An Awareness of Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Ethics Among UG Students

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A B S T R A C T

Corporations have a big part in creating and growing communities. Companies participate in a variety of communities and groups to promote integrated development. Corporate social responsibility is a major ethical duty for businesses, and they are more committed to advancing the community in which they operate. Corporate social responsibility mandates that they support community infrastructure, social, and economic development, as well as the holistic growth of every member of society. This paper aims to understand the significance of the 2014 amendments to the Companies Act (Amended) with CSR and how corporate ethics have become crucial to promoting community development. Based on information gathered from respondents and an examination of secondary sources, they examine the phenomena of development and offer recommendations for community development. The article examines how 93% of the plays a significant role in advancing corporate ethics through CSR and legal aid for community development operations.

Introduction

Businesses have been crucial to India's rising economy and human resources, consistently expanding their operations and making significant contributions to community development initiatives. Before emmer, a few corporations made voluntary social development contributions by allocating a portion of their profits to community development projects1. These actions fell within the purview of business ethics, which direct corporate entities to support the growth of infrastructure, health, and integrated development. The Companies Acts of 2013 and subsequent revisions mandate corporate support for community development under the umbrella of CSR initiatives. The act, which combines the most recent guidance with the listed activities, is the face of legalized business ethics. According to section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 ("Companies Act"), every business with a net worth of at least INR 500 crore, a turnover of at least INR 1000 crore, or a net profit of at least INR 5 crore must devote at least 2% of its average net profits to corporate social responsibility (CSR).

Review of Literature:

Michaela Bucur's (8-9 October 2020) study demonstrates that social responsibility has a big impact on communities, and participation in CSR activities requires knowledge of this idea. The study placed special emphasis on the understanding and growth of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Europe. They discovered that many respondents thought businesses were attempting to build and maintain a positive reputation through CSR activities.

John Donaldson; Irene Fafaliou: explained the degree of people's influences on business, whether positive or harmful. People have been made aware of the effects of their actions or inactions toward a business through a lot of work.

Vethirajan C. Ramu's: According to a survey, organizations that make Fast-Moving Consumer Goods are more likely to prioritize corporate ethics. According to the survey, CSR and business ethics are essential for exercising ethical and financial responsibility. They concentrated on other problems, such as how CSR's influence on FMCG firms might result in sustainable growth for all parties.

Bruce; Marinescu: study The CSR tenets are advantageous to businesses and drive their expansion and development. According to the report, it is becoming increasingly important for both employers and employees to consider how well each party fits into the workplace.

Objectives of the Study:

➢ To study the awareness of CSR practices among UG students in select areas.

➢ To explore the benefits of interrelation between CSR and Corporate ethics.

Hypothesis:

H_{01}: There is no awareness of CSR Practices among UG Students in the select area.

H_{02}: There is no interrelationship between CSR and Corporate ethics.

Methodology

The study was carried out using an explorative methodology, according to the main data source. Open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires were used to collect the primary data using a random sampling methodology. The 300-person sample was chosen from the B. A., B. Com, and B. Sc. programs of Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya Bilaspur CG. The study explored hypotheses for data analysis and inference using descriptive statistical methods. Additionally, a thorough academic literature search on business

ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR) was conducted using secondary sources of information. Additionally, a thorough search of books, research papers, publications, journals, government reports, theses, and authoritative websites that are concerned with CSR and corporate ethics.

Corporate Social Responsibility:

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the voluntary commitment made by an organization to conduct its business in a morally and socially responsible manner, going above and beyond what is required by law and considering the effects of its decisions on society, the environment, and numerous stakeholders. It is the understanding that companies have a responsibility that extends beyond maximizing profits and should consider the welfare of people and the environment. CSR entails incorporating social and environmental considerations into an organization's operational procedures and business strategies. It includes a wide range of programs and actions designed to have a beneficial effect and address societal issues. These programs may include.

➢ **Environmental Sustainability:** putting policies in place to lessen carbon emissions, protect resources, support biodiversity, and encourage renewable energy.

