

Sectoral Distribution and Trends in Mandated Corporate Social Responsibility Spending: A Case Study of Coimbatore, India

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ABSTRACT

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Mandated Corporate Social Responsibility in India requires eligible companies to allocate 2% of their profits annually towards CSR spends. These expenditures must be publicly reported, and the Ministry of Corporate Affairs of India publishes this data to ensure transparency. The Companies Act 2013 regulates expenditure areas across development sectors aligned with the national agenda. Despite government-listed sectors, companies may prioritize spending freely. As mandated CSR in India approaches a decade, understanding CSR spend patterns and trends is crucial. This paper analyzes CSR spending trends in Coimbatore using secondary data from the National CSR Data Portal. A statistical analysis explores trends in total contributions across various sectors by year, identifying key focus areas for each fiscal year. The study underscores corporate priorities and highlights the necessity for continuous monitoring of CSR expenditure trends. The implications are significant for policymakers contributing to informed decision making and maximizing social impact.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to the existing literature by analyzing sectoral trends in mandated CSR spending in Coimbatore using publicly available data. It is one of very few studies which have investigated regional CSR patterns in India. The paper's primary contribution is finding that corporate priorities vary significantly across sectors and years.

1. Introduction

Profitability is the primary factor that drives any business. Nevertheless, for a business to be truly sustainable, it must operate as a responsible entity, integrating social responsibility into its core strategy. Once a business has established a profitable model, the next step is to grow sustainably. To do so, it is essential to focus on the community and create an environment that balances profitability and factors such as the community's well-being and quality of life (Wan-Jan, 2006), Corporate Social

Responsibility (CSR) embodies this principle, representing a commitment to "giving back" or "paying it forward". Hence, there is a growing recognition among companies of the importance of societal welfare (Saeed & Arshad, 2012). This ethical trend has given rise to the concept of CSR in its current form, with the fundamental goal of making corporates aware of their responsibility towards society from being associated with voluntary philanthropy (Kolstad, 2007).

The objective of this study is to examine the sectoral distribution and evolving trends in mandated Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) spending in Coimbatore, India. By analyzing publicly available data from the National CSR Data Portal, the study seeks to identify key sectors receiving CSR investments, track changes in corporate priorities over time, and assess alignment with national development goals. These insights aim to support policymakers and stakeholders in enhancing the strategic impact of CSR initiatives.

2. Literature Review

2.1. CSR Evolution and Theories

The term CSR gained prominence in the 1990s by the German Beta pharma generic pharmaceutical company when they decided to implement CSR. Today, CSR initiatives have become a part of a company's branding strategy and promotions (Sanclemente-Téllez, 2017). One of the definitions of CSR is 'economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic expectations placed on organizations by society at a given time' (Carroll & Buchholtz, 2003). All these definitions and frameworks of CSR are based on two predominant theories of corporate social responsibility: the Stakeholder theory and the Triple bottom line theory. According to Freeman and Reed (1983) a Stake holder is an individual or a group who can directly or indirectly affect the objectives of an organization or can be affected by the objectives of an organization. Hence, the stakeholder theory proposes that a corporate objective can be achieved only if the stake holders are protected (Freeman & Reed, 1983). The Triple Bottom Line theory founded by Elkington (1998) is the only framework that incorporates 3 dimensions namely economic, social and environmental performances and the three dimensions should obtain results that are sustained to achieve profits for a long term.

Conversely, CSR in many countries is still seen as a philanthropic activity (Türker, 2013). Especially In Asia, CSR has been a response of the business sector to social and environmental issues. The corporations were already practicing philanthropic initiatives, which were influenced by the culture in Southeast Asian countries. On the contrary many companies still practice CSR only when they feel obligated. Regardless of the perspectives and its various dimensions, governments across the world have recognized CSR as a crucial development tool that can help address social and environmental issues (Chapple & Moon, 2005). As a result, many governments have taken steps to monitor corporate behavior and have created legislations related to CSR. This has elevated CSR from a voluntary practice to a formidable development tool in developing countries (Visser et al., 2008). This recognition of CSR as a development tool necessitated an obligation to institutionalize CSR to create accountability and establish defined outcomes. Hence, there was worldwide call for a more development-oriented approach in framing the CSR agenda. The institutionalization and mandating of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) have been adopted by numerous developing countries across Asia (Liu, 2020). Consequently, developing countries in Asia such as

Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand created CSR legislations. Going one step ahead, India constitutionalized mandatory CSR, resulting in the creation of a significant pool of funds designated for developmental purposes (Bergman et al., 2019).

2.2. Mandated CSR in India

CSR in India has existed since ancient times as charity or duty towards the society, and in recent times this definition has changed, and it is changing. India has had a deep history of corporate philanthropy since the 1800s (Sundar, 1996). The evolution of Corporate social responsibility in India can be classified into four stages. First, philanthropies by Indian business houses such as the Tata and Birla. The second stage started with the independence movement in India. The second stage offered a nationalistic perspective of social responsibility that would help the nation's development. The third stage was after independence, when there was a mixed economy, and with the new Labor & Environment laws, social responsibility was primarily confined to the Public Sector Units. Stage four is an intersection between business approaches and philanthropy which was predominant in the 1980s (Yemokhya & Buragohain, 2015).

