



Child Marriage in India

A declining practice, but
still a deep social concern

NGO FOCUS

GOONJ

Turning urban surplus
into rural strength

IMPACT STORIES

Radisson Hotel Group's
Skilling initiative
empowers 850+ Youth

CHANGEMAKER

AZIM PREMJI

The quiet architect of
India's giving movement

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CONTENTS



6 **SHORT NEWS**

10 **CORPORATE CARE**
Healthium MedTech supports GIMS in delivering advanced paediatric orthopaedic surgeries for 1,000+ children annually

12 **POLICY PULSE**
SHE-MARTs to power women-led rural enterprise ecosystems across India

13 Centre signs JJM 2.0 MoUs to strengthen rural water governance

14 **PSU PHILANTHROPY**
NBCC (India) Limited bags ₹103.47 crore CSR project management orders from Power Finance Corporation Limited

15 **BEYOND COMPLIANCE**
Heathium Medtech Promising long term healthcare ecosystem support, not just donations

16 **FOR A CAUSE**
Child Marriage in India A declining practice, but still a deep social concern

19 **GRAB A GRANT**

- Naaripreneur for Her Program opens applications for Cohort 2
- ANRF MAHA Leapfrog Demonstrators Programme invites Breakthrough Innovations for Societal Impact

20 **NGO FOCUS**
Goonj Turning urban surplus into rural strength

24 **IMPACT STORIES**
Shikhar Dhawan Foundation expands Digital Shiksha initiative to empower close to 2,500 girl students

26 **IMPACT STORIES**
Radisson Hotel Group's Skilling initiative empowers 850+ Youth

30 **CHANGEMAKER**
Azim Premji The quiet architect of India's giving movement

34 **GREENTECH & INNOVATION**
India-EU EV Battery Recycling Push Building a circular economy for clean mobility

GRAB-A-GRANT

NAARIPRENEUR FOR HER PROGRAM OPENS APPLICATIONS FOR COHORT 2

IIMV FIELD has opened applications for Cohort 2 of the Naaripreneur for Her Program, a nationwide incubation initiative aimed at supporting women-led ventures and enterprises creating solutions for women. Supported by NBCC India Ltd. as a CSR initiative, the 11-month programme will run from May 2026 to March 2027 and will support up to 75 entrepreneurs through three phases. Up to 25 promising ventures will receive six months of incubation support at IIMV FIELD.

The programme focuses on women entrepreneurship, gender equality, economic empowerment, business model development, marketing, finance, operations, AI adoption, fundraising, mentorship and social impact. It is open to applicants aged 18 years and above, with startups or ideas operating from anywhere in India. Ventures may be women-led or focused on women-centric solutions across sectors such as health, safety, education, livelihood creation and financial independence. At least one core team member must be committed full-time. The last date to apply is June 30, 2026. ■

Contact details - +917569309208, nfhp@iimv.ac.in



ANRF MAHA LEAPFROG DEMONSTRATORS PROGRAMME INVITES BREAKTHROUGH INNOVATIONS FOR SOCIETAL IMPACT

The ANRF MAHA Leapfrog Demonstrators Programme has opened opportunities for innovators, researchers and institutions working on breakthrough solutions with the potential to create large-scale societal impact in India. Designed to move beyond incremental improvements, the programme seeks to support bold, scalable and field-ready innovations that can address some of the country's most pressing development challenges.

Projects supported under this initiative are expected to demonstrate solutions that are technically feasible, economically viable and socially adoptable.

The programme covers a wide range of priority areas aligned with India's sustainable growth agenda. Under **Sustainable Development and Environment**, proposals may focus on climate-resilient agriculture, pollution control, waste-to-wealth models, and biodiversity preservation. The **Energy and Infrastructure** segment encourages radical solutions in energy efficiency and smart, sustainable infrastructure. In **Mobility and Urban Systems**, the emphasis is on reimagined transportation, road safety and urban mobility. The initiative also gives significant importance to **Social Impact and Inclusion**. Under Human Development, the programme seeks ideas in sports science, physical literacy and community-level wellbeing. ■

The last date to apply for the programme is **June 1, 2026**

Dear Readers,

There are moments when a magazine is not just launched as a publication, but as a purpose. The inaugural issue of **CSR-ESG Connect** is one such beginning — an effort to bring together voices, stories, ideas and initiatives that are shaping a more responsible, inclusive and sustainable India.

Corporate Social Responsibility today is no longer an act of charity. It is a powerful development tool, especially for a growing country like India, where the needs are diverse and the opportunities are immense. From education and healthcare to skilling, women empowerment, environment, rural development and livelihoods, CSR has emerged as a bridge between corporate capability and community need. As per official data, companies in India spent over **₹1,44,159 crore on CSR activities between FY 2019-20 and FY 2023-24**, with CSR expenditure touching **₹34,908.75 crore in FY 2023-24 alone**. These investments have touched millions of lives across the country, enabling access, dignity and hope.

Through **CSR-ESG Connect**, we aim to document this journey of impact with responsibility and sensitivity. Our first issue reflects the width of the development landscape. We raise concern over the continuing challenge of **child marriage**, highlight the meaningful grassroots work being done by **Goonj NGO**, and bring attention to **Radisson Hotel Group's community and sustainability initiatives**. We also carry an inspiring life story on **Azim Premji**, whose commitment to philanthropy remains a benchmark for India's social sector.

This issue further explores emerging areas such as the importance of **EV battery recycling**, the growing need for **skilling and livelihood creation**, and the many ways in which responsible businesses can contribute to India's larger development goals.

As we begin this journey, our hope is simple — to make **CSR-ESG Connect** a platform that informs, inspires and connects. A platform where good work is recognised, critical issues are discussed, and impact is seen not merely in numbers, but in changed lives.

PRIYANKA SAXENA RAY
editorial@csresgimpact.com



APPLE EXPANDS GREEN ENERGY PUSH IN INDIA WITH ₹100 CRORE INVESTMENT

APPLE HAS ANNOUNCED an initial investment of ₹100 crore to expand its clean energy footprint in India, strengthening its sustainability and supply chain decarbonisation efforts. In partnership with renewable energy developer CleanMax, the company will support development of over 150 MW of renewable energy capacity—enough to power around 1.5 lakh Indian households annually. The move aligns with Apple’s goal of achieving carbon neutrality across its entire supply chain by 2030. Alongside renewable energy expansion, Apple also unveiled new environmental initiatives in India, including partnerships focused on recycling, waste management, and supporting early-stage green enterprises.

SHORT NEWS

CFTI HONOURED FOR TRANSFORMING RURAL EDUCATION

CENTRE FOR TRANSFORMING INDIA (Centre for Transforming India (CFTI)) has been awarded the “Most Impactful Rural Support for Education Initiative 2026” at the Global CSR & ESG Awards 2026 for its outstanding work in strengthening rural education across India. The recognition highlights CFTI’s grassroots-led efforts in improving access to quality education, transforming over 140 government schools, and impacting more than 7 lakh lives nationwide. Through flagship programmes focused on school infrastructure, digital enablement, and student mobility, CFTI continues to drive inclusive and sustainable change in rural and aspirational communities across the country.



HURL, ALIMCO DISTRIBUTE ASSISTIVE DEVICES TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN BIHAR

HINDUSTAN URVARAK & RASAYAN LIMITED (HURL), in partnership with Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO), organised a CSR initiative in Barauni, Bihar, to distribute assistive devices to persons with disabilities. The programme aimed to improve mobility, independence, and quality of life for beneficiaries by providing essential aids and appliances. Senior officials from HURL and ALIMCO, along with dignitaries, attended the event, underlining the importance of inclusive development. The initiative reflects HURL’s continued commitment to social responsibility and community welfare through impactful, people-centric CSR interventions.

ADANI TO INVEST ₹1,060 CRORE IN GUNA CEMENT UNIT

ADANI GROUP has announced an investment of over ₹1,060 crore to set up a new cement grinding unit in Guna, Madhya Pradesh, marking the district’s largest-ever private investment. The project, to be developed in two phases, will have an annual production capacity of 40 lakh metric tonnes, with the first phase targeted for commissioning by 2028. The new unit is expected to create around 1,500 direct and indirect jobs and contribute over ₹6,000 crore to the state treasury over time. The investment forms part of Adani Group’s broader ₹1.1 lakh crore commitment to Madhya Pradesh.