➢ **Ethical Labour Practices:** fostering diversity and inclusion, ensuring safe and healthy working conditions, and upholding workers' rights across the supply chain.

➢ **Philanthropy and Community Engagement:** supporting philanthropic causes, contributing to community improvement projects, being involved in local communities, and supporting social issues.

➢ **Responsible Supply Chain:** ensuring that suppliers follow moral and ethical norms, such as laws governing the environment, ethical sourcing, and fair work practices.

➢ **Stakeholder Engagement:** actively involving and talking with stakeholders, such as staff members, clients, investors, residents, and NGOs, to understand their issues and consider their suggestions when making decisions.

➢ **Transparency and Accountability:** following ethical business principles, upholding high levels of corporate governance, and engaging in public reporting on social and environmental performance.

The objective of CSR is to create shared value, in which corporations produce financial gain while also making positive contributions to society and the environment. By implementing CSR, businesses hope to increase consumer confidence, improve their reputation, draw in socially conscious clients, inspire staff, control risks, and promote sustainable growth. The precise actions and initiatives performed by businesses might differ depending on their industry, size, resources, and the specific social and environmental issues they prioritize. It is crucial to remember that CSR is a voluntary activity.

The triple bottom line of CSR:

TBL is a concept in corporate social responsibility (CSR) that emphasizes the significance of considering social and environmental repercussions in addition to financial performance. It recommends that three connected metrics should be used to assess a company's success:

➢ **Profit (economic bottom line)**: Traditional financial performance and profitability are the main topics of this dimension. Measurement and apt optimization of financial returns, revenue growth, cost control, and the generation of shareholder value are all part of it.

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ON ECONOMICS, FINANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSN (electronic): 2620-6269/ ISSN (printed): 2615-4021

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- ➢ **People (social bottom line):** This factor emphasizes a company's social obligations and influence. It includes elements like workplace policies, diversity and inclusion, involvement in the community, respect for human rights, and corporate charity. It highlights the company's responsibility for advancing favourable social outcomes and enhancing the well-being of its constituents, including its workers, clients, suppliers, and communities.

- ➢ **Planet (environmental bottom line):** This factor places a focus on a company's environmental effect and sustainability practices. Resource consumption, carbon emissions, waste management, pollution reduction, biodiversity preservation, and sustainable sourcing are a few examples of the aspects that must be considered. The emphasis is on reducing the negative ecological impact of business operations and goods and on fostering environmentally friendly Beha behaviours for the whole value chain.

Companies try to create a balanced approach to sustainable business practices by considering these three factors: profit, people, and the environment. To achieve long-term economic, social, and environmental value creation, the TBL pushes organizations to look beyond just financial concerns and incorporate social and environmental issues into their decision-making processes.

List of Activities under CSR:

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to a broad range of initiatives that businesses carry out to give back to society and have a beneficial influence. The following is a list of typical CSR activities:

- ➢ **Philanthropy:** donating money, products, or services to charity causes, non-profits, and neighbourhood projects.

- ➢ **Education:** supporting activities to improve access to high-quality education through funding educational programs, scholarships, infrastructure development, and skill-building

- ➢ **Environmental sustainability:** putting eco-friendly practices into practice, assisting environmental clean-up programs, lowering carbon emissions, promoting renewable energy, and supporting conservation initiatives.

- ➢ **Health and wellness:** the funding of healthcare projects, the encouragement of medical research, the funding of public health efforts, the facilitation of access to healthcare facilities, and the promotion of wellness programs.

- ➢ **Employee volunteering:** encouraging staff members to participate in voluntary projects for the community while they are at work.

- ➢ **Social entrepreneurship:** supporting social entrepreneurs that use creative economic strategies to address social or environmental challenges.

- ➢ **Disaster relief:** supplying resources and assistance during calamities or natural disasters, such as cash donations, supplies, or logistical support.

- ➢ **Employee welfare:** putting in place activities that are centred on the employees, such as diversity and inclusion programs, work-life balance programs, and training and development opportunities.

