

SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL INSIGHTS

CSR | ESG | SUSTAINABILITY



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KEY NEWS ON CSR, ESG & SUSTAINABILITY

MCA ALLOWS CSR FUNDING THROUGH SOCIAL STOCK EXCHANGE

In a significant development for India's social impact ecosystem, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has clarified that eligible CSR funds can be deployed through not-for-profit organizations listed on the Social Stock Exchange (SSE). The move is expected to strengthen the SSE's role as a credible platform for channeling corporate resources toward social development initiatives.

Designed to enhance transparency and accountability, the Social Stock Exchange enables eligible non-profits to raise resources while providing greater visibility into the utilization and impact of funds. The clarification is likely to encourage wider corporate participation and support more structured funding for social impact projects.

Why it matters:

The decision creates an additional avenue for CSR fund deployment while promoting transparency, governance, and outcome-based funding. It also marks another step in strengthening India's social impact financing ecosystem.

Source: The Economic Times, May 2026



SUSTAINABILITY COMPLIANCE BECOMES A STRATEGIC BUSINESS PRIORITY

As environmental regulations, carbon disclosure requirements, and sustainability expectations continue to evolve, businesses are increasingly treating ESG compliance as a strategic business priority. Growing expectations from regulators, investors, and stakeholders are encouraging organizations to strengthen governance frameworks, improve sustainability reporting, and integrate ESG considerations into business operations. Experts note that areas such as carbon management, climate risk assessment, supply chain sustainability, and transparent disclosures are becoming increasingly important in shaping long-term business resilience and competitiveness.

Why it matters:

The shift reflects a broader move from voluntary sustainability commitments toward more structured and accountable business practices, making ESG integration an essential component of corporate strategy.

Source: Times of India, May 2026



Rural Talent Search Examination by Veer Teja Nav Srijan Sansthan, Barmer

ABOUT THE ORGANISATION

Veer Teja Nav Srijan Sansthan (VTNSS), established on 17 March 2020 in Barmer, Rajasthan, is a registered social organization working towards educational advancement, social welfare, environmental protection, community awareness, and rural development. The organization was founded with the objective of contributing to social transformation by addressing issues such as addiction, child marriage, superstition, corruption, and social inequalities while promoting education, health, culture, unity, integrity, and social harmony.

The organization believes that education forms the foundation of a prosperous and just society. Through its programmes, it seeks to provide opportunities for learning, encourage innovation, support employment and self-employment, and contribute to the development of a society where every individual has the opportunity to progress and contribute to national development. Among its various educational initiatives, the Rural Talent Search Examination (RTSE) has emerged as one of its flagship programmes for identifying and encouraging talented students from rural areas.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Students in rural areas often have limited opportunities to showcase their academic abilities and receive recognition for their achievements. While many students demonstrate strong potential, access to platforms that encourage academic excellence and reward performance remains limited.

To address this need, Veer Teja Nav Srijan Sansthan launched the Rural Talent Search Examination. The programme aims to identify talented students studying in government schools and encourage them through scholarships, awards, certificates, and educational support. The initiative seeks to strengthen the importance of education while motivating students to pursue their academic goals.

THEORY OF CHANGE

The Rural Talent Search Examination is based on the belief that recognition and encouragement can play an important role in promoting educational participation and achievement. By creating a structured examination platform and rewarding meritorious students, the programme seeks to



motivate students to continue their education and strive for academic excellence.

The initiative provides opportunities for students to participate in examinations based on the government-prescribed curriculum and receive recognition according to their performance. Through scholarships, awards, certificates, and public recognition, the programme aims to promote educational achievement and support deserving students in their learning journey.

PROJECT STEPS:

The Rural Talent Search Examination is currently implemented across Barmer and Balotara districts of Rajasthan through 636 government primary, middle, and senior secondary schools.

The project follows a structured implementation process:

1. School-Level Examination:

The first examination is conducted during the winter vacation period at the school level. The assessment is based on the curriculum covered up to the half-yearly examinations in government schools.