CCL WINS TOP CSR HONOUR FOR COMMUNITY WELFARE INITIATIVE



CENTRAL COALFIELDS LIMITED (CCL) has been awarded the prestigious Greentech CSR India Platinum Award 2026 for its impactful community welfare work in Jharkhand’s Hazaribagh region. The recognition honours CCL’s Integrated Community Development Project, which has transformed the lives of nearly 5,000 families across nine villages through initiatives in water conservation, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, livelihood generation, and women’s empowerment. The award highlights CCL’s strong commitment to inclusive and sustainable development, reinforcing its focus on improving living standards and creating long-term social impact in mining-affected communities.



AMBUJA FOUNDATION, KANO HAR ELECTRICALS TO SKILL 1,000+ YOUTH IN UP

AMBUJA FOUNDATION and Kanohar Electricals Limited have partnered to set up a Skill & Entrepreneurship Development Institute in Modinagar, Uttar Pradesh, aimed at empowering underserved rural youth. The three-year programme will train over 1,000 young people in employment-oriented courses such as Phlebotomy, General Duty Assistant, OT Assistance, Customer Care and Microfinance. The initiative will also include soft skills, IT training, financial literacy and on-the-job training to improve employability and create sustainable livelihood opportunities across the NCR region.



BRANCH INTERNATIONAL, SAMARTHANAM TRUST SUPPORT 220 BENEFICIARIES

BRANCH INTERNATIONAL, in collaboration with Samarthanam Trust for the Disabled, has implemented health, hygiene and community support initiatives benefiting 220 individuals across Bengaluru. The programme reached around 200 students in two government schools through menstrual hygiene and nutrition awareness, including distribution of MHM and nutrition kits. It also supported nearly 20 persons with disabilities by providing assistive devices such as artificial limbs, wheelchairs, digital kits and spinal injury kits, strengthening inclusion, dignity and independent living.

SHORT NEWS

TUNWAL BACKS MULA-MUTHA RIVER CLEAN-UP IN PUNE

TUNWAL has supported a large-scale Mula-Mutha River clean-up initiative in Pune, bringing together more than 1,200 students as part of the “White T-shirt Revolution – River Cleaning Drive”. The initiative focused on restoring a key stretch of the river and creating awareness on environmental responsibility among young citizens. Reports said over 600 kg of waste was removed during the drive, reinforcing the role of corporate-supported community action in addressing urban sustainability and river conservation challenges.



FLIPKART STRENGTHENS CSR FOCUS ON WOMEN’S SAFETY AND EMPOWERMENT

FLIPKART has reinforced its commitment to women’s safety and empowerment through a series of focused CSR and workplace initiatives aimed at creating safer, more inclusive environments. The company continues to invest in programmes that support women across its ecosystem through skill development, leadership opportunities, workplace safety measures, and community outreach. As part of its broader inclusion agenda, Flipkart is working to enable long-term social impact by empowering women economically and professionally. The renewed push reflects the company’s growing emphasis on gender equity and building safer spaces for women both within and beyond the workplace.

SHORT NEWS

PFIZER DEEPENS CSR COMMITMENT TO STRENGTHEN INDIA’S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

PFIZER INDIA is strengthening its healthcare-focused CSR efforts through targeted programmes aimed at improving access, patient support, and public health infrastructure across the country. Its flagship initiative, Project Aastha, has supported nearly 9 lakh cancer and rare disease patients through hospital helpdesks offering counselling, financial guidance, and care navigation. The company is also advancing antimicrobial resistance (AMR) efforts through Project Parivartan, working with government and NGO partners to improve infection prevention and safer healthcare practices. Pfizer’s broader CSR strategy remains focused on building a more inclusive, accessible, and resilient healthcare ecosystem in India.



POLO HOTELS LAUNCHES ‘CLEAN SOHRA, GREEN SOHRA’ CAMPAIGN

POLO HOTELS GROUP, through Hotel Polo Towers Limited, Shillong and Manor Floatel Limited, Kolkata, has launched the ‘Clean Sohra, Green Sohra’ campaign to strengthen waste management and civic infrastructure in Sohra, one of Meghalaya’s most visited destinations. Channelled through Rotary Guwahati, Luit Trust and implemented with Hima Sohra, the CSR initiative was inaugurated at Polo Resort, Cherrapunjee. Assets donated include a Tata 612 tipper truck for waste collection, four Bajaj Pulsar motorcycles for monitoring and sign boards for public awareness.



TRITON HOTELS STRENGTHENS CSR FOCUS AT FAIRMONT JAIPUR



TRITON HOTELS & RESORTS, through the Smt. Kailash Kumari Sharma Charitable Trust, has reinforced its commitment to community wellbeing in Kukas with a structured donation and textile-recycling initiative led by Fairmont Jaipur. Under the CSR mission, clothing, stationery, essential supplies and reclaimed hotel linen repurposed for community use are being distributed to the nearby Anganwadi school. Fairmont Jaipur has also partnered with Rags to Bags, Jaipur, to transform reclaimed materials into reusable bags, creating livelihood opportunities while reducing textile waste. ■



HEALTHIUM MEDTECH SUPPORTS GIMS IN DELIVERING ADVANCED PAEDIATRIC ORTHOPAEDIC SURGERIES FOR 1,000+ CHILDREN ANNUALLY

Government Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS) ready for advanced Paediatric Orthopaedic Surgeries, to benefit 1,000+ children annually



GIMS, Greater Noida, is now equipped to deliver advanced paediatric orthopaedic surgeries, enabling timely and specialised care for children with conditions such as clubfoot, limb deformities and complex fractures. This milestone has been achieved under a CSR initiative supported by Healthium MedTech and implemented by Plan International (India Chapter)

CSR-ESG IMPACT DESK

The Government Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS), Greater Noida, with support from Healthium

MedTech's CSR initiative and implemented by Plan International India Chapter, is now fully equipped to undertake advanced paediatric orthopaedic surgeries. In a major boost to child healthcare, the institute can now treat conditions such as developmental dysplasia of the hip (DDH), clubfoot, limb deformities, fractures and complex bone disorders. With the installation of specialised equipment including the Midas Rex MR8 High Speed Electric Drill System, Paediatric Hip Plating Set, Paediatric and Small Bone Drill & Saw System, Paediatric Orthopaedic Instrument Set and a C-Arm Machine, GIMS is now ready to deliver precise, safe and age appropriate surgical care for children.

India faces a significant burden of paediatric orthopaedic conditions, with 1 to 2 percent of children born with disorders such as clubfoot, and many others developing deformities due to trauma, infections or untreated conditions. In states like Uttar Pradesh, limited access to specialised care often delays treatment, increasing the risk of complications, disability and higher costs.

Addressing this gap, the strengthened infrastructure at GIMS is expected to benefit over 1,000 children annually, enabling timely interventions and reducing the need for referrals outside the region.

Speaking at the launch, the **Chief Guest, Dr. G.N. Singh, Adviser to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh** said, "This initiative reflects our commitment to ensuring that every child, regardless of background, has access to quality and timely healthcare. Strengthening public health institutions through such partnerships is essential to building an inclusive and equitable healthcare system."

Dr. (Brig.) Rakesh Kumar Gupta, Director General, GIMS, emphasised the institution's enhanced capability, stating, "With this advanced equipment, GIMS is now prepared to handle complex paediatric orthopaedic cases with greater precision and safety. This will significantly reduce referrals and ensure that children receive timely treatment closer to home."

Highlighting the organisation's commitment to strengthening healthcare access, **Anish Bafna, CEO & MD, Healthium Medtech** said, "At Healthium, we are focused on improving clinical outcomes by

enabling both innovation and access. Supporting initiatives such as the GIMS and Plan International India Chapter project reflects our effort to strengthen care delivery systems and equip healthcare providers with the tools needed to deliver specialised paediatric orthopaedic care. By enhancing on-ground capabilities, we aim to ensure that timely, reliable treatment reaches children who need it the most."

