

# Periodic Research

## Impact of Spirituality on Corporate Social Responsibility



**Sukhwinder Kaur**  
Associate Professor,  
Deptt. of Commerce,  
GCG, Ludhiana, (Punjab).

### Abstract

A direct link between the thought process and behaviour, has already been proven by various researchers. A good thought process leads to adoption of a good behaviour and bad thinking leads to bad one. The behaviour of corporate houses affects the society in many ways. This research paper reviews the vision and mission of ten Indian Companies which have been rated as top ten (Year 2012-2013) on the basis of their spending on CSR activities. These companies reflected a responsible behaviour towards society on their own and were spending a good amount of money on various welfare activities for the society, without compulsion under any of statute. Spirituality is an ability within a person which enables him/her to understand and experience the ultimate reality behind the functioning of the physical human body and the whole universe. This awareness brings a transformation in a person and converts him into a better human being. He starts choosing a behaviour which reflects care and concern for others. Choice of a responsible behaviour on part of an individual or corporate house willingly, indicates presence of a higher level of spiritual quotient within. This paper has made a sincere attempt to find out whether the vision and mission which becomes a guiding force behind future action plans had any reflection of spiritual thought. For realising this goal the vision and mission of companies under research study were put to test by using six indicators of spiritual intelligence. These are: feeling of oneness, feeling of sacrifice, honesty/ self-discipline, Initiative/ creativity and innovation, concern for environment and resilience. As per Holy Scriptures and research studies these traits are generally found in spiritual people. As ideologies of owners/managers, are ideologies of companies, these have been studied deeply to find whether the factors representing SQ are present there in the ideologies of companies or not. The study has found that these companies possess a higher level of spiritual quotient which serves as a basis for responsible behaviour towards society. It further opens up unexplored areas for future research by establishing a link between spiritual intelligence and responsible behaviour towards society.

**Keywords :** Corporate Social Responsibility and Spirituality

### Introduction

Big business houses are a significant section of our society. These artificial legal persons make maximum use of country's resources whether natural, financial, non financial or human. At the same time, it is these only who hold maximum wealth of the nation. From this perspective, it appears very genuine that they must take care of their country and countrymen and reflect an ethical and responsible behaviour towards different sections of society. It has been proven and accepted widely that actions are preceded by thoughts. Even the behaviour of corporate houses is guided and preceded by the ideologies and thought processes of those, who own and run these business houses. Corporate Social Responsibility does not mean, compliance to certain legal requirements towards society under different statutes rather it refers to adoption of an ethical and responsible behaviour voluntarily based on a deep understanding that corporate houses really owe towards society. Spirituality is instrumental in bringing a positive change in the attitude of business community. It provides ultimate knowledge about one's true self, mortal and immortal, physical and nonphysical, reality and illusion within physical body and in this whole universe. It explains that there is a mysterious all pervasive, conscious, eternal, self-illuminated, formless substance which is cause behind each creation in this universe. This ultimate

awareness moves them to contribute and share more willingly and naturally for upliftment and betterment of their country and countrymen.

## Objectives

In true sense the concept of CSR goes beyond the simple compliance to the legal requirements under different statutes. It rather refers to voluntary adoption of ethical policies and programmes by the business communities towards its key stakeholders and sparing a portion of business profits for the upliftment and betterment of the living standards of their employees and countrymen. The adoption of this kind of behaviour demands for existence of certain human values amongst those who influence the decisions of business institutions. Feeling of oneness, genuine concern for the well-being of others, desire for happiness, health and harmony all around are the kinds of values which lead to ethical and responsible behaviour. Spiritual intelligence can prove instrumental in inculcating this kind of value based behaviour amongst people. The major objectives of the study are outlined as below:

1. To have deeper understanding of the concepts of spirituality and Corporate Social Responsibility.
2. To see whether there exists any correlation between spirituality of entrepreneurs/managers and their attitude towards CSR activities.

