are signs it is declining<sup>15</sup>. Additionally, 82 per cent of male workers and 92 per cent of female workers

in India earn less than Rs. 10,000 a month<sup>16</sup>. Wage disparities, meanwhile, are even starker between scheduled castes and scheduled tribes on the one hand, and upper castes on the other hand: with the more disadvantaged groups earning on average 56 per cent and 55 per cent, respectively, of upper caste earnings. Meanwhile, the efforts to pursue growth, and ease the path of business, have been coinciding with the easing of many labour regulations, with concerning regressions in areas such as collective bargaining and equal pay for equal work<sup>17</sup>; and proposals to enable further contractualisation<sup>18</sup>, which means, among other things, lower wages for workers.

As events this past year have illustrated, some obtain their wealth with a little help from their friends. Recent years have seen a number of frauds related to the banking system unearthed. This includes the Nirav Modi swindling of Punjab National Bank, in a flourish of crony capitalism. Over recent months, another major bank, ICICI bank, has come under severe scrutiny, amid allegations of nepotism.

Corporate irresponsibility can also, in varying ways, cost lives. The murder of 13 protestors, including a 17-year-old student, in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, in May 2018, was a brutal example of State aggression towards an unarmed crowd. The crowd was attempting to build awareness of the wider society on environmental pollution and consequent health hazards to local villagers caused by M/s Sterlite, which is owned by London-based Vedanta. The incident presents a complex picture of State aggression in defence of corporate interests. Indeed, that the Government banned the functioning of the Plant subsequently justifies the protest. Sadly, the reactions of authorities were not isolated in the Indian context: rather, they form part of an upward trend of repression of protests



and civic activism over recent years<sup>19</sup>.

The incident in Unchahar, Rae Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh, was another example of how corporate irresponsibility can also cost lives. The explosion at NTPC's coal-fired power plant in November 2017, which took the lives of 43 workers, could have been prevented if the staff concerned had taken a more precautionary approach after becoming aware of excessive ash build up in one of the gas boilers. NTPC does not have an automated system for measuring ash build up, so relies on physical inspections. An internal report prepared by the company said that an earlier shut down would have been sensible.

Today, business leaders are garlanded at 'CSR' awards as if they were doing something much

more than complying with the law; but no 2 per cent CSR story, however positive, should be allowed to camouflage corporate irresponsibility. India's corporations have a real opportunity to redress social inequalities, to transform the conditions of their workers and those working across their value chains, to safeguard the human rights of local communities as well as to ensure that the environment is protected: indeed, of contributing to national development, as envisaged in the National Voluntary Guidelines. But are they ready for the responsibilities that this entails? As part of the Status of Corporate Responsibility in India 2018 study, disclosures of 200 randomly sampled private and public sector top 500 BSE listed companies were analysed. This and other sources, offer a helpful reality check.

## Are businesses a force for inclusion in the workplace?

Women continue to be underrepresented in most of the businesses featured in this study. In only three per cent of the businesses were more than half the workers women. On the other hand, more than 50 per cent of the businesses had a male to female ratio of 10:1, or worse. This can be seen in figure 1.1 below.

People with disabilities are also grossly underrepresented among permanent employees. Although disabled people make up more than 2

per cent of the population of India (more than the entire population of Australia), over 65 per cent of businesses studied have either zero disabled employees, or 1 per cent or lower. Furthermore, 43 of the 200 businesses studied do not even report this data, meaning that almost 90 per cent of the largest businesses in India either do not proportionately include disabled people, or do not think their stakeholders are interested in whether they include them or not. This is seen in figure 1.2 below.

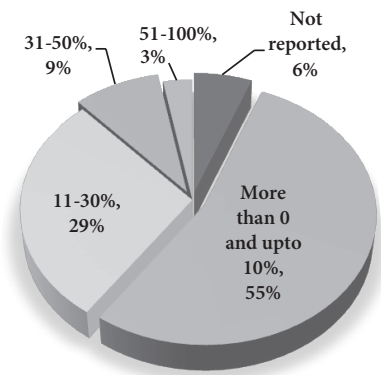


Fig 1.1: Permanent Women Employees (n=200)

