

# CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN INDIAN HOSPITALITY: HOTELS IN NEW DELHI

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## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) refers to that part of business activities of an organization that have a positive impact on the society, environment and their surroundings at large. The concept of CSR is decade's old but gained importance in 1990's after the government made it mandatory for the organizations to contribute a part of their earnings to the society's benefit. CSR in the Indian hospitality also gained importance at the same time when they realized that their customers, whether foreign or domestic are very much inclined to serve society in certain ways possible. They realized that people now-a-days do not just buy a product, they take up an initiative of the betterment of society as well and this motivates the Indian Hospitality to diversify the range and reach of their CSR initiatives and be called as 'Socially Responsible Hospitality or Hotel Brand.' **Objective:** The present study is done to understand CSR in terms of hospitality sector, to gain knowledge about CSR Initiatives taken up in the Hospitality sector: Hotels, and to know the awareness level of the employees for CSR activities working in perspective Hotels. **Methodology:** The details of the CSR Initiatives taken by the perspective hotels were taken by means of interview of the HR personnel of the organizations, Articles, Magazines, Previous Researches, Websites and Books. Questionnaires were filled up by the employees working in the organizations to check the employee awareness level regarding the CSR Initiatives taken up by their organization. **Results:** Details of the CSR Initiatives taken up by The Oberoi Maidens, ITC Maurya and The Leela Palace were arrived which indicated the members of CSR Committee of the hotel, initiatives taken up and their reach, target sectors of the initiatives and the budgetary support for the CSR Initiatives. Also, the awareness level of the employees was analyzed and summarized. **Conclusion:** CSR Initiatives, though a part of the hotel industry, need to be emphasized more as there is a misconception that the CSR Initiatives are taken by the hospitality industry for the publicity of their business.

**Key words:** Corporate Social Responsibility, Initiatives, Awareness, Contribution.

## INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility or CSR refers to business practices that benefit a society. A business's CSR can encompass a wide variety of tactics, from giving away a portion of a company's proceeds to charity, to implementing "greener" business operations (Caramela, 2016). CSR is a concept with many definitions and practices. The way it is understood and implemented differs greatly for each company and country. Moreover, CSR is very broad concept that addresses many and various topics such as human rights, corporate governance, health and safety, environmental effects, working conditions and contribution to economic development (Paton, 2007).

The concept of CSR activities was started from the industrial times but gained popularity and significance in the 1960's (Lantos, 2002). The present study will focus on tourism's private stakeholders' approach to CSR related to hotel industry. Impact of CSR combined with the main guidelines in tourism firms hasn't been studied to a great depth. The aim of this study is to shed light over this matter and know more about the CSR's strategic implications for the hotel industry. In the recent years, customers, employees, suppliers and more importantly organisations have started taking interest in additional investments in CSR activities. Initially, many of the companies showed resistance to the concept of CSR as they were profit driven only. But as the time has passed, the companies have understood that the current and upcoming customer doesn't buy a commodity but they buy an initiative (Caramela, 2016).

CSR evolved as a response to the stakeholder's need for transparency in regards to the actions of their corporations (Kaur and Bhatnagar, 2017). Many organizations responded by initiating programs within their HR departments to support charitable actions of their employees. Companies encouraged employees to volunteer their time to the services of society and the company would use these actions as a positive relations plug (Paton, 2007).

In the present scenario, the current generation or millenials is taking over the world at a rapid pace. They are the future consumers, employees and government officials and in order for businesses to succeed, they must understand how to market them. These millenials are highly educated and socially liberal and want to work for a company that will support their ideals and they want to be proud of their companies for all endeavors. So it's not only the consumers who are attracted and who appreciate the CSR activities of the companies, but it is the employees as well who would like to join a certain organization due to their contribution to the society and the methods through which they achieve it (Brands that do good also do well, 2003).