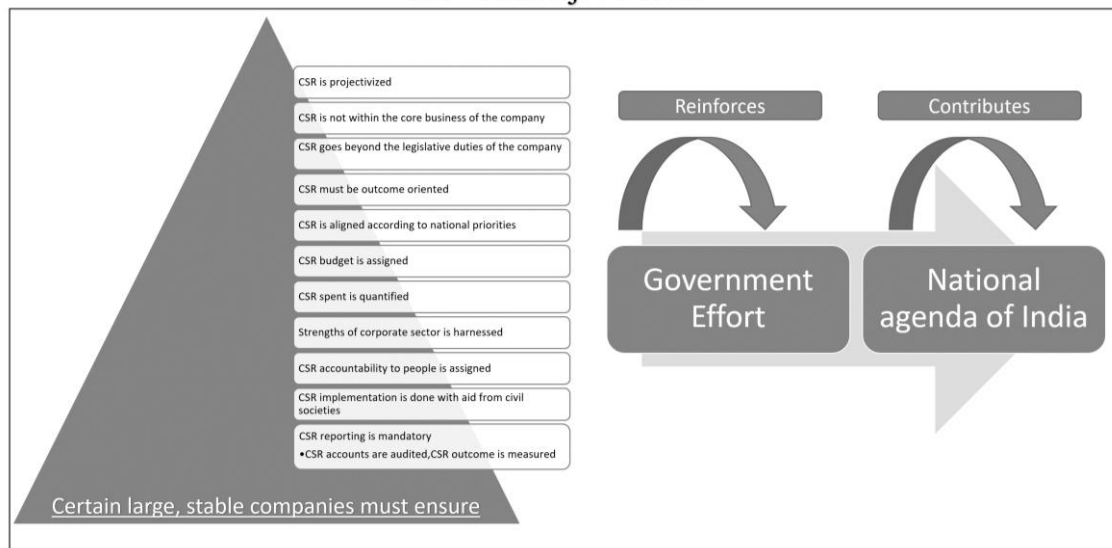
Despite the long-standing presence of CSR in India, the voluntary and sporadic nature of CSR activities that the companies have adhered to in India have resulted only in charity and philanthropy but have not contributed to national development effectively as the power of businesses or corporates were not leveraged for sustainable development (Mitra, 2021). Understanding this challenge progressively prodded the policy makers towards constitutionalizing CSR. The government decided to both constitutionalize and mandate CSR based on the recommendations of Bhaskar Chatterjee's committee report (Chatterjee & Mitra, 2016). The CSR mandate in India formed consequently was built based on the Chatterjee Model. This model was launched initially as the Guideline for Public Sector Enterprise CSR expenses in India starting April 1, 2010 (Chatterjee & Mitra, 2016).

Following the introduction of the guidelines for CSR expenditure for public sectors since 2010, Chatterjee and Mitra (2016) was also contributory in including Section 135 into the Companies Act, 2013 of the Indian constitution. In accordance to the act companies with net worth of INR 5 billion or more or having a turnover of INR 10 billion or higher, or a net profit is equal to INR 50 million or greater must spend at least 2% of their average net profit in the previous three years on CSR activities (Mitra & Schmidpeter, 2020) and may undertake CSR activities through Non-Government Organizations(NGOs) (Chatterjee & Mitra, 2016).

As shown in Figure 1 mandated CSR requires the company to form a board. The CSR department should report to the board. A report must be submitted to the Ministry of Corporate affairs every financial year. The areas of expenditure would be set by the Ministry of social affairs in line with the national agenda (Chatterjee & Mitra, 2016). This CSR mandate is 'For India, By India, In India' and is linked to the 'Inclusive Development Agenda of the Nation (Chatterjee & Mitra, 2016) where the expenditure is not only mandated but the areas or causes where the expenditure is made is also regulated by law. Since 1951, the Indian government has laid the National agenda every 5 years through its "Five Year plan's" and now with the newly formed NITI Ayog since 2017. Based on the National agenda the government suggests expense sectors such as education, rural development, women empowerment, poverty alleviation and others

providing a guideline for the corporates on where their CSR expenditures are expected to support the National agenda. The government only provides a list of sectors and does not control the distribution of expenditure across the sectors which allows the companies to focus on areas of their interest, issues affecting the locality of their presence or areas that they want to be associated with as a brand. At the same time this allows for sporadic, biased distribution of CSR funds as the priority is not fixed by the regulatory authorities (Chatterjee & Mitra, 2016).

Figure 1: Chatterjee Model



Source: Chatterjee and Mitra (2016)

3. Method

This study is based on a literature review and secondary data analysis. CSR expenditure data was obtained from the National CSR Data Portal maintained by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India. Relevant academic and policy literature was reviewed to contextualize sectoral spending patterns. Descriptive statistics were used to identify trends and shifts in CSR allocations across fiscal years in Coimbatore. This method was chosen due to the availability of comprehensive public data and the exploratory nature of the study.

