



# A helping hand for Indian universities

Posted at: 16/07/2018

Leadership in philanthropy is central to enabling an institutional vision for higher education

## Highlights

- The future of Indian universities (public and private) will significantly depend upon our ability to harness the possibility of individual, institutional and corporate philanthropy for the purposes of higher education.
- A major legal and policy reform to promote some form of mandatory corporate social responsibility (CSR) was initiated through the Companies Act, 2013. Path-breaking, it had the potential to transform the relationship between business and society.
- Unfortunately, the results so far have not been encouraging.

## Misinterpreting CSR

- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has observed that among the 5,097 companies that have filed annual reports till December 2016 (financial year 2015-16), only 3,118 companies had made some contribution towards CSR expenditure.
- During FY 2014-15, 3,139 companies had spent 74% of the prescribed CSR expenditure — most were to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.
- There has been very little strategic thinking and innovation in the CSR where corporations can play a leadership role in contributing to society.
- This also shows that companies in India have generally not understood the larger goals of CSR, viewing it more as a charitable endeavour.

## Planning commission report

- Some years ago, a report by a committee constituted by the then Planning Commission and headed by the then chief mentor of Infosys, Narayana Murthy, focussed on the role of the corporate sector in higher education.
- It acknowledged the importance of stronger private initiatives and recommended steps such as free land for 999 years (sic), 300% deduction in taxable income to companies for contributions towards boosting higher education and 10-year multiple entry visas for foreign research scholars.
- It also recommended a Rs. 1,000 crore scholarship fund (with tax exemption for corporate sector contributions) to promote greater accessibility of higher education to the underprivileged.
- However, these recommendations were not implemented.

There is an urgent need in Indian universities to reflect upon the crisis of leadership and the inability to seek reforms relating to institution building. In this, leadership in philanthropy is central to enabling an institutional vision that will help build the future of higher education in

India.

Source: [The Hindu](#)



SAHAYA IAS  
www.sahayaias.com