

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Its Impact on Public Health and Wellbeing in India 2023–25

Dr. C. Khamer Sultana

Department of Economics SDNB Vaishnav College for Women, Chennai, India Affiliated to The University of Madras

1. INTRODUCTION

India faces significant challenges in public health, ranging from high rates of malnutrition, poor maternal care, and the rise of non-communicable diseases to a burgeoning mental health crisis. Despite efforts from national health schemes like Ayushman Bharat, the National Health Mission (NHM), and Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), critical gaps in healthcare infrastructure and human resources persist. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a strategic tool to supplement public health initiatives and address these gaps.

The enactment of the Companies Act, 2013, which made CSR mandatory for companies meeting specific financial thresholds, has led to a significant shift in how corporate funding is allocated to social causes. Health, comprising approximately 27Percent of total CSR spending, has become a key beneficiary, with over ₹8,000 crore allocated to health-related initiatives in FY 2023–24. Despite this progress, the distribution of CSR funding is highly concentrated in urban and industrialized states, leaving rural and underserved areas with insufficient resources. This study evaluates CSR's effectiveness in public health, exploring both its successes and challenges in contributing to India's healthcare goals.

2. Objectives of the Study

The primary objectives of this study are:

- To analyze the evolution of CSR funding in healthcare for FY 2023–24 and FY 2024–25.
- To assess geographic disparities in CSR allocations for public health.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of corporate-funded health interventions.
- To examine CSR's alignment with key Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).
- To propose evidence-based policy recommendations for improving the integration of CSR with public health initiatives.

3. Literature Review

A growing body of literature highlights the role of CSR in public health. Baxi and Ray (2012) emphasized CSR's ethical imperatives and its transition from sporadic charity to a structured form of investment, particularly in education, healthcare, and sanitation. Mahapatra (2017) documented the increasing focus of pharmaceutical companies on CSR initiatives in healthcare. Furthermore, studies by Das and Bhunia (2018) and Singh and Sinha (2021) demonstrated that CSR initiatives have led to measurable

improvements in community health outcomes, especially in sanitation, immunization, and maternal health. However, as pointed out by Roy and Sharma (2023), regional disparities in CSR funding and a lack of long-term planning hinder the broader impact of CSR efforts in public health.

The theoretical underpinnings of CSR, particularly Carroll's Pyramid of CSR (1991) and Porter and Kramer's Shared Value Concept (2011), frame CSR as a strategic business tool that aligns corporate success with societal well-being. CSR's integration with SDGs, particularly SDG 3 and SDG 6, offers a pathway to achieving sustainable health outcomes, though challenges remain in addressing inequalities and ensuring effective allocation of resources.

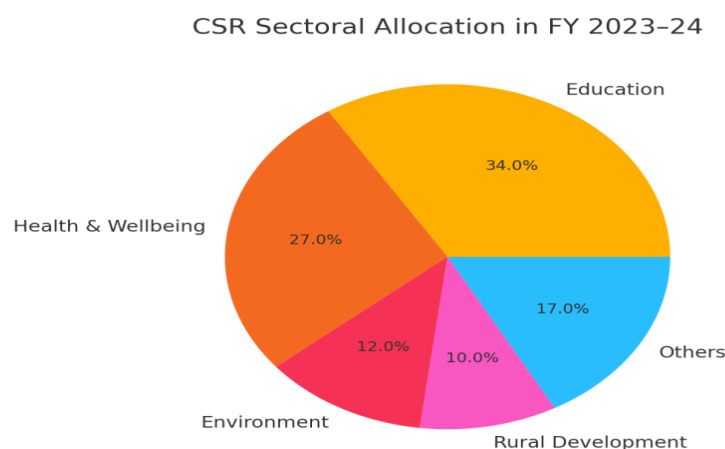
4. Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach to analyze CSR's impact on public health. Quantitative data were sourced from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), official CSR portals, and the annual reports of India's top 100 companies. A focus was placed on health-specific CSR expenditures for FY 2023–24, with projections for FY 2024–25. Additional datasets were drawn from the CSR Outlook Report 2024, NITI Aayog dashboards, and NGO reports.

