An exploratory study on awareness towards institutional social responsibility in Indian higher education institutions

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ABSTRACT

Institutional Social Responsibility (ISR) in context to a Higher Educational Institution has been defined as the ethical practice in transference of knowledge, and the active participation in betterment of quality of life in the society. It is an offshoot of the concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), but unlike CSR, it is neither mandatory nor actively monitored or researched in Indian context. However, awareness towards aspects of ISR has been increasing, especially in Indian Universities. Indian Universities adopt practices related to Adoption of Villages, Awareness Drives, Environmental Care and Rural Education initiatives. Critics often see ISR as an unnecessary burden; Review of literature from around the world suggests that ISR practices contribute to increased accountability towards exploitation of resources by Educational Institutes as well as better reputation of Educational Institutes in the society. The purpose of this paper is to examine the perception towards the concept of ISR in Educational Institutes in India. The paper opted for a questionnaire-based exploratory survey of 50 faculty members, across Private Universities in Rajasthan. The findings suggest lacking awareness but a significant acceptance of need of ISR practices. The paper includes implications for the Universities to include ISR practices in their strategy to address its obligations to the society and simultaneously gain a competitive advantage.

1 INTRODUCTION

Any discussion on the growth and potential of India oscillates between the countless economic opportunities that the nation is learning to harness and the plentiful social problems that characterize national and global sentiment. Remarkably, for India, this oscillation sweeps an abnormally wide arc – while India displaced Japan to become the third-largest world economy, it houses more poor people than anywhere on earth. Such instances indicate the uneven distribution of benefits of growth, which are the prime cause of this restless oscillation.

The revelation and recognition of the unjustified distribution of opportunities has led to a paradigm shift in the behaviour of the stakeholders of the economy. With the increased intervention and integration between and within economies, the significance of collaborative sowing and collective reaping has intertwined the interests of the Business and Society. Each has evolved into an active and concerned investor in economic growth, seeking a fair return on its efforts. The assertion of society for its share in the pie has led to emergence of concepts such as Corporate Social Responsibility, further fading the line that differentiates the two realms. Contributions by companies towards social benefit and community development are kept under strict scrutiny, and with the growing consciousness of the gap between haves and have-nots, this scrutiny will only increase along with rising social expectations to end this unrest. Governments as well as regulators have responded to this unrest and the National Voluntary Guidelines for Social, Environmental and Economic Responsibilities of Business or the NVGs (accompanied by the Business Responsibility Reports mandated by the SEBI for the top 100 companies) and the CSR clause within the Companies Act, 2013 are two such instances of the steps taken (Confederation of Indian Industries, 2013).

However, the concept of CSR transcends beyond the "corporate". The phenomenon of privatisation has invaded the "non-corporate" or "non-profit" sector, such as Education. The Education landscape is witness to rapid privatisation as well as commercialization. The manners in which Higher Educational Institutes, such as Universities,

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are organized and directed resemble the business organization. In addition, during the adaptation of this business-like approach, some institutions are discovering the importance of corporate image, corporate identity, corporate reputation and mainly CSR as a reputation and an advantage building strategy (Dahan & Senol, 2012). It is thus vital for these organizations to present themselves as socially responsible institutions. The concept of Institutional Social Responsibility (ISR) emerges from the increasing need to incorporate CSR practices into non-profit institutional policy. Formal proposition of Institutional Social Responsibility as an organizational policy will compel a non-profit institution to contribute to the larger schema of developmental effort. This research seeks to discover the awareness, acceptance and appliance of the concept of ISR in Private Universities.

Research Problem

The following statements sufficiently sum up the research problem –

- Is there a need to stretch the concept of CSR to accommodate non-profit organizations?
- Is there a need to propound the concept of ISR formally?
- Is the concept of Institutional Social Responsibility, if not nonexistent, unduly unacknowledged?
- If Universities are adopting business strategies to survive in the competitive landscape, mustn't they also inherit the liability towards the social betterment?
- Even if a University accepts its ISR obligation, is there a functional support system or formal guideline to serve as a directive reference?
- What are the opportunities and challenges in incorporation of ISR into operational practice by a Private University?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR does not have a universally accepted definition, yet the pioneering attempts defined it as "(it) refers to the obligations of businessmen to pursue those policies, to make those decisions, or to follow those lines of action which are desirable in terms of the objectives and values of our society" (Bowen, 1953) .

Corporate Social Responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of the workforce and their families as well as of the local community and society. (Holme & Watts, 2000)

Further, to meet its social duties "(an enterprise) should have in place a process to integrate social, environmental, ethical human rights and consumer concerns into their business operations and core strategy in close collaboration with their stakeholders."