Shri Mohammed Asif, Executive Director, Plan International (India Chapter), said, "Through this partnership, we are strengthening access to specialised paediatric healthcare for vulnerable communities. This intervention will directly benefit over 1,000 children every year, ensuring they receive timely, safe and life-changing orthopaedic treatment without financial or geographic barriers."

He highlighted the importance of such collaborations, noting that public-private partnerships are key to expanding access to specialised healthcare services for underserved populations.

The launch event included a ceremonial inauguration, screening of an impact film, addresses by dignitaries, beneficiary testimonials, and the formal handover of equipment to the GIMS orthopaedics department.

With this initiative, GIMS is emerging as a critical centre for paediatric orthopaedic care in western Uttar Pradesh, ensuring that children can access advanced treatment, regain mobility, and lead healthier, more independent lives. ■

SHE-MARTs to power women-led rural enterprise ecosystems across India

In a major push towards women-led rural entrepreneurship, the Ministry of Rural Development has charted a national roadmap for SHE-MARTs, positioning them as community-owned, professionally managed platforms to strengthen market access, enterprise growth and income opportunities for women-led producer collectives.



The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, through the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), organised a two-day National Consultation on SHE-MARTs — Self Help Entrepreneurs-Marketing Avenues for Rural Transformation — on May 14–15, 2026, at Mayfair Convention Hall, Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The consultation was hosted by Odisha Livelihoods Mission, Mission Shakti Department, Government of Odisha, and facilitated by PRADAN as the National Support Organisation.

The consultation brought together State Mission Directors, CEOs, senior officials from State Rural Livelihoods Missions, NABARD representatives, financial institutions, sector experts, development practitioners and ecosystem partners to deliberate on strategic interventions for strengthening women-led rural enterprises and market systems. The discussions focused on finalising operational guidelines for SHE-MARTs,

covering institutional architecture, financing models, convergence pathways, monitoring systems, governance structures, technology integration and implementation strategies.

Addressing the inaugural session virtually, Shri T. K. Anil Kumar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, emphasised that the future of DAY-NRLM lies in enterprise development and market integration. He underlined that SHE-MARTs should emerge as community-owned retail and aggregation systems led by women's collectives, rather than subsidy-driven institutional models.

A key focus of the consultation was to build SHE-MARTs as decentralised, women-led, professionally managed and community-owned enterprise ecosystems. The two-day deliberations also examined HR structures, women's leadership, technical design, implementation strategy and capacity-building architecture. Participants highlighted the importance of professional retail management while preserving women-led governance and community ownership.

The consultation concluded with a shared commitment from States, Union Territories, DAY-NRLM and ecosystem partners to support phased implementation of SHE-MARTs across the country. The Ministry also reiterated its commitment to creating three crore additional Lakhpati Didis by 2029, with SHE-MARTs expected to serve as sustainable rural marketing platforms for women-led collectives. ■



Centre signs JJM 2.0 MoUs to strengthen rural water governance

In a significant push towards transparent, accountable and community-led rural water management, the Centre has signed reform-linked MoUs with Andaman & Nicobar Islands and West Bengal under Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0.

The Ministry of Jal Shakti has signed reform-linked Memorandums of Understanding with the Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and the State of West Bengal, marking another step in the nationwide rollout of Jal Jeevan Mission 2.0. The MoUs aim to advance a Gram Panchayat-led, service-based and community-centred model of rural water governance, aligned with the larger vision of Viksit Bharat @2047.

The MoUs were signed in the presence of Union Minister of Jal Shakti Shri C.R. Patil, Minister of State Shri V. Somanna, DDWS Secretary Shri Ashok K.K. Meena and senior officials. The agreement with Andaman & Nicobar Islands recognises the UT's achievement of 100 per cent rural household tap water coverage in 2021 and its Har Ghar Jal certification across blocks. The UT has also completed a pilot project in Sippighat Gram Panchayat to test decentralised, community-led infrastructure management.

For West Bengal, the MoU was signed as a key Centre-State collaboration to speed up implementation of JJM 2.0. The Union Minister urged focused reviews in lagging districts such as Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Purulia, along with strict enforcement of Operation and Maintenance policies.

A major feature of the new framework is the transfer of village-level water infrastructure operations, daily maintenance and local water tariff collection to Village Water and Sanitation Committees. The Ministry has underlined that regular drinking water supply, grievance redressal and community



participation will be critical to sustaining the mission.

With Jal Jeevan Mission now extended till December 2028, the focus is on achieving 100 per cent tap water coverage and strengthening long-term rural water security across the country. ■

NBCC (INDIA) LIMITED BAGS ₹103.47 CRORE CSR PROJECT MANAGEMENT ORDERS FROM POWER FINANCE CORPORATION LIMITED

The PSU major will execute CSR development projects across multiple states, reinforcing its growing role in government-backed infrastructure and social impact initiatives.

By CSR ESG IMPACT DESK

State-run construction and project management major NBCC (India) Limited has secured fresh work orders worth approximately ₹103.47 crore from Power Finance Corporation Limited for the implementation of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) projects across multiple states in India.

The development was disclosed by NBCC in a regulatory filing submitted to the National Stock Exchange (NSE) and BSE on May 7, 2026. According to the filing, PFC has appointed NBCC as the Project Management Agency (PMA) for executing a range of CSR initiatives aimed at supporting development and welfare activities in different regions of the country.

The total value of the awarded projects stands at nearly ₹103.47 crore, excluding GST. NBCC clarified that the projects fall within the ordinary course

of business and are expected to strengthen the company's expanding footprint in government-backed infrastructure and social development assignments.

In its official exchange communication, the company stated, "Power Finance Corporation Limited has appointed NBCC as Project Management Agency to execute various CSR Projects in various States."

The latest order adds to NBCC's growing portfolio of project management consultancy and redevelopment assignments, reinforcing its position as a preferred execution agency for public sector undertakings. Analysts tracking the infrastructure sector note that such CSR-linked projects offer steady execution visibility while deepening PSU-to-PSU collaboration in India's development ecosystem. ■



CSR WATCH

Accountability | Compliance | Corporate Sustainability

A short intelligence section tracking ESG rules, BRSR developments, sustainability commitments and greenwashing risks shaping India's responsible business landscape.

India-focused compliance tracker

1 NEW ESG REGULATIONS TO WATCH



CCPA Greenwashing Guidelines, 2024:

Bars vague, exaggerated or misleading environmental claims. Terms such as "green", "eco-friendly", "sustainable", "carbon-neutral" and "net-zero" must be backed by clear disclosures and evidence.



RBI Framework for Acceptance of Green Deposits:

Effective 1 June 2023. Requires board-approved policies, eligible use of proceeds and transparent reporting on allocation of funds.

2 BRSR UPDATES



SEBI's BRSR and BRSR Core are now central to ESG reporting for large listed companies.



BRSR Core sharpens focus on assured key ESG indicators such as GHG emissions, water, waste, employee well-being, gender diversity, business conduct and customer complaints.



Value-chain disclosures bring suppliers and business partners into the ESG accountability framework.

In March 2025, SEBI introduced ease-of-doing-business measures on assurance/assessment, value-chain disclosures and voluntary disclosure of green credits.



Why it matters: BRSR is evolving into a board-level governance tool influencing investor confidence, access to green finance and corporate reputation.

3 MAJOR CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY COMMITMENTS



ReNew: Annual Integrated Report 2024-25 highlights a 2040 net-zero journey alongside continued expansion of clean-energy solutions and climate action.



IndianOil: Sustainability focus areas include reducing emission intensity, scaling renewable energy capacity and enhancing carbon sinks through afforestation.



Editorial lens: The real test is not whether a commitment exists, but whether it is measurable, financed, independently monitored and time-bound.

4 GREENWASHING & COMPLIANCE CASE STUDY



A. Example

A company markets a product as "eco-friendly" because its packaging uses some recycled material, but gives no percentage, methodology or verification.



B. Compliance concern

Consumers may be misled into believing the entire product is sustainable, when the environmental benefit is limited or unclear.



C. What good compliance requires

State the exact basis of the claim, disclose percentages, retain supporting evidence, avoid exaggerated visuals and seek independent verification.



CSR WATCH CHECKLIST



Is the claim specific?



Is it backed by data?



Is it proportionate?



