

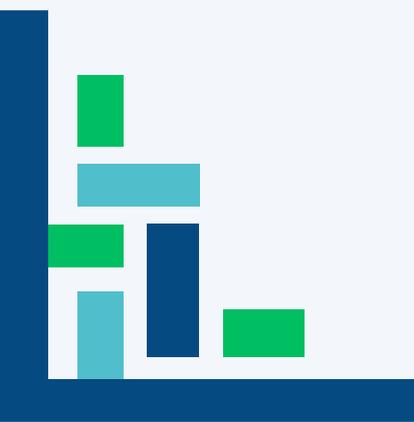


CONFERENCE REPORT

ESG CONCLAVE 2025

FROM COMPLIANCE
TO SUSTAINABILITY

22 AUGUST 2025 | NEW DELHI



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EVENT SUMMARY

The ESG Conclave 2025 concluded on a high note, successfully convening leaders from industry, government, academia, and civil society to deliberate on the future of CSR and ESG in India. The event provided a vibrant platform to exchange perspectives on how corporate responsibility has evolved from a compliance-driven activity to a strategic tool for innovation, inclusion, and sustainable growth.

Speakers underscored that intent is at the heart of meaningful CSR, while ethics, governance, and sustainability must form its guiding pillars. Technology and data-driven insights were identified as critical enablers for enhancing transparency, accountability, and impact measurement. At the same time, participants reflected on the need for deeper collaborations across stakeholders to address pressing social and environmental challenges, especially in underserved communities.

A key message that resonated throughout was that CSR is no longer just about projects or philanthropy - it is about building trust, fostering long-term partnerships, and creating systemic change. By integrating sustainable business practices, inclusive innovation, and responsible governance, corporate India has the opportunity to shape not only its own growth but also contribute meaningfully to national development goals. The conclave closed with a shared optimism that CSR and ESG, when anchored in sincerity and collaboration, can drive India toward a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable future.

INAUGURAL SESSION

The Inaugural Session of the ESG Conclave 2025 emphasized the growing importance of integrating CSR with ESG to create a holistic framework for sustainable business practices. The theme address framed CSR as purpose-driven and ESG as process-driven, stressing that when combined, they provide businesses with both direction and accountability. The academic address traced India's unique trajectory in shaping CSR, from voluntary guidelines in 2010 to the mandatory CSR law in 2014, positioning the country as a pioneer in creating an indigenous model rather than borrowing from global frameworks. The keynote address expanded on this by calling for a shift from compliance to culture, where businesses see CSR and ESG as strategic tools for building trust, resilience, and long-term value.

Speakers underlined that companies must invest in impact measurement, leverage technology and innovation, and encourage leadership-driven integration for meaningful outcomes. The session highlighted that CSR enables companies to deliver value to society, while ESG ensures they remain accountable to investors and stakeholders. Together, they create the convergence and alignment necessary for achieving scale, credibility, and sustainability in business. The inaugural session thus set the tone for the conclave by reaffirming that integration of CSR and ESG is not just a regulatory necessity but also a pathway towards inclusive growth and India's sustainable development journey.



From left to right: Mr. Praveen Karn, Dr. K.K. Pandey, Mr. Ayush Gupta, Mr. Prabhakar Kumar (IRS), Mr. Raj Kumar Dubey, Mr. P. Dwarakanath and Mr. Navin Bhatia

PANEL DISCUSSION 1

STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION FOR ESG-DRIVEN CSR: PARTNERSHIPS THAT DELIVER RESULTS

The panel emphasized that CSR–ESG partnerships succeed only when built on trust, equity, and co-creation. Beyond budgets and compliance, initiatives must connect emotionally with communities and be rooted in India’s values. With NGRBC principles and upcoming Indian ESG reporting standards, the country is positioned to lead with its own model of responsible business.

Key Insights

- Building partnerships that work requires trust and emotional connection with communities, not just financial investments. Without genuine relationships, even well-funded projects may fail to create impact.
- Effective initiatives demand co-creation rather than one-sided collaboration. NGOs and grassroots organizations must be treated as equal partners who bring valuable local knowledge and expertise.
- Ground realities often provide more practical insights than theoretical frameworks. Listening to communities ensures that projects address real needs.
- India’s National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC) and upcoming ESG reporting standards are set to strengthen accountability and position India as a global leader in responsible business practices.
- ESG should be understood as more than compliance- it can represent effectiveness, efficiency, and values, all of which align with India’s cultural ethos of responsibility.
- CSR, with its external community focus, and ESG, with its internal business focus, must be aligned and mutually reinforcing for long-term impact.