- ➢ **Community development**: makes investments in infrastructure development, helping regional communities, enhancing the quality of life, and empowering disadvantaged people

- ➢ **Ethical business practices:** promoting ethical business practices by ensuring fair trade, responsible sourcing, and supply chain transparency

➢ **Supporting underprivileged groups:** putting an emphasis on programmes that help economically disadvantaged groups, such as aiding income-generating projects, career training, and microfinance initiatives.

➢ **Arts and culture:** fostering access to the arts and cultural activities while assisting artistic efforts and cultural preservation.

➢ **Technology and innovation:** fostering digital literacy, closing the digital divide, and supporting technology-based solutions to societal problems.

➢ **Human rights and social justice:** standing up for human rights, promoting inclusion, equality, and diversity, and aiding organisations that advance social justice.

➢ **Stakeholder engagement:** interacting with a variety of stakeholders, including clients, staff members, shareholders, and local communities, in order to comprehend their requirements, worries, and goals and incorporate their viewpoints into company decisions. It is significant to highlight that depending on their industry, size, and values, businesses may differ in the precise CSR activities they perform.

Corporate Ethics (CE):

Corporate ethics are the moral principles and ideals that direct an organization's and its workers' behaviour and decision-making. It entails conducting business morally and responsibly, considering how decisions may affect a variety of stakeholders, including the environment, communities, and shareholders as well as employees, customers, and stockholders. Several essential components make up corporate ethics:

➢ **Integrity:** Upholding honesty, fairness, and transparency in all business dealings and interactions. This includes being truthful in advertising and marketing, maintaining accurate financial records, and avoiding conflicts of interest.

➢ **Compliance:** Adhering to laws, regulations, and industry standards relevant to business operations. This includes legal compliance in areas such as labour laws, environmental regulations, consumer protection laws, and data privacy.

➢ **Respect for stakeholders:** Treat employees, customers, suppliers, and communities with dignity and respect. Respecting human rights, promoting diversity and inclusion, ensuring safe working conditions, and avoiding exploitative practices are essential components of corporate ethics.

➢ **Social responsibility:** Recognizing the company's responsibility to contribute positively to society and the environment. This involves considering the social and environmental impact of business decisions and taking actions to mitigate negative effects and promote sustainability.

➢ **Ethical leadership:** Demonstrating ethical behaviour and fostering an ethical culture within the organization. Leaders play a crucial role in setting the tone at the top, establishing ethical standards, and promoting ethical conduct throughout the company.

➢ **Accountability:** Taking responsibility for the consequences of business decisions and actions. This includes accepting accountability for mistakes, addressing ethical breaches promptly and transparently, and implementing mechanisms for reporting unethical behaviour.

> ➢ **Stakeholder engagement:** Engaging with stakeholders to understand their needs, concerns, and expectations and integrating their perspectives into decision-making processes. This helps ensure that business actions are aligned with the interests of various stakeholders.

Ethical business practices not only contribute to the long-term sustainability and reputation of a company but also foster trust among stakeholders and help build stronger relationships. Companies prioritizing corporate ethics are more likely to attract and retain customers, motivate employees, and positively impact society.

Results and discussion

The genders and courses that the respondents—42% of B. Com graduates, 30% of B. A graduate, and 28% of B. SC UG grads—took for the study may be inferred from Table A. In the sample design, 43% of respondents were women and 57% were men. Many of the male respondents participated in the study and were very important, as indicated by the mean score $(\bar{x}) = 100$ and $(SD) = 21.79$

Table - A

Gender	B. A	B. Com	B.Sc.	N	Mean	Sd
Male	50 (17%)	80 (27%)	40 (13%)	170 (57%)	56.67	20.82
Female	40 (13%)	45 (15%)	45(15%)	130 (43%)	43.33	2.89
Total	90 (30%)	125 (42)	85 (28%)	300 (100%)	100.00	21.79