Is there third-party assurance?



Is it updated regularly?



Is the value chain included?



Key takeaway

India's ESG landscape is entering a stricter phase. BRSR, green-deposit rules, ESG assurance, value-chain disclosures and anti-greenwashing guidelines are pushing companies to move from sustainability storytelling to sustainability evidence.



Sources: SEBI BRSR Core Circular, 2023; SEBI ESG Disclosure Circular, March 2025; CCPA Greenwashing Guidelines, 2024; RBI Framework for Acceptance of Green Deposits, 2023; ASCI Guidelines for Environmental/Green Claims, 2024; company sustainability disclosures and integrated reports.



Note: This section is an editorial compliance tracker. Readers should refer to original regulatory documents before making legal or reporting decisions.

CHILD MARRIAGE IN INDIA

A DECLINING PRACTICE, BUT STILL A DEEP SOCIAL CONCERN

Child marriage in India may have reduced over the years, but it has not disappeared. Rooted in centuries-old social customs, poverty, insecurity and gender inequality, the practice continues to rob many children—especially girls—of education, health, safety and opportunity. For CSR and ESG stakeholders, this remains a critical issue linked to gender justice, education, health, livelihoods and long-term social transformation.

BY PRIYANKA SAXENA RAY



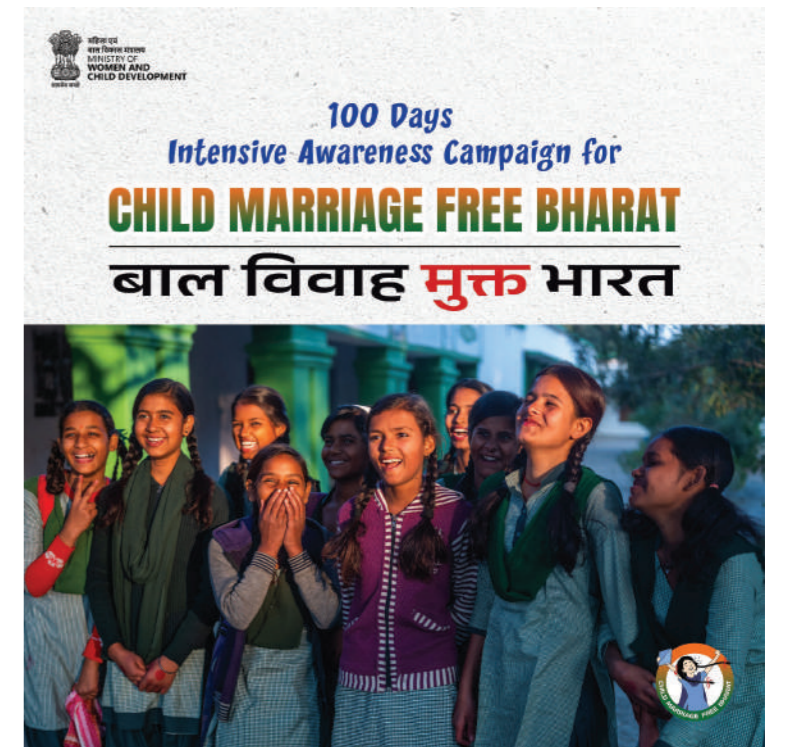
A practice rooted in tradition, poverty and patriarchy

Child marriage has historically been linked to social customs, family honour, economic hardship and the perception that marriage offers “protection” to girls. UNICEF describes marriage before 18 as a violation of human rights, noting that poverty, social norms, customary practices and weak civil registration systems often increase a child’s risk of early marriage. It also affects schooling, health, safety and future livelihood opportunities.

India has made visible progress. According to NFHS-based analysis, child marriage among women aged 20–24 declined from 47.4% in 2005–06 to 26.8% in 2015–16, and further to 23.3% in 2019–21. The median age at first marriage among women aged 20–49 also increased from 17.2 years in 2005–06 to 19.2 years in 2019–21.

Where the burden remains high

The challenge is not uniform across India. UNICEF notes that over half of girls and women in India who married in childhood live in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, with Uttar Pradesh having the largest number. At least



Ending Child Marriage
A profile of progress in India





40% of young women were married before 18 in West Bengal, Bihar and Tripura. UNFPA's NFHS-5 analysis also identifies Jharkhand, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana among states where prevalence is above the national average.

The data clearly shows that education and poverty are decisive factors. Around 48% of girls with no education were married before 18, compared to only 4% among those with higher education. Similarly, about 40% of girls from the poorest households were married before 18, against 8% from the richest households.

Government action and legal push

India's legal journey began with early reform movements and the Sarda Act of 1929, later strengthened through the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, which defines child

marriage as a union where the girl is below 18 or the boy below 21. The government's Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat campaign, launched in 2024, aims to reduce child marriage prevalence by 10% by 2026 and make India child marriage-free by 2030. The campaign prioritises 257 high-burden districts, real-time reporting through a national portal, Child Marriage Prohibition Officers and district-level task forces.

Role of private sector and CSR

The private sector has an important role through CSR investments in girls' education, digital literacy, menstrual health, adolescent empowerment, livelihood skilling, community counselling and strengthening school retention. NGOs and corporates can support prevention by working with panchayats, schools, frontline workers and local women's collectives. The issue is getting more policy attention, but it still needs stronger CSR focus because child marriage is not just a child protection concern—it is also an education, health, gender equality and economic development issue.

The road ahead

India's progress proves that change is possible. But the remaining 23% is not just a statistic—it represents millions of interrupted childhoods. Ending child marriage will require sustained investment in girls' education, family counselling, strict legal enforcement, community leadership and economic support for vulnerable households. ■

“ The government's Bal Vivah Mukta Bharat campaign, launched in 2024, aims to reduce child marriage prevalence by 10% by 2026 and make India child marriage-free by 2030. The campaign prioritises 257 high-burden districts, real-time reporting through a national portal, Child Marriage Prohibition Officers and district-level task forces.

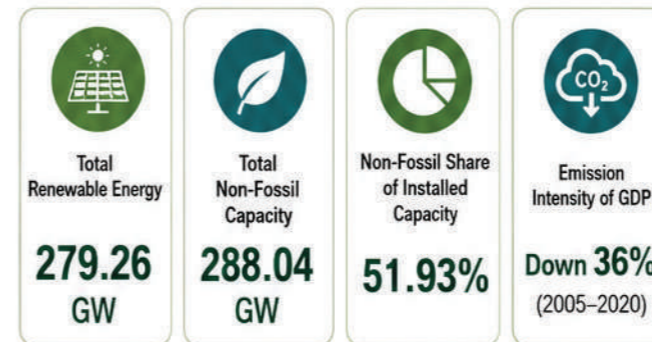
ESG DATA DESK

Visual intelligence section | Renewable Energy & Carbon Data | ESG Funding & Green Investments Tracker

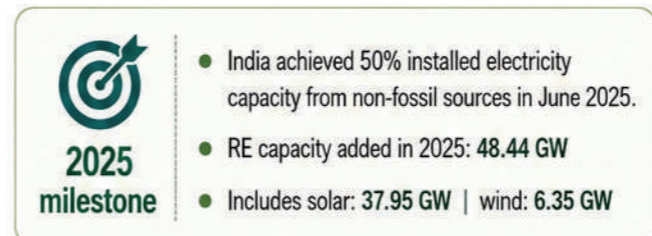
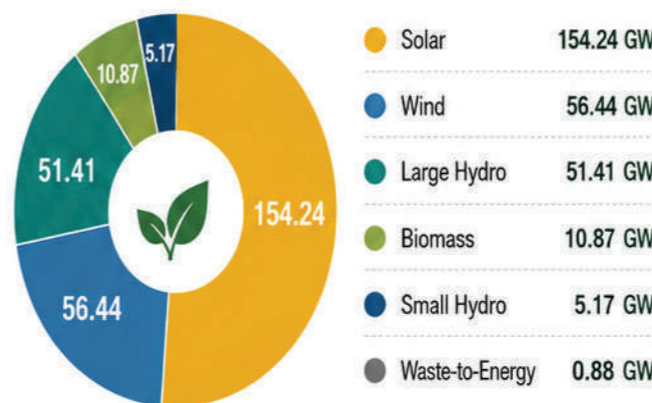


India-focused. Based on government and industry datasets.