Companies have specialized CSR teams that formulate policies, strategies and goals for their CSR programs and set aside budgets to fund them. These programs are often determined by social philosophy which have clear objectives and are well defined and are aligned with the mainstream business. The programs are put into practice by the employees who are crucial to this process. CSR programs

ranges from community development to development in education, environment and healthcare etc. (Khanna and Gupta , 2011).

Also, corporate are increasingly join hands with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and use their expertise in devising programs which address wider social problems (Kaur and Bhatnagar, 2017). Earlier Corporate Social Responsibility was a concept whereby companies used to decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and a cleaner environment. At the present time, the government has made it mandatory that at least 2% of the average net profit of the corporate should be entitled towards CSR initiatives (Singh, 2016).

The term CSR is imprecise and its application differs from sector to sector and so does its reach. It can not only refer to the compliance of human rights standards, labor or social security arrangements but also to basics of providing jobs, health and sanitation facilities and education of the backward sections (Mattera and Moreno, 2012).

Over the last years, an increasing number of companies worldwide started promoting their CSR initiatives to win over the market sector. They realized that customer nowadays doesn't only buys a product, but buys an initiative and feels to contribute his/her bit to the society through the same (Paton, 2007).

CSR requires organizations to demonstrate responsible business conduct that does no harm in the marketplace, in the workplace, in the community they operate in and to the natural environment. (Roberts, 2007). The actions of business impact the local, national, and global community, so businesses have a responsibility to ensure that the impact is positive (Paton, 2007).

CSR involves a firm helping to alleviate external social problems and inequities through charitable funding whether it financially benefits the firm or not. This type of giving is at the shareholder's expense and may not be legitimate. It can be finer as long as it is coming from the owner's funds or profits but as soon as the source of funds changes to the shareholder's funds, there should be legitimate documents to prove it (Kaur and Bhatnagar, 2017).

Strategic CSR involves choosing philanthropic activities that will also benefit the company and help it to reach its strategic goals. A restaurant may choose to support the arts to grow its business from the after-theatre crowd. Morale may increase if the employees become involved in meaningful corporate volunteer programs, which can increase job satisfaction and in turn reduce job turnover (Lantos, 2002). In the Fortune Corporate Reputation Index, thirty hospitality and travel brands were found to have a strong positive correlation between CSR and profitability. The same study also revealed that larger companies benefitted from high CSR ratings but smaller hotel chains and standalone hotels may be able to implement environmental and social policies easier than the larger companies (Roberts, 2007). CSR programmes can actually lead companies into more sustainable growth substantially reduced

through waste reduction and conservation and these sustainable activities are of interest and can be communicated to existing and potential customers (Clark, 2006).

Many companies CSR efforts, however, are less than effective because they do not take into consideration their goals and strategies and instead are generic and fragmented activities. Too many of CSR programs are simply public relations campaigns that do not necessarily have anything to do with how the business is operated (Porter and Kramer, 2006).

Initiatives for sustainable tourism and CSR in the hospitality sector have been put forth over the past 10-15 years by international organisations such as WTO. Increased attention, particularly in the public domain, is resulting in adopting of WTO ethical guidelines by more and more local associations and organisations. While reporting CSR activities do not necessarily correspond to actual CSR activities, it is obvious that CSR is becoming an accepted global initiative (Holcomb et al, 2007).

The introduction of CSR in India can be traced back to as early as 19th century when the industrial families such as Tata, Godrej, Bajaj, Modi , etc, were strongly inclined towards economic as well as social considerations in India. As the time went on the PSU's emerged along with the laws relating to labor and environmental standards but the CSR initiatives could be picked up on a right track. It was then in the late 1990s when the Indian companies realized that the western companies were getting more and more concerned about the labor and environmental standards, so it was high time for them to pay close attention to compliance with the international standards (Clark, 2006).

80% of the top hotel companies reported giving charitable donations as a part of their company mission statement. The top ten hotel companies' websites and annual reports were analyzed and the information found out was categorized into community, environment, marketplace, vision and values and workforce (Holcomb et al, 2007).

