

CSR TODAY

RNI NO. MAHENG/2013/48866 ■ VOLUME 07 ■ ISSUE 02 ■ SEPTEMBER 2019 ■ PRICE ₹100 ■ TOTAL PAGES: 48

ONE QUARTER OF
THE WORLD'S POPULATION
FACE EXTREMELY

HIGH WATER STRESS

Seventeen countries are drawing more than 80 per cent of their available water supply each year according to new data from the World Resources Institute (WRI).

CSR TODAY

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Basic Data

Frequency	: Monthly
Place of Publication	: Mumbai
Mode	: Controlled circulation
Ad closing	: 24th of every month

For More Information:



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CSR violations and law



Rajesh Tiwari
Publisher
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**AS PER THE NEW
RULES, COMPANIES
MEETING
CERTAIN DEFINED
THRESHOLDS
ARE REQUIRED TO
SPEND 2% OF THEIR
AVERAGE NET PROFIT
OF THE PRECEDING
THREE YEARS ON
CSR PROGRAMMES.**

The violation vis-à-vis Corporate Social Responsibility and the legal remedies has been one of the most debated topics in India's corporate sector during the last couple of months.

Jail or no jail came to be debated.

However, there is a sigh of relief, as Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman under the companies law will be treated only as a civil liability and not a criminal offence.

At a time when India is faced with social issues, natural calamities, the government needs to encourage CSR and not to frighten the people involved in the CSR.

The Corporate Affairs ministry would review the sections concerned under the Companies Act, according to the minister.

The industry has expressed concerns over penal provisions for non-compliance with Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) requirements in the amended Companies Act, 2013.

Sitharaman said the government respects and honours wealth creators. "CSR violations... not be treated as criminal offence and will be civil liability," Sitharaman said.

The government has provided companies through revised orders more time for completing ongoing projects as part of their CSR obligations.

Under the Act, a certain class of profitable companies is required to shell out at least two per cent of their three-year annual average net profit towards CSR activities.

To address concerns over alleged harassment of taxpayers, Sitharaman said it has been decided that from October 1, all notices, summons, and orders of the Income Tax Department would be issued through a centralised computer system and would also have a computer-generated unique Document Identification Number.

While at the aggregate level, India Inc continues to report shortfalls, compliance over the years has improved. In fact, the percentage of shortfall against the mandated CSR spend has been falling over the years.

Thanks to an Ordinance issued earlier, effective from April 1, 2014, the companies with a net worth of Rs 500 crore or turnover of over Rs 1,000 crore, or net profit of Rs 5 crore are mandated to spend 2% of the average net profit of the preceding three years on CSR programmes.

As per the new rules, companies meeting certain defined thresholds are required to spend 2% of their average net profit of the preceding three years on CSR programmes. Further, unspent funds earmarked by such firms for ongoing projects have to be transferred by the company to a special bank account called Unspent Corporate Social Responsibility Account, and should be utilised within three years of transfer. Additionally, any unspent annual CSR funds must be transferred to one of the funds under Schedule 7 of the Companies Act like Prime Minister's Relief Fund within six months of the financial-year end.

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CSR TODAY

SEPTEMBER 2019 | VOL. 07 | ISSUE 02

PRINTER AND PUBLISHER: Rajesh Tiwari

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Circulation: C.R. Tiwari

Printed, Published and Edited by Rajesh Tiwari on behalf of Indian Centre For Corporate Social Responsibility, Printed at The Pack-Age, 196-I, Katrak Compound, J.S.S. Road, Gaiwadi, Girgaon, Mumbai - 400 004 and Published from Indian Centre For Corporate Social Responsibility, 106/A, Nirman Kendra, Plot No.3, Dr. E. Moses Road, Mahalaxmi Estate, Mahalaxmi, Mumbai 400 011.

Editor: Rajesh Tiwari

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CSR NEWS



Let's Reframe- Participation of Women in Formal Workforce

Breakthrough organised a convention, 'Let's Reframe'- Participation of Women in formal Workforce' in the capital city that invited a diverse group of stakeholders (like NGOs, government departments, agencies, schemes, laws and policymakers working for the welfare of working women) on a common platform to build partnerships to help to increase the participation of women in formal workforce and create a safer & supportive work space.

The event addressed issues impacting lives of women working in the formal sector in India through three panel discussions. These discussions highlighted factors responsible for women's rapidly declining presence at workplaces as well as the need for creating awareness and sensitizing

young and adolescent girls on career choices, aspirations and also make them realise their agency and worth as equal members of the society. The imperative to make adequate and appropriate budgetary provisions for women and child related issues and priorities was also discussed. Further, there was consensus among participants that infrastructural and public provisions that would assist and ease women's mobility should be promoted/operationalized.