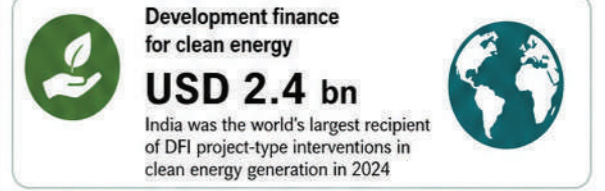
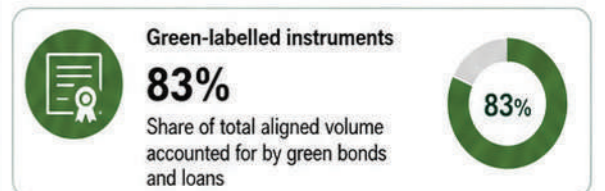
1 RENEWABLE ENERGY & CARBON DATA



Renewable energy mix (GW, as on 30 Apr 2026)



2 ESG FUNDING & GREEN INVESTMENTS TRACKER



Data takeaway: India's energy transition is scaling fast, while green debt and climate-aligned capital are becoming increasingly mainstream.

Sources: MNRE Physical Achievements (30 Apr 2026); Ministry of Power Rajya Sabha reply (02 Feb 2026); PIB/MoEFCC BUR-4 updates; DPIIT FDI in Non-Conventional Energy Sector; Economic Survey 2025-26; IEA World Energy Investment 2025; Climate Bonds Initiative India Sustainable Debt State of the Market 2024.

Goonj

TURNING URBAN SURPLUS INTO RURAL STRENGTH



In a world where development is often measured through numbers, Goonj stands out for placing dignity, community participation and circularity at the centre of social change. Headquartered in New Delhi, the organisation has built a powerful bridge between urban India's surplus and rural India's unmet needs, using material not as charity, but as a catalyst for collective action, livelihoods, disaster response and long-term community resilience.

Goonj's work is rooted in a simple yet deeply transformative thought — what lies unused in cities can become a meaningful resource in villages. Through its model, urban surplus material is channelised to rural and underserved communities, where it is linked with people's own participation, effort and local problem-solving. The organisation's mission is to "ignite the self-worth and dignity of common people" and mobilise them as equal stakeholders in solving their own challenges.

Over the years, Goonj has emerged as one of India's most respected development organisations, working across areas such as water, sanitation, education, access and infrastructure, agriculture, menstrual wellbeing, livelihood, environment and disaster response. According to its official impact data, between 2014 and 2025, Goonj has supported 110,000+ community projects, touched 20 million+ lives across 31 States and Union Territories, and channelised 72 million+ kg of material for rural development, dignity and disaster response.

BY **PRIYANKA SAXENA RAY**

A model built on Dignity, not Charity

What makes Goonj's approach distinct is the way it reimagines giving. Instead of seeing material contribution as a one-way act of charity, the organisation uses it as a tool to reward community effort. Under its initiatives such as Cloth for Work, people identify their own local needs — whether it is repairing a road, building a water structure, improving school infrastructure or undertaking plantation work — and contribute labour, ideas and ownership. Material is then shared as a dignified reward for their effort.

This model has deep relevance in the CSR and ESG space, particularly because it brings together social impact, environmental responsibility and community-led governance. By moving surplus material away from landfills and into meaningful use, Goonj's work contributes to circularity. By placing decision-making in the hands of local communities, it strengthens ownership. By addressing basic needs with dignity, it builds social equity.

Goonj's Annual Report 2024-25, themed "Climate + Circularity + Community", reflects this larger vision. In 2024-25 alone, the organisation implemented 19,000+

community development projects, touched 2.3 million+ lives, channelised 8 million+ kg of material, created 0.3 million+ person-days of employment under its community-based effort initiative, and reached 400,000+ individuals during disasters, covering 19 states and 90+ districts.

Responding to climate emergencies with communities

In the last one year, Goonj's work has strongly reflected the growing urgency of climate-linked disasters. Floods, landslides, fires, cloudbursts and other extreme weather events are increasingly affecting vulnerable communities, and Goonj has been responding with a model that goes beyond immediate relief.

In its April 2025 official note on disaster response and climate resilience, Goonj emphasised the importance of community-led disaster preparedness, strategic planning, resource mobilisation and long-term rehabilitation. Its disaster work is guided by local teams, grassroots volunteers and partners, making the response more contextual and participatory.

This was visible in West Champaran, Bihar, where the Tharu community in Gobrahia



village faced severe disruption after continuous rains washed away the main road. The damaged road affected school access, farming activity and market connectivity. Goonj's official account highlights how the community came together to repair the road, turning a climate-linked disruption into an example of local resilience and collective dignity.

Goonj's disaster ground reports from 2025 also show the scale of its ongoing response. From April to November 2025, the organisation extended disaster response operations across more than 80 districts in 21 states, including Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

Education with dignity in flood-prone Assam

One of Goonj's recent official stories from Majuli, Assam, captures the essence of its community-led development approach. In Molual Miri village, where recurring floods disrupt everyday life and schooling, the community identified the need for a library at Arda Public School. Through Goonj's School to School initiative, integrated with Cloth for Work, teachers, parents and local residents

contributed labour and resources to repair the classroom floor and build wooden shelves.

Goonj then supported the effort with storybooks, school kits and stationery, recognising the community's work instead of simply delivering aid. Children also became active participants, with 154 students cleaning the school premises and preparing 770 seed balls for a greener learning environment. The initiative demonstrates how education, environment and dignity can come together when communities are treated as partners rather than beneficiaries.

Environment, Circularity and Local Action

Goonj's environmental work is closely linked with its larger model of material reuse and community participation. In Hirekolachi, Karnataka, a drought-prone village, 45 villagers participated in a plantation drive in September 2024 under the Cloth for Work initiative. With support from the local Panchayat and saplings sourced from the Forest Department, the villagers planted more than 150 saplings near a government school, addressing concerns around lack of greenery and poor water retention.

Such initiatives show how Goonj's work aligns naturally with ESG priorities. The



environmental dimension comes through reuse, waste reduction, climate resilience and plantation work. The social dimension is reflected in dignity, participation, education, livelihood and women's wellbeing. The governance dimension is visible in the decentralised, community-led decision-making model that encourages local ownership.

A strong fit for CSR-ESG Partnerships

For CSR-focused organisations, Goonj offers a compelling model because it does not work in silos. A single intervention may support livelihoods, reduce waste, build local infrastructure, improve school access and strengthen disaster preparedness. Its presence across multiple states and districts also gives corporate partners the opportunity to support scalable, measurable and community-rooted impact.

In the CSR-ESG context, Goonj's work is especially relevant because it offers a practical example of how sustainability can be people-led. The organisation is not only addressing material poverty but also challenging the way urban India looks at consumption, waste and responsibility. Its work reminds us that circularity is not just an

“ Goonj's Annual Report 2024-25, themed “Climate + Circularity + Community”, reflects this larger vision. In 2024-25 alone, the organisation implemented 19,000+ community development projects, touched 2.3 million+ lives, channelised 8 million+ kg of material, created 0.3 million+ person-days of employment under its community-based effort initiative, and reached 400,000+ individuals during disasters, covering 19 states and 90+ districts.

environmental idea; in the Indian context, it can become a tool for dignity, resilience and rural transformation. ■

Don't just recycle... Goonj..it!

For Dignity, Development and Disaster Response

Your **Contribution** help trigger large-scale development work, from making bamboo bridges to cleaning water bodies to developing village roads. It significantly impacts rural education, health, disaster resilience and response, and much more.

Sanitation, Rural Development, Health and Nutrition, Education, Water, Disaster Response

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Shikhar Dhawan Foundation expands DIGITAL SHIKSHA INITIATIVE TO EMPOWER CLOSE TO 2,500 GIRL STUDENTS

The initiative aims to transform classrooms at Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, Tughlakabad Village, one of the capital's largest all-girls government schools



Shikhar Dhawan Foundation (SDF), with CSR support from InnoVen Capital, has expanded its flagship Digital Shiksha programme to Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, Tughlakabad Village, one of Delhi's largest government schools, bringing technology-enabled learning to close to 2,500 girl students.