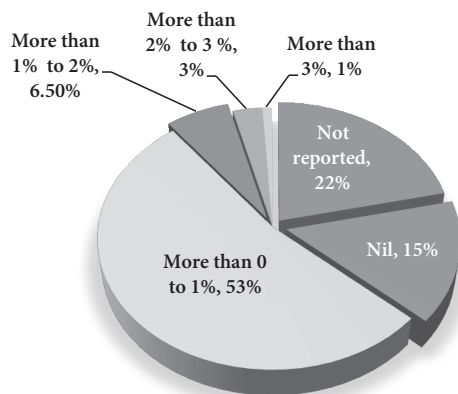


Fig 1.2: Permanent Disabled Employees (n=200)

Given the vulnerabilities of many disabled people, to discrimination, to social exclusion and to poverty; but also because of their human rights,

and the contributions they can make, it is critical that India's businesses do more to provide them with opportunities for permanent employment.

## Contractualisation: a widespread phenomenon

A myopic focus on reducing human resource expenditure in the shorter term can obscure recognition of some of the conditions needed to ensure dignity and well-being in the workplace and, beyond it, the security necessary to protect against poverty, from one generation to the next.

Among the surveyed businesses, the majority of those that provided data indicated that contractual workers make up 26 per cent or more of their workforce (seen in Figure 1.3 alongside) – a significant number. As may be expected, incidence of contractual employment is highest among private companies, though the incidence of high contractualisation (51 or more or more) is approximately equal among private companies and PSUs. Contract workers, apart from facing uncertainty about long-term employment prospects, often receive lower wages

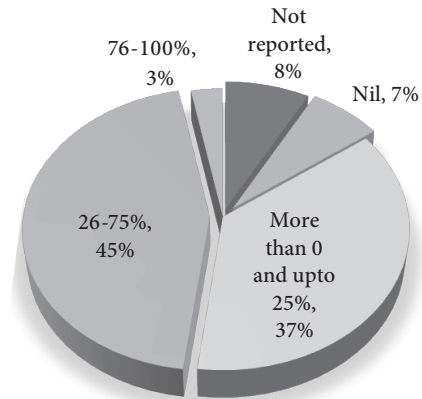


Fig 1.3: Total Contractual workers (n=200)

than permanent workers. This distribution of contractual workers in PSUs and non-PSUs can be seen in Figure 1.4 below.

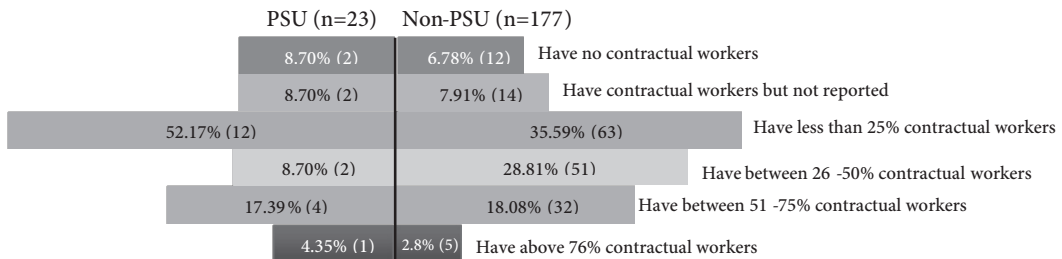


Figure 1.4: Distribution of contractual employees across workforce of PSUs and non-PSUs

## Do workers have freedom to associate?

A key tool for enhanced worker rights is the ability to freely associate within the workplace and discuss and attend to issues of shared concern and interest. This is a Constitutional right, but one that is currently available only in 55 per cent of India's top 200 randomly selected companies. In this pool of companies, 73 did not have a recognised association, and 17 did not report whether they had such an association or not. Of the 110 companies that recognised employees' union, 92

provided actual membership data. Between private and public sector companies, it was found that levels of recognition were higher among the public sector companies (83 per cent as compared to 51 per cent). It is notable that the focus here is only on permanent employees: once we account for other categories of workers (such as contractual workers), the levels of participation in employee associations will be shown to be far lower. Details can be seen in figure 1.5 below.

