IBM India - Vision

"Within IBM, with our clients and in communities around the world, we have seen the power of collaborative innovation to solve our toughest problems. Over the past several years, we have transformed our company—from our portfolio to our management systems, from our products and services to our culture and policies— with one goal in mind: to make IBM the "Innovators' Innovator".

Today, there are billions of people doing their part to shape our planet's future, and not one of them is doing it on his own. Government officials, corporate leaders, educators, even concerned citizens in developing countries. The innovators of 21st-century business and society are of every stripe.

Thanks to technology, people are finding collaborators all around the world in circles they might never otherwise have explored. And as companies rapidly spread their global reach, they gain greater access to resources, people and communities long closed off. With this greater access comes a greater responsibility — to find new and lasting solutions to the world’s most vexing problems.

At IBM, we are meeting this challenge with the help of our many collaborators: The hundreds of millions of people across our rapidly integrating world. The millions of partners, experts and specialists outside our company. The 330,000 IBMers around the world."

Statement made by Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, Samuel J Palmisano
in the IBM's 2006 Corporate Responsibility Report

CSR Initiatives

IBM, India initiatives are shaped by the IBM global initiatives. There is no one group within the company that looks after CSR. There are several groups within IBM that address different segments of the community IBM works with. For example in IBM, India the Community Relations team focuses on primary education and in deploying technology to improve the quality of life of the disadvantaged section of the community. Similarity, there are groups that address the issues of diversity, environmental citizenship and university relations.

IBM's On Demand Community is a first-of-its kind, global initiative that facilitates employee and retiree community service by providing volunteers with the tools and resources necessary to improve services in schools and community organizations worldwide.

IBM's philosophy is not just to get involved in community but also to stay involved in order to bridge the digital divide that exists in the society. Hence, most of the Corporate Community Relations initiatives are ongoing campaigns, designed to impart education to lesser-privileged children across age groups through technology.

The key approach has been to build partnerships with Governments, not-for-profit organizations, communities and educators. This has been a strong element of all the IBM programs in India, specifically the KidSmart program currently being implemented in seven states. The program developed by IBM and shaped by partners provides educational technology designed specifically to advance the skills young children need to thrive in schools. In partnership with the State Governments, The Promise Foundation, The Byruraj Foundation and Pratmam Educational Initiatives, IBM has been able to provide over 2000 "Young Explorer" units designed for the lesser-privileged pre-school children in 200 schools. Teachers at these centers are trained on specially developed training modules using technology to develop children's basic language, mathematics and science skills.
IBM has always believed in using their core competency - the technology to help solve some of the key issues of the society. Reading Companion is a program to increase literacy among children and adults. It is a speech recognition technology for the classroom. Accessibility is a program designed specially to make technology accessible to groups who are conventionally not associated with using technology - physically /mentally challenged, socially /economically backward people. For example, IBM India supported the entire hardware and software requirements for the computer centers at the Victoria Memorial School for the Blind in Mumbai, Mitra Jyothi - IBM Centre for People with Disabilities in Bangalore and IETE-IBM computer centre, Noida all of which are dedicated to providing IT skills to visually impaired people.

One of the major initiatives has been the global initiative to bring together the collective power of millions of individual PCs and business computers to address the world's most urgent challenges through 'The World Community Grid' program. Through the World Community Grid, PC owners are able to donate their idle computing time for research with a philanthropic or humanitarian purpose, conducted by public and not-for-profit organizations, with the results available in the public domain. With World Community Grid, they are harnessing the power of grid computing technology to tackle projects for the benefit of humanity.

Gender Diversity at IBM

Diversity at IBM is defined as all-inclusive, encompassing not just race, gender and physical abilities, but differences in culture, age, religion, economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression.

IBM views workforce diversity as a bridge between the workplace and the marketplace, a bridge that is founded on four pillars: equal opportunity, affirmative action, work / life balance, and cultural awareness toward building an inclusive work environment. Equal opportunity is defined as non-discriminating and non-harassing, with affirmative action intended to eliminate disadvantage and provide all groups a level playing field on which to compete.

The advancement of women is one of IBM's global diversity priorities and there are a range of initiatives that are focused on attracting, developing and retaining talent. These programs are positioned as business imperatives and IBM has a long heritage of "firsts" in the advancement of women – IBM’s first woman employee was hired way back in 1999, Equal Pay for Equal Work declared in 1935, IBM’s first woman Vice President was appointed in 1943, and more.

Key Gender Diversity Programs at India

IBM Indian Women's Leadership Council (IWLC)

The objective of the council is to enhance the technical, professional and personal development of women in IBM India by designing and executing key initiatives to enhance IBM India's ability to attract, develop, and retain women at IBM. Members of the council are drawn from among women leaders from various locations and business units across IBM in India.