Qualitative data were obtained through document analysis of CSR project evaluations and interviews published in case study reports. Five CSR programs were selected for detailed examination based on their impact and geographic reach: Tata Trusts' rural cancer care initiative, Infosys Foundation's infrastructure projects, Sun Pharma's mobile health units, Biocon Foundation's eLAJ clinics, and Vedanta's Nand Ghar project. The effectiveness of these programs was assessed using both quantitative health indicators (e.g., immunization rates, institutional delivery rates) and qualitative metrics (e.g., community satisfaction, engagement).

5. CSR Trends in Public Health (2020–2025)

CSR expenditures in India have steadily risen, particularly in the healthcare sector. Total CSR outlays grew from ₹20,150 crore in FY 2020–21 to ₹35,000 crore in FY 2023–24, reflecting a compound annual growth rate of 13.4Percent. Health-related spending reached ₹8,096 crore in FY 2023–24, accounting for 27Percent of total CSR allocations.



Source: National CSR Portal, Ministry of Corporate Affairs

CSR Sectoral Allocation in India (FY 2024–25)

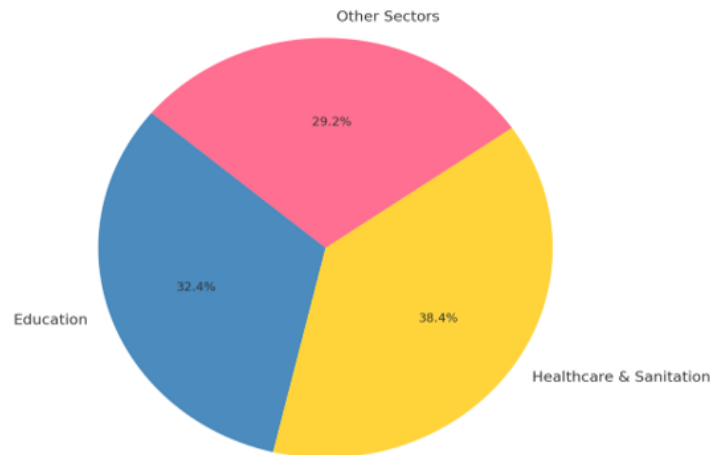


Fig : 1

Source: National CSR Portal, Ministry of Corporate Affairs (via The CSR Journal, July 2025 edition)

As shown in **Figure 1**, healthcare, education, and sanitation continue to dominate CSR sectoral allocations. The healthcare sector received approximately 38.4Percent of CSR spending in FY 2024–25.

Geographically, CSR funding is heavily concentrated in Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka, while rural and underserved areas—particularly in the North-East and tribal regions—receive less than 5Percent of total CSR health funding. Public sector companies like NTPC and SAIL have focused on CSR interventions in rural areas, but private corporations have predominantly invested in urban healthcare infrastructure.

6. Case Studies of CSR Impact

Tata Trusts – Rural Cancer Care

Tata Trusts has developed decentralized cancer centers in Tier-II and Tier-III cities, improving early diagnosis rates by 30Percent and easing the burden on metropolitan hospitals. These clinics have significantly reduced cancer-related mortality in rural regions.

Infosys Foundation – Infrastructure Development

The Infosys Foundation has partnered with public hospitals to build ICU blocks, maternity wards, and oxygen-supported facilities. In Karnataka, this initiative led to a 40Percent increase in patient intake at district hospitals.

Sun Pharma – Mobile Health Units (MHUs)

Sun Pharma's 228 mobile health units have provided essential healthcare services, such as immunization and primary care, to over 200,000 people across rural areas. This has led to a 25Percent increase in immunization coverage in these regions.

Biocon Foundation – eLAJ Clinics

Biocon Foundation's eLAJ clinics integrate digital health solutions to manage chronic diseases like diabetes and tuberculosis. Serving low-income urban and peri-urban populations, the clinics have increased treatment adherence by 35Percent.