PANEL DISCUSSION 1

Key Takeaways

- Trust and equity are the foundations of impactful CSR–ESG partnerships, and building genuine relationships is as important as financial contributions.
- Partnerships must be based on co-creation, where corporates and NGOs work as equals to design and implement solutions.
- Indian culture and values provide a natural base for sustainability, making India's model of ESG and CSR unique in the global context.
- Aligning CSR and ESG ensures that corporate efforts are cohesive and not fragmented, avoiding duplication and inefficiency.
- The NGRBC principles and BRSR framework offer a clear and robust roadmap for responsible business conduct in India.



From left to right: Mr. D.V. Shastri, Prof. rohan sarma, Mr. Anil Padmanabhan, Mr. Vijay S. Chauhan, Mr. Prabhakant Jain, Mr. M. Prabhakar Das

SPECIAL ADDRESS BY DR. BHASKAR CHATTERJEE

In his special address, Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee highlighted the deep-rooted need to integrate CSR and ESG in India's corporate ecosystem. He explained that CSR, formalized through the 2010 guidelines and later mandated by Section 135 of the Companies Act in 2014, represents a homegrown Bharatiya model designed for India's unique development context. Similarly, ESG reporting in India evolved indigenously - first through Business Responsibility Reporting (BRR) in

2012 and later expanded into Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) in 2021—to create frameworks aligned with Indian business ethos. CSR, he stressed, is about a company's outward impact on society, while ESG reflects how social and environmental issues impact the company itself, making their integration essential.

He further emphasized that true integration can only happen when driven by top management, not left siloed between CSR heads and company secretaries. Sharing a practical example, he described how companies have combined CSR and Sustainability Committees, aligning CSR activities with BRSR reporting requirements. This creates synergy between societal investments and regulatory accountability, ensuring that CSR contributes directly to ESG disclosures.

Dr. Chatterjee concluded that the way forward lies in convergence, alignment, intersection, and synergy- principles that can propel Indian businesses towards meaningful integration and ultimately contribute to building a Viksit Bharat.



Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee

PANEL DISCUSSION 2

LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION FOR ESG ALIGNED CSR

The second panel highlighted how technology, innovation, and intent are reshaping CSR and ESG from compliance to credibility, with emphasis on data utilization, inclusivity, and ethics. While progress is visible, panelists agreed that India is still mid-journey, and there is a long way forward.

Key Insights

- Data is not the problem in today's context, as it is widely available across organizations and government platforms; the real challenge lies in converting data into meaningful insights that can inform decisions and create impact.
- Technology and tools such as AI and dashboards play a crucial role in transforming raw data into actionable intelligence, thereby strengthening the credibility and effectiveness of CSR and ESG initiatives.
- Access, inclusion, and ethics remain areas where significant progress is still needed, with industry leaders rating the current state only between three and eight on a scale of ten.
- Ethics continues to be a foundational element, requiring a strong human touch and consistent handholding to build trust and ensure responsible practices in the CSR ecosystem.
- Beyond the traditional four pillars of CSR—community, environment, governance, and business—there is a growing recognition of the need to include sustainable technology and sustainable innovation as additional pillars for long-term impact.
- Governance is a critical enabler of sustainability; even the most innovative and sustainable solutions cannot succeed without strong governance frameworks that ensure transparency, accountability, and trust.

PANEL DISCUSSION 2

Key Takeaways

- From data to insights: Organizations must move from raw data collection to intelligent data use for impact measurement.
- Technology + human intent: Tools, dashboards, and AI are valuable, but ethical leadership and intent are non-negotiable drivers of sustainable CSR.
- Inclusion is lagging: Access and DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) require more investment and community engagement.
- Stronger governance needed: Sustainable solutions fail without reliable governance, transparency, and accountability.
- New CSR pillars: Sustainable technology and innovation must be embedded into CSR strategies alongside traditional areas.



From left to right: Mr. Akshay Sharma, Ms. Mahima Chandra, Mr. Rakesh Khar, Ms. Priti Srivastava, Ms. Anita Malik, Mr. Chirag Bhandari

SPEAKERS



Mr. Prabhakar Kumar (IRS)

*Additional Commissioner,
Directorate of Logistics
CBIC, DoR, GoI*



Mr. Ayush Gupta

*Director - HR,
GAIL (India) Ltd.*



Mr. Raj Kumar Dubey

*Director - HR, BPCL |
Chairman, IGL*



Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee

*Senior Adviser CSR and ESG, Deloitte
India and Dua Consulting, Former
Director General and CEO, Indian
Institute of Corporate Affairs*



Mr. P. Dwarakanath

*Chairman Advisory Council,
National CSR Network and
Former Chairman, GSK-CH
India*