## Spirituality and CSR: A Review

Human beings are conscient beings and hence can make a difference between right and wrong, ethical and unethical, rational and irrational (Holy Scriptures, studies in the field of psychology, sociology, economics, anthropology and medical science) but can the organisations which are considered as artificial legal persons can do so? Yes, the answer to this question is- Big Yes. Reason behind this is that although organisations do not have mind and heart of their own but they do function through those who possess these two. The ideology of owners and managers becomes the ideology of organisations and gets reflected when they conduct their business activity. Naomi Klein, author of book, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (2007), states that any social system fails when human relations break down and a successful economic system depends upon the integrity of its actors. A successful market system requires the ethical and responsible operation of the markets and that this ethos informs corporate organisation. Niels Due Jensen (Grundfos) asserts that spirituality gives him a deeper meaning in life, and therefore also regulates the way he behaves on a regular daily basis in his private life as well as in his job life. Spirituality can transform the attitudes of owners and managers and can make them more ethical and responsible in their approach. If entrepreneurs/ managers are spiritually intelligent then there is no need to bring law in force to make organisations socially responsible. Spiritually intelligent entrepreneurs themselves feel the need of producing quality good for their countrymen. Mitroff and Denton (1999) believe strongly that organisations must harness the immense spiritual energy within each person in order to produce world class products and services. I Ching

(Book of Changes) asserts that the movement of the Sacred is full of power. As per this, power arises from the primal depths of the universe and reaches its potential only when it accords with 'what is right'. Spiritually intelligent leaders/ entrepreneurs believe in providing good working conditions to their employees and sharing profit margins, considering employees as their team workers. They honestly discharge their tax obligations and do not believe in hoarding the resources rather put them in circulation for productive purposes. They strongly believe in that they are not to disturb the nature rather follow and learn the laws of nature. They do not believe in wasting the rare natural resources but help in preserving them. K.C. Shroff (Excel Industries, India) showing a passionate concern for earth says that our mother earth has been badly hurt by greed. She must be healed. He declares that at Excel, service is the motivation and profit is a by-product of services rendered. He admits that industry has responsibility towards industry and community. This kind of behaviour is the result of spiritual awareness which sheds ignorance and make aware that there is nothing permanent in this world. There is no fun in holding material things. Every concrete thing in this world is mortal. We all spiritual beings are on human journey and will not carry anything in material form with us at the time of our physical death. We the spiritual beings belong to one creator. Researchers have proved that only those companies whose owners/ directors are of spiritualistic mind-set are most ethical and responsible companies in the world. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) compared companies that have strong sustainability programmes with companies that have poor ones and found that in the former morale was 55% better, business processes were 43% more efficient, public image was 43% stronger and employee loyalty was 38 % better. Reputation Institute's 'Pulse Survey(2011)' indicated that CSR is responsible for more than 40% of company's reputation. Peter Pruzan and William C. Miller conducted interviews with leaders from Europe, USA and Asia and proved that when leaders and organisations operate from a spiritual perspective they naturally behave responsibly on behalf of themselves, their communities, society, the environment and all of creation. A spiritual person possesses certain qualities which render him a better person than others. As per Sri Sri Guru Granth Sahib a spiritual person is unattached, stainless, even patience, considers all equal, pure, enlightened, no pride, humble, impartial, spiritual bliss, humility, divine knowledge, eternal happiness, immortal, wellbeing of all, control over mind, pure life, free from worries, true guide, awakened, owns the universe, absorbed in lord's name, and abides in celestial peace. Gauri Sukhmani (272). Chapter sixteen of Bhagwad Geeta explains twenty six qualities of a spiritual person. He is fearless, peaceful, knowledgeable, soft spoken, resilient, good learner and teacher, kind hearted, tolerant, submissive, pure and away from anger, lust and greed. Danah Zohar & Ian Marshal (2000) have termed spiritual intelligence as Ultimate intelligence.

# Periodic Research

They claim that SQ has twelve qualities which are self-awareness, spontaneity, being vision and value led, holism, compassion, celebration of diversity, field independence, humility, tendency to ask fundamental, ability to reframe, positive use of adversity, sense of vocation. Richard Griffith (2011) contends that full spectrum of human intelligence has five dimensions from Physical Quotient (PQ) to transcendental quotient (TQ) which means PQ, IQ, EQ, SQ and TQ. To him SQ regulates all the other three quotients that is PQ, IQ and EQ. Robert Emmons referred to four core abilities of spiritual intelligence which are – capacity to go beyond physical realm and reach higher levels of consciousness, the ability to handle everyday activities, events and relationships with a sense of sacred/ purity, ability to use SI to solve everyday problems and the capacity to engage in virtuous behavior. Cindy Wigglesworth (2004) asserts that SQ leads to development of twenty one skills which relate to self-awareness, universal awareness, self-mastery and social mastery. These twenty one skills are reflection/indicators of Spiritual Intelligence. These are awareness of own worldview, awareness of life purpose (mission), awareness of values hierarchy, complexity of inner thought, awareness of Ego self / Higher Self, awareness of interconnectedness of all life, awareness of worldviews of others, breadth of time perception, awareness of limitations/power of human perception, awareness of Spiritual laws, experience of transcendent oneness, commitment to spiritual growth, keeping Higher Self in charge, living your purpose and values, sustaining your faith, seeking guidance from Higher Power or Higher Self, a wise and effective spiritual teacher /mentor, a wise and effective change agent, makes compassionate and wise decisions, a calming, healing presence and being aligned with the ebb and flow of life.