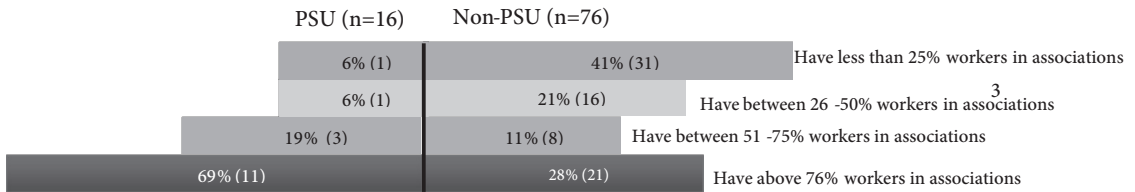


Figure 1.5: Distribution of percentage representation of permanent employees in associations in PSUs and non-PSUs

## Policies for whom?

Beyond the workplace and the boardrooms, businesses' social and environmental impacts unfold across their supply chains. Here, especially but not only in the initial tiers, millions of workers contribute invisibly to the process of production, in contexts that may be illegal or where the law is flouted with impunity. Business impacts, as numerous cases clearly illustrate, also occur in communities, especially but not limited to those near which they are located.

The question arises as to how well stakeholder concerns are integrated into policy, considering the vastness of Indian corporations' stakeholder communities. How many Indian businesses are interested in identifying their external stakeholders and their value chains? The table below presents a glimpse of the same.

Table 1.1: Status of implementation mechanisms related to National Voluntary Guideline Principles 2016-17 (n=200)

Indicator	Ethics, Transparency & Accountability	Product Life-cycle Sustainability	Employee Well Being	Stakeholder Engagement	Human Rights	Environment	Public Advocacy	Inclusive Growth	Customer Value
Policy formulation in consultation with relevant stakeholder	181	169	184	178	170	177	127	180	167
Policy has been approved by the board	183	155	169	168	159	167	120	179	154
Policy communicated to all relevant stakeholders	171	159	170	168	158	166	130	171	159
Existence of the grievance redressal mechanism	194	181	193	183	179	177	143	180	177
Carried out independent audit of working of the policy	142	134	141	135	134	140	110	143	133

As the table above indicates, the vast majority of businesses that were surveyed claim that they formed policies against NVG Principles in consultation with relevant stakeholders, had the policies approved by the board, communicated it to relevant stakeholders, and also established a

grievance redressal mechanism. For the significant number of companies that have not have carried out an independent audit of various NVG-related policies, it raises questions about the inclination, or competence, of businesses to identify stakeholders systematically, especially the most

marginalised. It is also concerning that whilst, in another area of their Business Responsibility Reports, more than 75 per cent (154) of companies studied say they have identified marginalised stakeholders, less than 40 per cent (73) have listed who they are and indicated engagement with these stakeholders.

Given the size of Indian businesses, the scale of their value chains and of their community level

impacts, these figures suggest a fundamental lack of due diligence among Indian companies. Yet without rigorous processes to identify stakeholders, the definition of materiality – of who and what is material for a business (now a key principle of reporting) is more than likely to be reduced to the bottom line, whilst the question of which public it is that policies are actually written for, still remains.

## **NPAs: to what extent are they a problem of lack of capacity?**

For a number of service sectors, such as the financial sector, their value chain includes entities that receive finance. Further, their impacts are bound up with the conditions, or lack thereof, that are attached to their financing decisions. However, there is very little evidence of banks and insurance companies of what may be termed ‘upward accountability’ towards the value chain, exercising what the UN Guiding Principles term as leverage to influence their businesses partners. Very few banks publically disclose a policy or system for environmental and social risk assessment.

Noteworthy, in this respect, is the scale of the NPA crisis, which saw bad loans reach a staggering Rs

10.25 lakh crore – a 16 per cent increase from the previous quarter - at the end of March 2018. This would seem to suggest that a large number of Indian banks are not able to effectively assess credit risk. Clearly, there may be more to this than meets the eye: it cannot be assumed that when banks do not appear to take account of various risks, including non-financial risks, that they do so simply because of technical deficiencies – other factors may well be at play. But in the absence of public disclosure of how they assess credit risk, the citizen is - at the very least - entitled to demand transparency on which criteria are being applied.

## **CSR: spending where it is most needed?**

A closer look at the CSR spend across various sectors in the FY 2016-17 (amounting to INR 13,464 crore<sup>20</sup>) sheds light on the fact that as in previous years, areas such as education, health and rural development make up the bulk of expenditure with 38 per cent, 25 per cent and 11 per cent respectively, of the total share of CSR spend. Yet, whilst businesses are investing considerable sums, and occupying key roles in the delivery of services critical to the realisation of fundamental rights, they are, beyond the provision of a basic framework, receiving precious little guidance on how to spend it; with more emphasis being on the need, simply, to spend.