Vedanta's Nand Ghar – Integrated Anganwadi Centres

Vedanta's Nand Ghar project has upgraded over 6,000 Anganwadis, providing a platform for telemedicine, nutrition, and early childhood education. The initiative benefited over 2 lakh children and mothers in FY

2023–24 alone.

7. Impact Assessment

Quantitative analysis of health outcomes revealed the following:

- A 25Percent increase in institutional deliveries in CSR-supported Primary Health Centre's (PHCs).
- A 15Percent reduction in infant mortality in areas supported by Biocon and ITC.
- An 80Percent adoption rate for improved sanitation practices in CSR-supported communities.
- A 30Percent rise in cancer screening due to Tata Trusts' decentralized clinics.
- A reduction in TB dropout rates to under 1.5Percent through Operation ASHA's interventions.

Qualitative indicators, such as enhanced community trust in health systems and increased participation in maternal care programs, further demonstrate CSR's positive influence.

8. CSR and SDG Alignment

CSR in India is strongly aligned with several SDGs, particularly:

- **SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing** – CSR programs have contributed significantly to maternal health, disease control, and health infrastructure development.
- **SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation** – Through programs focused on sanitation and rural water projects, CSR has helped improve access to clean water and hygiene.
- **SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities** – CSR has partially addressed inequalities, but geographic disparities in funding allocation remain a significant challenge.
- **SDG 17: Partnerships** – Collaboration between corporates, NGOs, and government schemes like Ayushman Bharat has been critical in extending health services to underserved communities.

The diagram below illustrates the sectoral focus of CSR spending across the SDGs for India in 2024–25. Here is a stacked bar chart showing state-wise CSR spending across key SDG categories for 2024–25.

Each bar illustrates how corporate social responsibility funds were distributed among:

- SDG 3: Health & Well-being
- SDG 4: Quality Education
- SDG 6: Clean Water & Sanitation
- SDG 5: Gender Equality

This format helps to compare not only total CSR spending per state but also how it is distributed across development priorities.

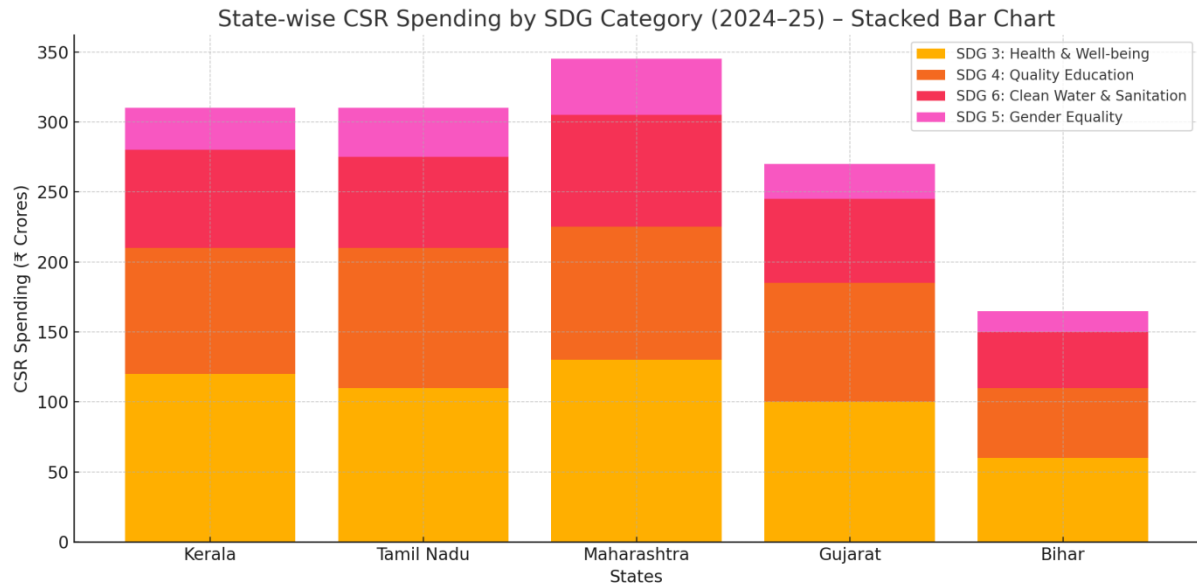


Fig: 2

Source: National CSR Portal, Ministry of Corporate Affairs (via The CSR Journal, June 2025), FY 2023–24 state-wise CSR

The state-wise distribution of CSR funds across key SDGs in **Figure 2** highlights the regional disparities in funding, with industrialized states like Maharashtra receiving a significant share.