2. Block-Level Examination:

Students who continue in the programme participate in a second examination conducted at the block level immediately after the annual examinations. This assessment covers the complete academic syllabus prescribed by the government curriculum.

3. Student Participation:

The programme is open to students studying in Classes 5 to 12 in rural government schools. To date, 21,752 students have participated in the Rural Talent Search Examination programme.

4. Selection and Ranking:

Students are evaluated based on their examination performance. Those securing



positions within the top 100 ranks in their respective classes become eligible for awards, scholarships, and certificates.

5. Recognition and Awards:

Selected students are honoured through the Rural Talent Award Ceremony, organized in the presence of dignitaries, government officials, teachers, parents, and volunteers. The ceremony recognizes academic achievement and encourages students to continue their educational pursuits.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION PROCESSES:

The organization undertakes regular reviews of programme activities and maintains records related to participation, beneficiary selection, scholarships, and awards. Programme reports and beneficiary data are documented to monitor implementation and assess progress.

Monitoring focuses on student participation, selection processes, scholarship distribution, and the overall reach of the programme. The organization also records beneficiary numbers and reviews the social impact of its educational initiatives as part of its monitoring and evaluation framework.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACTS:

Programme Reach and Participation:

The Rural Talent Search Examination has emerged as a large-scale educational initiative across rural government schools in Barmer and Balotara districts.

Key achievements reported by the organization include:

- Participation of 21,752 students from Classes 5 to 12.
- Engagement of 636 government schools across the two districts.
- Selection of 2,415 promising students for awards, scholarships, and certificates of eligibility.
- Distribution of awards and recognitions to 1,612 students to date.
- Annual scholarship support exceeding ₹15 lakh.
- Annual awards exceeding ₹8 lakh.



Recognition and Scholarship Support:

The programme follows a structured reward mechanism to encourage academic achievement. Students securing first position at the district level receive cash prizes of up to ₹25,000 along with certificates and scholarships, while second and third rank holders receive ₹11,000 and ₹5,100 respectively.

Students securing ranks between 3 and 100 are also recognized through cash awards ranging from ₹250 to ₹2,100 and certificates. In addition, the top five students in each class receive annual scholarships ranging from ₹3,000 to ₹5,500 to support their educational activities.

Beyond Recognition: The UPSC Foundation Programme

The organization's educational support extends beyond awards and scholarships through its UPSC Foundation Programme. Designed for rural students from Class 6 onwards, the programme provides free educational support and guidance with the objective of preparing future IAS, RAS, and other administrative officers from rural communities.

According to the organization, 25 students are currently enrolled in the programme during the 2024–25 academic session, while 30 new students are selected every year. The programme follows a long-term model extending up to ten years and combines academic learning with activities such as yoga, sports, speech competitions, art, music, and personality development.

Support for Competitive Examination Preparation:

The programme follows a structured reward mechanism to encourage academic achievement. Students securing first position at the district level receive cash prizes of up to ₹25,000 along with certificates and scholarships, while second and third rank holders receive ₹11,000 and ₹5,100 respectively.

CHALLENGES FACED:

Implementing a programme that reaches thousands of students across hundreds of rural schools requires continuous planning, coordination, and resource mobilization. Expanding scholarship opportunities, conducting examinations,



organizing award ceremonies, and supporting long-term educational initiatives require sustained institutional and financial support.

To strengthen and expand the programme, the organization continues to seek collaboration through CSR partnerships, community participation, and other forms of support.

SUSTAINABILITY AND EXIT STRATEGY:

The organization has developed a sustainability approach focused on long-term continuation of its educational initiatives. Resource mobilization is planned through CSR partnerships, government support, social donations, and community participation.

The sustainability plan includes regular programme reviews, maintenance of beneficiary records, programme reporting, and social impact assessment. Through these measures, the organization aims to continue supporting rural students through talent identification, scholarships, awards, educational guidance, and related development programmes.