The Indian hotel brands like TAJ, ITC, OBEROI and LEELA are also doing great in the case of CSR for society but many of the hospitality companies still need to come forward and make a mark on the society's mindset with their CSR initiatives.

Society and business have a direct relationship that has grown more contentious in the past decade. CSR reports are primarily the result of the insistence of employees who are demanding assurance that their companies are behaving themselves, and companies that are seen as good employers and take their social responsibilities seriously (Lantos, 2002).

CSR is also linked with other sub-factors like environment and shareholder's aspect:

**Environment** is also inter-linked with CSR initiatives. There are various companies that follow green practices in the hotels like recycling resources, saving water and energy, using renewable sources, etc. These green practices save money, attract new customer, and help to preserve the natural environment upon which hospitality industry is dependent upon.

**Shareholder's** social capital is built through the company's CSR activities only because even though the activities are carried out by the company personnel, it is the shareholder's funds which finance them so their reputation and goodwill is also being worked upon at the same time. Sustainable relationships can foster a sense of goodwill as the companies become a "force of good" for multiple shareholders and the community instead of just for the management and the company (Caramela, 2016).

Thus the current study was conducted with the objectives to understand CSR in terms of hospitality sector, to gain knowledge about CSR Initiatives taken up in the Hospitality sector: Hotels, and to know the awareness level of the employees for CSR activities working in perspective Hotels.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This research is on the Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) in Hospitality sector in reference to Indian Hospitality: Hotels in New Delhi. The sample size was three Hotels of Indian origin situated in New Delhi was taken, The Oberoi Maidens, ITC Maurya and The Leela Palace. 10 employees each were randomly selected from various department of the hotel. Personal Interview with a questionnaire was conducted with the Human Resource Personnel's. Convenient time and appointment were taken for the same. Later data was statistically analyzed to attain the results.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The hotels were visited to gather information about their CSR Initiatives and the other details included.

Interview of the Human Resource Managers (HRM) were taken. Convenient time and appointment was taken by them. The CSR committee at The Oberoi Maidens comprises of the Human Resources Manager, The Operational Heads and the various department supervisors. This line-up of the CSR committee ensure that all the supervisors look after the actual work being done in terms of CSR initiatives and the managerial force ensures the planning of these initiatives and analyze the effectiveness of the same.

The CSR committee at the ITC Maurya comprises of the Human Resources Manager, The Operational Heads and the various department supervisors. This line-up of the CSR committee ensure that all the supervisors look after the actual work being done in terms of CSR initiatives and the managerial force ensures the planning of these initiatives and analyze the effectiveness of the same.

The CSR committee at the The Leela Palace comprises of the Human Resources Manager, Training Manager, The Operational Heads and the various departmental heads and supervisors. This line-up of the CSR committee ensure that all the supervisors look after the actual work being done in terms of CSR initiatives and the managerial force ensures the planning of these initiatives and analyze the effectiveness of the same.