CSR & SDG Alignment – 2024–25 (India)

Key SDGs Relevant to Public Health and CSR

SDG Goal	Goal Description	CSR Relevance & Impact (2024–25)
SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing	Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages	27% of India’s total CSR spend (₹8,096 Cr) in FY 2024–25 focused on healthcare. CSR supported maternal health, cancer care (e.g., in Nagpur), child immunization, sanitation, and primary health centres.
SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation	CSR projects included installation of toilets, rural drinking water projects, and hygiene awareness—especially in Rajasthan and Odisha.
SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities	Reduce inequality within and among countries	While CSR spending rose overall, geographic inequality persists. Wealthier states like Maharashtra and Gujarat receive the bulk of funds, while aspirational and tribal districts receive <5% of total CSR health funding.

SDG Goal	Goal Description	CSR Relevance & Impact (2024–25)
SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals	Strengthen partnerships for sustainable development	CSR involves collaboration with NGOs, governments (e.g., Ayushman Bharat), and communities. Many corporates co-funded public health infrastructure with local governments.

Fig: 3

The distribution of CSR spending across SDGs, as seen in **Figure 3**, confirms the prioritization of health and sanitation, with notable emphasis on SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation).

CSR Spending by SDG Categories, 2024–25

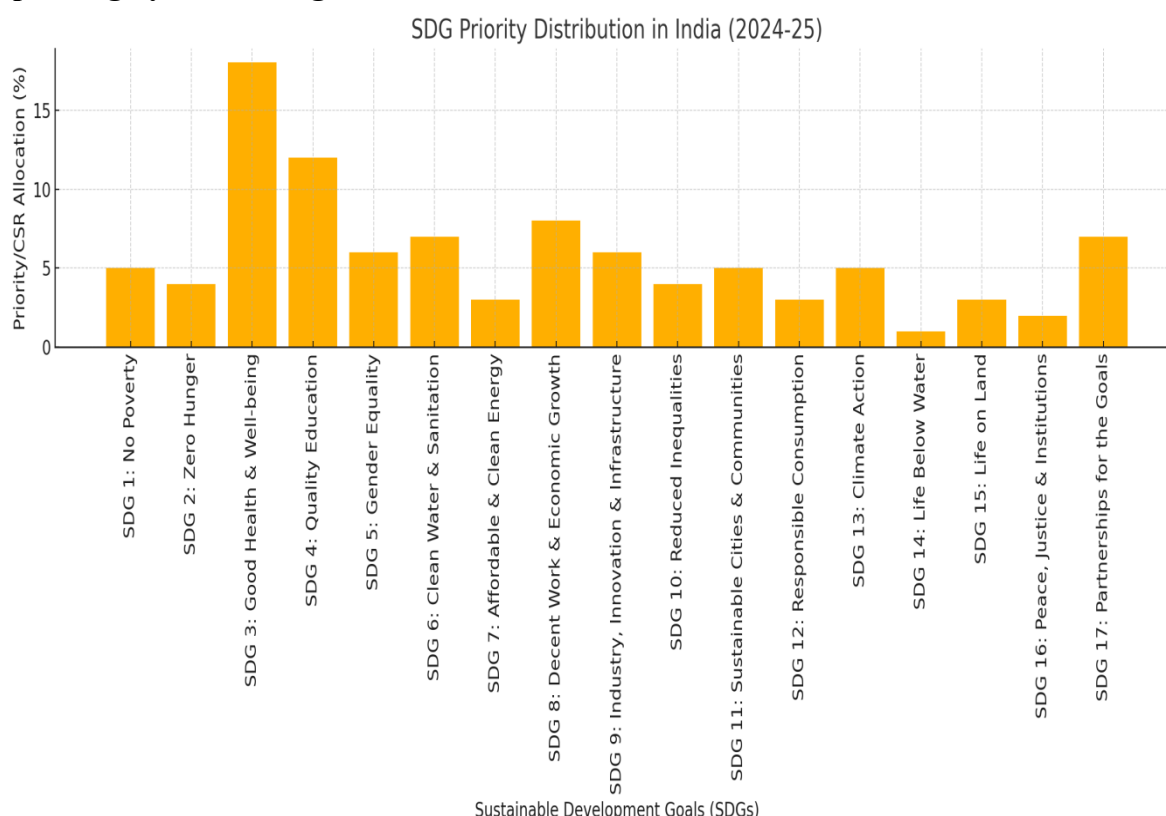


Fig:4

Source: NITI Aayog, SDG India Index & Dashboard 2023-24 (for composite and goal-wise SDG scores across states)

Figure 4 provides an overview of India's CSR allocations across the 17 SDGs, with a clear focus on health and education. This alignment underscores the potential of CSR in advancing national development goals.

9. Policy Recommendations

1. **Mandatory Allocation for Underserved Areas:** Mandate that at least 20Percent of CSR health spending be directed toward aspirational districts and tribal regions to address geographic disparities.
2. **Long-term Funding Frameworks:** Shift from one-year funding cycles to 3-5 year grant models to ensure sustained impact.
3. **Capacity Building for NGOs:** Allocate 10Percent of CSR funds for enhancing the capacity of NGOs to implement and monitor health programs effectively.
4. **Innovation Incentives:** Dedicate a portion of CSR funds to support innovations such as AI-based diagnostics and mobile health platforms.