CONCLUSION:

The Rural Talent Search Examination reflects Veer Teja Nav Srijan Sansthan's commitment to promoting education and recognizing talent among rural students. Through a structured examination process, scholarships, awards, certificates, and educational support, the programme has created opportunities for thousands of students studying in government schools across Barmer and Balotara districts.

By identifying talented students, rewarding academic achievement, and supporting continued learning, the initiative contributes towards strengthening educational participation and encouraging students to pursue higher educational goals. The programme demonstrates how community-focused educational initiatives can create opportunities for recognition, encouragement, and academic growth among rural youth.

WEBINAR

SUMMARY

STRATEGIC CSR ALIGNMENT WITH INDIA'S NATIONAL PRIORITIES: A Leadership Playbook for Corporate Impact & Influence

National CSR Network recently organised an insightful webinar on “**Strategic CSR Alignment with India’s National Priorities: A Leadership Playbook for Corporate Impact & Influence**” which witnessed participation from 80+ CSR professionals, corporate representatives, development sector leaders, and stakeholders from across the ecosystem for meaningful discussions on the evolving role of CSR in India’s development journey.

The webinar focused on how CSR is increasingly moving beyond compliance-led approaches towards strategic, impact-driven, and nationally aligned interventions that contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth.

The session brought together an eminent panel of thought leaders and changemakers -



The graphic features a black background with the National CSR Network logo at the top center. Below the logo, the title "STRATEGIC CSR ALIGNMENT WITH INDIA'S NATIONAL PRIORITIES: A Leadership Playbook for Corporate Impact & Influence" is displayed in yellow and white text. The central focus is on Dr. Rashmi Singh, I.A.S., with her name and title in yellow and white, and her portrait in a circular frame. Below this, three speakers are listed on a yellow background: Mr. Alok Kumar Tripathi, Ms. Ritu Kalra, and Ms. Anushree Lakshminarayanan, each with their name, title, and portrait in a circular frame. The roles "SPEAKER", "MODERATOR", and "SPEAKER" are indicated in white text below each speaker's name.

Dr. Rashmi Singh, I.A.S.
Secretary, Women and Child Development, Govt. of Delhi
KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Mr. Alok Kumar Tripathi
Whole Time Director,
NTPC GE Services Ltd.
SPEAKER

Ms. Ritu Kalra
Director, The Hirakihope Foundation
Founder, Humanity Vault
MODERATOR

Ms. Anushree Lakshminarayanan
Director Corporate Affairs,
MSD India
SPEAKER

WEBINAR

KEY INSIGHTS

- **Dr. Rashmi Singh (IAS Officer), Department of Women & Child Development, Government of Delhi** – shared insights on aligning CSR initiatives with national development priorities and strengthening public-private collaboration for sustainable impact.
- **Ms. Anushree Lakshminarayanan, Director – Corporate Affairs & CSR, MSD India** – highlighted the importance of strategic CSR planning, healthcare interventions, and stakeholder partnerships for long-term community development.
- **Mr. Alok Kumar Tripathi, Whole Time Director, NTPC GE Power Services Pvt. Ltd.** – discussed NTPC’s 3D Materiality Framework and the role of integrated CSR approaches in driving measurable and scalable social impact.
- **Ms. Ritu Kalra, Founder– HirakiHope Foundation**– moderated the session, facilitated engaging discussions and guided the conversation around strategic CSR alignment, collaboration, and emerging priorities for corporate social impact.

Key discussions during the webinar highlighted:

- The importance of aligning CSR initiatives with national priorities and missions such as Skill India, Digital India, Ayushman Bharat, Swachh Bharat, and Viksit Bharat 2047.
- The need for collaborative partnerships among corporates, government institutions, NGOs, academia, and communities for achieving scale and sustainability.
- The growing focus on measurable outcomes, long-term ecosystem development, and community ownership in CSR initiatives.
- Emerging focus areas including healthcare strengthening, education and skilling, digital inclusion, AI and technology-driven learning, sustainability, climate resilience, women empowerment, and green communities.

