

Social Responsibility Reporting: Evidence from India's Leading Corporations

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Abstract

In this article, I examine how 121 leading corporations in India communicate the external relevance of their corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs/outputs and whether these outputs vary by ownership identity (foreign, government, and family), industry affiliation (environmentally sensitive and consumer proximate), and market orientation (inward and outward). I use content analysis from corporate websites, annual reports, and CSR/Sustainability reports to create a unique database on India. Indicators include issuance of stand-alone CSR/Sustainability reports, participation in GRI, UNGC, Carbon Disclosure Project, and UN Carbon Credits reporting and auditing, social and environmental data and disclosure scores, and CSR/Sustainability awards. My analyses find that with the exception of outward-oriented firms that are exposed to a wider range of stakeholder influences that demand higher disclosure to make investment decisions, neither ownership identity nor industry affiliation explain a firm's proclivity to engage in social reporting. In addition to a systematic empirical examination of a large sample, my analyses of CSR outputs at the firm and industry level in India can serve as a benchmark for longitudinal and cross-country comparisons and add to the scant research on the form and penetration of CSR in Asia and emerging economy contexts.