CSR has emerged as a valuable and necessary strategy to the competitive business environment of today. Yet besides creating a good reputation and a competitive advantage, CSR can help the business world to contribute to the well-being of the society, as successful corporations need a healthy society. (Porter & Kramer, 2006)

Inclusion of Mandatory CSR in Companies Act, 2013

Once seen as a voluntary moral obligation, the concept has evolved into a more formal, structured policy element. The inclusion of mandatory CSR in New Companies Act, 2013, by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs is a testimony to this radical transformation.

Clause 135 of New Companies Act, 2013 includes following criteria for Corporate Social Responsibility –

- Net worth – Rs. 500 Crores or more OR
- Turnover – Rs. 1000 Crores or more OR
- Net Profit – Rs. 5 Crores or more

If any company during any of the financial year fulfils, any of above conditions then it should –

- Constitute a CSR committee of Board, which shall consist of minimum three directors, out of which one shall be independent director.
- The committee shall formulate and recommend CSR Policy, which indicates company's activity as, specified in Schedule VII and amount recommend for the same.
- At least 2% of the average net profit of the immediately preceding three financial years of the company shall be used for spending in accordance with the CSR Policy.

- According to the approach "Comply or Explain", Board should explain the reason for not spending such amount if it fails to do so.
- The company shall give preference to its local area from where it operates, for CSR activities.

According to Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs, a minimum of 6,000 Indian companies will be required to undertake CSR projects in order to comply with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 with many companies undertaking these initiatives for the first time. Further, some estimates indicate that CSR commitments from companies can amount to as much as 20,000 Crore. INR (Confederation of Indian Industries, 2013).

The Commercialization Argument against Higher Education

The role of higher education institutions is a topic that has to be studied separately and discussed deeply, in order to make a comparison between higher education and traditional corporate, the responsibility of the higher education institutions can be summarized as transferring the knowledge to the new generations by teaching, training and doing research; determining a balance between basic and applied research and between professional training and general education; meeting the priority needs of their respective societies. (UNESCO 1991)

However, recent changes have casted higher education institutions into an ambiguous arena that looks more like a consumer goods marketplace. (Goia & Thomas, 1996)

Higher education in India has witnessed an impressive growth over the years. The number of higher educational institutions (HEIs) has increased from about 30 universities and 695 colleges in 1950-51 to about 700 universities (as of 2012-13) and 35,000 colleges (as of 2011-12) as per a recent UGC report. With an annual enrolment of above 25 million (including enrolment under Open and Distance Learning system), India is today ranked as the third largest higher education system in the world after US and China. The break-up of number of HEIs in the country shows that the share of state universities is the highest (44%) followed by private universities (22%), deemed universities (18%), institutes of national importance (10%) and central universities (6%). The increase in number of private HEIs has also resulted in an increased private sector share in the total enrolment. The share of private sector in terms of total enrolment has grown from 33% in 2001 to 59% in 2012. While the number of private HEIs account for about 64% of the total HEIs, the share of private sector in total enrolment stands at 59%, as illustrated in the following figures. The central and state government institutes on the other hand account for 2.6% and 38.6% of the total enrolments, respectively. (Shafi, 2014)

Under the new circumstances such as the globalization, privatization of the education institutions and competition in higher education industry, many higher education institutions are adapting a more business-like approach in order to compete and survive in the changing face of the industry. (Dahan & Senol, 2012).

Need for Institutional Social Responsibility in Higher Educational Institutions

Since higher education institutions have begun to behave in a business-like manner, they also need to be managed in the same manner. Therefore implementing CSR strategies in a higher education institution should be considered in order to obtain a true competitive advantage and a positive reputation. Moreover, practicing what is taught and thereby generating a real example of the academic knowledge can create a unique proposition for any higher education institution. Besides, as the complexity of higher education operations increasingly overlap with societal interests, higher education institutions are pressured for responsible practices. Thus responsible higher education practices not only will contribute to the well-being of the shareholders and the public in general, but also these practices will increasingly become a long-term value proposition for the institution itself. (Dahan & Senol, 2012)

Universities faced with competition, have realized the role of corporate identity as a powerful source of competitive advantage. They have thus began to develop corporate identity program as part of their competitive strategies. (Melewar & Akel, 2005)

Organizations such as companies or universities are usually responsible for the severe environmental degradation we have witnessed (Alshuwaikhat and Abubakar, 2008; Haden et al., 2009; Hoffman and Woody, 2008). Since education provides awareness and many organizational decision makers were once a student in universities, it is important to know how universities regard CSR. (Nejati, Shafaei, & Salamzadeh, 2011)

