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AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON IMPACT OF CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ON CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

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Abstract: Despite the increasing emphasis on CSR in the marketplace, little is known about the effects of CSR action on consumers (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). It is not clear when and how CSR activities influence consumer evaluations (Yoon, 2003). Hence, the basic objective of this study is to study the factors/dimensions related to CSR affecting the behavior of consumers and to draw strategic marketing implications.

Data was collected through purposive sampling from 182 respondents on five point likert scale through a questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha for reliability of questionnaire was analyzed. Further Factor Analysis with varimax rotation using Kaiser Normalization was applied to the data to know the key factors for consumer behavior.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Consumer Behavior, Ethical Commitment and Social Accountability.

Introduction: Maignan & Ferrell, (2004) in their study highlighted that past research has not given any single definition of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). He further stated that CSR is the umbrella that covers a variety of theories such as Corporate Citizenship; Stakeholder Theory; Corporate Philanthropy; Corporate Responsibility; Corporate Social Policy. Though there are conceptual differences in these terms but more or less they interpret the similar meaning. Past studies have emphasized the requirement to sustain the corporate governance standards internally as well as externally, specifically in context of CSR (Perrini, Pogutz and Tencati, 2006; Rosam and Peddle, 2004; Grosser and Moon, 2005).

Dimensions of CSR: Corporate social responsibility holds that there are multiple dimensions that should affect a company's actions. Thus, the facets and dimensions of corporate social responsibility include:

Environmental and Social Concerns: CSR can be refer as a series of activities that are undertaken by the business firm for the public welfare beyond the mere compliance of laws and regulations (Ozanne & Menguc, 2000). It further suggests that CSR extends beyond the concept of profit-making and considers its obligation towards the society and the environment (Godfrey & Hatch, 2007). The prime emphasis remains on environment due to the growing environmentalism and increased awareness of society towards environment protection. Competitive advantage, brand awareness and value, value and norms, corporate marketing, cause related marketing are the various sub dimensions which enhance environmental and social concern of CSR.

The Meaning of CSR for Consumers: Morsing, (2008) pointed that consumers nowadays, feel that companies must engage themselves in some sort of CSR activities but do not indulge in publicizing their good deeds as that is generally taken negative by the consumers. Similarly, Vogel, (2006) in his study found that consumers become dubious about the firm involving themselves in marketing of their good deeds and making profit out of it. Thus, it is argued, "the idea that consumers should be a main target for corporate activities related to responsibility and reputation building may itself be inherently flawed" (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000).