Table 1.2 below details the geographical distribution of CSR spending and what emerges is that expenditure is highest in some of India’s most

industrialised states. On the face of it, it is not surprising as the presence of industries will tend to be associated with CSR activity, and there may be good reasons to justify this. However, the data also shows that some of the poorest states in India are relatively underserved by CSR funds.

The data raises some salient questions. What methods, for example, are companies using to assess the efficacy of CSR from a human development and human rights perspective? What happens when CSR fails to deliver? What effective accountability mechanisms are in place, given that companies, unlike government administrations, cannot be voted out?

Among states, striking comparisons can be made between, for example, Bihar, which received Rs 94.4 crore of CSR funds in 2016-17, and

Table 1.2: Geographical Distribution of CSR spending in the year 2016-17

Ranking	State	Amount spent FY 2016-17 (INR Cr.)	Ranking	State	Amount spent FY 2016-17 (INR Cr.)
1	Maharashtra	2222.25	11	Madhya Pradesh	282.03
2	Karnataka	843.49	12	West Bengal	274.7
3	Gujarat	779.88	13	Assam	268.87
4	Andhra Pradesh	729.97	14	Telangana	221.26
5	Delhi	478.63	15	Kerala	117.54
6	Tamil Nadu	470.54	16	Uttarakhand	94.64
7	Haryana	346.56	17	Jharkhand	94.63
8	Rajasthan	318.88	18	Bihar	94.4
9	Uttar Pradesh	312.74	19	Chhattisgarh	80.36
10	Odisha	311.96	20	Punjab	67.19

Source: <https://csr.gov.in/CSR/index16.php>

Maharashtra, which received Rs 2222.25 Crore. This chasm exists despite Maharashtra's superior performance on most indicators of human development, and the states' similar populations: with Maharashtra's only around 10 per cent greater than Bihar's.

Further, we also find that within Maharashtra itself, far from CSR money being spent equitably across the State, or going to the poorest regions, there is evidence that it is being concentrated in certain areas. This can be seen in the Figure 1.6 below<sup>22</sup>:

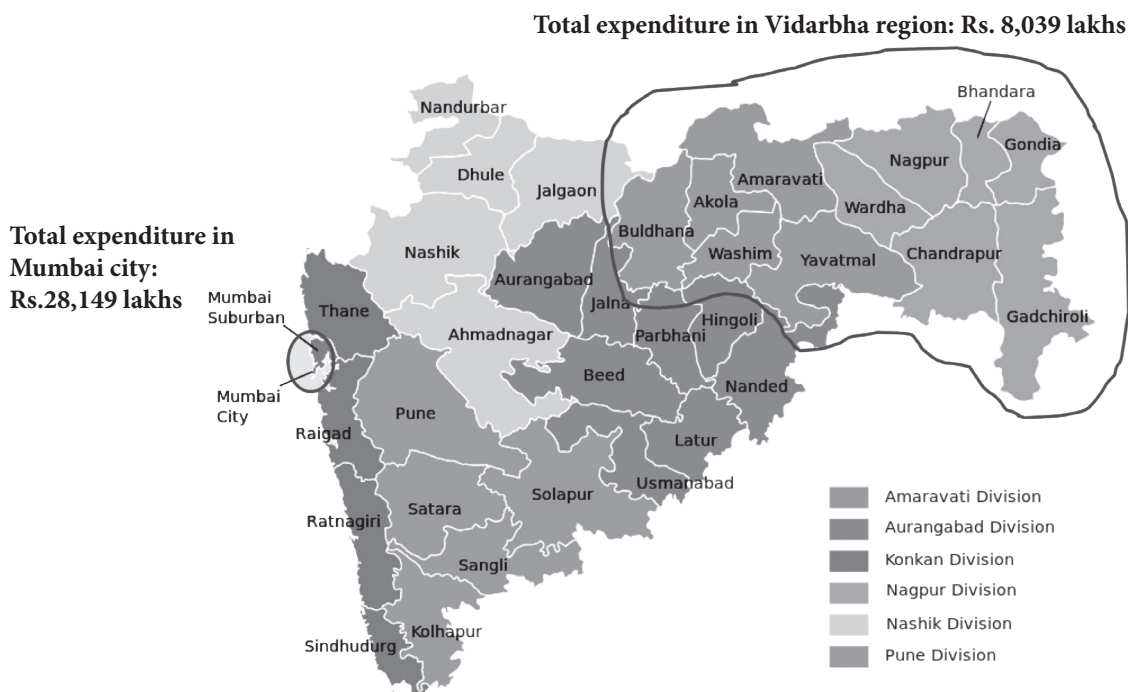


Figure 1.6: Comparison of CSR expenses on the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra and Mumbai city