Source: primary data

Source: Authors

Table-B

Inference about awareness of principles of corporate ethics, 52% of the respondents were aware honesty is one of the principles of corporate ethics (N)= 300,($\bar{x}$) = 50 and (SD)= 58.98), 59% of the undergraduate students with h ($\bar{x}$) = 50 and (SD) = 66.88 agreed on integrity, 33% of the graduates opined that promise-keeping is corporate ethics, 53% of the respondents said loyalty is one of the principles of CE with a mean score of 60 and (SD)=30.58, 63% of the respondents were aware that fairness is the principle of corporate ethics. 62% of the graduate students know the law following. One of the elements of corporate ethics is a commitment to excellence, which has a mean value of SD = 60.06 and 80% of respondents believed that the company's reputation and moral support for implementing ethics are important. Many respondents believed that in some locations, accountability is one of the requirements for understanding corporate ethics ($\bar{x}$) = 60 and (SD) = 71.71). As a result, many respondents were informed and significantly informed about.

(UG students are conscious of corporate ethical standards.)

Corporate ethics	S. not aware	Not aware	Neutral	Aware	S. aware	N	Mean	SD	SE
Honesty	65 (22%)	25 (8%)	0 (0%)	155 (52%)	55 (18%)	300 (100%)	60	58.98	26.36
Integrity	48 (16%)	32 (11%)	22 (7%)	178 (59%)	20 (7%)	300 (100%)	60	66.88	29.91
Promise keeping	19 (6%)	43 (14%)	78 (26%)	98 (33%)	62 (21%)	300 (100%)	60	30.58	13.67
Loyalty	2 (0%)	3 (1%)	65 (22%)	159 (53%)	71 (24%)	300 (100%)	60	64.34	28.77
Fairness	28 (9%)	33 (11%)	51 (17%)	98 (33%)	90 (30%)	300 (100%)	60	32.31	14.45
Law-abiding	19 (6%)	30 (10%)	66 (22%)	89 (30%)	96 (32%)	300 (100%)	60	34.47	15.41
Commitment to excellence	8 (3%)	12 (4%)	52 (17%)	156 (52%)	72 (24%)	300 (100%)	60	60.06	26.86
Exemplify Honour & ethics	22 (8%)	43 (14%)	55 (18%)	98 (33%)	82 (27%)	300 (100%)	60	30.36	13.57
Reputation and morale	5 (2%)	19 (6%)	37 (12%)	158 (53%)	81 (27%)	300 (100%)	60	61.81	27.64
Accountability	0 (0%)	10 (4%)	40 (13%)	178 (59%)	72 (24%)	300 (100%)	60	71.71	32.06