Guided by the vision of Arjuna Awardee and India cricketer Shikhar Dhawan, the foundation continues to resonate with the Government's vision towards strengthening access to modern learning tools through scalable, technology-driven education initiatives. The initiative is supported by InnoVen Capital, India's leading venture

debt and speciality lending platform, as part of its commitment to enabling access to quality education and supporting community development through impactful CSR initiatives.

Sophie Dhawan, COO, Da One Group, said, "With Digital Shiksha, Shikhar Dhawan Foundation's focus is on making learning more accessible, intuitive and effective, in schools and the entire education ecosystems, where impact can be created at scale. It is highly encouraging to see a growing emphasis by the government on technology-enabled learning across public education systems. In classrooms where resources are limited but aspirations are not, the introduction of digital

learning can make a meaningful difference to how students engage with education every day."

Anshita Gupta, CEO, Da One Group, added, "We are pleased to partner with InnoVen Capital to expand our Digital Shiksha to a school of this scale, enabling more students to benefit from technology-driven learning environments. This initiative is in resonance with the growing focus of our government, on strengthening digital infrastructure in public education. At the Shikhar Dhawan Foundation, we are focused on building scalable interventions that enhance classroom engagement and support better learning outcomes for students."

Ashish Sharma, Managing Partner, InnoVen Capital, said, "In partnership with the Shikhar Dhawan Foundation, we are proud to support Digital Shiksha's expansion to Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, bringing modern, technology-driven education to nearly 2,500 young women who deserve every opportunity to thrive."

Shikhar Dhawan Foundation's Digital Shiksha is active across 25+ schools, impacting more than 20,000 students nationwide, with a focus on improving engagement, strengthening conceptual understanding and enabling better learning outcomes.

Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya is one of the

largest all-girls government schools in Delhi, with close to 2,500 students. The integration of Digital Shiksha is expected to enhance classroom engagement and improve learning outcomes at scale.

Digital Shiksha transforms classrooms through the installation of state-of-the-art Interactive Flat Panels (IFPs) and a licensed K-12 digital curriculum, enabling a more engaging and visual learning experience. The programme supports teachers with structured digital tools while helping students better understand concepts across subjects such as science, mathematics and languages. The foundation will continue to expand Digital Shiksha to schools across India, with a focus on building scalable, measurable and sustainable models that enhance access to quality education. ■

RADISSON HOTEL GROUP'S SKILLING INITIATIVE EMPOWERS 850+ YOUTH

Radisson Hotel Group has marked a significant milestone in its Youth Skilling Initiative, positively impacting over 850 young people across India through its ongoing collaboration with the Tourism and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC) and The Job Plus. Designed to enhance employability and create sustainable livelihood opportunities, the initiative has emerged as one of the country's largest hospitality-focused skilling interventions for underserved youth.

BY PRIYANKA SAXENA RAY



Driving employability through industry-aligned training

Across the first two completed projects under the initiative, 616 young people have already been trained and certified under the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF), with 501 successfully placed in formal hospitality employment across leading hotel brands in India. More than half of the placed candidates are women, reflecting the programme's focus on inclusive growth and gender participation.

Leaders speaking on the initiative's impact

"At Radisson Hotel Group, we believe hospitality can be a powerful medium for social and economic transformation. Through our collaboration with THSC and The Job Plus, we are proud to have

impacted over 850 young people across eight states, including Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Jammu & Kashmir, West Bengal, Delhi NCR, Himachal Pradesh, and Telangana. The programme has focused on regions where access to formal skilling and employment opportunities remains limited, and it is encouraging to see rural youth participating in the initiative achieve an 87% placement rate. These outcomes reinforce our commitment to building an inclusive and future-ready hospitality workforce in India," said Nikhil Sharma, Managing Director & COO, South Asia, Radisson Hotel Group.

"The continued confidence that Radisson Hotel Group has placed in The Job Plus is both affirming and energizing. Over the past two project cycles, we have demonstrated that when skilling is closely aligned with industry demand, it can create a scalable pathway to employment and long-



At Radisson Hotel Group, we believe hospitality can be a powerful medium for social and economic transformation. Through our collaboration with THSC and The Job Plus, we are proud to have impacted over 850 young people across eight states, including Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Jammu & Kashmir, West Bengal, Delhi NCR, Himachal Pradesh, and Telangana. The programme has focused on regions where access to formal skilling and employment opportunities remains limited, and it is encouraging to see rural youth participating in the initiative achieve an 87% placement rate.

— NIKHIL SHARMA,
Managing Director & COO, South Asia,
Radisson Hotel Group.





term economic mobility for young people. This renewed commitment enables us to expand our reach and further strengthen a talent pipeline that delivers value to both underserved youth and the hospitality industry,” said Natwar Nagar, Founder, The Job Plus.

“What makes this partnership particularly meaningful is the shared intent to build impact with both scale and accountability. Each project cycle has strengthened our ability to reach young people in geographies that are often disconnected from formal employment opportunities and connect them to industry-recognized training and quality careers. As we move into the next phase, our focus is on expanding this initiative with greater precision, stronger employer integration, and outcomes that continue to deliver measurable value for both communities and the industry,” said Divya Krishan, Chief Growth Officer, The Job Plus.

“CSR initiatives and collaborations reflect our shared commitment towards strengthening the hospitality workforce ecosystem by equipping youth with industry-relevant skills, practical exposure, and meaningful employment opportunities. We are pleased to continue our association with Radisson Hotel Group in creating a positive impact through skill development and industry collaboration. Such partnerships play a vital role in bridging the gap between skilling and employment while supporting the growth of a future-ready

hospitality industry,” said Rajan Bahadur, CEO, THSC.

Transforming lives through hospitality careers

The initiative has enabled several inspiring journeys of transformation for young beneficiaries. Abigail Rynthiang from Shillong, Meghalaya, who came from an economically weak family, enrolled in the programme while awaiting her Class 12 results. Before completing her 45-day training, she secured employment at The Bay Club in Mumbai with a great package, becoming the first person in her family to enter the hospitality industry. Similarly, Asharani Hamom from Imphal, Manipur, who grew up amidst years of ethnic conflict and uncertainty, joined the programme and relocated to Delhi to pursue a career in hospitality. Today, she works as an F&B Associate at The Leela Palace New Delhi, demonstrating the programme’s role in helping youth build careers beyond geographical and social barriers.

Expanding the next phase of impact

With the third phase of the initiative currently underway, Radisson Hotel Group aims to further expand its impact by enabling more youth across underserved regions to access formal skilling, certification, and long-term employment opportunities within India’s growing hospitality sector.

Reinforcing Radisson Hotel Group’s India Leadership

Radisson Hotel Group continues to command a leading presence in the Indian market and is one of the country’s largest international hotel operators with over 200 hotels in operation and development. It continues to be the largest hotel operator in a tier-1 market like Delhi NCR, while over 50% of its portfolio is in tier-2 and 3 markets. The Group has successfully introduced various brands to the growing Indian market, including Radisson Collection, Radisson Blu, Radisson, Radisson RED, Park Inn by Radisson, Park Plaza, and Radisson Individuals and its extension Radisson Individuals Retreats. ■








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MAKE A DIFFERENCE.
BUILD HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES.

Be a part of our mission to provide quality healthcare services at the community level.

MULTIPLE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

 BLOCK PROGRAM MANAGER (3 Posts/Block) Community Mobiliser	 CM AWARENESS (6 Posts/Block) Community Mobiliser	 CM COUNSELLING (6 Posts/Block) Community Mobiliser	 CM SCREENING (6 Posts/Block) Community Mobiliser	 CM TREATMENT (6 Posts/Block) Community Mobiliser	 LAB TECHNICIAN (6 Posts/Block)	 RADIOGRAPHER (6 Posts/Block)
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DISTRICT / BLOCK	AVAILABLE POSITIONS PER BLOCK						
	Block Program Manager	CM Awareness	CM Counselling	CM Screening	CM Treatment	Lab Technician	Radiographer
Andhra Pradesh: Parvathipuram Manyam	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Andhra Pradesh: Srikakulam	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Chhatisgarh: Bastar (Jagdalpur)	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Chhatisgarh: Dantewada	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Chhatisgarh: Sukma	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Jharkhand: Dumka	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Jharkhand: Pakur	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Jharkhand: Sahibganj	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Karnataka: Bidar	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Karnataka: Raichur	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Madhya Pradesh: Barwani	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Madhya Pradesh: Dhar	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Madhya Pradesh: Khargone (West Nimar)	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Odisha: Koraput	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Odisha: Malkangiri	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
Odisha: Nabarangapur	3	6	6	6	6	6	6
GRAND TOTAL	48	96	96	96	96	96	96

WHY JOIN US?

