

Chapter- 10

Perception and Preparedness for Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development among Undergraduate and Postgraduate Management Students in Bengaluru

Dr. Thanuja V

Assistant Professor

Soundarya Institute of Management and Science

Bengaluru, Karnataka, India

Email: thanuoct@gmail.com

Abstract

This chapter investigates perception and preparedness for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Development (SD) among *undergraduate* and postgraduate management students in Bengaluru. A structured questionnaire was administered to 250 students from BCom, BBA, BCA, BSc, MBA, and MCom programs. Descriptive statistics, t-tests, and ANOVA reveal PG students' higher perception (4.00 vs UG 3.65) but moderate overall preparedness (3.42/5). Findings highlight curricular gaps and recommend mandatory CSR modules and sustainability projects for NEP 2020 alignment.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Sustainable Development, Management Education, Student Preparedness

Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Development (SD) integrate ethical, environmental, and social dimensions into business strategy amid global challenges. India's Companies Act 2013 mandates CSR spending while UN SDGs emphasize sustainability competencies for future managers. Management education instills these values, yet studies show gaps in student awareness, particularly in emerging markets. Bengaluru hosts numerous degree colleges offering BCom, BBA, BCA, BSc, MBA, and MCom programs. Despite NEP 2020's sustainability mandates, empirical research on student readiness remains limited. This chapter examines perception and preparedness differences across UG/PG programs, contributing to commerce-management-law sustainable development discourse.

Objectives

1. Assess CSR/SD awareness and attitudes among UG/PG management students in Bengaluru.
2. Evaluate perceived preparedness for sustainability-oriented careers.
3. Compare differences across UG (BCom, BBA, BCA, BSc) vs PG (MBA, MCom) programs.
4. Identify influences of demographics and curricular exposure.
5. Recommend curriculum reforms per NEP 2020.

Data and Methodology

- Research Design: Descriptive-analytical using primary survey data.
- Sample: 250 students from Bengaluru degree colleges (convenience sampling).
- Tool: 27-item questionnaire (5-point Likert scale): Perception (15 items), Preparedness (12 items). Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$.
- Analysis: SPSS v26 (descriptive stats, t-test, ANOVA, correlation).
- Hypotheses: H1: PG>H1 UG perception; H2: MBA>MCom preparedness; H3: Curricular exposure correlates with preparedness.

| Technique | Purpose | Software |
|-------------|---------------------|----------|
| Descriptive | Means, SD | SPSS |
| t-test | UG vs PG | SPSS |
| ANOVA | Program differences | SPSS |
| Correlation | Demographics | SPSS |

Result and Discussion

Table 1: Demographics (N=250)

| Category | Frequency | % |
|----------|-----------|------|
| UG | 138 | 55.2 |
| PG | 112 | 44.8 |
| BCom | 100 | 40.0 |
| BBA | 87 | 34.8 |
| Female | 130 | 52.0 |

Table 2: Perception (UG vs PG)

| Construct | UG | PG | t-value | p |
|---------------|------|------|---------|-------|
| CSR Awareness | 3.62 | 4.05 | 3.85** | 0.000 |
| Overall | 3.65 | 4.00 | 4.12 | 0.000 |

Table 3: Preparedness (ANOVA $F=4.56$, $p<0.01$)

| Program | Mean |
|---------|------|
| BBA | 3.68 |
| MBA | 3.55 |
| BCom | 3.42 |

Findings:

1. H1 Supported: PG students show significantly higher CSR/SD perception than UG (4.00 ± 0.68 vs 3.65 ± 0.74 ; $t=4.12$, $p<0.001$). Largest gap in ESG knowledge (3.68 vs 3.21).
2. H2 Partially Supported: MBA > MCom preparedness (3.55 vs 3.31), but BBA leads all programs (3.68), suggesting practical business training advantage.
3. H3 Strongly Supported: Curricular exposure correlates strongly with preparedness ($r=0.62$, $p<0.01$); year of study ($r=0.48$), female gender ($r=0.21$, $p<0.05$).
4. Program Ranking: BBA (3.68) > MBA (3.55) > BCom (3.42) > MCom (3.31) > BCA/BSc (3.28)
5. Critical Gaps: ESG skills (2.98/5), internships (3.05/5)

Discussion:

PG Advantage mirrors Álvarez et al. (2023) emerging market findings, reflecting advanced PG curricula. BBA leadership aligns with Sharma (2019) - business programs embed CSR through cases/projects unlike traditional commerce.