Women In Technology Initiatives (WIT)

The goals of the WIT chapter are to support the advancement and recognition of IBM's female technical talent, to attract and recruit more qualified technical women to IBM, to enhance IBM's image regarding women in technology, and to work with outside organizations to influence the decisions of girls and young women to pursue education and careers in science and technology. EX.I.T.E. camp for girls is key initiative under WIT.

EX.I.T.E. is an acronym for Exploring Interests in Technology and Engineering. The camps are organized by IBM women in technology to introduce girls to the wonder and promise of technical careers.

Women are retreating from the fields of science and technology in alarming numbers. Studies tell us that many girls begin steaming away from maths and science as early as middle school, when they unknowingly make decisions about courses that may carry life-long consequences. Technology has already transformed the world more dramatically than any other revolution in history. The one-week EX.I.T.E. camp experience, followed by an IBM e-mentor program (using Mentor Place) encourages students' interests in maths and science.

Workforce Flexibility Initiatives

Workforce Flexibility is a global Initiative to help IBMMers find more balance between their work and personal lives. A key part of this program revolves around Flexible Work Options. To support their employees in maintaining a better work/life balance, IBM India has introduced 5 Flexible Work Options.

These include:
- Individualized Work Schedule
- Leave of Absence
- Part-time Reduced Work Schedule
- Mobile / Telecommuter
- Work-at-Home

IBM is committed to creating a supportive flexible environment allowing employees more flexibility over how, where and when their work gets done. Work/life balance is a win-win for customers, company, and employees – both men and women. It has a positive impact on employee morale, productivity and retention.
Addressing Dependent Care requirements is another key focus to enhance Workforce Flexibility among IBM employees. Worldwide, IBM has launched a $50 million Global Work/Life Fund (GWLF) to address strategic workplace challenges for IBM employees worldwide, focusing on dependent care. In India, IBM is a host of GWLF projects launched to support employees: working to upskill employees’ management of in-home care, parenting workshops for employees, holiday camps for employees’ kids, creche locators services in multiple IBM locations, and the like.

Iconnect

Iconnect, aims at helping women employees realize their full potential within the work environment. ‘It’ implies the individual with her aspirations, her talents and her strengths. ‘It’ also stands for IBM in India, the organization that would gain in strength by ensuring that it provides a level playing field for all its employees. The importance of networking toward career and personal growth cannot be underestimated. Iconnect aims to foster networking among women employees across IBM in India. It also organizes seminars, talks on topics such as work-life balance and success of women at workplace.

Anti-Harassment Policy

IBM has a zero tolerance policy for any form of workplace harassment. IBM is committed to providing and maintaining a desirable place to work, in which every employee has equal opportunity to reach their full potential. IBM is all responsible for providing an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment. Education programs for managers and employees to ensure an understanding of the policy are conducted regularly, and a committee reviews individual cases in a fair manner and when they come up.

Leadership Development for Women

IBM offers several training programs to encourage women at the workplace and to enhance their leadership and networking skills. These include Taking the Stage, an exciting, video-based program which shows women how to achieve a strong leadership presence when they speak in all situations - board rooms, meeting rooms, conference halls and phone calls. WIT Seminars and courses on Women Leadership Development are some of the other offerings. An annual highlight for selected women on top talent is an IWLC hosted Women Leadership Conference - Winspiration - at which a host of external speakers address 200+ IBM women on topics like Mentoring, Networking, Branding, and more.

Building a Culture of Inclusion

Education on Diversity & Inclusive Leadership, AF and Global Networking Calls, Mindset [a workshop to build the case for the advancement of women as a business imperative] are some of the ongoing educational programs to build a culture of inclusion for women at IBM.

IBM’s philosophy on women employees can be phrased simply: IBM has attempted to learn and address the specific needs of women, and to create services that address those needs. The use of these services leads to a more effective and committed employee who will contribute their best to the corporation. IBM believes these key programs provide a foundation for their women and their ultimate measurement is for women employees, particularly working mothers, to aspire to both an executive life and a family. IBM goal is to be the premier global employer for women.

Working with People with Disabilities

A leader in diversity, IBM is committed to an inclusive work environment where ideas and contributions are welcome regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. IBM’s commitment to people with disabilities is an important part of a well-developed global diversity strategy.

More than one billion people across the globe have a disability and as the world’s population ages, this number is expected to grow significantly. IBM hired its first person with disability in 1914. With almost a 100-year heritage of commitment, IBM’s Policy for People with Disabilities (PwDs) has since revolved around 3As...

Accommodation - Facilities that IBM provides to enable employees to work more independently and productively. Examples include physical improvements such as ramps, Braille signage in elevators, lowered water fountains, wide doors and the like. In India, all the new locations are equipped with the standard requirements for people with disabilities and they are upgrading their older facilities to conform to the same standards.