5. **Scheme Integration:** Ensure better alignment with public health schemes like Ayushman Bharat and Poshan Abhiyaan to avoid duplication and maximize outreach.

10. Findings and Discussion

Escalating CSR Investments in Healthcare with Persistent Regional Imbalances

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) investments in India have surged, with total spending reaching a record ₹34,909 crore in FY 2023–24—a 13% increase from the previous fiscal year (Fortune India, 2024). The combined share of education and healthcare now commands over 55% of total CSR allocations, compared to 44% a decade ago (Economic Times, 2024). In FY 2023–24 specifically, health and sanitation initiatives received ₹9,087.41 crore, of which ₹7,150.81 crore was designated for healthcare (The CSR Journal, 2024).

Nevertheless, funding distribution remains highly uneven across regions. States such as Maharashtra and Gujarat dominate CSR health spending—Gujarat, for instance, emerged as the second-highest state-level spender at ₹2,707.54 crore in FY 2024, backed by strong growth from industrial players (Times of India, 2024). Meanwhile, tribal regions and the North-Eastern states continue to receive limited attention, with Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura together receiving merely 0.91% of CSR allocations in FY 2021 (Fortune India, 2024). These disparities underscore the urgent need for more equitable CSR distribution aligned with public health needs (Chatterjee & Mitra, 2020).

Strategic CSR Models Aligned with Public Health Systems Demonstrate Enhanced Impact

CSR programmes aligned with systemic public health priorities yield greater sustainability and effectiveness. For example, **Project Nand Ghar**, through the Anil Agarwal Foundation, implemented scalable nutrition interventions by distributing over 50,000 millet protein shakes across multiple states, while also establishing more than 3,300 nutrition gardens and providing mobile healthcare and telemedicine services (Vedanta Foundation, 2024).

Similarly, **Sun Pharma's CSR portfolio** illustrates public–private synergy via its Malaria Elimination Demonstration Project (MEDP), implemented in partnership with ICMR and the Madhya Pradesh government. This effort achieved a 91% reduction in indigenous malaria cases across more than 1,200 villages (Sun Pharma, 2024). In addition, Sun Pharma's mobile healthcare units deliver primary care services to over 565,000 beneficiaries across seven states (Sun Pharma, 2024).

