



BOOK REVIEW

CSR and Sustainability: From the Margins to the Mainstream

Authored by: **Michael Hopkins**

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Details of the Book

Hopkins, Michael; CSR and Sustainability- From the Margins to the Mainstream: A Textbook; Greenleaf Publishing Limited; UK; 2016;** ISBN-I3:978-1-78353-444-9 (Hardback), ISBN-I3:978-1-78353-446-3 (Paperback), ISBN-I3:978-1-78353-445-6 (PDF ebook), ISBN-I3:978-1-78353-519-4 (ePub ebook).

The Review:

From 'A Planetary Bargain: Corporate Social Responsibility Comes of Age' (Macmillan, 1998, Earthscan, revised and republished 2003 and Routledge 2010) to 'Corporate Social Responsibility & International Development: Is Business The Solution' (Earthscan 2007, Routledge, republished 2010) to 'CSR and Sustainability, From the Margins to the Mainstream: A Textbook' (2016) Professor Michael Hopkins has been constantly shaping theory and practice of CSR. He is a Ph.D. in economics, an expert on CSR and heads MCH International Ltd (MCHi), a research and advisory company on development, employment and CSR. Unlike his earlier works, this book has other contributors of international repute like Adrian Henriques, Judge Mervyn King, Abby Ghobadian, Lawrence Gikaru, Deborah Leipziger, Olga Lenzen, Adrian Payn, Vivek Soundararajan, Laura J. Spence, George Starcher, Thomas W. Stephens and Enrique Torres.

A very beautifully written preface explains the purpose of the book, 'to leave the world a better place' than the author has found it. Throughout the book, he addresses what, why and how of CSR. Globalised world has thrown many challenges like increasing intensity of competition, ruthless exploitation of natural resources, deadly environmental pollution, widening of gap between haves

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and have not, labour problems, vast tracts of lands being converted into mining areas and people losing their rights over the land.

Since these problems are seen as product of not so healthy business practices, business is called upon to pay for the damages and reform its way of operating to suit people, planet and profit. CSR is seen as one of the useful tools that can help business in ‘treating key stakeholders responsibly.’

‘From the Margins to the Mainstream’ covers the movement of CSR, from humble CSR to all pervasive CSR. The book has been composed in four parts. Three chapters in part one by Michael Hopkins deals with ‘theoretical dimensions of CSR’ and gives this book a fitting introduction. This part covers the areas like concept of CSR, CSR and Sustainability, CSR and International development. Tracing trajectory of evolution and development of CSR and covering myriad connotations of CSR, Michael Hopkins elaborates his model of CSR and maps stakeholders on the basis of his experience with the field. From the ‘voluntary CSR’ in ‘The planetary Bargain’, he now suggests some form of legislation for compliance of CSR norms. He establishes a link between CSR and Sustainability and considers CSR as a process and sustainability as the goal. He tries to find answer for a very fundamental question, business for development or development for business only?

Here sustainability enters the discourse on CSR. He splits sustainability into two parts, giving it broader connotations to combat ills of Globalisation and strongly recommends ‘greening of CSR’ to counter global warming. He sees corporations playing meaningful role in international development and private sector with private investment as important player in this field. First chapter is followed by CRITIC, a multiple-choice instrument to enable the reader test his CSR knowledge. This part is widely supported by graphics and data.

All theory and no practice, heads nowhere. Part two on ‘CSR in Practice’ deals with the application of CSR. This part adds to the knowledge of CSR as it deals with Measurement and Impact Analysis, stakeholder dialogue, voluntary standards and verification. How business ethics can be put to practice and the linkage between CSR concepts and measurement and impact analysis is forte of this part. Michael Hopkins in “CSR and business ethics” elaborates meaning of business ethics, its evolution in the wake of corporate scandals and converging of business ethics and CSR in the globalised World. Michael Hopkins and Enrique Torres in “CSR, measurement and impact analysis” deal with some practical applications of a measurement system based on Archie B. Carroll and Donna Woods Corporate social performance framework (CSP). This chapter has detailed analysis of Global Reporting Initiatives (GRI) and a quantitative questionnaire, developed by Hopkins in 1999 to assess CSR. As CSR is all about stakeholders, identifying them comes at the core of any narrative on CSR. Adrian Henriques defines and identifies a wide spectrum of stakeholders in “CSR, Social accounting and Stakeholder dialogue”. A large number of stakeholder techniques supported by large number of case studies figure in this chapter. Henriques finds that quality of stakeholder engagement practice has declined over the years.