### **Details of the CSR Initiatives by THE OBEROI MAIDENS HOTEL:**

- The annual budget allocated for the CSR activities is approximately INR 1 Lakhs.
- Paalna is the DCCW's (Delhi Council for Child Welfare) home for providing care and shelter for abandoned, homeless and destitute children. The Oberoi Maidens has taken up an initiative to make the children feel cared and looked after. They visit the NGO on 15th August every year and spend a day there with the kids. They host various activities and games with the kids and play with them. Also, they give sweets and gifts to all the children there to make them feel special and a part of the society (<http://www.dccw.org/palna.php>).
- The Mother Teresa Foundation is an NGO working for the unwanted, uncared and unloved in the society. The foundation has been collaborating with other agencies towards bringing up the poor children, women and farmers in the mainstream of life. The Oberoi Maidens also contributes to this cause. They are involved in charitable donations to this NGO from time to time to contribute their part to the society ( <http://www.motherteresafoundation.org.in>).
- On 19th November 2014, The Oberoi Group commenced a partnership with SOS Children's Villages with the objective of supporting the education and well being of the under privileged children as a part of the company's primary CSR policy. The group not only provides upbringing and basic education of the children, but also sponsors higher education through Bachelors Program of 61 youths at various professional institutes. Also, the culinary teams organize cookery classes for the children and their mothers at the SOS Children's Village ( <http://www.oberoigroup.com/csr/project-saksham>).
- Goonj is the New Delhi based NGO which undertakes disaster relief, humanitarian aid and community development in parts of 21 states across India. It is also the first one to highlight 'clothing' as a basic but unaddressed need which deserves a piece on the development agenda. The team at The Oberoi Maidens donate their discarded but in good condition uniforms to this positive cause to contribute their part to the society ( <http://goonj.org>).
- Apart from all these activities, there are a few in initiatives in the planning stage. One of them is a fully funded party for the children Paalna at The Oberoi Maidens to make them feel even more special and mark that day as one of the most fun filled day for them.
- Also, another initiative which is in planning stages is the education of the red light children by the group, teaching them as to what hospitality is all about and if they feel up to make a career out of it, they provide them with the training and the opportunity for the same ( <http://www.oberoigroup.com/csr/project-saksham>).

### **Details of the CSR Initiatives by ITC MAURYA, NEW DELHI:**

- The annual budget allocated for the CSR activities is approximately INR 1 to 1.5 Lakhs.
- The hotel has taken up the initiative to employ deaf and dumb in various back office areas where they can learn a skill set, master it and use that skill set to acquire a reputed job and hard-earned

money. This not only gives them financial aid or employment, but more than that, an emotional stability and motivational booster. The team at ITC Maurya started this initiative 5 years back with a team of 20 strong men in various departments. As of now only 4-5 of them remain in the organization.

- E-Choupal is another CSR initiative of ITC hotels which initiates a direct link between the company and the rural farmers via Internet for procurement of agricultural and aquaculture products like soybeans, wheat, coffee, prawns, etc. e-Choupal tackles the challenges posed by Indian agriculture. The programme installs computers with internet access in the rural areas of India to offer farmers up-to-date marketing and agricultural information ( <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-Choupal>).
- Committed to creating the greenest hotels, ITC Maurya is the World's first hotel to be given the LEED Platinum Rating under the Existing Building category ( <https://www.itchotels.in/hotels/new-delhi/itcmaurya.html>).
- The first hotel chain in the world to earn Carbon Credits under the carbon trading regime by UNFCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) in recognition of its endeavors to reduce carbon emissions (<https://www.itchotels.in/hotels/new-delhi/itcmaurya.html>).
- The only hotel chain using the largest and the first on-site Paraboloid Solar Concentrators for thermal need in the hotel (steam and hot water) (<https://www.itchotels.in/hotels/new-delhi/itcmaurya.html>).
- World's largest Membrane Bio Reactor installation in the hospitality industry for Ultra filtration of Waste Water processing 800 Kilo Liters per day with potable water quality.
- Apart from these, the hotel also meets 25% (approx.) of its energy demand through renewable source i.e., Wind and Solar (<https://www.itchotels.in/hotels/new-delhi/itcmaurya.html>).