- ✓ Make a meaningful impact in community health
- ✓ Work in diverse and impactful locations
- ✓ Be a part of a dedicated and supportive team
- ✓ Opportunities for growth and development

TOTAL POSITIONS
720+
ACROSS MULTIPLE DISTRICTS!

ELIGIBILITY

-  Relevant qualification as per the post
-  Passion for community health and service



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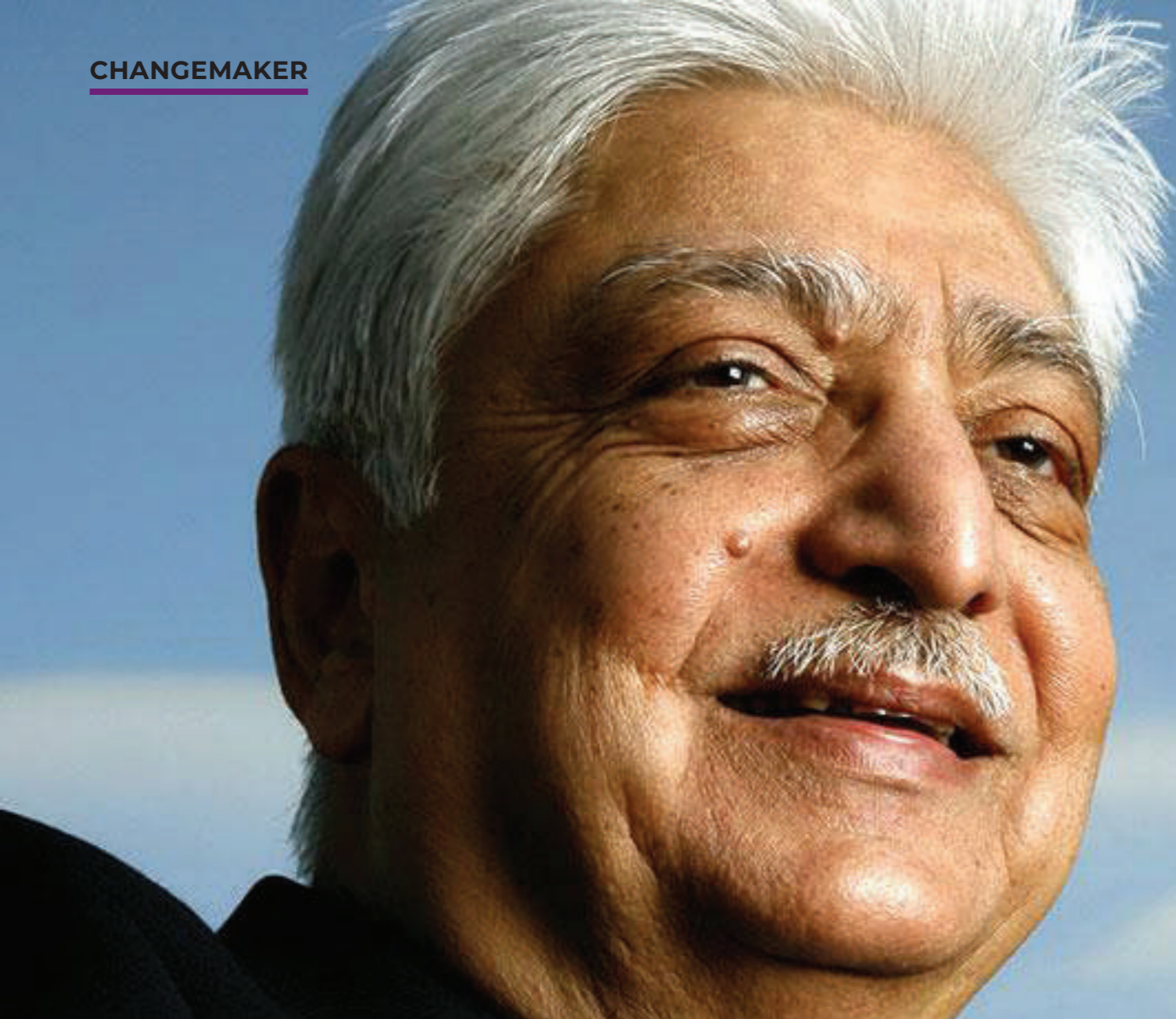
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“ Philanthropy is not about giving away wealth alone; it is about using resources with responsibility to create lasting change. True progress is achieved when education, equity and opportunity reach those who need them the most.



AZIM PREMJI

The quiet architect of India’s giving movement

In India’s CSR and philanthropy landscape, few names command the respect that Azim Premji does. Known for transforming Wipro from a modest vegetable oil business into a global technology giant, Premji’s larger legacy lies in how he redefined wealth, responsibility and nation-building through structured, long-term giving.

From business leadership to social purpose

Azim Premji’s journey began early. He took charge of Wipro at the age of 21 after the death of his father and, over the decades, built it into one of India’s most respected technology companies. But while his corporate success made him one of India’s leading business figures, his contribution to society made him a changemaker. Premji has consistently believed that wealth must serve a larger purpose, and this belief shaped one of the most significant philanthropic journeys in modern India.

Building institutions, not just donating money

In 2001, he established the Azim Premji

Foundation, with a focus on improving the quality and equity of public education in India. Over time, the Foundation’s work expanded beyond education into grants, health and livelihoods, with the larger vision



“
Today, the Azim Premji Foundation’s work has moved into broader development areas, including grants, health and livelihoods. This reflects an important CSR-ESG lesson: social challenges are interconnected.

of contributing to a “just, equitable, humane and sustainable society.”

Unlike short-term charity, Premji’s approach has been institutional and long-term. The Foundation works with government school systems, teachers, education functionaries and communities, recognising that meaningful social change requires patience, public systems strengthening and sustained investment. The creation of Azim Premji University further strengthened this vision by preparing professionals for education, development, public policy and social change sectors.

One of India’s largest acts of giving

Azim Premji was among the first Indians to sign the Giving Pledge, committing a major part of his wealth to philanthropy. According to the Giving Pledge profile, he donated over 521 million Wipro equity shares, representing 20.2% of the company’s shareholding, for philanthropic purposes, valued at around US\$5 billion as of January 2015.

His giving later expanded significantly. Forbes reported that Premji’s donation to his charitable foundation rose to US\$21 billion,

making it one of the largest philanthropic commitments in India. This scale of giving changed the conversation around Indian philanthropy—from cheque-writing to deep, patient capital for social transformation.

CSR beyond compliance

Premji’s work is important because it goes beyond the mandatory CSR framework. While India’s CSR law has encouraged companies to spend on social development, Premji’s model demonstrates the value of mission-led philanthropy. His work shows that the private sector can support public systems without replacing them, and can invest in difficult, long-term issues such as education quality, teacher development, equity, livelihoods and health.

During the COVID-19 crisis, Wipro, Wipro Enterprises and the Azim Premji Foundation committed ₹1,125 crore towards health and humanitarian relief, underlining the role of responsible business in times of national emergency.

Expanding into health and livelihoods

Today, the Azim Premji Foundation’s work has moved into broader development areas, including grants, health and livelihoods. This reflects an important CSR-ESG lesson: social challenges are interconnected. Education outcomes are linked to nutrition, health, income security, gender equity and community resilience. By expanding its footprint, the Foundation is addressing development as an ecosystem rather than a single-issue intervention.

