

# **SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL INSIGHTS**

**CSR | ESG | SUSTAINABILITY**



## **IN THIS EDITION:**

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### **KEY NEWS ON CSR, ESG & SUSTAINABILITY**

### **BEST PRACTICE**

**Empowering Underprivileged Women, Transforming Eye Care: Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital's Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic Program**

### **WEBINAR REPORT ON 'DRIVING SOCIAL EQUITY THROUGH CSR: STRATEGIES, CHALLENGES & IMPACT'**

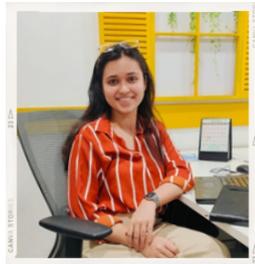
### **ABOUT NATIONAL CSR NETWORK**



**Ms. Meena Raghunathan**

**Editor,  
Sustainable Social Insights**

**Former Executive Director,  
GMR Varalakshmi Foundation**



**Ms. Muskan Kaushik**

**Compiler & Designer,  
Sustainable Social Insights**

**National CSR Network**



# KEY NEWS ON CSR, ESG & SUSTAINABILITY

## SUSTAINABILITY IS A NECESSITY, NOT A SLOGAN ANYMORE: PRESIDENT DROUPADI MURMU

Sustainability is a necessity and not a slogan anymore, President Droupadi Murmu said on Monday (June 23, 2025) as she emphasised the need for corporates to keep environmental costs in mind. She was speaking at the 12th National Students' Convocation 2025 function of The Institute of Cost Accountants of India in the national capital. Highlighting the crisis of climate change, Ms. Murmu said, "Sustainability is no longer a slogan, it has become a necessity".

Source: The Hindu



## INDIA TO LAUNCH GREEN CEMENT SOON

Their startup Novacret, incubated at the Foundation for Science, Innovation and Development, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, promises to reduce carbon emissions by up to 80% and uses no water for curing. The green cement will be launched formally in September 2025.

Novacret's material is more than green cement. It is a circular economy product whose raw material comes from waste.

Source: Sustainability Next

## BENGALURU TO HAVE A CIRCULAR ECONOMY INNOVATION CLUSTER FOR WASTE

A new report released by Climate KIC, GrowthAfrica, and SecondMuse—with support from the IKEA Foundation—offers a powerful roadmap for how dynamic innovation ecosystems can turn the tide on urban waste and catalyse inclusive circular economies in fast-growing cities along with putting a spotlight on Bengaluru's potential to lead India's transition into this new phase of growth.

Titled "How Strong Innovation Ecosystems Can Create Inclusive Circular Economies," the report draws on in-depth insights from Circular Economy Innovation Clusters (CEIC) operating in Bengaluru and Nairobi. These clusters are doing more than managing waste—they're reimagining it as a lever for social equity.

Source: Sustainability Next

## FUTURE-PROOFING INDIA'S WORKFORCE: HOW CSR CAN MITIGATE AI-DRIVEN JOB DISPLACEMENT

While AI promises significant economic benefits, including a potential \$15.7 trillion contribution to the global economy by 2030 (according to PwC), it also poses challenges such as job displacement. Recent research by Goldman Sachs predicts that generative AI could boost global GDP by 7% and increase productivity by 1.5 percentage points by 2033.

In this rapidly evolving landscape, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives play a crucial role in addressing the potential job displacement caused by AI, ensuring that the workforce is future-proofed and equipped to thrive in an AI-driven economy.

Source: Money Control

**Note: All of these headings are clickable and will redirect you to the full article when clicked.  
Views are of the authors.**

## Empowering Underprivileged Women, Transforming Eye Care: Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital's Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic Program



### About Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital (SCEH)

Established in 1922, Dr. Shroff's Charity Eye Hospital is a pioneer in affordable, high-quality eye care. SCEH's work extends across all pillars of blindness prevention – from clinical excellence at tertiary and secondary centers to community outreach in rural areas and slums; from training and mentoring other eye-care institutions in India and abroad to advancing research and public awareness.

### Addressing Dual Challenges

Despite advances in eye care, mid-level professionals remain in short supply in rural and peri-urban areas. Deep-seated gender inequities further restrict young women's career options. This impacts service delivery and sustainability. Further, human resources recruited from outside find it difficult to relate to local culture.

### The COP Program

Launched in 2014, the Certified Ophthalmic Paramedic (COP) program empowers young women aged 18–21

with clinical skills and hands-on experience.

Training spans two years – one year of instruction at SCEH's tertiary center in Delhi and one year of practical learning at a secondary center close to home. Graduates specialize as Ophthalmic Assistants, Vision Technicians, Patient educators/Counsellors, Optical assistants, or Medical Records Assistants. They are provided monthly stipends and after successful completion of training, they are absorbed in the workforce. Each of the above mentioned branch has a career path. Graduates of the first batch are now master trainers and supervisors.