#### **Details of the CSR Initiatives by THE LEELA PALACE, NEW DELHI**

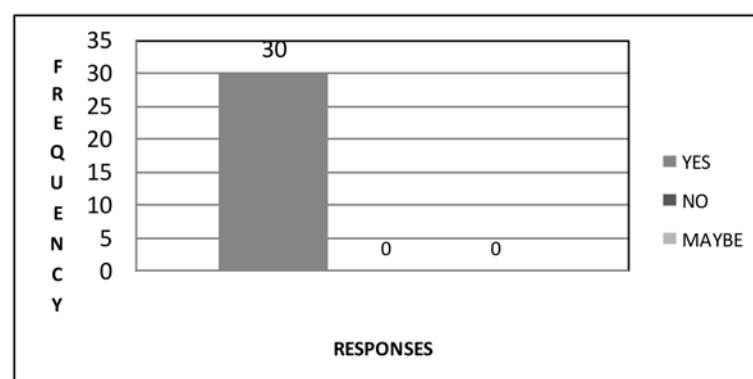
- The annual budget allocated for the CSR activities is approximately INR 1.5 to 1.75 Lakhs.
- Fr. Agnel School is run by the AGNEL REGION of the Society of the Missionaries of St. Francis Xavier, of Catholic Priests and Brothers, (commonly known as Agnel Ashram Fathers). The Agnel Ashram Fathers run reputed institutions well known all over the country for their excellence, efficiency and dedication. The hotel calls over the students from the school for their annual Christmas choir to be sung in the hotel on Christmas Eve every year to sing the Christmas carols. They also visit the school and organize games, gifts and spend a day with the kids ( <http://www.fasnoida.org/institution>).
- The hotel has taken up the initiative to employ deaf and dumb in various back office areas where they can learn a skill set, master it and use that skill set to acquire a reputed job and hard-earned money. This not only gives them financial aid or employment, but more than that, an emotional stability and motivational booster.
- Pallavanjali is a school committed to being a learning environment with a difference inclusive of education which responds to the diverse needs of all learners with special focus on the needs of

children and youth with disabilities. The hotel employs some students from the school on a Fixed Term Contract basis to work in the back office areas and thus providing them a skilled training and a positive working environment.

- The hotel also organizes lectures where lecturers from these NGO's come and hold a session with the employees about how to communicate with the deaf and dumb people and the students from Pallavanjali ( <http://www.pallavanjali.org>).
- The Shanti Avedna Sadan is India's first Hospice, an institution that takes care of the \advanced terminally ill cancer patients. The hotel visits the hospital on a regular basis and spends time with the people there on a regular basis and helps them out in any way possible ( <http://www.shantiavednasadan.in/about.htm>).
- The hotel also donates their used soaps to Diversey Taski which recycle these soaps and donates these soaps to the backward areas of the society and with the help of people from hotel, they teach people about personal hygiene and sanitation.
- Godhuli is a premier old age home which offers a continuum of assured lifetime care for every resident. The hotel visits the old age home on a regular basis where they spend some time with the elders there, interact with them, organize activities and cut a cake too on their birthdays ( <http://godhuli.in/index.php>).

A questionnaire was filled out by the employees to provide information about the secondary objective i.e. awareness level of the employees. The results are as follows:-

The Figure 1 shows that 100% of the respondents agree that CSR initiatives are needed in hospitality industry because they feel that they are giving back to the society for what it has provided us by the means of CSR Initiatives.



**Figure 1: Need for CSR in the Hospitality Industry**

The following Table 1 depicts that 70% of the respondents were 'Very Well' aware about the CSR Initiatives while the remaining 30% of the respondents were just 'Aware' about the presence of CSR Initiatives in the organization. This infers that more participation is required from the employees by involving employees from all departments on a regular basis.



*Table 1: Awareness level of the employees*

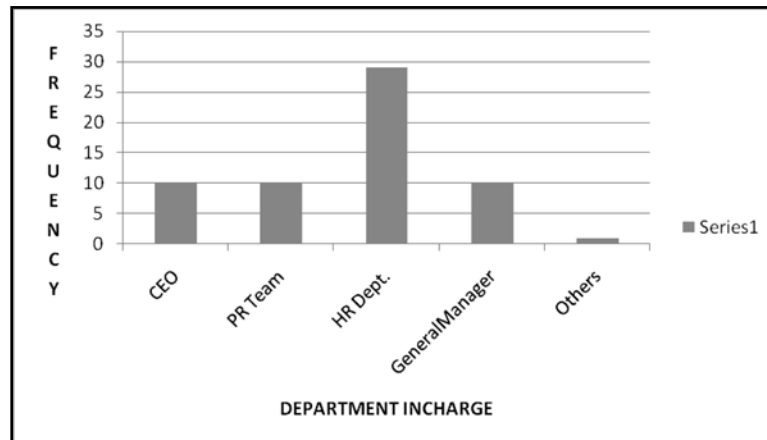
S.No.	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Somewhat aware	0	0
2	Aware	9	30
3	Very well aware	21	70
4	Not aware	0	0
Total		30	100