WEBINAR

KEY INSIGHTS

Emerging CSR Priorities:

The webinar also explored emerging areas that are expected to shape the future of CSR in India. These included:

- AI and digital skilling
- Healthcare strengthening
- Mental health and well-being
- Climate resilience and sustainability
- Green communities
- Women empowerment
- Agriculture and rural livelihoods

The discussions highlighted the growing need for corporates to adopt forward-looking and innovation-driven approaches while designing future CSR strategies.

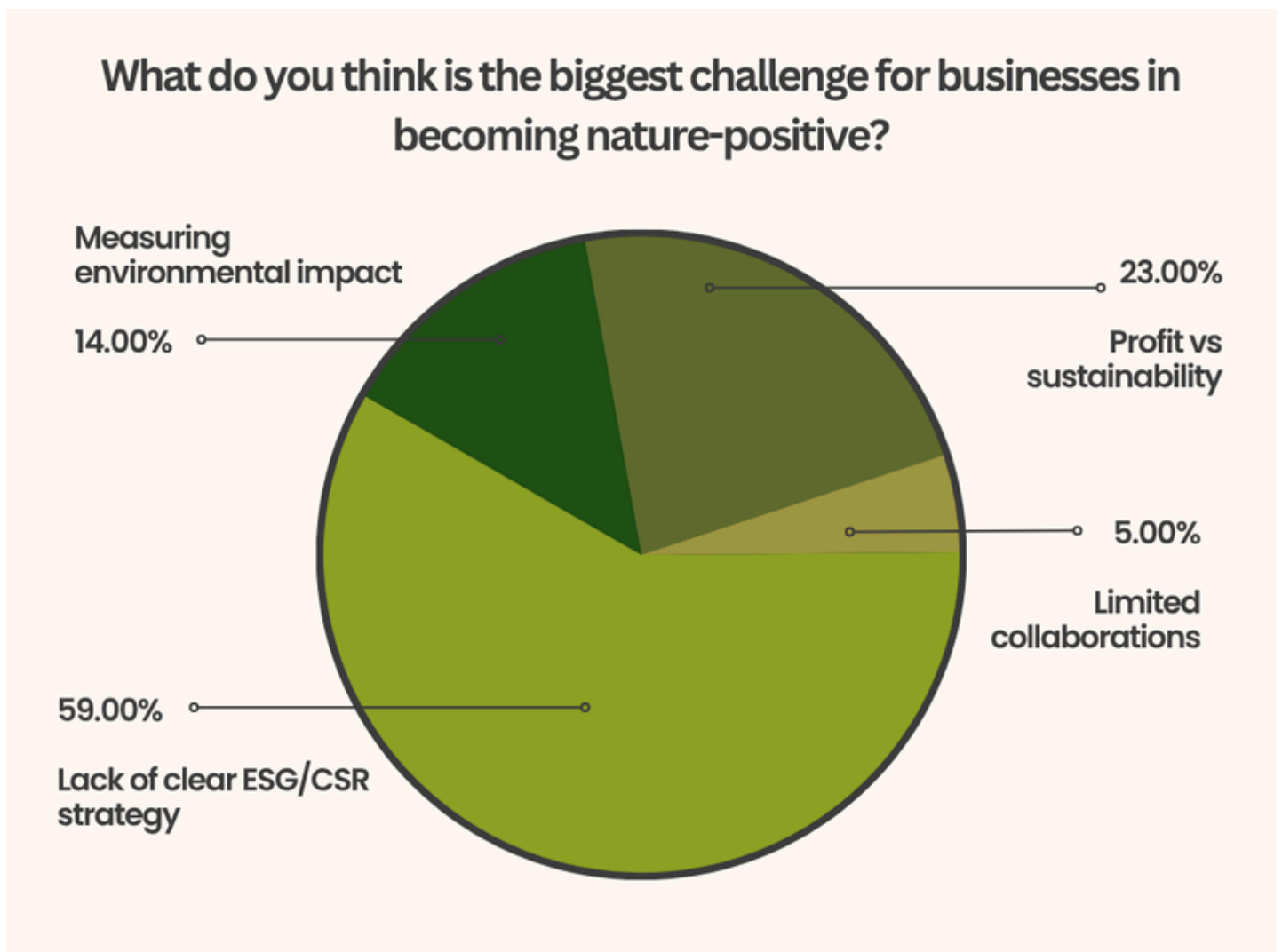


Survey Conducted by NCN

What do you think is the biggest challenge for businesses in becoming nature-positive?