4. Findings

4.1. CSR Spent and Expense Sectors

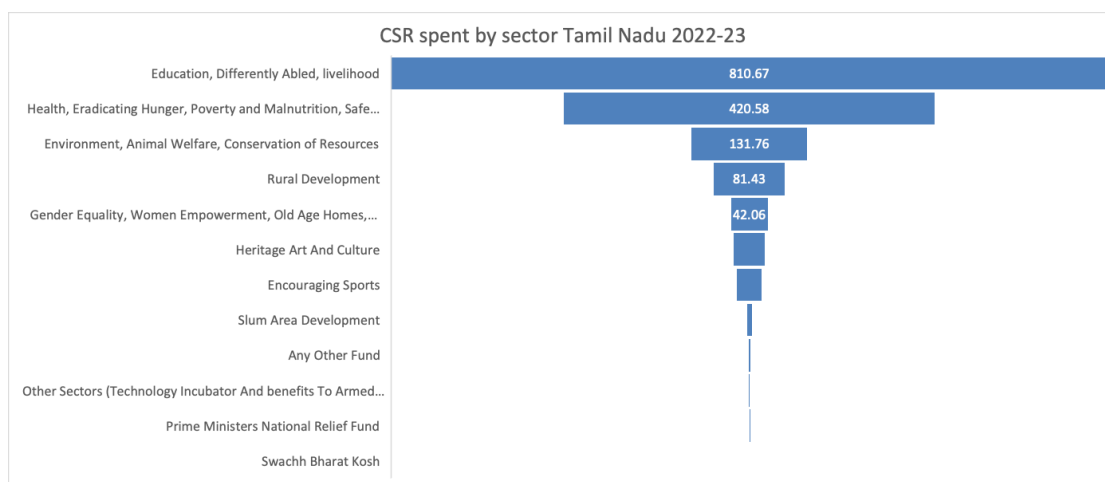
The CSR expenditures are categorized under multiple sectors in India. All CSR expenditure by companies should be reported and categorized under these sectors. The government has already formulated areas where the expenditures can be diverted in line with the National Agenda. These sectors have been updated and evolved in the past two decades and they include Health, Environment, Rural Development and others and exhaustive list is published in the government's CSR portal. The expenditure under these sectors varies from sectors above 1000 crores, 500 crores and downwards. The indicates a variance in spending across various sectors (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025).

4.1.1. Variability in CSR Spending Across Sectors

CSR expenditure sectors in Tamil Nadu for the financial year 2022-2023 shows that the top sectors was Education with 810.67 crores and slum area development is around 6.53 crores. It is clearly evident that the CSR expenditure across sectors is not equal, where there are sectors with extreme highs and very low spending patterns.

In addition to sectoral variance, the expenditure by year for a given sector also fluctuates, where there are years with very low spending, may affect sustainable development in that specific sector as shown in Figure 2. In the case of Heritage, Art and Culture, it continued to grow upwards, but there was a significant drop after 2019-2020 highlighting the volatile nature of the trends (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025).

Figure 2: CSR spent by sector 2022-2023



Source: Ministry of Corporate Affairs (2025)

Reasons for variability can range across government programs across India utilising CSR funds for COVID treatment and vaccination at the time of crisis. There may also be reasons for low visibility, implementation difficulties, non-availability of information, or a bias among NGOs towards specific sectors for various issues (Rahman, 2006). Such deviations may vary across the country and even among the states. Expenditure sectors such as Education, differently-abled and Livelihood, Health, Eradicating hunger, poverty have been a constant in the the last decade between 2014 and 2022. At the same time, sectors such as Swachh Bharat Kosh and Slum area development have not been a regular entry in the categories in the same period. This clearly shows that this system has its pros and cons.

4.1.2. Distribution of CSR Spending Across geographies

The data of all CSR expenditures is available on the Government of India portal, and the overall data for India shows that the CSR fund distribution or the focus on companies is limited to a few states in general. This is mainly due to rapid industrialization, total area, political, literacy rate and population where there are states in India such as Maharashtra, Gujrat, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu with very high Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and states like Bihar, Mizoram and Sikkim with very low GDP according to the government report in 2024. The same pattern is observed where the overall CSR spent

by state shows the same states, such as Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu, as the top states in CSR spending ([Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025](#)).

Analyzing the overall (country-wide) data may not provide the real picture, as the trends and amounts spent across the country could vary drastically. The same applies when we study by states where states have very low CSR activities ([Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025](#)). A city-based study would be more rational as it could be applied across at least cities in various states. When it comes to studying cities based on CSR contributions, another important factor is the focus on the state capitals, where the overall CSR spent would be as high as 2754 crore rupees for 2023-24, which is higher than the total CSR spent across all other cities and towns in the state or the same year. This pattern is seen across all the states; hence, to study a city with data that can be applied across many other cities across India, we decide not to choose the capital cities or metropolitans. Notably, there is a significant gap in research, as most recent studies on CSR show limited attention towards the southern states ([Arevalo & Aravind, 2011](#)). This study aims to address this gap by examining CSR trends in one of the southern states, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of regional variations in CSR practices. In addition to analyzing CSR contributions data, where the top five states frequently change, this study also incorporates GDP data from the past five years. Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu consistently rank as the top two states by GDP in India ([Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025](#)). Therefore, adhering to the criteria of selecting a non-metropolitan and southern state, Coimbatore emerges as the optimal candidate for this study.

4.2. CSR in Coimbatore

Coimbatore is a major city in the western part of Tamil Nadu and is the second-largest city in Tamil Nadu after Chennai. Coimbatore, a Tier 2 city, is home to many industries in textile, automobile spares, machinery, electronics and construction. Coimbatore, a hub of various manufacturing industries, is the 'Manchester for South India' ([Govindarajulu, 2014](#)). Coimbatore city, with many companies and their corporate social responsibility mandated contributions, has a massive opportunity for development and is seen as a game-changer ([Elumelu, 2014](#)). At the same time Coimbatore is not immune to development issues that are common to all other cities in India, the poverty rate in Coimbatore 21.65% which is considered to be on the higher side in a state like Tamil Nadu with high GDP ([Asian Development Bank, 2024](#)). Combination of all the above factors such as high rate of industrialization, distribution of CSR spending across sectors and growing CSR contributing companies which is discussed in detailed later make Coimbatore an ideal candidate for our study.