Another highlight of the highly engaging panel discussions was the constant conflict between the social identity and the work women do, which requires recognition of women's work and her economic productivity at the family as well as societal levels. To increase participation of women in workforce, modification of existing policies,

including flexi-working, was the need of the hour as that would significantly help and motivate women to re-join the formal workforce.

"Women's workforce participation cannot be understood in isolation - we need to rethink the tools and involve analysts, practitioners and people on the ground", Urvashi Butalia, Publisher, Writer & Director of Zubaan said while discussing contributing factors to bring back women in workforce.

In Asian countries, specifically in India, participation of women in the workforce is declining particularly in the formal sector despite the increase in the competencies of women to contribute. This issue if unaddressed cascades into creating gender imbalance in workplaces as a consequence of skewed policies in terms of hiring, flexible working conditions, and lack of conducive workplace environment or infrastructures for women employees. Moreover, sexual harassment during commute and at workplaces and weak response mechanisms are also challenges which every working women currently face day in and day out. In many cases hostility on the home front towards working women and harassment at the workplace result in women bearing a dual or double burden which eventually force women to opt out of formal work.

"It's not that we haven't heard this perspective earlier, but it's the pressing need to revisit the advice and recommendations. If the infrastructure for women to enter into the formal workforce is not created, then women's economic value will forever be ignored. There is a need to overhaul policies and overall social norms", says Sohini Bhattacharya, CEO & President, Breakthrough India in concluding remarks.

A clear-cut case for business action on deforestation

Concern over deforestation has led activists to aim their campaigns at companies within commodity supply chains, writes **Joel Makower**, Chairman & Executive Editor, GreenBiz Group

The issue of corporate deforestation is on the rise, taking root in supply chains in a surprising range of sectors. And the risks to companies for inaction are rising, too.

This is hardly a new issue — “Save a tree” and “Plant a tree” having been rallying cries since the earliest days of the modern environmental movement. Nearly every continent has seen swaths of its forests disappear over the past several decades, and converting forests — from cooler boreal regions to warmer tropical ones — to farming, cities and other purposes has been part of human development for centuries, even millennia.

More recently, climate and biodiversity issues have given new life to old concerns. As forests, which serve as massive carbon sinks, are cut, burned or otherwise cleared,

they release the carbon dioxide they naturally store. Deforestation and forest degradation are responsible for around 15 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions, according to WWF.