Vivek Soundararajan and Laura Spence take a look at the social responsibility of small business (SMEs). CSR initiatives of small business are as important as those of large corporations as they

employ a very large number of people and thus have numerous stakeholders. No particular framework for formalisation of CSR has been recommended given the diversity of small business. Good CSR is not possible without socially responsible restructuring. George Starcher in “Responsible enterprise restructuring” emphasises that socially responsible restructuring makes good business sense. Globalisation has unleashed a number of paradoxes making restructuring of companies pertinent. The chapter narrates hierarchy of restructuring and an interesting case study of the Volkswagen. Deborah Lelpziger in “CSR, Branding and Supply Chains: Laws, voluntary standards and verification” writes on principles, codes of conduct and standards and see them as a map to guide companies. The chapter gives DNA of an outstanding code of conduct and details of some important codes and standards.

Part three, ‘Business and CSR in Society’ deals with CSR and human Rights, Labour, Socially responsible Investment (SRI), the Oil sector and country based examples by Michael Hopkins. Activities of corporations have social, economic and environmental implications. Olga Lenzen in “Business and human rights” explores impact of MNCs activities on human rights. As activities of corporation can violate rights of people and planet, therefore how to make them respect human rights? Labour is considered to be one of the important stakeholders. In “Labour, employment and CSR: The need for a planetary bargain” Michael Hopkins cautions against beggar-thy-neighbour policies, and suggests a planetary bargain between two main players, governments and the business to create standards for responsible behaviour. With poor income distribution and high unemployment, corporations will hardly find markets for their products.

Jacques bogh’s “In the business case for CSR: Estimating future earnings impacts of CSR projects” explores the business case and emphasises a review of anticipated CSR expenditure. The author shares his own experience and gives a three dimensional CSR business case model for practitioners. “Socially responsible investment (SRI)” by Jullan Roche looks at CSR from investor’s perspective. Investors will have to be mindful of the impact their investments will have on the society. SRI Indices and current state of SRI form major component of this chapter. In “CSR and sustainable development in practice”, Michael Hopkins cites examples from Bangladesh (tobacco company BAT), Sri Lanka (Comprehensive Employment Mission), India (Mandatory CSR in the new Companies Act) and Kenya (Safaricom). He gives a 3-M approach to development and an 11-point tool to measure impact of CSR initiatives. Dr Tom Stephens in “CSR in the oil and gas sector” explores best practices in CSR in this sector as it making deep inroads in the developing countries. This chapter is supported by case studies from Indonesia, Equatorial Guinea, Qatar and a pipeline project across Azerbaijan-Georgia-Turkey. He urges that environmental and social issues should be addressed at a very early stage in the development of this sector.

Stakeholders are convinced by actions and result and for actions a strategy is required. Part four ‘Strategic Corporate Social Responsibility’ deals with strategy to convert an idea into working model. Michael Hopkins and Adrian Payne in “Practical implementation of strategic CSR” provide a 15 point checklist of strategic methodology. They apply it to National football Associations (NFAs) of Europe and come out with interesting findings. Professor Abby Ghobadian and Michael Hopkins in “How is tradition business strategy linked to CSR?” compare traditional business strategy and

CSR as it has important practical implications. In “Integrated Reporting”, Mervyn King and Michael Hopkins discuss utility of integrated reporting and give integrated report of Vodacom as an example. “Leveraging your CSR initiatives: Strategic communication to build your reputation with key stakeholders”, by Lawrence Gikaru is very different from rest of the chapters as it focuses on art of communication to build reputation. Seven steps for better communication are worth reading. Concluding chapter by Michael Hopkins reflects on future of CSR-as something moving from the margins to the mainstream.

This book is a complete package on CSR and heralds the onset of Second Generation of CSR that will be on a more serious note, refined, practical and result oriented. However, two observations deserve to be mentioned here. Since India is taking CSR on a serious note, some case studies from India would have added to value of this book. Not everywhere CSR has been a success story, so a chapter on what actually weakened CSR initiatives of those corporations would have helped in shaping of future CSR practices. Comprehensive glossary and definition of main terms like Sphere of influence, Remediation, Eco-imagination, Baseline community assessment AA1000, SA 8000, ISO26000, etc. makes it extremely helpful for new entrants. This seminal work is a must read for academia, practitioners and all those who want to leave the World a better place than they have found it.

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