4.2.1. CSR expenditure distribution and trends – Coimbatore

Mandated CSR has paved way for a huge pool of funds in Coimbatore with 16.55 crores in 2014 it has grown over 9 times to 140.85 crores in 2023 ([Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025](#)). CSR expenditures in Coimbatore were spread across 11 sectors in five years between 2015-2023. There were also expenditures classified under Any other fund category and NEC category, which were less than one percent.

The highest expenditure was towards Education differently abled and livelihood with a minimum expenditure of 324.82 crores in the 2014-2023 period, and the lowest was

towards Technology incubator, benefits to armed forces which was recorded as 0.23 crores for the same period.

4.2.2. CSR growth sectors

The following three sectors have seen a steady and continued growth from 2014-2015 and the COVID dip is not substantial or inversely they grew higher through the same period they are,

- i. Education, differently abled and livelihood
- ii. Health, poverty and malnutrition, eradicating hunger, safe drinking water, sanitation
- iii. Environment, conservation of resources and animal welfare

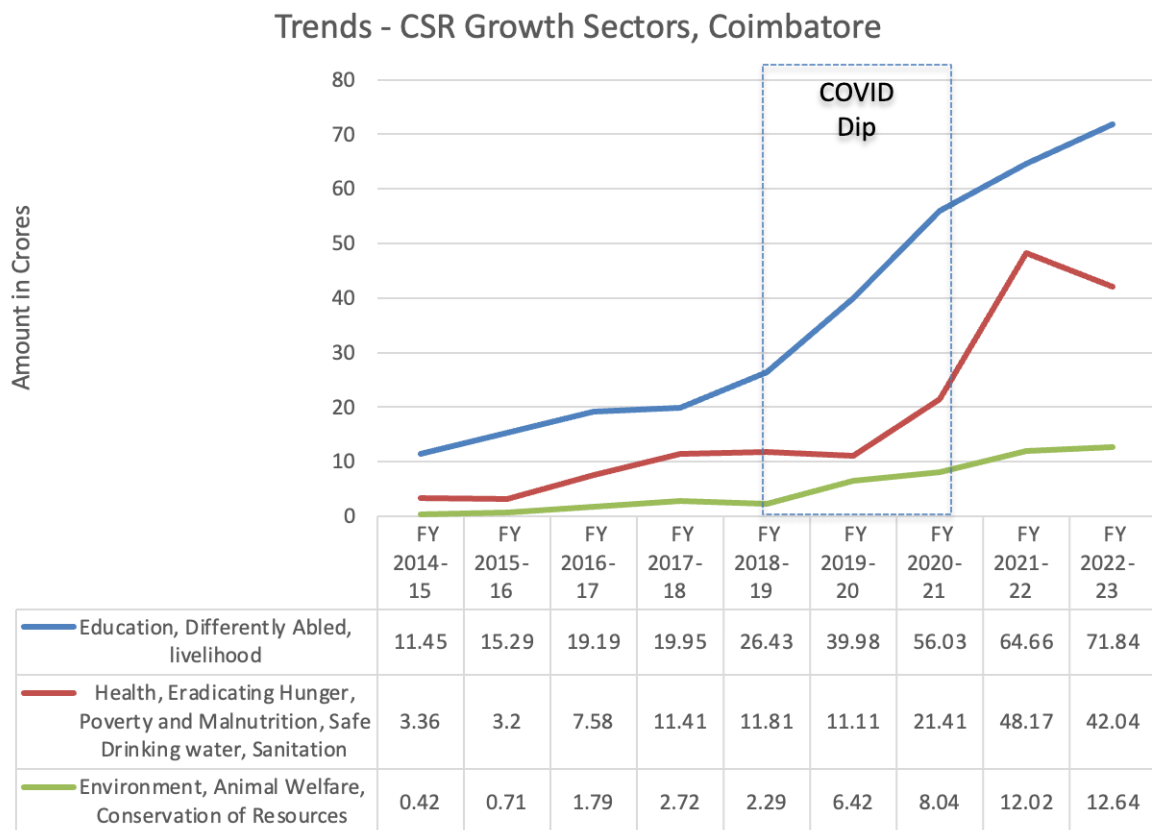
With the highest expenditure of 324.82 crores in 10 years the Education Differently abled and Livelihood was the top focus, expenditures in this sector have been substantial between 2014-2023. Furthermore, it is also evident that the expenditure in this sector has steadily increased in this period.

A deeper dive as shown in [Figure 3](#) provides information about the subcategories. Among the subcategories, education has always been at the top with over 86% share in this category, while the remaining 14% is spent towards three subcategories such as vocational skills, special education and Livelihood enhancement projects ([Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025](#)). Data also clearly suggests that the expenditure in the education sector has been the top focus on the companies in Coimbatore in the period between 2014-2023. The CSR activities associated with education are mostly improving the infrastructure of government schools, providing stationaries and training to school and college going students. From 11.45 crore to 71.8 crores in 2023, which is around 7 times higher growth clearly indicates that the corporates are inclined towards improving the quality of education and educational infrastructure in the city.

In general, the expenditure on Health, Poverty and Malnutrition, Eradicating Hunger, Safe Drinking Water, Sanitation for the period between 2015-2024 has been upward. This sector has recorded the second-highest expenditure after Education Differently abled and Livelihood ([Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025](#)).

A significant share of the expenditure has been towards health services such as poverty eradication, hunger and malnutrition. With 22% of Indians living below the poverty line (BPL), poverty is one of the most critical problems faced by India. Poverty eradication is listed at the top of the national agenda as per the current 5-year plan ([Planning Commission, Government of India, 2013](#)), and the government of India has introduced numerous poverty eradication schemes in addition to those schemes the government also expects CSR expenditures to focus on poverty eradication as it is one of the top items on the National agenda. The data suggest the expenditure towards poverty and health, safe drinking water, which would benefit the poor and improved sanitation facilities that will have a considerable impact on people's lives under the poverty line, have all been on an upward trajectory ([Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025](#)). With over 160.09 crores spent in 2014-2024, it has been the second-highest expenditure for this period.