On the basis of above findings, six variables or qualities: feeling of oneness, feeling of sacrifice, honesty/ self-discipline, Initiative/ creativity and innovation, concern for environment and resilience have been selected as the indicators of spiritual quotient for the purpose of present study.

## **Meaning of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)**

Social Performance, Responsible Business Corporate Citizenship and Corporate Conscience, are some of the terms which have been used as synonymous terms for CSR by various authors. "Corporate Social Responsibility is concerned with treating the stakeholders of a company or institution ethically or in a responsible manner (Michael Hopkin). To him ethically or responsible means treating key stakeholders in a manner deemed acceptable according to international norms. It is a way to create trustworthy relationships with all those connected with business in one form or the other. "Corporate Social Responsibility is the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and contribute to economic development while improving the quality of life of workforce and their families as well as the local community and society at large" (World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)). "CSR is how companies manage the business

processes to produce an overall positive impact on society" (Mallenbaker). As per business dictionary.com, "corporate social responsibility means a company's sense of responsibility towards community and environment (ecological and social) in which it operates. Companies express this citizenship through their waste and pollution reduction processes, by contributing towards educational and social programmes and by earning adequate return on capital employed", (business dictionary.com).

As per this study CSR can be considered as a voluntary adoption of an ethical and responsible behaviour towards its key stakeholders. Here the term key Stakeholders refers to employees, suppliers, clients, investors, environment, competitors and government.

## **Meaning of Spirituality**

It is a subject of study which relates to knowledge about our own true being. It makes clear that we all human beings are simply awareness/consciousness/souls operating through physical bodies. Our true being is formless, eternal, self-aware, self-illuminated and ever present substance. Every human being can experience this highest state of awareness by observing deeply within oneself. Once a person is able to understand and experience his / her own consciousness, the person is able to state clearly that 'I' the consciousness is eternal, formless, intangible, self-illuminated, immortal substance within body and is the owner and controller of this body. It is subject of "know thy self." It enables a person to draw a distinction clearly between the subject i.e. 'I' - the owner and controller of both body and mind and the objects i.e. body, mind, breath and rest of universe. Spirituality is purely internal and experiential. This spiritual experience makes a person wise, fearless, understanding, blissful and peaceful. The behaviour gets transformed and the qualities like feeling of oneness, care and concern for others start reflecting from the conduct.

## **Awareness given by Spiritual Intelligence**

1. That the formless substance /space / void known as Brahm, paramtata, or God in the universe is eternal, infinite and ever present energy. This ultimate substance is beyond the circle of birth and death.
2. That the formless substance in the universe being eternal cannot be created divided and destroyed by anyone.
3. That everything which is visible to eyes within universe whether living or non-living will come to an end one day.
4. That the physical human body is mortal but consciousness attached to this body is immortal.
5. That the physical body keeps on changing and grows older every moment but the consciousness/ soul is subtle energy and same forever.
6. That the soul /spirit/does not bring anything in physical form at the time of birth and does not take anything in physical form along at the time of death.
7. That the supreme soul/ Paramatma is the cause of each manifestation in this universe.

# Periodic Research

8. That the soul /individual consciousness is a part of formless substance in this universe.
9. That one can have experience of bliss, peace, oneness, immortality, abundance, by connecting with his/her own consciousness and with its source. i.e. formless substance of universe.
10. That one can understand the reality of non-matter and matter by experiencing one's own awareness known as spiritual experience.
11. That all material possessions and relations are acquired by soul during the life span and left here only.
12. That the sole formula to be in state of bliss is self-realization i.e. to experience your own consciousness.