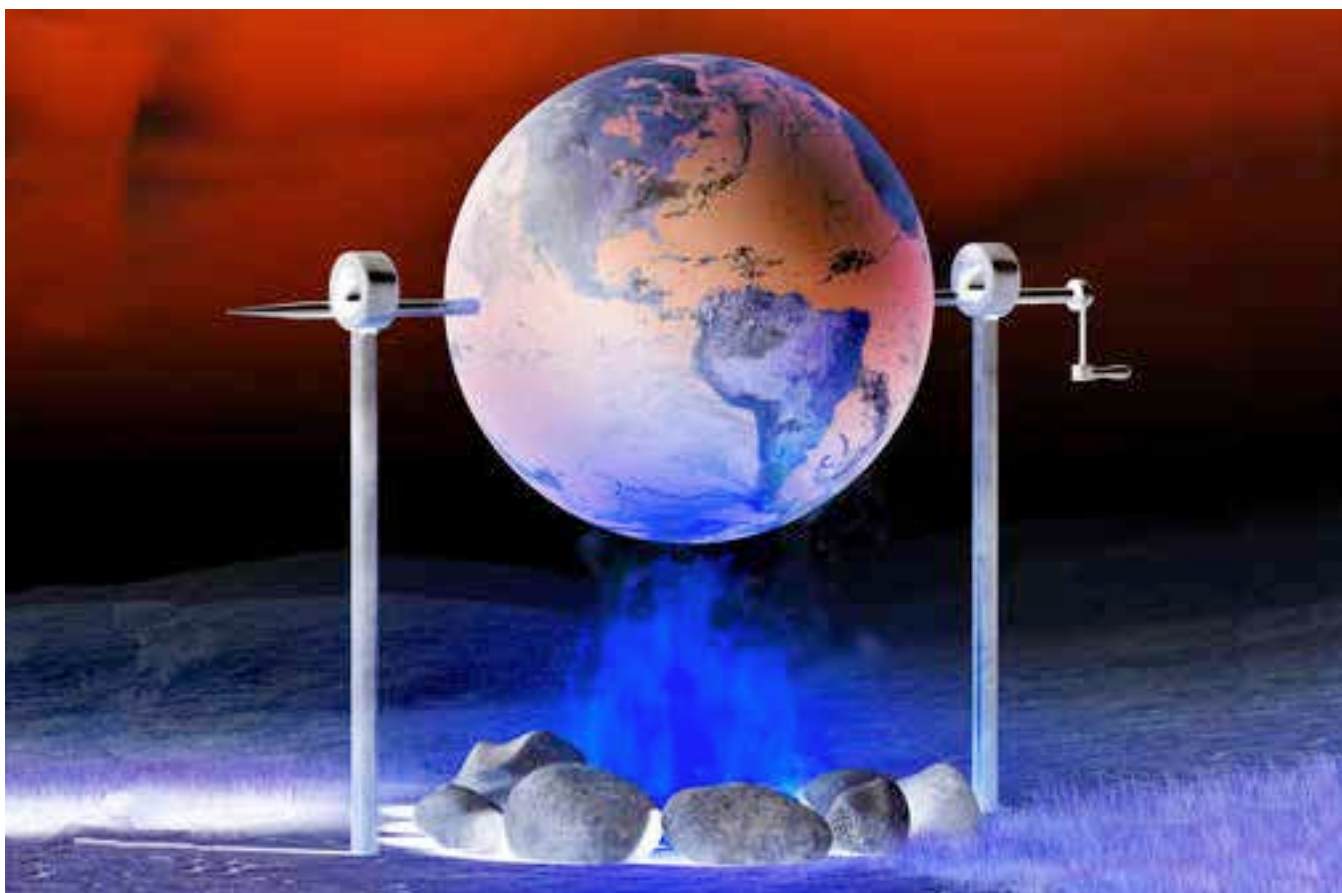
Along the way, we lose the biodiversity forest ecosystems provide, roiling the chain of life that often leads to benefits for humans, such as flood protection, pollination, pest control and new foods and medicines.

Concern over deforestation has led activists to aim their campaigns at companies within commodity supply chains. Their targets include upstream producers and manufacturers of

everything from food and beverages, to pulp and paper, to ingredients that are embedded in thousands of products — along with the retailers that sell these products and the banks that finance them.

Moreover, emerging technologies — drones, satellites, data analysis — are enabling governments and watchdog activists to hone in on companies that are sourcing from high-deforestation areas to monitor their progress, or lack thereof. In response, many firms are committing to deforestation-free supply chains. But according to two recent studies, when it comes to deforestation





While you were grilling, the world moved forward

There was no shortage of announcements coming from beyond U.S. shores, burnishing America's second-class status in sustainability leadership, says Joel Makower, Chairman & Executive Editor, GreenBiz Group


There was a time when summer was a slow season for sustainable business, as companies, NGOs and others, or at least their communications arms, dialed back for a couple months to gear up for the

fall, when the flow of announcements, events and press pitches would resume in full force.

That was then. These days, sustainability news is a year-round event, the product in large part of diverse and robust leadership around the world.

If you need proof, consider last week, the first week of July. It was a three-day workweek in the United States, thanks to Independence (or Interdependence) Day celebrations. But while Americans were grilling, the rest of the civilized world was moving forward on climate





ONE QUARTER OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION FACE EXTREMELY HIGH WATER STRESS

Seventeen countries are drawing more than 80 per cent of their available water supply each year according to new data from the World Resources Institute (WRI).

Once-unthinkable water crises are becoming commonplace.

Reservoirs in Chennai, India's sixth-largest city, are nearly dry right now. Last year, residents of Cape Town, South Africa narrowly avoided their own "Day Zero" water shut-off. And the year before that, Rome rationed water to conserve scarce resources.

The reasons for these crises go far deeper than drought: through new hydrological models, WRI found that water withdrawals globally have more than doubled since the 1960s due to growing demand—and they show no signs of slowing down.

New data from WRI's Aqueduct tools reveal that 17 countries—home to one-quarter of the world's population—face "extremely high" levels of baseline water stress, where irrigated agriculture, industries and municipalities withdraw more than 80 per cent of their available supply on average every year. Forty-four countries, home to one-third of the world, face "high" levels of stress, where on average more than 40 per cent of available supply is withdrawn every year. Such a narrow gap between supply and demand leaves countries vulnerable to fluctuations like droughts or increased water withdrawals, which is why we're seeing more and more communities facing their own "Day Zeros" and other crises.