Figure 3: CSR expenditure –growth sectors Coimbatore



Source: [Ministry of Corporate Affairs \(2025\)](#)

The Indian Government is gradually realigning its approach to managing the nation's economy and natural resources. Several initiatives are becoming increasingly evident at the grassroots level: renewable energy is gaining momentum, with bold targets set for solar and wind power generation. In addition, certain regions are prioritizing less water-intensive methods of rice cultivation to promote sustainable agricultural practices ([Synopsys India, 2024](#)).

Important shifts are also taking place within the government. One of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's earliest national initiatives was renaming the Ministry of Environment and Forests to the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change—signaling a strong commitment to tackling climate-related issues. At the same time, his Swachh Bharat Abhiyan or "Clean India" campaign, aimed at improving sanitation and cleanliness across urban and rural areas, has sparked a nationwide movement with widespread impact ([Kugelman & Banaji, 2015](#)). This indicates that the government has significant interest in conserving natural resources. The same is also reflected in the CSR expenditure on the environment, animal welfare and conservation of resources. The expenditure between 2014-2024 has been in an upper trajectory consistently. The topmost expenditure was towards the Environmental sustainability subsector, and the lowest was spent towards agroforestry ([Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025](#)).

4.2.3. Sporadic and Low-Focus CSR Sectors

Four other sectors following top 3 have seen sporadic trends in expenditure from 2014-2025, they are

- i. Rural development
- ii. Gender Equality, Women Empowerment, Old Age Homes, Reducing Inequalities
- iii. Encouraging Sports
- iv. Heritage Art and Culture

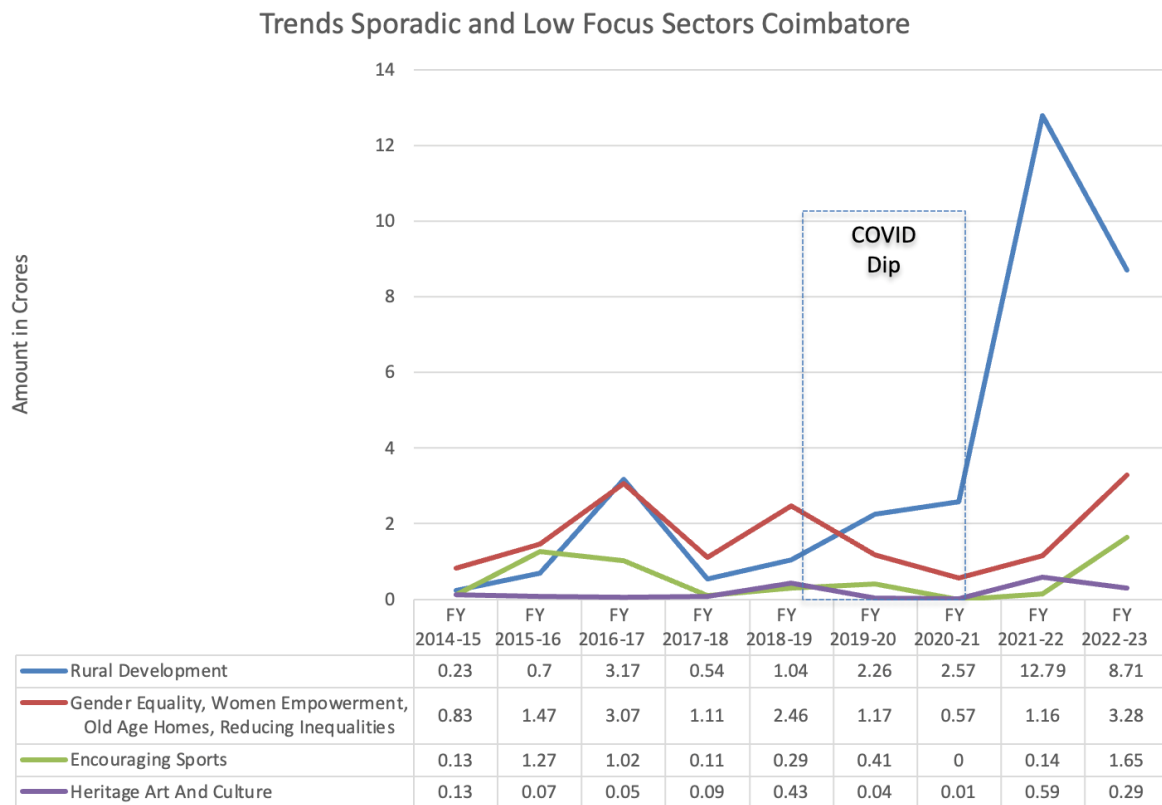
This signals that these sectors were not the area of focus for the companies in Coimbatore. Coimbatore includes huge suburban and rural areas. The people in the rural areas in and around Coimbatore primarily are involved in agriculture. However, there is also a continuous migration of people from rural areas to urban parts of Coimbatore in search of job opportunities. This rapid movement leads to an increase in the urban poverty ratio ([Revathy et al., 2020](#)). Hence it is essential to focus on developmental activities in rural areas to help improve the lifestyle of people.