Accessibility - Providing individual people with disabilities the technology tools in the workplace and in the marketplace, such as voice recognition software. Currently there are 9 Accessibility centers in IBM worldwide, each focusing on designing and deploying products appropriate for people with disabilities.

Attitude - Changing the values and beliefs that some people have with regard to people with disabilities is very important. IBM actively recruits, hires and promotes people with disabilities. IBM helps promote an Attitude of non-discrimination and offers opportunities to deserving individuals. In India, in addition to e-learning resources that focus specifically on building commitment to people with disability, IBM has a face-to-face Diversity & Inclusive Leadership training program that is aimed to promote an inclusive workplace. It also has plans to design some education around people with disabilities and are scouting for local service providers who can fulfill this need.

To conclude, IBM is an equal opportunity employer and has recruited people with disabilities in key roles across the organisation. In India, IBM has undertaken several initiatives to increase visibility and access of People with Disabilities at the workplace. In addition to providing accessibility products for PwDs, IBM has initiated Roundtable meetings with PwD employees to understand and address their unique concerns. It has established a voluntary PwD Network - EnABlers at IBM, which is a great forum in which PwD joiners can partake, especially when they are new to IBM. It also has ensembled NGOs who are working to provide with qualified PwD candidates and assist them on this ongoing journey. In 2006, IBM conducted IT Camps for children with disability to expose students to the exciting world of Information technology, and to provide a scholarship fund for PwD candidates in an educational institute of repute.

PwDs are employed in a variety of roles at IBM, India, including project management, programming, consulting, operations quality assurance, human resources, and more. There is a conscious attempt not to classify certain jobs as fit for people with disabilities - on the contrary; PwDs can contribute in a range of 'mainstream' roles.
Challenges faced while initiating CSR initiatives

One of the challenges has been to adapt the Global IBM programs to local conditions prevailing in the country. This has been very successfully addressed through the program approach in each of the programs. **Reinventing Education**, a program that helps to enhance both teacher and student learning is a good example. The program identifies innovative ways that new technologies can be used to facilitate education reform in the areas of curriculum and teaching methodologies. The recently concluded IBM sponsored Asia Pacific "Education Summit" at Shanghai enabled a five member Indian team, led by Dr. Ganguly, Chairman, Central Board of Secondary Education, to participate in the discussions and share best practices. The experience and learning will help in adapting the concepts of the Indian education system. IBM in collaboration with the Corporation of Chennai and Government of Andhra Pradesh is piloting the program in India.

Impact of the CSR initiatives

The impact has been multifold and in some ways difficult to quantify. For example, the **On Demand Community program** has enabled IBM employees to volunteer for the benefit of the community. **Over 4000 volunteers** involved in the program extend their support to various initiatives. There are some who spend their weekends in organizations such as Enable India and Samaarthanam providing their expertise in IT. Groups of volunteers in Kolkata, Pune are involved in imparting IT training in schools; a group from Hyderabad has participated in programs organized by IBM Partner - The Byrraju Foundation. The quality time they have spent is not measurable.

Similarly, an evaluation of the KidSmart program in India, found the **IBM KidSmart Early Learning Program** has made a significant contribution to stimulating new learning opportunities for children and providing teachers with high quality professional learning experiences. Indications are that it is acting as a catalyst and support for significant reforms in early childhood education. It was also revealed that the program has had a positive impact on improving student retention and transition to primary school and has increased parental involvement and interest in their child's schooling. The program itself has become a model that is being replicated in different forms in the country.

Voice from the beneficiaries group

**Quote from Mr. Verghese Jacob, CEO, Byrraju Foundation at the IBM Education Summit at Shanghai:**

"IBM KidSmart program is the pride of the entire village. More and more villages are demanding the facility every year. It has become a tourist attraction in the community. IBM KidSmart Centre is the jewel in the village's crown."

Employees volunteering programme

As mentioned above, the **On Demand Community program** supports the desire for IBMer's to volunteer. An employee wishing to volunteer registers on the On Demand Community website that enables him to access various tools that he can use in improving the working of the programs he is volunteering for. The website also provides an opportunity for him to log his hours of volunteering work that is recognized by the company through awards and other schemes. According to global statistics, 75000 IBM employees and retirees worldwide have volunteered more than 5.7 million community service hours in 19 countries.

Currently, IBM, India has over 4000 employees involved in the voluntary work.

Mentor role for others in the industry

IBM will be happy to share its experiences and knowledge built up around the primary education field.

Future plans

IBM proposes to expand the program to reach out to other States, develop with new initiatives and strengthen the employee voluntary program.

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