Universities can nowadays be regarded as 'small cities' due to their large size, population, and the various complex activities taking place in campuses, which have some serious direct and indirect impacts on the environment. The environmental pollution and degradation caused by universities in form of energy and material consumption via activities and operations in teaching and research, provision of support services and in residential areas could be considerably reduced by an effective choice of organizational and technical measures. Although many environmental protection measures can be seen at some universities, but a more systematic and sustainable approach to reducing the negative impacts of those activities and making the campuses more sustainable, is generally lacking. (Alshuwaikhat & Abubakar, 2008)

The university's role in the society is evolving. They are no longer just institutions of higher education and research, which grants academic degrees in a variety of subjects, but rather they are turning into institutions of higher education and research which train responsible humans, create cutting-edge knowledge to solve the issues and problems at a global scale and share the knowledge so that it can benefit the community. (Nejati, Shafaei, & Salamzadeh, 2011)

Though to different extents, leading universities of the world have all taken social responsibility seriously and announced this in their websites. However, there are differences in their reporting and the areas, which covered. The findings show that all the 10 studied universities have covered areas of "organizational governance", "human rights", "labor practices", "environment", "fair operating practices", and "consumer issues" (with consumers considered as students of universities) in their websites. (Nejati, Shafaei, & Salamzadeh, 2011)

Significance of the Study

The rationale of this study is substantiated by the evidence of two trends, which have progressively evolved into popular research subjects:
1. The increasing recognition and incorporation of Corporate Social Responsibility as a mandatory business policy
2. The growing behavioural similitude between Educational Institute and Business Organization

Resultantly, an educational institute must address to the compulsory fulfilment of social responsibility towards its stakeholders. A HEI, such as a Private University, is accountable for the development of internal stakeholders such as students and faculty, as well as the betterment of quality of life of parents, local community and society at large; it is necessary for the University to fulfil its Institutional Social Responsibility.

Arguably, a Private University cannot be liable to perform such activities, since it is not driven by profit-motive. Moreover, HEIs such as Universities are often the consequence of CSR, and thus the concept of ISR might seem like an unnecessary burden. Education, unlike a personal non-durable packet of chips, is an eternal, itinerant and social product. In itself, it is an element of development and betterment of society.

Is it then correct to equate a University with a Business Organization? Can education be likened to an economic commodity, the business of which is bound by societal obligations?

Interestingly, the same can be asked of Health Care, Educational Entertainment and Religion.

A glance around would testify the contention of commoditisation or commercialization of Education.

Commercial practices may have become more obvious, but they are hardly a new phenomenon in American higher education. By the early 1900s, the University of Chicago was already advertising regularly to attract students, and the University of Pennsylvania had established a "Bureau of Publicity" to increase its visibility. In 1905, Harvard was concerned enough about its profitable football team to hire a 26-year-old coach at a salary equal to that of its president and twice the amount paid to its full professors. As President Andrew Draper of the University of Illinois observed, the university "is a business concern as well as a moral and intellectual instrumentality, and if business methods are not applied to its management, it will break down." (Bok, 2003)

Education is more and more viewed as an investment by "customers" who search the world for the best product available. Students expect a pay-off from their investment.

So they seek vocationally oriented courses. Distinctions between universities and polytechnics are disappearing, and indeed in the UK all polytechnics were renamed "new" universities, a re-branding exercise of enormous significance for the traditional universities. So the products of tertiary institutions are becoming more standardized, as participation rates increase while state funding is reduced. (Lawrence & Sharma, 2002)

The case of India is not any different. The government itself has realized the need for adoption of an active self-sustaining business-like countenance by HEIs to counterbalance the burden on public organizations.

Major efforts have been mounted for mobilisation of resources and it has been recommended that while the government should make a firm commitment to higher education, institutions of higher education should make efforts to raise their own resources by raising the fee levels, encouraging private donations and by generating revenues through consultancy and other activities. It is not only justifiable but desirable to raise money from private sources in order to ease pressure on public spending. (Joshi, 1998)

Most universities now operate in an environment where students are recognized as fee-paying customers. Universities now produce employable, marketable "labour" for the knowledge economy. Education is no different from buying other commodities (like cars). Students need to pay for their education, as the benefit is considered a private one and not a social good (Lawrence & Sharma, 2002).

