

# FRAMEWORK: HOW DO YOU EFFECTIVELY MEASURE THE IMPACT OF CSR INITIATIVES IN EDUCATION?

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Education is one of the cornerstones for building an equitable and empowered society.

In recent decades, India has made tremendous progress in ensuring universal access to elementary education. 98% of India's population today has access to a primary school within a kilometer of their homes. With the Right to Education Act, 2008, that makes free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 years a fundamental right, enrolment rates have also increased significantly (96% of all children in India enroll in schools). Yet access and enrollment success are no markers of learning outcomes. According to the ASER report 2014, the English and Math skills of school students is very poor and has declined in comparison with previous years. The ASER report records that less than half the children in Grade 5 can even read a Grade 2 textbook and only a quarter can perform division.

Education is a key focus area for Corporations as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility. According to a recent study<sup>[1]</sup>, 78 of the top 100 companies in India are supporting at least one program on school education. However, the same study reveals that there is not enough focus on direct interventions that can improve learning outcomes.

The renewed focus on CSR under Section 135 of the Companies Act 2013 provides fresh impetus for organizations to address the missing gaps in the Indian education

ecosystem. A crucial step in furthering efforts in this direction is a robust Impact assessment framework that can help organizations not only measure their Impact but also steer their focus to the right intervention areas in education.

### Impact Assessment: Going from proving to improving

Social Impact assessment has its roots in Government measures that were designed to understand the Impact of public service programs in the United States in the 1950s. Over the years venture philanthropists, foundations and social investors have invested effort in furthering these guidelines into establishing sector-wide standards and building rigor in the way social organizations measure Impact.

However, Impact assessment in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives is still at a nascent stage. Sattva's conversations with leading Corporations confirm that existing initiatives focus predominantly on standard assessment metrics and qualitative evidence to gather Impact. Certain organizations that have taken a rigorous approach towards Impact assessment have implemented large-scale, one-time programs that are effort intensive and do not provide an ongoing view of Impact on the ground.



Sattva firmly believes that Impact assessment initiatives should be holistic [A holistic impact assessment exercise will focus on the impact of the CSR initiatives on the company, community and implementation partners. However, the focus of this document is on the impact on the community – particularly in education, on the students and the schools] and extend focus **beyond proving Impact on the ground to helping the organization and the implementation partners [ improve their implementation and Impact. Such an approach should focus on measurable Impact on the ground, make actionable recommendations and integrate with ongoing operations to ensure that there is continuous improvement.**

While there is no one-size-fits-all approach in Impact assessment, Sattva recommends a phased approach that helps the organization build their Impact assessment models inline with the scale of the CSR investment.

### **A holistic Impact Assessment framework**

Following are some of the key tenets of Sattva’s approach to Impact assessment

**1. Build a model that helps the organization understand the social return on investment of its CSR initiatives and provide a steering model to sharpen its focus**

**2. Take a phased approach towards Impact assessment** that evolves based on the maturity of the CSR initiatives and helps the organization **incrementally build the system** and understanding of the same within the organization

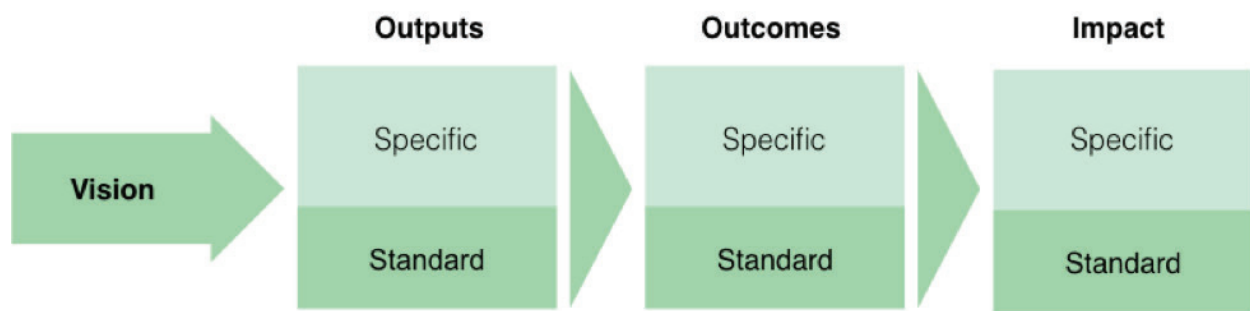
**3. Evolve the partnership between organizations and the implementation partners** from that of a funder seeking evidence of Impact to that of a collaborator using an objective, data-driven approach to maximize impact

**4. Engage business leadership** on the impact on the ground through rigorous CSR reporting

**5. Combine quantitative data on indicators with strong qualitative inputs to contextualize numbers and gain a deeper understanding**

**Impact Assessment: A phased approach**

An organization should focus on measuring three types of indicators related to its CSR initiatives [The exact table of outputs, outcomes and impact will be based on the interventions on the ground].



The current education system already has standard metrics such as pass percentage and subject-wise performance of students that can be used as outcome and Impact indicators. In addition, the CSR implementation could have specific outcomes and Impact indicators to measure aspects such as utilization of resources or motivation of stakeholders that will require additional effort and rigor if they are to be measured effectively. These specific indicators provide greater visibility to the organization of the on-ground of their CSR initiative.

Sattva recommends that the organisation takes a phased approach wherein the impact assessment model evolves along with the CSR initiative.

You can download the complete casestudy here for detailed phases of the framework and how they can be implemented.