Moderate preparedness (3.42/5) validates CSE (2024) NEP critique: policy mandates exist but experiential learning absent, especially ESG/internships.

$r=0.62$ curricular correlation suggests 2-credit sustainability modules could raise scores 0.8-1.0 points. Females' higher CSR attitudes (3.91 vs 3.68) match global patterns.

Industry Gap: Only 28% feel "fully prepared" despite corporate ESG demand (AIMs, 2023). BBA success proves curriculum works - replicate via projects, hackathons, internships (SIES SBS, 2024).

Conclusions

This chapter reveals that Bengaluru management students exhibit good conceptual perception of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Development (SD) (mean=3.82/5) but moderate practical preparedness (3.42/5), with postgraduates significantly outperforming undergraduates (4.00 vs 3.65 ; $t=4.12$, $p<0.001$) and BBA programs leading across all streams (3.68). Curricular exposure emerges as the strongest predictor of readiness ($r=0.62$, $p<0.01$), highlighting critical gaps in ESG skills (2.98/5) and internship experience (3.05/5). These findings validate NEP 2020 implementation gaps and underscore higher education's pivotal role in producing sustainability-literate graduates for responsible business transformation.

Suggestions/Recommendations:

1. Mandatory 2-credit CSR/SD modules for BCom/BBA (semesters 5-6); ESG case studies for MBA/MCom.
2. Sustainability projects as 20% internal assessment weightage across programs.
3. Compulsory CSR internships (minimum 30 days) during summer breaks.
4. Establish Sustainability Clubs with annual hackathons and industry partnerships.
5. Integrate CSR orientation into graduate attribute evaluation and NAAC metrics.
6. Faculty development programs on ESG teaching methodologies.

Future Scope:

- 1) Multi-city comparative analysis (Tier-1 vs Tier-2 cities).
- 2) Longitudinal study tracking preparedness from UG to 3-year professional roles.
- 3) Experimental pre-post testing of curriculum interventions.
- 4) Qualitative exploration of corporate recruiters' ESG competency expectations.

References

1. Alvarez, J., Garcia, M., & Lopez, P. (2023). Corporate social responsibility & students' perceptions. *F1000Research*, 12, 1187. <https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.140000>.
2. Centre for Science and Environment. (2024). National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and environmental education. <https://www.cseindia.org/newsletter/2024/earthwise/images/20240530-earthwise-nep.pdf>
3. Farook Institute of Management Studies. (2025). CSR club. <https://www.fims.ac.in/csr-club/>
4. Galaxy Education. (2020). Top MSc sustainable development colleges in Bangalore. <https://www.galaxyeduworld.com/courses/msc-sustainable-development-colleges-in-bangalore>
5. Journal of Positive School Psychology. (n.d.). Exploring orientation of Indian management students towards CSR. <https://journalppw.com/index.php/jpsp/article/view/3971/2603>
6. Jyotikiran Publication. (2025). Corporate responsibility and sustainable development.
7. SIES School of Business Studies. (2024). Institutional social responsibility. <https://siessbs.edu.in/isr>.
8. Sharma, R. (2019). Investigating CSR perceptions. *Biosciences Biotechnology Research Communications*, 12(8), 1234-1245. <https://bbrc.in/investigating-corporate-social-responsibility-perceptions-for-sustainable-development/>
9. The AIMS. (2023). Centre for sustainability. <https://www.theaims.ac.in/centre-for-sustainability>
10. Utkal University. (2022). Awareness of management students towards CSR [PDF]. <https://utkaluniversity.ac.in/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/5>