### Impact

- 2000+ women trained and employed
- Financial independence, decision-making power, and enhanced social status for COPs and their families
- Strengthened capacity at SCEH centers to deliver affordable eye care
- Better patient satisfaction

## Sustainability

SCEH integrates career progression pathways, alumni networks, and formal certification to support retention. Its mentoring and capacity-building expertise is also shared with eye-care institutions across India and other developing countries – helping scale this proven model. So far SCEH have partnered with Lavelle fund for the Blind, Standard Chartered Bank, Combat Blindness International, Cognizant Foundation, Jiti Foundation, CBM India, Mission for Vision, Nikon, and ITC.

## Case Study

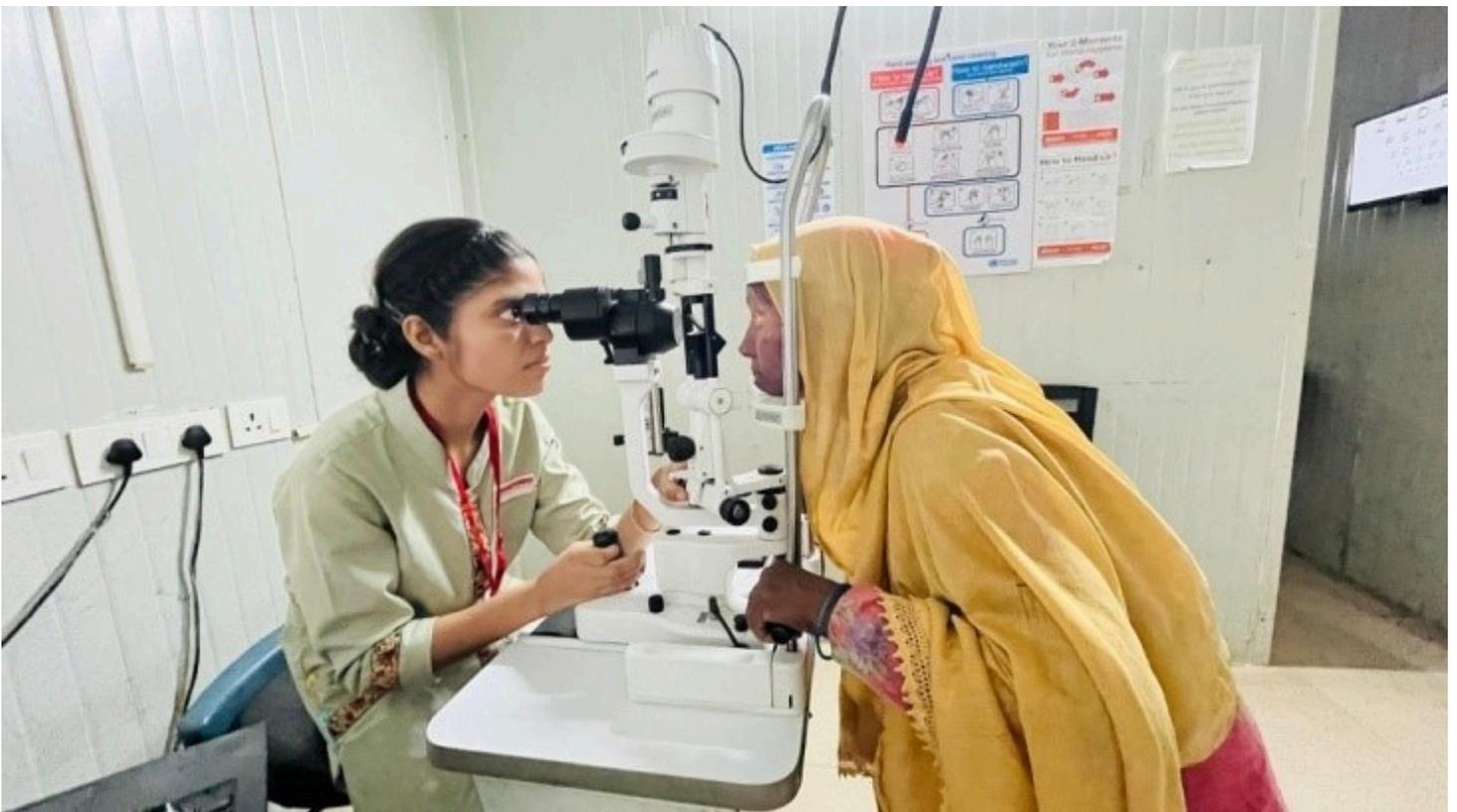
Neha Karanwal, a young woman from Behat Saharanpur, has faced many hardships in her life. After the untimely loss of her father, she lived with her mother and brother, carrying the weight of responsibilities on her young shoulders. Despite these challenges, Neha never lost sight of her dreams and remained committed to building a better future for her family.