These programs demonstrate that embedding CSR within existing healthcare systems—through infrastructure improvements and continuity of services—enhances long-term community health outcomes (Kour & Singh, 2021; Puri & Sinha, 2022).

Sustainability Challenges: Short-Term Funding and Misalignment with Government Schemes

Despite these successes, the long-term viability of CSR health initiatives remains compromised. Many

CSR projects are constrained by **short-term funding cycles**, fragmented project designs, and insufficient alignment with existing government health schemes (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2024). These limitations reduce scalability and effectiveness (Kour & Singh, 2021).

Moreover, enforcement of CSR compliance has intensified. For instance, over 30 corporations were penalized for failing to meet CSR mandates in recent years (Economic Times, 2024). Additionally, bureaucratic challenges persist—for example, despite securing ₹17 crore in CSR funding, Mumbai's Nair Hospital has faced significant delays in procuring a CT scan machine due to procurement bottlenecks (Times of India, 2024).

Such structural and administrative obstacles threaten the impact of CSR-driven health interventions and underscore the need for more strategic alignment and oversight (Puri & Sinha, 2022).

Policy Implications: Towards Long-Term, Integrated, and Context-Aware CSR Strategies

To amplify CSR's public health impact, the following strategies are imperative:

- **Institutional alignment:** CSR efforts must integrate seamlessly with governmental health programs to leverage infrastructure and avoid redundancy (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2024).
- **Long-term engagement models:** Sustainable initiatives—such as those offering continuous service (e.g., mobile health units, nutrition gardens)—should be prioritized over one-off interventions (Sun Pharma, 2024; Vedanta Foundation, 2024).
- **Focus on underserved regions:** Strategic targeting of tribal and North-Eastern communities through evidence-based allocation will help address entrenched health disparities (Chatterjee & Mitra, 2020).
- **Strengthened governance mechanisms:** Streamlined regulatory compliance and robust monitoring frameworks are necessary to ensure accountability and maximize health outcomes (Puri & Sinha, 2022).

11. Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides valuable insights into the role of CSR in advancing healthcare in India, several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the analysis relies heavily on secondary data from government portals, corporate reports, and media sources, which may contain reporting biases or inconsistencies. Second, the study focuses primarily on financial allocations and flagship CSR programs, while overlooking smaller, localized initiatives that may also contribute significantly to community health outcomes. Third, the research does not directly evaluate health outcomes in terms of morbidity or mortality reduction, limiting the ability to measure the full impact of CSR on public health indicators.

Future research should adopt a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative impact assessments with qualitative case studies of CSR–health partnerships. Longitudinal studies could explore the sustainability of CSR interventions, while comparative analyses across states and industries may reveal best practices for equitable and systemic health improvements.

12. Conclusion

This study highlights the growing significance of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in strengthening healthcare delivery in India, particularly for underserved communities. The analysis demonstrates a clear upward trajectory in CSR spending on healthcare, rising from ₹20,150 crore in FY 2020–21 to ₹35,000 crore in FY 2023–24. However, despite this growth, structural inequities persist, as allocations remain concentrated in industrialized states such as Maharashtra and Gujarat, while tribal and North-Eastern

regions continue to be overlooked.

The findings suggest that CSR initiatives closely aligned with public health systems—such as Project Nand Ghar and Sun Pharma’s Malaria Elimination Demonstration Project—offer more sustainable and transformative outcomes. These programs illustrate the potential of CSR to act as a complement to government health schemes by improving infrastructure, delivering continuous care, and fostering community resilience.

Nevertheless, the sustainability of CSR in public health remains constrained by short-term funding cycles, fragmented project designs, and inadequate integration with state-led health programs. To unlock its full potential, CSR must evolve from fragmented philanthropic engagements into long-term, strategic investments aligned with national health priorities and local socio-economic needs. By doing so, CSR can serve not merely as a compliance-driven mandate but as a catalyst for advancing equity, accessibility, and long-term public health outcomes in India.

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