With Universities imitating Businesses in more ways than one, their participation in social progress is inevitable. Yet, there is indeed a visible difference between a University and a Corporate Entity. Thus, it is imperative to define ISR with a clear distinction from CSR. It is neither enforced nor expected of the University to mimic the CSR activities of a business; the acknowledgement and absorption of the concept of ISR into Institutional strategy would

help an academic institution understand its social liability as different from a business organization, and explore the opportunities to fulfil it actively.

It is thus obvious to study ISR, agreeably an offshoot to CSR. The research thus proposed, shall be substantial in revealing the awareness and acceptance, as well as prospects and challenges in implementation of ISR. The concept of ISR will restore the karmic balance – giveth and you shall receive – and will bring to light the veiled yet undeniable accountability that non-profits hold towards social betterment.

The question which rises is the reason behind such social responsibility practices of the universities, since one may argue that the entire rationale for a university is to serve society through education, so CSR (or ISR) is redundant in that context. (Nejati, Shafaei, & Salamzadeh, 2011)

Yet, it is not new for Universities to opt for community development practices voluntarily. Higher educational institutes across the world have increasingly adopted Social Responsibility into their competitive strategy. Many Universities indicate their passion and goal for sustainability and solving world problems through their mission statements, values and other contents reported on their websites. For example, a university in US has a specific office of sustainability where they tackled issues such as greenhouse gas reduction as well as climate change. In another instance, a university in UK puts a great focus on the term "global citizenship" on its website referring to it as the ways in which they actively seek to prepare their students to respond to the intellectual, social and personal challenges that they will encounter throughout their lives and careers. (Nejati, Shafaei, & Salamzadeh, 2011) The concept of ISR too, has been studied thoroughly in context of German Universities.

The notion of ISR might be intimidating to the Universities in the beginning, owing to its activist-like tone, yet evidence suggest that the practice of aspects of ISR has led to numerous benefits in the longer run. Business consultant Richard Goosen posits Universities realise that it is a competitive market in terms of creating an ongoing stream of satisfied alumni, attracting new students and addressing the concerns of business supporters, a strategy, which incorporates CSR, is a start. These benefits include betterment of image in the society, since all stakeholders are increasingly evaluating educational institutes based on their contribution to the community. Reputation of the institute is more often than not among the factors that affect decision-making of students and parents.

Moreover, critics have regularly stressed the need for providing CSR exposure to the students. Industries require managers who can develop sustainability strategies. Students, especially in management and business schools study CSR as a part of their academic curriculum. Most universities tend to focus only on teaching social responsibility in terms of corporate social responsibility initiatives and do not go beyond this by attempting to improve their communities. (Atakan & Eker, 2007) Thus, another contention in favour of generating awareness and practicing ISR is the necessity to allow CSR exposure to students. According to the results of the first Global Campus Monitor (GCM) survey of over 1,000 university students from around the world, a strong majority believe that corporate social responsibility (CSR) should be taught more at universities. Results suggest that there is a strong interest to learn more about CSR, regardless of students' area of study.

Furthermore, while practices congruent with the concept of ISR are prevalent in most Universities abroad, limited formal evidence of the said is available in India. The role of educational intuitions in community development beyond knowledge delivery is scantily researched in India. This study thusly seeks to fill the following research gaps:

- Absence of defining research on the concept of Institutional Social Responsibility
- Limited exploration of ISR practices in Higher Educational Institutes

3   OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The primary intent of this research is stated as under:
- To find the involvement of Private Universities in Institutional Social Responsibility
- To identify factors affecting adoption of Institutional Social Responsibility practices in Private Universities
- To identify challenges and opportunities in implementation of Institutional Social Responsibility

Research Methodology

The research was exploratory in nature. The data for the study was collected by administering the questionnaire on the management level staff from the private universities in India. The size of the sample was 500 participants from various private universities which was selected by applying simple random technique.

Since the research was exploratory in nature, descriptive statistics was used to do the analysis of the research.

Operational Definitions

Institutional Social Responsibility (ISR) – Institutional Social Responsibility, with reference to a Private Higher Educational Institute would relate a two-fold approach:
1. Ethical practice in transference of knowledge, training and research
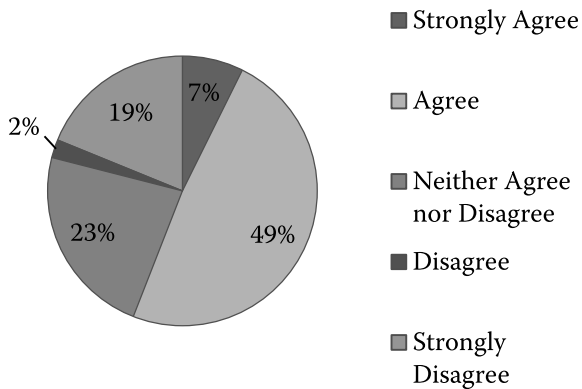2. Active consideration of and participation in betterment of quality of life of stakeholders

4   RESULTS

The questionnaire was floated to 50 institutions covering 500 participants. Iterative computation of Item Total Correlation indicated that 13 out of 14 items administered on the 5-point scale were significant. Item 10 was found to insignificant. Item 12 exhibited negative item-total correlation, owing to negation in the sentence structure.