Dr. K. K. Pandey

*Professor & Dean Office of
Doctoral Studies,
O.P.Jindal University*



Mr. Praveen Karn

*Group Head
Sustainability & CSR,
Spark Minda Group*



Mr. Rakesh Khar

*Editor, English
Cluster, TV9 Network*



Mr. Anil Padmanabhan

*Senior Journalist &
Former Managing
Editor, Mint*



Mr. D. V. Shastry

*Executive Director,
Natural Gas Society*



Mr. Prabhakar Das

*CGM & Head CSR, Power
Finance Corporation*



Mr. Vijay S. Chauhan

*Executive Director-
Deloitte India*

SPEAKERS



Mr. Prabhakant Jain
Head CSR, DS Group



Prof. rohan sarma
Social Scientist and Senior Fellow, Centre for Responsible Business (CRB)



Ms. Mahima Chandra
General Manager - Global CSR, Bata Group



Mr. Akshay Sharma
DGM - CSR, Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd.



Ms. Priti Srivastava
Senior Vice President- Corporate Affairs, Reliance Industries Ltd.



Ms. Anita Malik
Group CHRO and Head CSR, Jackson Group



Mr. Chirag Bhandari
Founder & CEO- Ennoble Social Innovation



Mr. Navin Bhatia
CEO- Navkar Skills

Annexure 1


PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Time	Topic	Speakers
8:30 AM – 9:30 AM	Registration and Networking	
9:30 AM - 11:30 AM	Welcome Address	Mr. P Dwarakanath Chairman-Advisory Council, National CSR Network & Former Chairman, GSK-CH India
	Context	Mr. Praveen Karn Group Head Sustainability & CSR, Spark Minda Group
	Academic Address	Dr. K.K. Pandey Professor & Dean- Office of Doctoral Studies, O.P. Jindal Global University
	Address	Mr. Raj Kumar Dubey Director-HR, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL) Chairman, Indraprastha Gas Ltd. (IGL)
	Address	Mr. Ayush Gupta Director HR, GAIL India Ltd.
	Keynote Address	Mr. Prabhakar Kumar, IRS Additional Commissioner, Directorate of Logistics CBIC, DoR, Gol
	Concluding Address	Mr. Navin Bhatia CEO, Navkar Skills
11:30 AM - 11:50 PM	TEA BREAK	

Program Schedule

Annexure 1

11:50 AM - 1:10 PM	<p align="center">Panel Discussion 1</p> <p align="center">Stakeholder Collaboration for ESG-Driven CSR: Partnerships that Deliver Results</p>	
	Session Moderator	<p align="center">Mr. Anil Padmanabhan Senior Journalist & Former Managing Editor, Mint</p>
	Panelists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Vijay Singh Chauhan (Former IRS)- Executive Director, Deloitte India • Mr. D. V. Shastry- ED, Natural Gas Society • Mr. M. Prabhakar Das- CGM & Head CSR, Power Finance Corporation • Mr. Prabhakant Jain- Head CSR, DS Group • Prof. rohan sarma- Social Scientist and Senior Fellow, Centre for Responsible Business (CRB)
1:10 PM - 1:30 PM	Special Address	<p align="center">Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee Senior Adviser CSR and ESG, Deloitte India and Dua Consulting Former Director General and CEO, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs</p>
1:30 PM – 2:15 PM	LUNCH	

Program Schedule

Annexure 1

2:15 PM - 3:45 PM	<p style="text-align: center;">Panel Discussion 2 Leveraging Technology & Innovation for ESG Aligned CSR</p>	
	Session Moderator	Mr. Rakesh Khar Editor, TV9
	Panelists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Priti Srivastava- Senior Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Reliance Industries Ltd. • Ms. Mahima Chandra- General Manager, Global CSR, Bata Group • Ms. Anita Malik- CHRO & Head CSR, Jakson Group • Mr. Akshay Sharma-DGM CSR, Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. • Mr. Chirag Bhandari- Founder and CEO, Ennoble Social Innovation
	Concluding Remarks and Vote of Thanks	Mr. Navin Bhatia
4:30 PM	CLOSE	

EVENT GLIMPSES

Annexure 2



EVENT GLIMPSES

Annexure 2



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Annexure 3

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EVENT PARTICIPANTS *(Indicative list)*

Annexure 4



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EVENT PARTICIPANTS *(Indicative list)*

Annexure 4



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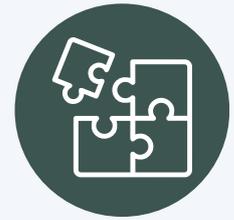
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Insights & Solutions to address pain points



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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 :



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