Boys on their way home from school gather around to drink from a bucket and quench their thirst in India.

Image: Daniel Bachhuber, CC BY-NC 2.0

Why the fight against climate change will never be won with capitalism

Our current socio-economic system is built on the exploitation of both people and planet, causing inequality and environmental devastation. To save a world on the brink of ecological and social disaster, calls for greener, more efficient capitalism won't cut it, writes **Zafrah Zein**.

Several weeks ago, I attended the Shape the World Summit 2019, where leaders from business, education, civil society and delegates from around the world gathered at the National Design Centre in Singapore to discuss ways of designing economies to become more equitable and inclusive, while keeping within planetary boundaries.

It was one event not unlike others I have attended as an environmental journalist that facilitated discussion on how to make cities in the 21st century more liveable—in other words, efficient, resilient and sustainable—without compromising modern day comforts.

Why I was particularly drawn to this event however was its focus on global inequality and its call to alter the socio-economic rules that govern today's societies. I was interested to find out how a room full of professionals would re-imagine a more equitable economy in a world faced with impending climate catastrophe.

Major climate movements like Extinction Rebellion and top-down approaches like the Green New Deal have recognised environmental and social justice as a cornerstone of effective climate action, but very rarely did sustainability events in Singapore confront related issues of inequality, even though inequality undergirds



Young climate activists around the world are calling for system change in a world beset by climate change and widening inequality. Image: Roy/Flickr, CC BY-NC 2.0

every global issue, from urban population growth, to the renewable energy transition to food security.

Many communities in Asia are also disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis, even though they are the least responsible for it, and research has found that unequal societies emit more carbon.

According to data released by Global Footprint Network on Earth Overshoot

Day, developing countries like Indonesia and Vietnam have the least impact per person on resources, while the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Luxembourg and Canada far exceed the planet's ability to recover the natural resources consumed in those countries.

However, during a panel titled Imagine a More Equitable Economy, while panelists highlighted that widening inequality and climate breakdown were

The climate change denier concept as a dying sick tree shaped as a human head with a long nose as a surreal environmental metaphor for global warming disinformation.

Image: lightsource, CC BY-SA 2.0

PSEUDOSCIENCE IS TAKING OVER SOCIAL MEDIA—AND PUTTING US ALL AT RISK

The majority of a randomised sample of YouTube videos related to climate change showed that they oppose the scientific consensus that it is primarily caused by human activities, a new study has found.

By **Santosh Vijaykumar**

Search for “climate change” on YouTube and before long you’ll likely find a video that denies it exists. In fact, when it comes to shaping the online conversation around climate change, a new study suggests that deniers and conspiracy theorists might hold an edge over those believing in science. Researchers found evidence that most YouTube videos relating to climate change oppose the scientific

consensus that it’s primarily caused by human activities.

The study highlights the key role of social media use in the spread of scientific misinformation. And it suggests scientists and those who support them need to be more active in developing creative and compelling ways to communicate their findings. But more importantly, we need to be worried about the effects that maliciously manipulated scientific information can have on our behaviour, individually and as a society.

The recent study by Joachim Allgaier of RWTH Aachen University in

Germany analysed the content of a randomised sample of 200 YouTube videos related to climate change. He found that a majority (107) of the videos either denied that climate change was caused by humans or claimed that climate change was a conspiracy.

The videos peddling the conspiracy theories received the highest number of views. And those spreading these conspiracy theories used terms like “geoengineering” to make it seem like their claims had a scientific basis when, in fact, they did not.

Health misinformation

Climate change is far from the only area where we see a trend for online misinformation about science triumphing over scientifically valid facts. Take an issue like infectious diseases, and perhaps the most well-known example of the measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine. Despite large amounts of online information about the vaccine’s safety, false claims that it has harmful



Native corn varieties such as those shown here are adaptable to drought and come from seeds that were passed down from this farmer's parents and grandparents in Pacux, Guatemala. Photo courtesy of Nathan Einbinder

Why traditional knowledge is the key to sustainable agriculture

Substituting organic “bio-inputs” for synthetic agrochemicals is still a one-size-fits-all, technology-focused solution, which means it won’t lead to sustainable agriculture, write **Nathan Einbinder** and **Helda Morales**

The idea that our current agricultural and food system needs adjusting isn’t exactly revolutionary these days. In fact, many scientists and others believe that it could use an entire overhaul.