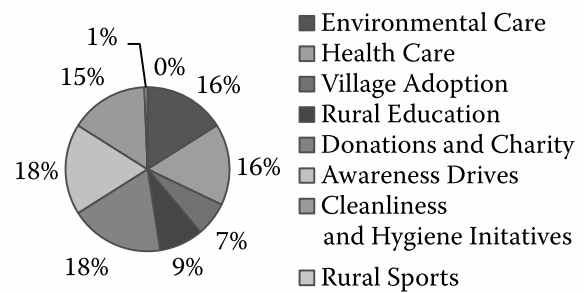Item 1: The institute actively addresses its social responsibilities

Item 2: From the following, please choose the areas covered by the social responsibility initiatives of your institute

Response

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Response

- Environmental Care
- Health Care
- Village Adoption
- Rural Education
- Donations and Charity
- Awareness Drives
- Cleanliness and Hygiene Initatives
- Rural Sports

Item 1: sought to assess the participation of the University in social responsibility initiatives. Most respondents (49%), agreed that their institute addresses its social responsibility, however, about 44% respondents either disagreed or were unsure of the suggested.
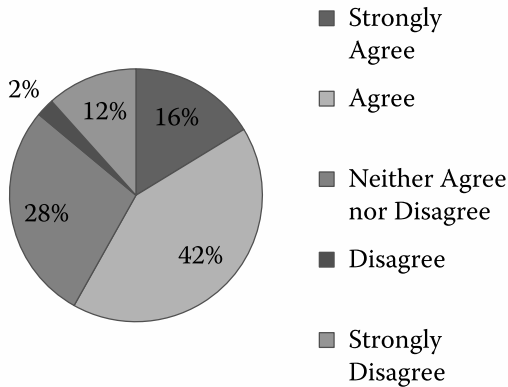
Item 2: From the following, please choose the areas covered by the social responsibility initiatives of your institute

Item 3: The practice of social responsibility at the institute includes aspects of ISR as defined by the authors
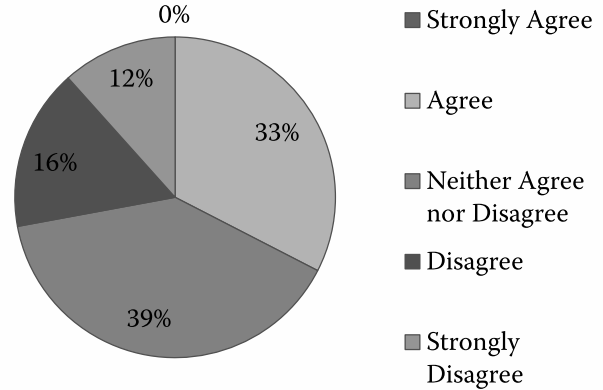
Response

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Item 3 sought to assess whether there was a consensus among the authors and practicing institutes over the concept of ISR. 42% agreed that the definition of ISR by the authors matched the norms governing ISR in their institute

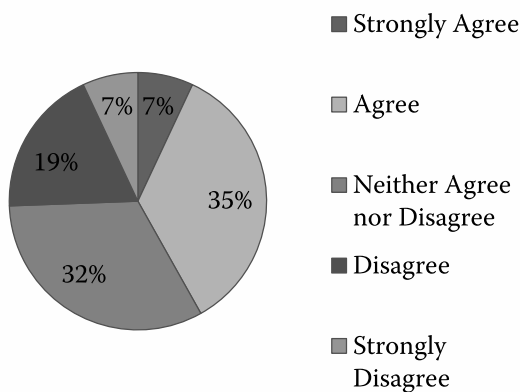Item 4: The institutional policy includes definition and/or provision of aspects ISR

Response

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Item 4 asked the respondents if ISR, or similar practices were incorporated in their policy. 39% were not sure of any such inclusions, while 32% suggested there were policies addressing ISR. No respondent was absolutely sure.