(A synthesis from BhagwatGeeta, Shri Guru Granth Sahib, AshtavakraSamhita, Jainism, Sufism, Taoism, present time missions and organisations- Nirankari Mission, Radha Swami Mission, Brahma Kumari organisation, Yogananda, Shivyog organisation, Sciencedvine.org, Oshodhara, BhoomanandaTirtha Org., empirical researches by- (Zohar and Marshall(1997), Frances Vaughan(2002), Robert Emmons(2000), Tony Buzan(2001), Kathleen Nobel(2001), Cindy Wigglesworth(2004) and David B. King(2007).

## Rationale Behind CSR

Business world and society are closely connected to each other. Their needs are interdependent. Businesses cannot survive without the help of different sections of society and society also cannot survive without business houses. These are the business houses which produce variety of goods and services required by countrymen and hence make their living comfortable. Since long business units have been functioning as economic entities only and profit maximisation has remained main target for majority of business houses. They have paid least attention towards social aspect of their existence. Rationale behind the concept of CSR is to make business houses aware that their growth and worth is the result of common efforts put in by different sections of society. Investors provide required amount of finance for business, employees provide them with their knowledge, skills and time, consumers purchase and pay for the products and services produced by them, environment provides them a suitable place and other natural resources needed for their operations, Government provides infrastructure, legal system, banking system, stock exchanges and many more facilities which are considered as essential requirements for business activities. Hence it becomes a moral obligation of the businessmen to act as trustees of the money generated by the business houses and spare a portion of their business profits for the well-being of country and countrymen. Different sections of society were looking towards these business houses since ages to come forward willingly and sacrifice some portion of business profits in favour of employees and other countrymen who are not able to afford even basic necessities of life. Leaving aside a few business houses in India, majority of the companies were

insensitive towards their social obligation towards society.

Ministry of Corporate Affairs in India has taken a wonderful step to involve Indian corporate sector in the developmental process of the country more actively. Indian Government has introduced section 135 in Indian Companies Act 1956, 2013 which deals with compulsory implementation of CSR. It will be operative from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 and will make CSR a mandatory activity for all the business houses whose net worth is equal to or beyond Rs. 500 crores or annual turnover is equal to or beyond 1000 crores or annual profits are equal to or beyond Rs. 5 crores. Companies falling in this category will allocate 2 % of their average net profits (taking 3 years as base for averaging) for CSR activities in their budget. Ministry of Corporate Affairs has prepared a set of voluntary guidelines which indicate some of the core areas that businesses should focus upon while conducting their business activities. This will assist them to responsible governing practices. These guidelines have been drafted after keeping in mind the valuable suggestions of trade and industry, chamber experts, NGOs, other stakeholders & international prevalent practices and norms in relation to CSR. According to Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Core areas identified for CSR are :- care of all stakeholder, ethical functioning, respect for workers right and welfare, respect for human rights, respect for environment, activities for social and inclusive development. According to Schedule -VII of Companies Bill, 2012, the following activities can be included by companies in their CSR Policies.

1. Eradicating extreme hunger and poverty;
2. Promotion of education;
3. Promoting gender equality and empowering women;
4. Reducing child mortality and improving maternal health;
5. Combating Human Immune Deficiency Virus, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, Malaria and other diseases;
6. Ensuring environmental sustainability;
7. Employment enhancing vocational skills;
8. Social business projects;
9. Contribution to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund or any other fund set by the Central Government or the State Governments for socio-economic development.

Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee CEO & Director general of IICA during an interview at Chandigarh (Pb) stated that new legislation through section 135 in companies Act, 2013 will help in pumping crores of rupees into the developmental process of India. Although he also expressed his opinion that it may take 4 to 5 years to produce the desired results in this area. He suggested that activities falling under CSR, must be reviewed by media and civil society. Kordant Philanthropy advisors are of the view that section 135 will cover 2500 companies in India and will generate over US\$ 2 billion for CSR activities.