The following Table 2 depicts the reach of the CSR Initiatives taken up by the organizations. It was found that the areas affected the most by these Initiatives were Environment (15%) followed by Charitable Events and Child Care / Development (14%). This is because the respondents feel that the organization works more towards preserving the environment and follow green practices to contribute their part in conserving the environment.

*Table 2: Reach of CSR Initiatives*

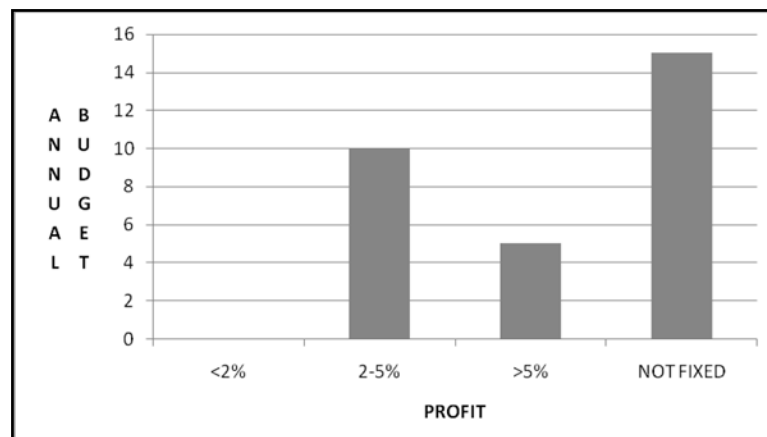
S.No	Areas	Frequency	Percentage ( %)
1	Health	17	9
2	Micro Finance	5	2
3	Education	17	9
4	Charitable Events	25	14
5	Sanitation	15	8
6	Disaster mgmt.	11	5
7	Agriculture	10	5
8	Women Empowerment	13	7
9	Environment	26	15
10	Child care/ development	25	14
11	Resource conservation	21	11
12	Others	2	1
Total		187	100

The following Figure 2 depicts the person or the team responsible for the CSR Initiatives. It was found that primarily HR Department was responsible for implementation of the CSR Initiatives as it is the HR Department which finds out about the various CSR Initiatives that can be taken up and directly coordinates the flow of Initiatives in the organization.



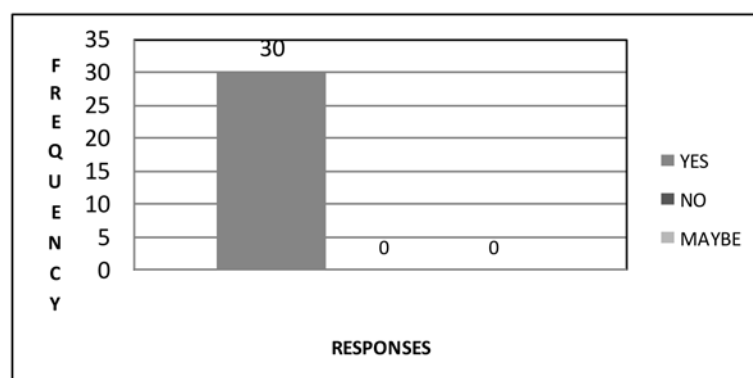
**Figure 2: Responsibility for implementation of CSR Initiatives**

The Figure 3 shows that in 50% of cases, Annual Budget for CSR Initiatives is 'Not fixed'. Also it shows that no organization spends less than 2% of their profits for their CSR Initiatives. This is because the organizations feel that they should contribute to the society as much as they can but there are times when the business is not profitable to a certain level so amends have to be made in terms of the funds being allocated for carrying out the CSR Initiatives.