Item 5: The institute communicates the concept and practice of aspects of ISR to its stakeholders (faculty, students, parents, management etc.)
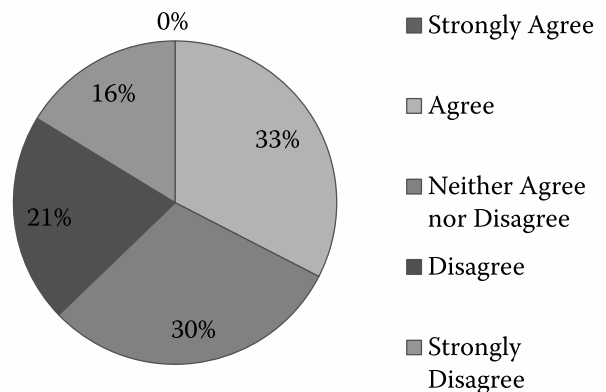
Response

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Item 6: The organizational vision/mission statement includes aspects of ISR

Response

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Item 5 solicited evidence of institutional communication regarding ISR. 35% suggested the institute discusses ISR policy with the faculty, students and parents, while 32% were not sure. Item 6 revealed that 33% respondents could identify ISR concepts in the organizational vision, while 30% were unsure.
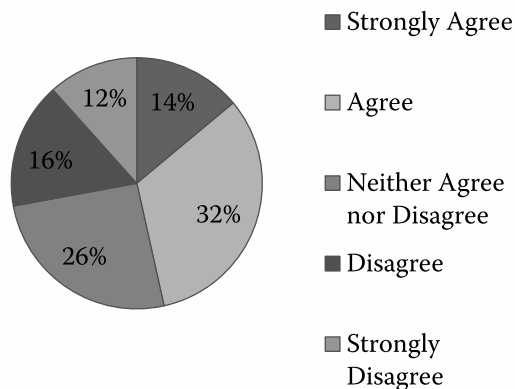
Item 7: The institute sets clear objectives towards the practice of social responsibility

Response

- Strongly Agree
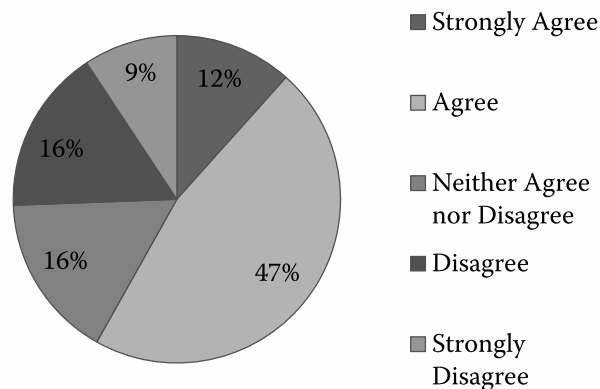- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Item 7 revealed that 32% respondents suggested their institute sets clear ISR related objectives, while 25% were unsure, and 16% found no such objectives.

Item 8: The stakeholders of the institute encourage the practice of aspects of ISR

Response

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Item 8 was included in the questionnaire to assess if ISR practices were praised by stakeholders. 46% agreed with the statement, while only 9% believed stakeholders did not appreciate ISR.

Item 9: The aspects of ISR should be inculcated in every educational institute's practice
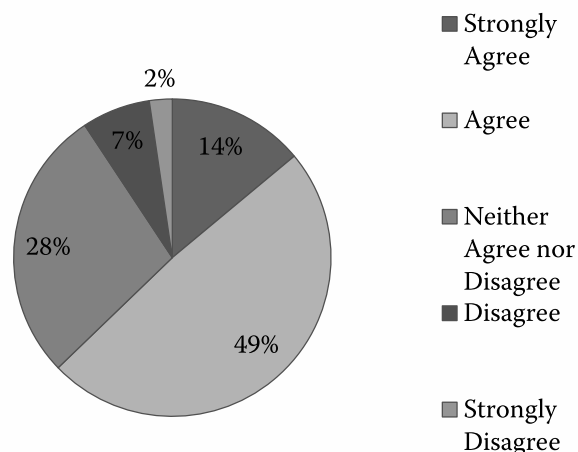
Response

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
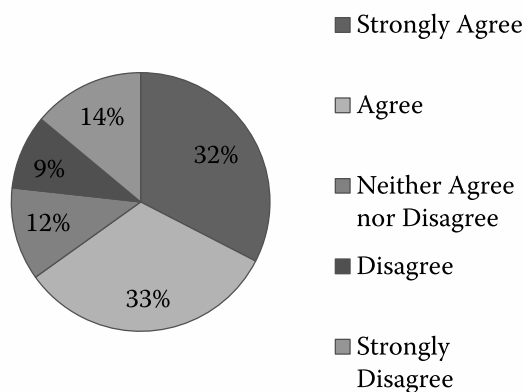
Item 9 found that the 64% respondents were in favor of including ISR in educational institutes. Collectively, only 22% disagreed.