As part of the growing conversation around ESG and sustainability, National CSR Network conducted a LinkedIn poll to understand the biggest challenges businesses face in becoming nature-positive.

The poll received participation from professionals across the CSR, ESG, sustainability, and corporate sectors, reflecting current industry concerns and priorities.



The responses reveal not just preferences - but deeper insights into how nature positive businesses are being understood and valued today.

Survey Conducted by NCN

Key Findings:

The survey responses highlighted the following key challenges faced by businesses:

- **59%** of respondents identified **Lack of clear ESG/CSR strategy** as the biggest challenge. This indicates that many organizations still struggle with creating structured sustainability plans and aligning ESG goals with overall business operations.
- **23%** believed the major concern is **balancing Profit vs Sustainability**. Businesses often find it difficult to maintain financial growth while simultaneously investing in long-term environmental and social initiatives.
- **14%** pointed to difficulties in **Measuring Environmental Impact**. This reflects the growing need for reliable tools, data systems, and reporting frameworks to track sustainability performance effectively.
- **5%** highlighted **Limited Collaborations** as a barrier to becoming nature-positive. Partnerships between companies, NGOs, governments, and communities are increasingly important for achieving meaningful environmental impact.

The findings clearly indicate that strategic direction and implementation remain the most significant gaps for organizations pursuing sustainability goals.

Analysis:

The survey results suggest that while businesses are increasingly aware of sustainability expectations, many still face challenges in translating ESG commitments into actionable business strategies.

The majority response around the lack of a clear ESG/CSR strategy reflects the need for:

- Structured sustainability frameworks
- Measurable ESG goals
- Stronger leadership alignment
- Integration of sustainability into core business operations

The concern regarding “Profit vs Sustainability” highlights the continued perception that sustainable business practices may conflict with short-term financial priorities.

Survey Conducted by NCN

However, evolving investor expectations and stakeholder demands are gradually positioning sustainability as a long-term business advantage rather than an operational cost.

Additionally, the challenge of measuring environmental impact indicates the growing need for robust reporting systems, data-driven assessment tools, and transparent ESG disclosures.

Although fewer respondents selected limited collaborations, the finding still emphasizes the importance of partnerships between corporates, governments, NGOs, and communities in driving collective environmental action.

Recommendations:

Based on the survey insights, organizations may consider the following steps to strengthen their nature-positive journey:

- Develop clear and long-term ESG/CSR strategies aligned with business objectives.
- Invest in measurable sustainability and impact assessment frameworks.
- Strengthen internal ESG governance and leadership involvement.
- Encourage cross-sector collaborations for greater environmental and social impact.
- Integrate sustainability into operational and strategic decision-making processes.

Conclusion:

The poll findings highlight that businesses today recognize sustainability as a strategic priority, but many continue to face implementation and alignment challenges.

Moving toward a nature-positive future requires organizations to adopt structured ESG frameworks, measurable impact systems, and collaborative approaches that go beyond compliance and create meaningful long-term value. As sustainability expectations continue to evolve, businesses that proactively embed ESG into their core strategy will be better positioned to drive resilience, innovation, and sustainable growth.

ABOUT US



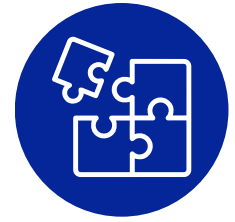
**Section 8
Company**



**Industry led
organization
governed by a strong
Advisory Council**



**Interactive
platform for
CSR
Stakeholders**



**Insights &
Solutions to
address pain
points**

THE AAA APPROACH

ADVISORY: CSR Strategy, 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 :