Source: primary data
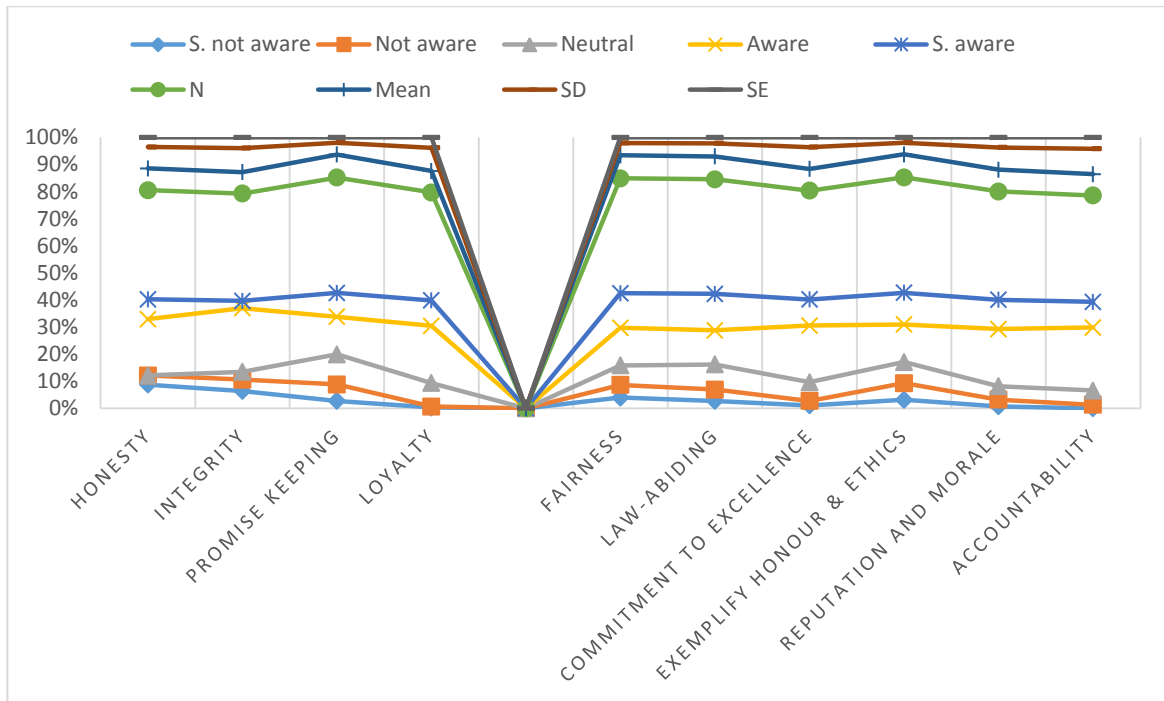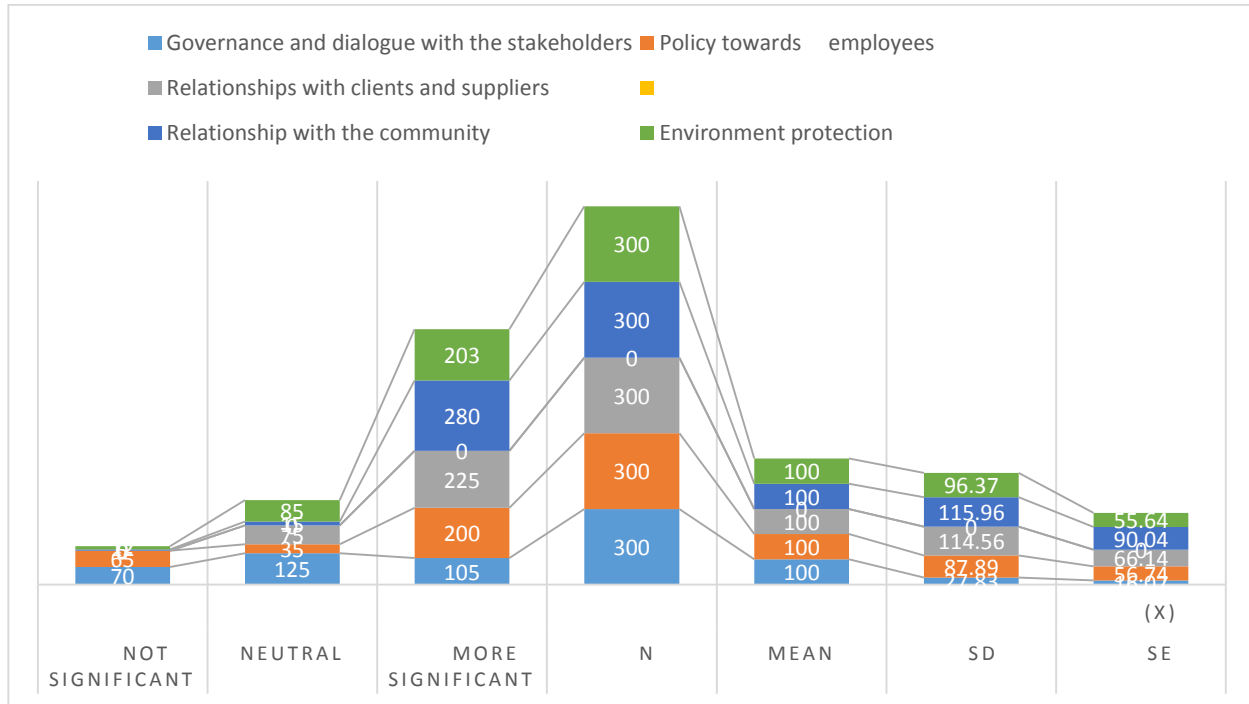
Source: Authors