The total CSR spend in Mumbai City is approximately 3.5 times that of the entire Vidarbha region, the poorest region in the State, with a larger population and far larger geographical area than Mumbai. Even within Vidarbha, spending is skewed – Nagpur, home to the State's third largest city, receives a far greater share than most other districts. This supports the view that CSR is not necessarily a driver of more equitable human development across

## Government measures

The Government has been active in some areas of regulation of business, and in certain key domains of the business responsibility ecosystem. Preliminary notices were issued to 272 companies for failure to comply with the CSR spending requirements stipulated by the 2013 Companies Act<sup>23</sup>. In the past year there has also been a crackdown on so-called 'shell companies'. A staggering 5.43 lakh businesses were closed at the end of June 2018, with only 66 per cent of 17.79 lakh companies in the country found to be active. Being in a persistent state of dormancy was not the only reason companies were closed: over 2.25 lakh companies were slated to be deregistered under the 2013 Companies Act, part of an attempt to root out black money and illegal activities. SEBI has also dealt firmly with the world's second largest professional services company, Price

## Conclusion

Businesses have enormous opportunity to shape the lives and destinies of people in India. However, in the midst of their extraordinary power and influence, there are severe doubts around the sincerity of their attention to the interests of people they impact. As the above data illustrates, in terms of areas such as freedom of association, gender equity, and stakeholder engagement, the largest Indian corporations are failing to rise to their responsibilities.

There is a clear need for effective instruments of public accountability, and particularly of better means of measuring private sector impacts.

the country, nor does it help to address areas of greatest need. Instead, there are other factors that appear to determine spending, which may include convenience, visibility, and other prerogatives of companies themselves. CSR spending can be a force for good, but, without adequate management and direction, it can actually serve to widen certain inequalities, or, at the very least, fail to do enough to combat them.

Waterhouse Coopers, banning its firms from auditing listed companies, after finding PWC responsible for certifying the false accounts of Satyam Computer Services from 2000 to 2008<sup>24</sup>.

This year, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs also renewed its commitment to a renamed National Guidelines on the Economic, Social and Environmental Responsibilities of Business, facilitating a process of public consultation and stakeholder feedback. The decision was also made to extend SEBI's Business Responsibility Reporting to Top 500 BSE-listed Companies. The Government of India also took steps towards a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights: a key responsibility under Pillar 1 of the United Nations Guiding Principles.

This need is underlined as more businesses are entrusted with the delivery and management of public goods. Here, CSR is just one small part of the story; with this shift visible in many other areas. Notably, following the National Health Policy of 2017, the Government this year announced Ayushman Bharat, a national health insurance scheme designed to make healthcare affordable to crores of underserved Indians. A silver bullet? Perhaps not, given the challenges of marshalling the private sector to make healthcare available to all, yet sustainable within the limits of the insurance<sup>25</sup>. Integral to the healthcare ecosystem are pharmaceutical companies, whose



track record tends to suggest that business priorities will, by default, take precedence over the interests of the last in line. This speaks of a wider concern: whether it really is in the public interest to place so much dependence on the private sector for the realisation of Fundamental Rights.

On this question, the jury is most definitely out. Businesses in India have a lot to do in order to convince of their intent as well as their capacity to uphold the Constitution and serve the public interest, especially the interests of their most marginalised stakeholders. For a start, there must be greater recognition that the sustainability of businesses is not reducible to the sustainability of its business; and, normatively, that what is material for a business is the interests of the society and environment on which it depends. In this spirit, efforts to respect human rights and the environment must be integrated into policies and systems; and corporate governance must recognise that if growth and profits serve any ultimate purpose, it is to better serve these ends. Ultimately, if businesses are to contribute constructively to national development, they need to abide by democratic values and allow themselves to be kept in check.