In 2014-2023, the total expenditure on Rural development was recorded as 32.01 crores as shown in [Figure 4](#) which is 10x smaller compared to the amount spent of the sectors leader the Education sector. The expenditure in the sector has been sporadic from 2014 to 2017 and then was affected by the COVID Dip and a very positive spike in 2012 period is seen as a very encouraging signal. This indicates that Rural development has caught the eyes of corporates increasing CSR expenditures towards the later part of the period of study ([Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025](#)).

As reported in the Global Gender Gap Report released by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2011, India was ranked 113 on the Gender Gap Index (GGI) among 135 countries polled ([World Economic Forum, 2013](#)). Since then, India had improved its rankings on the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (GGI) to 105/136 in 2013 ([World Economic Forum, 2013](#)). India also scores poorly on overall female to male literacy and health rankings. With the rank of 101 in 2013, India had an overall score of 0.6551, while Iceland, the nation that topped the list, had an overall score of 0.8731 (no gender gap would yield a score of 1.0) ([World Economic Forum, 2013](#)). The expenditure in Gender Equality, Women Empowerment, Old Age Homes, and Reducing Inequalities has fluctuated in the in the period of study. Most of the expenditures were towards Women empowerment and social, economic inequalities. This clearly shows there is focus on gender and income equalities which is predominant in India, but the expenditure trends don't really represent the reality.

According to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) 2017 report, senior citizens in India will rise from eight per cent in 2015 to 19 percent in 2050. The population of the elderly in the country will have grown by 270 percent ([Lakshman, 2023](#)). As per the report, the young India of today will turn into a rapidly ageing society in the decades to come. It has also been noted that there have been minor contributions towards Senior citizen welfare and setting up old age homes and orphanages. As rapid increase in aged population is expected in years to come, the expenditure in the sector is considerably low and not consistent year after year.

Figure 4: Trends Sporadic and Low-Focus Sectors, Coimbatore



Source: [Ministry of Corporate Affairs \(2025\)](#)

Encouraging sports is one of the sectors with very low expenditures in the 2015-2020 period. Compared to the corresponding expenditure in education in the same period, encouraging the sports sector has received less than 10% percent compared to the former. There are no subsectors in the category; all the expenses under Encouraging sports were spent on Training to promote the sports category.

In recent times in India, there has been an emphasis on sports activities; India has recently won its highest medals in the Olympics ([Vasavda & Ranjan, 2017](#)). However, while government shows interest in encouraging sports in the country, it has not been the same from the CSR expenditures standpoint. There is a considerable decline in the expenditure from 2016 to 2018, and the expenditure after 2018 has been at least 50% lesser compared to the period from 2015-2017.

Indian is a country with a diverse and deep-rooted culture. Indian civilization is one of the oldest, and there are numerous monuments and places of historical importance that require preservation and maintenance. Government has a particular focus on preserving the country's heritage and encouraging cultural activities ([Government of India, 1956](#)). It is also one of the sectors of expenditure through CSR where companies can contribute to the same. Between 2015-2020, an average of 13.5 lakhs was spent every year on Art and culture, which is the only subsector under this sector and the expenditure trend is sporadic and has been very low compared to other sectors in general.

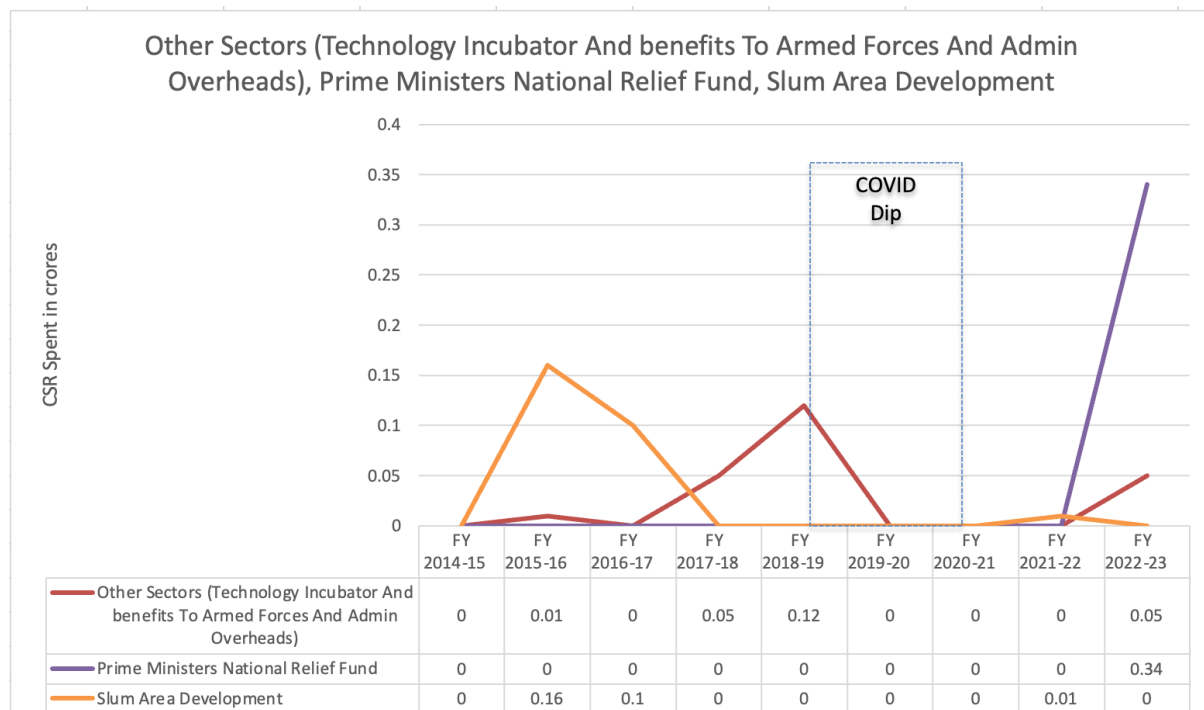
4.3. Need Based and Underrepresented CSR Sectors

There are sectors where the contributions are expected to be non-stable because the contributions are made only when there is a need. One such sector in Coimbatore is Prime Minister's National Relief Fund. In the north of India there is Clean Ganga fund where it is used to clean the Ganges River there is another Swatch Bharath Fund which is used for the Clean India program initiated by the Prime Minister of India (Ministry of Jal Shakti, 2025).

The Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) in India is established to provide financial assistance to individuals impacted by both natural and human-made disasters. Natural calamities covered under this fund include floods, cyclones, and earthquakes. Man-made disasters include significant accidents, acid attacks, riots etc. The fund is also allotted to the people for treatment like cancer, kidney transplantation, heart surgery etc. The fund was first consolidated during the first prime minister of the Republic of India, Jawaharlal Nehru (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025). Corporates are also allowed to contribute towards PMNRF. From 2014 to 2023, a total of 0.34 lakhs were contributed by Coimbatore corporates towards PMNRF which is expected based on the nature of this sector as shown in Figure 5. PMNRF is also open to the citizens of the country for donation and there has always been generous amount of donation from various sources in addition to the CSR funds. The underrepresented sectors are:

- i. Slum Area Development
- ii. Other Sectors (Technology Incubator and Benefits to Armed forces and Admin Overheads)

Figure 5: CSR expenditure – Need based and Underrepresented sectors



Source: Ministry of Corporate Affairs (2025)

Slum area development is an important sector to eradicate urban poverty and improve the well-being of the urban poor. Data indicates that the urban poverty ratio in Coimbatore (22.70 %) is higher than Chennai (8.7%), which is the capital of Tamil Nadu

and also higher than the national average (13.7%) (NITTTR, 2013). Though there has been significant spending on CSR by the industries in Coimbatore, there has been no considerable improvement in the urban poverty ratio. Hence this sector has a considerable impact on the urban poor in Coimbatore.

An overall amount of just 27 lakhs was spent in this sector between 2015-2023 (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025). The trend shows a downward trajectory with zero expenditure starting in 2017. With a considerably high urban poverty ratio and people living in slums, a downward trend in this sector raises a question on the distribution of CSR funds in line with the National agenda.

The others category has a combination of odd sub sectors such as Technology incubation, Armed forces support which is clubbed with admin Overheads. With very low CSR spent on these sectors it indicates they are neglected and at the same time also raises questions on the reporting structure and the rationality behind clubbing sectors that are non-related.

4.4. COVID Dip: Adapting CSR to National Needs in Crisis

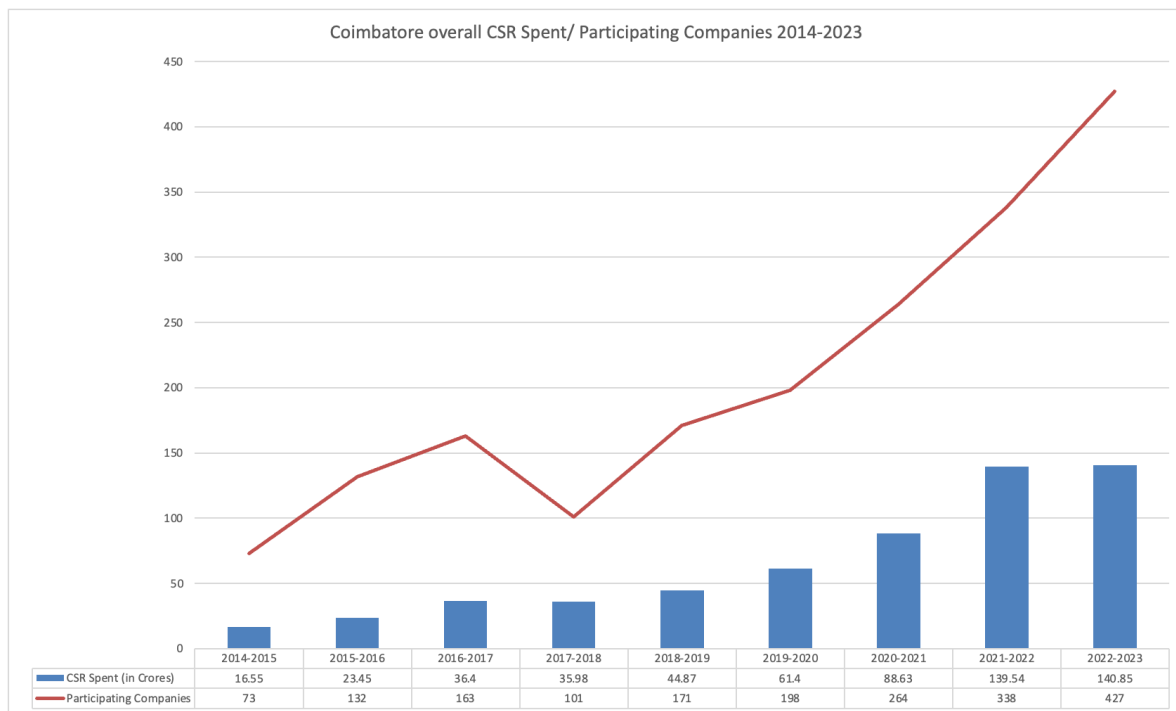
The sectoral trends shown in Figure 1, Figure 2 and Figure 3 indicate a significant decline or change in CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) expenditure from 2019 to 2021, primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This impact reduced the revenue of contributing companies, causing many CSR projects to be paused. Additionally, available CSR funds were redirected to support COVID-related health initiatives and vaccine procurement. In Coimbatore, the government worked with companies and their CSR funds in procuring vaccines (Meghani et al., 2025) and making it available at private hospitals, allowing residents to receive free vaccinations, while government hospitals also offered them at no cost. This strategy made use of private health infrastructure to ensure equitable vaccine access across various income levels. The capacity to reallocate funds during a crisis highlights the strengths of India's mandated CSR model.