Table-C

It follows that every firm will have an equal impact in the field of CSR. With a mean score of $(\bar{x}) = 100$ and $(Sd) = 27.83$, $(N) = 300$, 42% of graduates believed that government and discussion with stakeholders are extremely significant. Environmental protection is a more important factor in CSR, according to 66% of respondents, who indicated this with a mean score of $(\bar{x}) = 83.3$ and $(Sd) = 87.89$, followed by responses from 75% of respondents regarding relationships with customers and suppliers and 93% of respondents regarding relationships with the community. UG students indicated this with a mean score of $(\bar{x}) = 100$ and $(Sd) = 115.96$. According to the study's findings, many respondents agreed that CSR and corporate responsibility are beneficial.

Greater importance for the organisation in the area of social responsibility?

Factors	Not significant	Neutral	More significant	N	Mean	SD	SE (x)
Governance and dialogue with the stakeholders	70 (23%)	125 (42%)	105 (35%)	300 (100%)	100	27.83	16.07
Policy towards employees	65 (22%)	35 (12%)	200 (66%)	300 (100%)	100	87.89	56.74
Relationships with clients and suppliers	0 (0%)	75 (25%)	225 (75%)	300 (100%)	100	114.56	66.14
Relationship with the community	5 (2%)	15 (5%)	280 (93%)	300 (100%)	100	115.96	90.04
Environment protection	12 (4%)	85 (28%)	203 (68%)	300 (100%)	100	96.37	55.64

Source: primary data

CHART NO. C

Source: Authors

Table-D

The implication relates to the company's efforts to reduce its influence on the environment and the community through measures like waste management and energy conservation. Measures of CSR as environmental system management were known to 13.33% of respondents, the utilisation of renewable resources was mentioned by 7.67% of graduate students, and cause-related marketing initiatives were known to 12.33% of respondents. According to the report, 18.67% of UG students were aware of CSR's equal opportunity and diversity initiatives in India. As a result, many respondents were aware of corporate social responsibility initiatives.

Shows the actions taken by the company to lessen its impact on the environment and the community:

CSR Measures	Respondents	Per cent
Energy saving	18	6
Waste recycling	40	13.33
Sustainable packaging	5	1.67
Develop environmentally friendly product	23	7.67
Life Cycle Assessment processes	3	1
Management of environmental system	38	12.67
Use of renewable resources	23	7.67
Donations	27	9
Sponsorship of sports and cultural events	16	5.33

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL ON ECONOMICS, FINANCE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ISSN (electronic): 2620-6269/ ISSN (printed): 2615-4021

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Cause Related Marketing campaign	37	12.33
Partnership projects of social solidarity	4	1.33
equal opportunities and diversity	56	18.67
Management standards	10	3.33
Total	**300**	**100 %**