Item 10: (Insignificant) The concept of ISR differs from CSR

Response

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
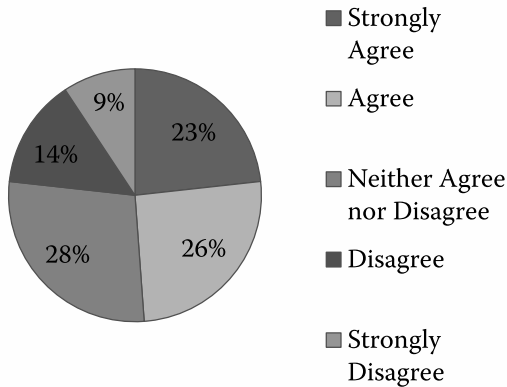- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Item 10 was found insignificant upon item-total correlation. ISR and CSR could not be differentiated.

Item 11: Practicing aspects of ISR is beneficial
for the institute

Response

Strongly Agree — 23%
Agree — 26%
Strongly Disagree — 28%
Disagree — 14%
Neither Agree nor Disagree — 9%

Item 12: ISR is an unnecessary burden
on educational institute

Response

Strongly Agree — 2%
Agree — 23%
Neither Agree nor Disagree — 26%
Disagree — 16%
Strongly Disagree — 33%

Item 11 assessed whether respondents saw ISR as beneficial or not. 49% respondents agreed with the statement, while only 22% disagreed.
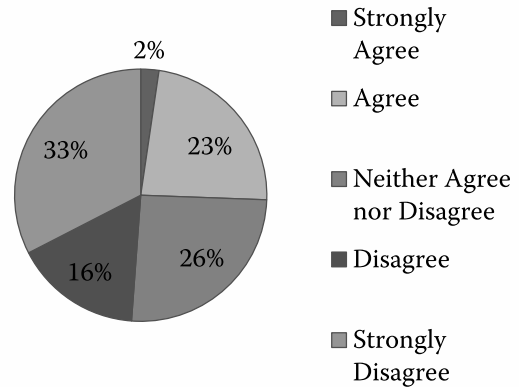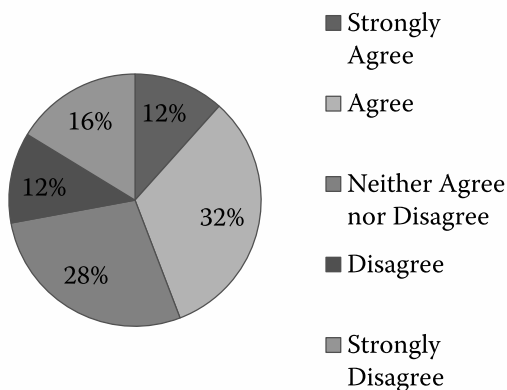
Item 12 discovered that 25% believed ISR to be an unnecessary burden.

Item 13: ISR should be made mandatory
for educational institutions

Response

Strongly Agree — 12%
Agree — 32%
Neither Agree nor Disagree — 28%
Disagree — 12%
Strongly Disagree — 16%

Item 14: The educational institutes need to
engage in ISR activities actively

Response

Strongly Agree — 19%
Agree — 44%
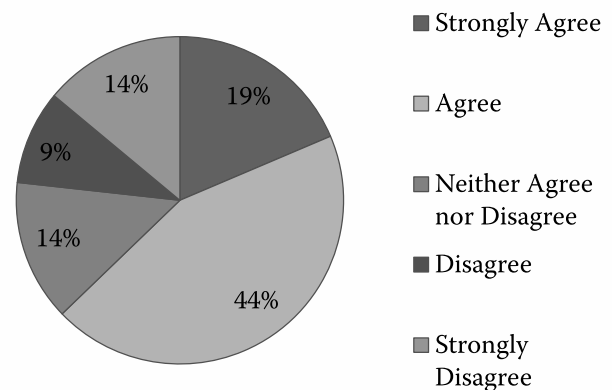Neither Agree nor Disagree — 14%
Disagree — 9%
Strongly Disagree — 14%