To some extent, the Government seems to understand that business needs more guidance and, in certain respects, a flashing of regulatory

teeth and a more stringent demeanour. This year, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs renewed its commitment to a renamed National Guidelines on Economic, Social and Environmental Responsibilities of Business. Further, SEBI's decision to extend the Business Responsibility Reports mandate to the Top 500 BSE-listed companies marks a highly significant extension of the Right to Information to the private sector. More effort is needed, though, to devise ways of ascertaining that whatever is promised in policy measures up in practice. The Government's steps taken towards a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights are arguably the most significant of all, and extremely welcome, in terms of what they promise for a new environment for responsible business. Progressive systems and standards to ensure more transparent corporate governance as well as corporate responsibility are not new to India. But the voluntary emphasis of the erstwhile national guidelines and other global standards gave them a 'friendly' spin, which made companies take them less seriously. The hope is, that with more regulatory oversight mechanisms, companies respond with due seriousness, and demonstrate constructive intent if they are keen to reap the benefits of the domestic and global capital markets.

1. Business and Community Foundation
2. Centre for Social Equity and Inclusion
3. Socio-Research and Reforms Foundation
4. Praxis Institute for Participatory Practices
5. Partners in Change
6. With inputs from Mary George, Pradeep Narayanan, Shireen Kurian and Tom Thomas
7. According to World Bank data, India's GDP is now at \$2.597 trillion <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/india-scores-over-france-in-gdp/article24392629.ece>
8. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2017/10/31/india-jumps-doing-business-rankings-with-sustained-reform-focus>
9. <https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/ioc-most-profitable-psu-for-second-consecutive-year/article24045171.ece>
10. <https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/at-82-april-june-gdp-growth-touches-two-year-high/article24837044.ece>
11. <https://www.businesstoday.in/top-story/imf-rankings-india-per-capita-gdp-terms-imf-ppp-world-economic-outlook/story/264384.html>
12. <https://www.oxfamindia.org/blog/2101/15-shocking-facts-about-inequality-india>

13. ibid
14. <https://qz.com/india/1216899/indias-unemployment-climbs-to-7-at-31-million-and-is-set-to-worsen/>
15. Asia-Pacific scores 0.44 on average in terms of gender equality in work, whereas India scores 0.3, according to McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) [http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/64655536.cms?utm\\_source=contentofinterest&utm\\_medium=text&utm\\_campaign=cppst](http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/64655536.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst)
16. [https://cse.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/State\\_of\\_Working\\_India\\_2018.pdf](https://cse.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/State_of_Working_India_2018.pdf)
17. <https://www.theweek.in/news/biz-tech/2018/08/06/labour-reforms-cost-optimising-india-economy.html>
18. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/don-t-amend-labour-law-to-hire-contractual-workers-for-permanent-jobs-bms-tells-govt/story-Q5rsN8CY9bJO0bJvF3DWMN.html>
19. See [https://www.globalwitness.org/documents/19122/Defenders\\_of\\_the\\_earth\\_report.pdf.pdf](https://www.globalwitness.org/documents/19122/Defenders_of_the_earth_report.pdf.pdf) as referenced in <https://scroll.in/article/880388/thoothukudi-massacre-is-a-tragic-reminder-that-india-is-in-the-grip-of-a-state-corporate-nexus>
20. Source: <https://csr.gov.in/CSR/developmentlist.php>
21. <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/3KhGMVXGxXcGYBRMsmDCFO/Why-Kerala-is-like-Maldives-and-Uttar-Pradesh-Pakistan.html>
22. Source: [https://csr.gov.in/CSR/state.php?csr\\_spent\\_range=&year=FY%202015-16&compCat=&district=&mact=&state=Maharashtra](https://csr.gov.in/CSR/state.php?csr_spent_range=&year=FY%202015-16&compCat=&district=&mact=&state=Maharashtra); Image attribution: By Maharashtra\_locator\_map.svg; User:PlaneMadderivative work: Kaajawa (talk) - Maharashtra\_locator\_map.svg, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=16143635>
23. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/business/india-business/govt-issues-preliminary-notices-to-272-cos-for-csr-violations/articleshow/65117564.cms>
24. <https://www.firstpost.com/business/sebi-bans-pwc-for-2-years-it-is-unprecedented-but-a-wake-up-call-for-auditors-others-associated-with-capital-markets-4301175.html>
25. [http://www.picindia.org/wp-content/uploads/Pharma-and-Healthcare\\_31-Jan.pdf](http://www.picindia.org/wp-content/uploads/Pharma-and-Healthcare_31-Jan.pdf)