4.5. Overall CSR Trends: Sector Growth, Stability and the NGO Factor

An overview of the CSR data of Coimbatore from 2014-2023 shows that the number of companies has increased 6 folds and has been on an upward trajectory. Correspondingly the overall CSR expenditure has also been in an upward tractor in the same period and has seen a 9x growth. The below graph indicates an upward trend in both company count and total CSR expenditure which is in line with the increase in GDP of the state of Tamil Nadu (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025). With the increase in revenue the number of contributing companies is increasing and hence the contributions are also increasing.

As shown in Figure 6 between 2015 and 2023, the top three sectors receiving the most corporate social responsibility (CSR) expenditures were Education, Support for Differently Abled Individuals, Livelihood, Health, and efforts aimed at Eradicating Hunger, Poverty, and Malnutrition. Other important areas include Safe Drinking Water, Sanitation, Environmental Protection, Animal Welfare, and Resource Conservation.

Figure 6: CSR expenditure – Combined Trend



Source: [Ministry of Corporate Affairs \(2025\)](#)

Figure 7 illustrates that the ranking of the top five sectors has remained relatively stable, with the same five sectors consistently appearing at the top throughout most of the ten-year period.

Figure 7: CSR sectors change in ranking 2014-2023

Sector	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Education	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Health	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Gender Equality	3	3	4 (+1)	4	3 (+1)	5 (+2)	5	5	5
Environment	4	5 (+1)	5	3 (+2)	4 (+1)	3 (+1)	3	4 (+1)	3 (+1)
Rural Dev	5	6 (+1)	3 (+3)	5 (+2)	5	4 (+1)	4	3 (+1)	4 (+1)
Sports	6	4 (+2)	6 (+2)	6	7 (+1)	6 (+1)	7 (+1)	7	6 (+1)
Heritage	6	9 (+3)	9	7 (+2)	6 (+1)	7 (+1)	6 (+1)	6	8 (+2)
PM Relief Fund	8	10 (+2)	10	8 (+2)	8	9 (+1)	7 (+2)	9 (+2)	7 (+2)
Others	8	7 (+1)	7	8 (+1)	8	8	7 (+1)	9 (+2)	9
Slum Dev	8	8	8	8	8	9 (+1)	7 (+2)	8 (+1)	9 (+1)

Source: [Ministry of Corporate Affairs \(2025\)](#)

Notably, there has been no change in the top two sectors, which clearly indicates the enduring focus of companies since the inception of the CSR model. Another important factor is the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which act as intermediaries between corporations and beneficiaries. Most contributing companies implement their projects through NGOs, so focusing on these organizations can significantly influence how CSR funds are allocated. Based on information about the top companies in Coimbatore, it is evident that their areas of interest include education and health, which is also reflected in their CSR spending data. This clearly demonstrates the crucial role of NGOs and highlights the need to ensure diversity among the NGOs chosen by these companies.

5. Conclusion

Over 587.67 crores of rupees were contributed by companies towards CSR activities in 10 years depicts the importance and strength of the mandated CSR model in India. Aligning the expenditure sectors to the national agenda also has helped ensure the CSR expenditures are focused and are in line with the government's national agenda. The increasing number of companies and their corresponding contributions show that CSR as a development tool with mandated CSR can play a significant role in developing a district like Coimbatore and hence the country's development overall. The mandatory reporting also has allowed researchers and analysts to study and analyze the CSR expenditure trend, and the transparency has created confidence in various government bodies and communities in general. The data showcases the incredible potential of leveraging and allocating funds during crises like COVID-19. This underscores the adaptability and strength of the mandated CSR model, making it an inspiring example for policymakers around the world. It is an implausible opportunity to learn from and implement similar strategies in other developing countries. The data suggest that a very high emphasis is shown towards sectors such as education comparatively and there is the sector where the expenditure has been deficient which also highlights scope for improvement of the mandated CSR model that requires further enhancement ([Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2025](#)). While allowing companies to choose their areas of focus has its own advantages, having fixed contribution percentage towards sectors that are of top priority which require additional funding could make the model more effective.

Positively the data portray trends in most sectors upward while few areas, such as Rural Development and slum development, had fluctuations, and the contributions were not substantial and sustained. For a long-term impact, the expenditure needs to be focused and sustained, and this data analysis provides an overview of the expenditure trends and helps in understanding the gaps in the expenditure patterns. This research will be instrumental for researchers, participating companies and government bodies to understand the expenditure patterns and tune the program to create more impact. Future works can also involve gathering data for at least 20 years and with the help of advance statistical and forecasting algorithms to analyze data and predict expenditure patterns for the future and also provide proactive suggestive actions to be taken for the best implementation of the mandated CSR program in India and across the world. While mandating CSR remains a subject of debate, this study underscores its potential as a viable model for development, particularly in developing countries, and calls for further scholarly attention and research.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

This study is based entirely on secondary data obtained from publicly accessible government sources. No human participants were involved, and therefore, ethics approval and informed consent were not required.

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Conflict of Interest

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