Source: primary data
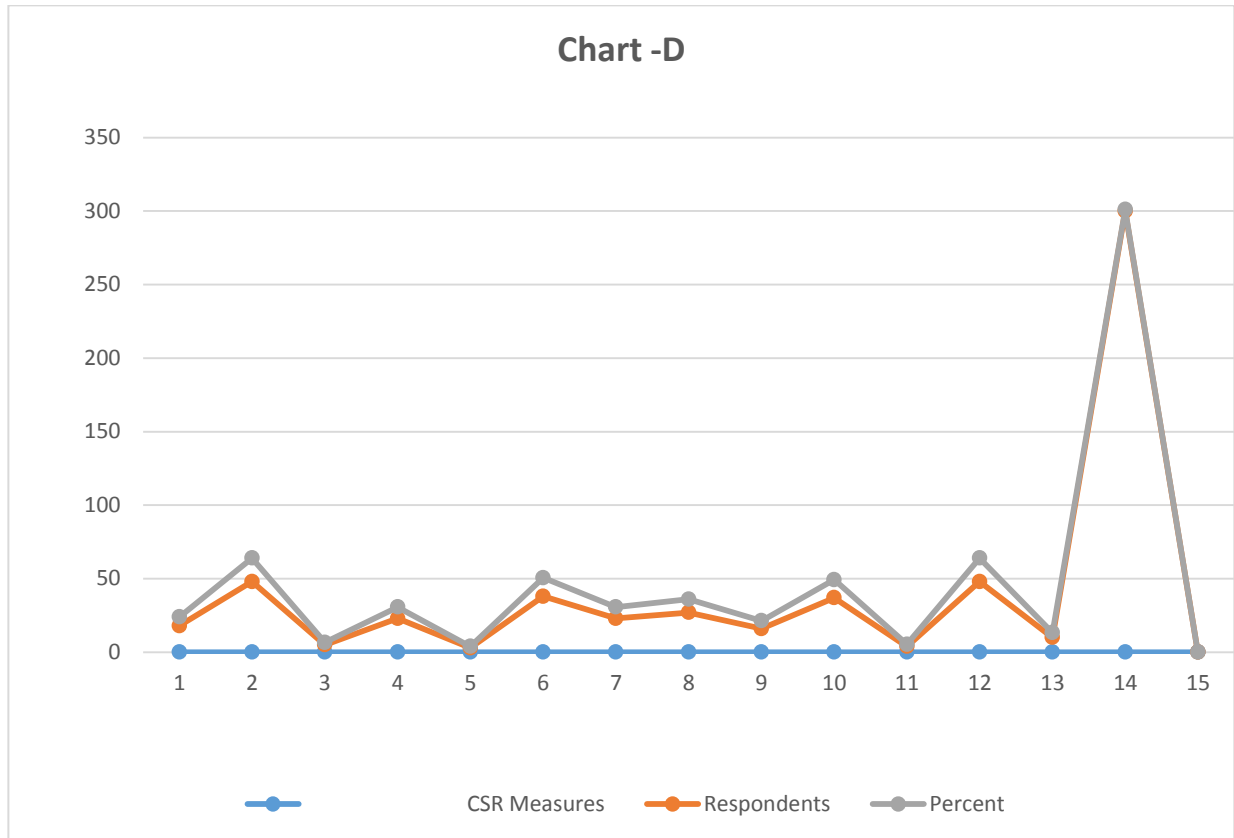
Source: Authors

Finding:

➢ The study's key findings are as follows: 43% of women and 57% of men who responded to the survey participated in it. Boys are more likely to have enrolment problems, and they actively participated in the research.

➢ 42% of respondents are B. Com. grads, and because corporate ethics is one of their academic specialities, they are more knowledgeable about it.

➢ Fairness is the guiding principle of business ethics, and 63% of respondents were aware of this fact, which is crucial for preserving positive relationships with all of the company's stakeholders.

➢ According to the report, 62% of graduate students are familiar with the legal requirements for CSR and business ethics.

➢ According to the study, 80% of respondents believed that the company's reputation and moral backing for implementing ethics were important.

➤ 75% of respondents said that a company's ethics revolve around its relationships with its customers and suppliers. These relationships also play a significant role in social responsibility, and the companies actively participate in CSR-related community development initiatives.

➤ 93% of respondents concurred that keeping vital connections with community members and formal and informal leaders depends on having relationships with the community.

➤ 13.33% of those surveyed were aware of CSR metrics. The actions that were carried out in a community as part of CSR activities were known to the respondents.

➤ 18.67% of undergraduate students were aware that CSR gives tribal, rural, and urban groups the same possibilities.

Conclusion:

Corporate social responsibility, or CSR, is businesses' moral, ethical, and legal side. The foundation of Indian philosophy is giving to those in need. The Companies Act of 2013 was recently introduced, which requires corporate investment in community development and then accelerates corporate working practises towards community development. Many corporations make investments in sustainable development and the emancipation of disadvantaged groups in society. Such corporate initiatives aid in the advancement of corporate ethics. Numerous elements of corporate social responsibility and business ethics were uncovered by the current investigation. The study concludes that CSR is crucial in preserving brand reputation by assisting residents in integrating growth.

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