**Figure 3: Annual Budget allocation for CSR Initiatives**

The following Figure 4 depicts that the major target group affected is that people taken up from NGO's with 51%. This is because in the city conditions, visits and organizing events for NGO's is comparatively more feasible for the organizations.



**Figure 4: Target Groups Affected**

The following Table 3 depicts that in 73.4% of the cases, the organisations are involved in CSR activities are done on a quarterly basis in a general aspect. This is because planning, organising and funding of these CSR Initiatives take some time which makes the frequency of the initiatives at a quarterly basis.

**Table 3: Frequency of Initiatives for CSR Activities**

S.No.	Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Weekly	1	3.3
2	Fortnightly	0	0
3	Monthly	1	3.3
4	Quarterly	22	73.4
5	Bi-Annually	6	20
6	Annually	0	0
<b>Total</b>		30	100

The Figure 5 shows that 100% of the respondents agree that CSR initiatives bring about a positive change in the society because this is the way of making people aware that organizations also contribute to the society and try to bring about a positive change in the society by the means of CSR Initiatives.

In The Oberoi Maidens, the CSR Initiatives are more focused towards education of children, child care and development and supporting NGO's in a positive manner.

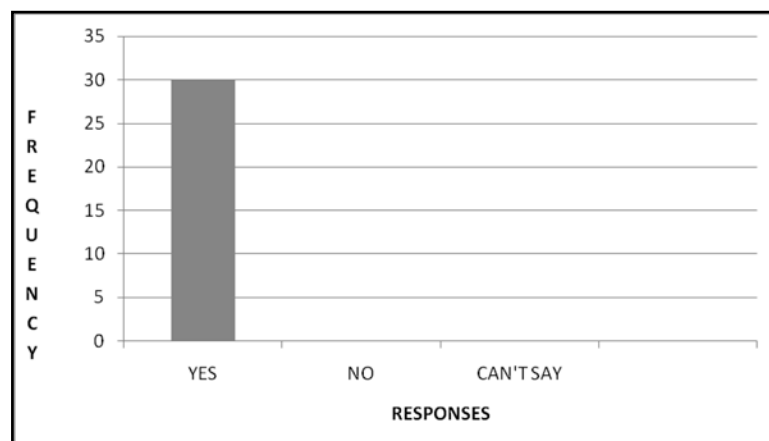
In ITC Maurya, the CSR Initiatives are primarily focused on using and supporting environment friendly practices. Apart from this they also focus on employing people from various sections of society, particularly deaf and dumb people.

In The Leela Palace, the CSR Initiatives are more focused on supporting NGO's and covering various aspects like education, sanitation, environment, skill development and charitable donations.

- 100% of the respondents feel that there is a need of CSR in the Hospitality Industry.
- 70% of the respondents are 'Very Well Aware' about the CSR Initiatives in the organization.
- Environment is the main focus of the majority of CSR Initiatives of the organizations.

The HR department was primarily responsible for the CSR Initiatives taken up by the organizations.

- In 50% of the cases, the annual budget for CSR Initiatives was 'Not Fixed'.
- In 51% of the cases, the main target group affected by the CSR Initiatives was the NGOs.
- In 73.4% cases, the organizations are involved in CSR Initiatives on a 'Quarterly Basis'.
- 100% of the respondents agree that CSR Initiatives do bring about a positive change in the society.



*Figure 5: Positive changes in the Society*

## CONCLUSION

During the course of the research, several findings came to light, adding to the knowledge gathered during interviews with the team members at the hotel. Although, it is believed that CSR initiatives should be encouraged more than they are in today's time. The customer now-a-days not only buys a product but rather purchases an initiative. The people go out in the market and buy a product with the view of being able to contribute to the society by the means of purchasing only. This is how the CSR in hospitality comes. People don't realize or see that the hotels too are also involved in CSR initiatives. Hence there is a need to generate awareness in the guests about the same so that while staying or spending in a hotel, they are aware that a part of it will be contributed to the betterment of the society.

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