After completing her intermediate education, Neha made a pivotal decision—to enroll in the Certified Ophthalmic Paramedics (COP) course and train to become a Vision Technician (VT). This choice was not just about finding employment; it was a bold step toward stability, independence, and purpose.

To fully concentrate on her training, Neha moved into the hostel provided by the program. The supportive and structured environment of the hostel allowed her to focus on her studies without distractions. It was here that she found encouragement, resilience, and a renewed sense of direction.

Through the COP course, Neha gained both theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience in eye care. She learned how to perform vision assessments, assist in clinical procedures, and provide vital eye care services in her community. This training equipped her with the skills necessary to build a successful and meaningful career.

Today, Neha is well on her way to achieving her goals. Her determination and hard work have not only opened the doors to financial independence but have also made her a source of inspiration in her community. As a Vision Technician, she is poised to make a lasting impact—helping people improve their vision, restoring hope, and lighting the way for others like her.



## WEBINAR REPORT

# ‘DRIVING SOCIAL EQUITY THROUGH CSR: STRATEGIES, CHALLENGES & IMPACT’

On 27th May, 2025, National CSR Network hosted an engaging webinar which brought together experienced voices from the field to explore how CSR can move beyond compliance to become a catalyst for inclusive and equitable development.

The session brought together leading practitioners who shared on-ground experiences, strategic models, and honest reflections on embedding social equity in CSR.

Guest Speakers:

- **Ms. Ruchika Garg**, Head HR, SHARP India
- **Mr. Shantanu Das Gupta**, Director, Strategic Planning & Sustainability, Dr. Shroff’s Charity Eye Hospital

The session was moderated by **Ms. Meena Raghunathan**, Former ED, GMR Varalakshmi Foundation.

Their work offered compelling proof that when equity is central to program design, CSR becomes a true force for inclusive development.



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## WEBINAR REPORT

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### SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

- **Equity is not Equality – and That Matters**

Equal treatment does not ensure equal opportunity. Equity means understanding contextual disadvantage and tailoring interventions that uplift those who need it most. Programs must shift their focus from just outreach to meaningful, need-based impact.

- **Mission-Led Equity: The Case of Shroff Eye Hospital**

With a board-level mandate to offer 50% of surgeries to underprivileged patients, equity is woven into the DNA of the institution. This model is reinforced daily through self-declaration protocols and a tiered care delivery system across 3,000+ villages.

- **Cross-Subsidy as a Tool for Sustainable Equity**

Dr. Shroff's innovative cross-subsidy approach ensures financial sustainability while delivering high-quality care to the underserved. The model recovers 95% of operational costs while offering dignity-based access to those unable to pay – a benchmark in equitable healthcare.

- **From Recipients to Entrepreneurs: SheVenture by SHARP**

SHARP NGO's SheVenture project empowers rural and tribal women through a comprehensive entrepreneurship model – combining digital literacy, business skills, and ongoing mentoring. The result: women who are not only self-reliant but also community role models.

- **Early Intervention through STEM Mentorship**

SHARP also runs STEM-focused mentoring programs in government schools for students from underprivileged backgrounds. By offering career guidance, life skills, and exposure to opportunities, the program bridges the rural-urban education divide early in the student journey.

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## WEBINAR REPORT

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- **Co-Creation, Not Top-Down Planning**

Both organizations reinforced the importance of community participation in program design. Whether it is panchayat consultations, working with school teachers, or listening to local women – equity begins with listening to those who live the problem.

- **Building Grassroots Leadership**

Dr. Shroff's Allied Ophthalmic Paramedic Program trains young women from rural areas in clinical eye care. Over 2,000 women have graduated, breaking stereotypes and stepping into formal jobs, financial independence, and public leadership – a long-term equity win.

- **Equity Within the Organization**

The conversation also touched upon internal HR practices. Ruchika noted that SHARP actively promotes gender-equitable hiring and leadership development – a reminder that equity must be practiced both within and outside the organization.

- **Respect, Dignity, and Choice Matter**

From letting patients self-identify as paying or non-paying, to allowing women to present their business ideas publicly – every example shared reinforced that true social equity respects individual agency and preserves dignity, not just delivers services.

## ABOUT US



Section 8 Company



Industry led & managed  
organization governed by a  
strong Advisory Council



Interactive platform for  
CSR Stakeholders



Insights & Solutions to  
address pain points



## THE AAA APPROACH

**ADVISORY:** CSRStrategy, Capacity Building, Professional Development, Influence and Advocacy, Knowledge and Expertise, Recognition and Awards  
**ALLIANCE:** Networking Opportunities, Collaboration and Innovation  
Government, Access to Resources and Information, Resource Sharing  
**AMPLIFY:** Best Practices, Brand Building, Showcasing Work, Recruitment and Talent Acquisition Community and Support

For suggestions and feedback, Connect with us :



[info@nationalcsrnetwork.in](mailto:info@nationalcsrnetwork.in)



[www.nationalcsrnetwork.in](http://www.nationalcsrnetwork.in)



+91 7042350657