Item 13 asked respondents if they feel ISR should be made mandatory in educational institutes, to which 44% agreed, while 28% disagreed. 28% had no opinion. However, Item 14 revealed that more than 50% respondents believed educational institutes should engage in ISR activities.
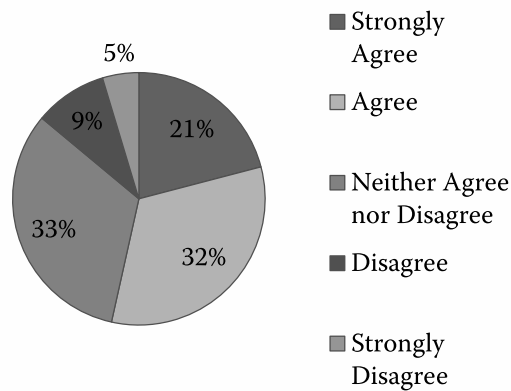
Item 15: It is essential to separate the concept of ISR from CSR

Response

Item 15 sought to ascertain the need to separate ISR from CSR. 53% believed such need existed, and only 14% believed they needn't be defined separately.

Item 16: What possible challenges shall emerge if ISR is made mandatory for Private Universities?
Availability of Time, Cost Burden, Clarity of Goals, Pressure on Academic Front, Participation of Students, Management of Activities, Credibility and Transparency, Burden on Faculty, Monitoring, Changing Mindset, Policy reforms, Acceptance of Society

Item 17: What possible benefits shall emerge if ISR is made mandatory for Private Universities?
Positive Publicity, Betterment of Institutional Reputation, Increased Accountability of Institutions towards Social Advancement, Development of Community and Stakeholders, Value Education, Student Learning, Establishment of Healthy Relationship with Stakeholders, Growth in Literacy and Standards of Living

Item 18: Enlist factors that govern the extent of ISR involvement of your institution.
Top Management Decision, Personnel and Financial Capacity, Pressure from Community, Awareness, Project Duration and Location, Institutional Policy

The study shows that most respondents acknowledge the need for actively practicing Institutional Social Responsibility.

5   CONCLUSIONS

The results indicate that most of the respondents are acknowledge and favour of the aspects of concepts of ISR. Of the total respondents, 49% fell in the third quartile, followed by 35% in the third quartile, showing high acceptance, awareness and agreement towards the practice of ISR. 16% respondents fell in the second quartile, and no respondent fell in the first quartile.

Item 1 and Item 2 wished to derive the extent to which the institute pursues its social responsibility. In Item 1, 48.83% respondents agreed that their institute pursued its social responsibility actively. 23.25% were indifferent, and 18.60% strongly disagreed. Item 2 sought to derive areas where most respondents found the focus of their ISR activities. The top areas included Awareness Drives (18%), Donations and Charity (18%), Health Care (16%), Environmental Care (16%), closely followed by Cleanliness and Hygiene Initiatives (15%).

Items 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 sought to discover the practice and manifestation of aspects of ISR in institutional strategy. 41.8% strongly relate to the practice of ISR practice in their institutes. 39.53% could not comment on the provision of aspects of ISR in their institutional policy. 34.8% agreed that their institute communicates the concept and practice

of aspects of ISR to their stakeholders. 32.55% agreed that the vision/mission statement of the organization included emphasis on aspects of ISR. 32.55% agreed that their institutes sets clear ISR objectives.

Items 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 derived the perspective of the respondent towards ISR practice. 46.51% respondents agreed that the stakeholders' encouraged the practice of ISR. 32.55% strongly agreed that ISR practices should be inculcated in every institution's stratagem. However, 27.9% could not assess whether ISR practice has benefits for the institute. 32.55% strongly disagreed to see ISR as a burden on the institute. 32.55% agreed that ISR should be made mandatory, like CSR. 44.18% agreed that institutes should practice ISR actively. 32.55% agreed that ISR differs from CSR, yet an equal number could not draw a clear distinction.

The study shows that most respondents acknowledge the need for actively practicing Institutional Social Responsibility.

6   SUGGESTIONS

The conclusion declares a favourable result and suggests that it is indeed necessary to spread the awareness towards concept and practice of ISR.

Following suggestions can be made in the area:
- The contribution of Universities towards social betterment should be actively studied and documented
- Certain aspects of ISR should be formally included in Institutional policy and practice
- Faculty and students should be included in determining the ISR strategy
- To battle challenges of finance, personnel and time management, partnerships should be formed between educational institutes, companies and social organizations
- Evaluators of higher education quality in Universities should include practice of ISR as a factor in the assessment
- ISR should be taught as a subject, and should include practical exposure for students
- Further research should define ISR concretely, and should develop best practice models and stencils to help Universities satisfy their ISR.

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