A legacy of responsible wealth

Azim Premji’s legacy is not only about how much he gave, but how he gave. His philanthropy is structured, research-driven, institution-focused and rooted in humility. In a country where development challenges remain vast, his model reminds India Inc. that real impact requires more than funding—it requires commitment, accountability and long-term partnership with communities and public institutions. ■

**WHOLESOME SKILLING:
PREPARING YOUTH FOR WORK,
NOT JUST JOBS**



Child marriage in India may have reduced over the years, but it has not disappeared. Rooted in centuries-old social customs, poverty, insecurity and gender inequality, the practice continues to rob many children—especially girls—of education, health, safety and opportunity. For CSR and ESG stakeholders, this remains a critical issue linked to gender justice, education, health, livelihoods and long-term social transformation.

SABBAR TOUSIF

India can no longer treat skilling as a classroom transaction. A young person does not become job-ready only because she has learnt coding, welding, retail sales, healthcare assistance or machine operations. She becomes employable when she also understands what work demands: discipline, punctuality, humility, communication, patience, relocation, teamwork, feedback, and the ability to stay through discomfort.

Having worked in this field for over a decade, I witness this gap every day. Industry believes candidates are trained but not job-ready, while candidates feel the jobs are not what they expected. Both perspectives hold some truth. The missing link is holistic and wholesome skilling.

India has made strong progress. The India Skills Report 2025 places youth employability at about 54.8%, a rise from earlier years. The Periodic Labour Force Survey has also shown improvement in labour-force participation, especially among young people and women. Yet employers across sectors continue to report difficulty finding suitable candidates. The issue is no longer only “skill shortage”; it is expectation mismatch.

Many first-time workers enter jobs with limited understanding of workplace reality. They expect fast growth, immediate comfort and quick rewards. Social media has intensified this. A 22-year-old sees success stories every day and feels behind in life before even starting. But careers are not reels. They are built through repetition, reliability and resilience.

This is why skilling must include mentoring. Every trainee should speak regularly with someone who has lived the journey: a supervisor, alumni, industry mentor or counsellor. They must be told honestly what the first job looks like: long hours, basic pay, shared accommodation, learning from seniors, mistakes, pressure and gradual growth. This is not to discourage them; it is to prepare them. Office etiquette must be taught as seriously as technical training. How to speak to a manager. How to write a message. How to ask for leave. How to receive criticism. Why absconding damages careers. Why relocation may be necessary. Why staying 12–18 months in the first job can change one’s trajectory.

Industry must also contribute. Companies should open shop floors, hospitals, hotels, warehouses and offices for exposure visits. They should provide real job descriptions, guest trainers, apprenticeships, retention bonuses and structured first-90-day support. New-age skilling companies that combine domain training with life coaching, digital learning, counselling and placement handholding must be supported through outcome-linked funding, CSR partnerships and public-private collaboration.

India does not need skilling factories. It needs career-building institutions. The goal is not just to place a candidate. The goal is to help a young Indian enter work, stay, learn, grow and become confident enough to build a life. ■

The writer is Managing Director, Elios Management Consulting

INDIA-EU EV BATTERY RECYCLING PUSH

Building a circular economy for clean mobility



As India accelerates its electric mobility transition, the question is no longer only about how many electric vehicles can be put on the road. The bigger sustainability challenge is what happens to the batteries once they reach the end of their life. In a significant move, India and the European Union have launched a joint initiative to strengthen EV battery recycling, positioning circular economy as a core pillar of clean mobility.

A timely partnership for a growing EV market

The Government of India and the European Union have announced a €15.2 million, approximately ₹169 crore, joint initiative focused on the recycling of electric vehicle batteries. Launched under the India-EU Trade and Technology Council, Working Group 2 on Green and Clean Energy Technologies, the initiative is designed to support advanced technologies, secure critical raw materials and accelerate the transition towards a circular economy. The European component will be funded through Horizon Europe, while India's Ministry of Heavy Industries will support the Indian component.

The call for proposals opened on May 5, 2026, with the submission deadline set for September 15, 2026. The programme invites collaborative participation from Indian and European industries, research institutions and innovators working on battery recycling solutions.

Why Battery Recycling matters

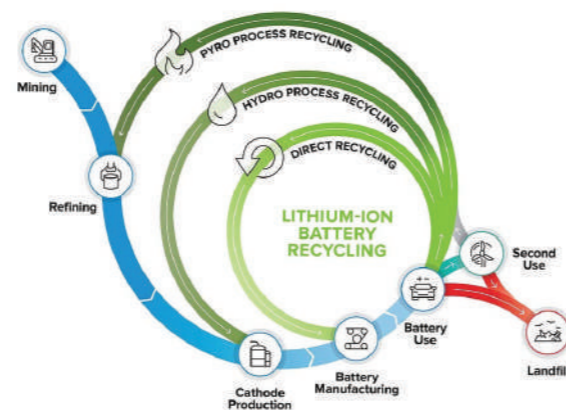
Electric vehicles are central to India's cleaner mobility future, but EV batteries depend on

critical minerals such as lithium, cobalt, nickel and graphite. These materials are expensive, globally contested and environmentally intensive to mine. Efficient recycling can reduce dependence on fresh extraction, recover valuable materials, minimise hazardous waste and strengthen supply chain resilience.

For India, this is particularly important. As EV adoption grows across two-wheelers, three-wheelers, buses, fleet vehicles and personal mobility, battery waste will also increase. Without a strong recycling ecosystem, the country risks replacing one environmental challenge with another. A circular model can ensure that end-of-life batteries are not discarded irresponsibly but are collected, processed and brought back into the manufacturing value chain.

From Waste to Resource

The India-EU initiative focuses on technologies and systems that can improve recovery of valuable battery materials, enable safer recycling, support second-life applications and promote sustainable



value chains. It also encourages digital and industrial solutions that can improve traceability, collection and lifecycle management of EV batteries.

This is where innovation becomes critical. Battery recycling is not just a waste-management issue; it sits at the intersection of clean technology, climate action, manufacturing, resource security and ESG compliance. For companies, it can create new green business opportunities. For governments, it can reduce import dependency. For consumers, it can make clean mobility more responsible and credible.

ESG Lens: Clean mobility must be circular

From an ESG perspective, the initiative addresses all three pillars. Environmentally, it reduces waste and promotes responsible resource use. Socially, it can help create skilled green jobs in recycling, testing, logistics, safety and battery diagnostics. From a governance perspective, it encourages traceability, formalisation and compliance across the EV battery lifecycle.

The move also signals a shift in how clean mobility is being viewed. Earlier, the focus was largely on adoption, charging infrastructure and subsidies. Now, the conversation is expanding to lifecycle responsibility—how batteries are sourced, used, reused and recycled.

The road ahead

India's EV transition will be truly sustainable only when its battery ecosystem is safe, circular and innovation-led. The India-EU battery recycling push is therefore more than a research call; it is a strategic step towards building the backbone of clean mobility. If implemented well, it can help India move from being an EV adoption market to becoming a global hub for battery circularity, critical mineral recovery and green technology innovation. ■

#EV EXPLAINER

BATTERY RECYCLING IN INDIA

India has been steadily transitioning towards electric vehicles with a focus on renewable energy. In this scenario, efficient and sustainable management of lithium-ion batteries, a key component of EVs, is a challenge that the country needs to address at priority.

7 million tonnes

LI-ION BATTERIES TO BE PRODUCED BY 2030

800GWh

MARKET SIZE BY 2030

50,000 tonnes

LI-ION BATTERY WASTE GENERATED ANNUALLY

India's reliance on other nations for critical minerals necessitates a circular ecosystem for batteries to be recycled back in a sustainable manner.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

- Leaching of toxic chemicals into soil and water sources.
- Release of Particulate Matter, increase in air pollution.
- Being finite resources, not recycling leads to increased mining.

HEALTH HAZARDS

- Workers exposed to toxic materials leading to respiratory problems, skin diseases etc.
- Lack of safety measures lead to accidents and injuries.

Unscientific disposal of Li-ion batteries also leads to tremendous negative environmental impacts and health hazards.

Misconceptions

1	2	3
Battery recycling is a small market	It is a hazardous industry	It is a capex heavy industry
1 million tonnes of end-of-life batteries ready to be recycled at present.	Use of cutting edge technology recycles batteries in efficient and environment-friendly manner.	Use of efficient technology can also help reduce the capital per tonne.

AD BACK PAGE