After decades of technological advances focused on grain production and the development of synthetic inputs, there is finally recognition that the benefits—higher crop yields and increased

Why NGOs top the list of those advancing sustainable development

With this increased appreciation of WWF and Greenpeace, along with the strong performance of other NGOs such as the World Resources Institute, Oxfam and The Nature Conservancy, we are seeing a diverse set of NGOs that are both collaborative and activist leading the charge toward advancing sustainable development, writes Eric Whan, Director, GlobeScan



Greenpeace's Rainbow Warrior, docked in Amsterdam.

Sustainability leadership by NGOs is well recognized around the world as the type of organization that has contributed the most toward sustainable development since the Rio Earth Summit.

While this finding from our latest Sustainability Leaders Survey of experts is neither new nor surprising (NGOs

have ranked as a leading institution since we began tracking this measure in 2009), NGOs' steady commitment to collaboration, engagement and advocacy is celebrated despite them often being under-resourced.

Meanwhile, the United Nations has seen an 11-point increase in positive recognition among experts and now ranks in second place, viewed positively by the

largest percentage of experts in the history of this survey. In contrast, very few experts rate the performance of national governments and institutional investors positively. The private sector has also seen a significant decline in ratings compared with 2018. It is impossible not to notice the negative correlation between influence and recognition across these various types of actors.

Bashettihalli Wetland and its catchment ready to catch rains

Diverse set of stakeholders come together as stellar example for community-led wetland conservation

According to The Global Wetland Outlook 2018 the loss of wetlands is three times faster than that of natural forests. However, the Bashettihalli wetland stands out as a stellar example of contrast. A story of continuous and concerted efforts, the Bashettihalli wetland has been rejuvenated as an outcome of a three-year wetland conservation initiative by WWF-India, supported by NOKIA in association with a multi stakeholder committee comprising communities, industries, gram panchayat members, under the leadership of the Bangalore Rural District Administration. The team came together today to celebrate the rejuvenation of Bashettihalli wetland, covering an area of 48.18 acres in the industrial town of Doddaballapura.

WWF-India, with the support of NOKIA and the committee has been working towards conserving the Bashettihalli wetland since 2016 through a multi-pronged approach including social mobilization, awareness creation and technical interventions. While wetlands across the country have



Before Rejuvenation Bashettihallu



After Rejuvenation Bashettihalli Wetland

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COMPANY: Mahindra Holidays and Resorts India Ltd

DESIGNATION: Corporate Manager - Corporate Social Responsibility

- **Experience:** 10 to 16 yrs
- **Salary:** As per Industry Standards
- **INDUSTRY:** Hotel / Travel / Tourism / Airlines / Hospitality
- **Location:** Mumbai (Maharashtra)
- **Key Skills:** reports companies actmis
- **Job Function:** Accounting / Tax / Company Secretary / Audit
- **Specialization:** Company Secretary
- **Qualification:** Any Graduate

Job Description:

- Plan, take approvals and implement ESOP initiatives at resorts through effective coordination with Resort Managers
- Plan and implement various CSR initiatives to comply with the provisions of the revised Companies Act
- Prepare periodic MIS and reports and send the same to M&M and upload on our intranet

- Motivate the resorts team to identify CSR projects for a desirable positive impact on community and the environment
- Build relationship with NGOs and other partner organizations to implement various CSR initiatives

COMPANY: ADITYA BIRLA MANAGEMENT CORPORATION LTD

DESIGNATION: Assistant General Manager - Corporate Social Responsibility

- **Experience:** 13 to 15 yrs
- **Salary:** As per Industry Standards
- **INDUSTRY:** Cement, Building Materials & Construction Equipment (Cement, Cement Products)
- **Location:** Ahmedabad (Gujarat)
- **Key Skills:** statutory compliance training needs learning hr employee engagement
- **Job Function:** HR / PM / IR / Training
- **Specialization:** Training & Development
- **Qualification:** Any Graduate

Job Description:

- Spearheading the baseline data

collection and analysis and identifying potential CSR projects and initiatives

- Planning CSR initiatives and corresponding budgets for the Birla Copper Unit at Dahej
- Collating manpower needs and requirements for budgetary allocation for different CSR projects and preparing the CSR budget
- Preparing plan and budget for Copper Jana Seva Trust operated medical units within the Birla Copper complex at Dahej
- Implementing CSR initiatives as per plan
- Providing Administrative support to the following through local liaison, media management for publicity of CSR Projects, maintenance of cordial relations with Sarpanch, Panchayat members, leading village leaders, Govt. officers, NGO's
- Implementing the vision, mission values of the Organisation and ensuring adherence to its systems and processes in implementing all CSR projects
- Generating MIS reports with respect to manpower movement, attrition patterns,