## Findings

Ideologies of ten companies in India which come under the category of top spending companies

# Periodic Research

on CSR for the year 2012-13 have been deeply gone through and tested by applying six indicators of spiritual quotient. After analysis it has been found that vision and mission of all the ten companies comprise majority of the indicators of spiritual quotient. Activities undertaken by these companies relating to CSR include initiatives relating to improving education, enhancing vocational skills, taking care of maternal health and protecting girl child, environment sustainability programmes and preserving dying arts of India. Helping the most disadvantaged section of society is one of the preferred CSR activities of most of the companies under present study. Their ideologies are very near to the ideology of spiritualism. They are not only concerned with their own interest but well-being of their employees, their families, investors, customers, environment and pride of their country. They are with big visions and well equipped to face adversities. These companies were already doing on their own for the welfare of their employees and countrymen in the previous years. This proves that they are sensitive towards needs and expectations of different sections of society. They did not wait for any law to be in operation to adopt this kind of behaviour. It was their own belief system and thought process which worked as a guiding force to adopt an ethical behaviour toward society. These companies spent more than 2% of their average net profits of the previous three years in 2012-13. Table showing names of the companies and their spending on CSR is given below

### Companies Those Spent More Than 2% Of Average Net Profit Of Fy11,12&13

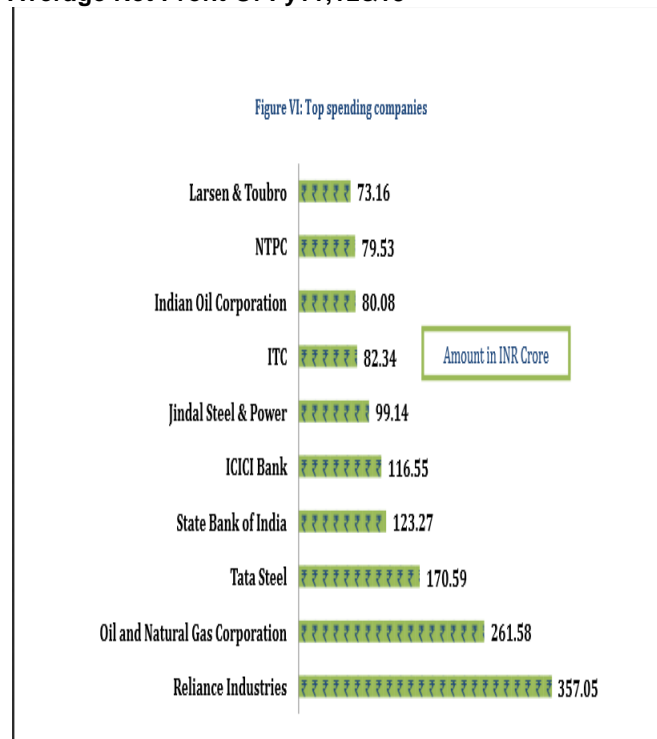


Table adopted from:  
<http://www.slideshare.net/samyakjainsha/h/csr-spending-by-bse-100-and-br-rs-analysis-partners-in-change>

The above given table proves that not only public sector companies but private companies too, are sensitive towards the needs of society. It is thinking beyond self which leads to a socially responsible behaviour. Larsen and Toubro's ideology states that doing right things comes naturally to the company and its people; the right thing for the society, environment and economy. Long before the term like code of governance had entered the public lexicon, L&T had adopted intuitively and with considered intent, business practices in consonance with their value system. A sense of responsibility towards society and environment has been a part of their corporate culture not because the rule book said so, but because doing it any other way would have gone against their grains. Dr. Arup Roy Chaudhary (NTPC) believes in project implementation through proactive approach and his dictum is "Sankalp suddha hi siddah". People before PLF (Plant Load Factor) is the guiding philosophy behind the entire gamut of HR policies at National Thermal Power Corporation. NTPC is fully committed in achieving high standards of corporate governance and developing mutual trust via expensive CSR activities. The organization believes in empowering people through education. The vision of Indian oil corporation (IOC) revolves around ethics and values, care and concern for community, customer, environment and encouraging technology and innovation through the spirit of creativity and research. It values care, passion innovation, and trust across the organisation in order to deliver value to the stakeholders. Jindal Steel and Power limited (JSPL) has a vision to enhance the quality of life of all stakeholders through sustainable industrial and business development. Company is committed to integrate its business values and operations to meet the expectations of all its stakeholders. It aspires to achieve business excellence through the spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation, optimum utilization of resources, sustainable environment friendly practices, highest ethical standards and ensuring that these all have a positive impact on the communities it touches. This organization strives through their core values i.e. by having passionate people, business excellence, integrity, ownership and sense of belonging and sustainable development. JSPL's objectives is to strengthen India's industrial base by aiding infrastructural development, through sustainable development approaches and inclusive growth. The company deploys its resources to improve infrastructure, education, health, water, sanitation, environment etc. in the areas it operates in. Recognizing that business enterprises are economic organs of society and draw on societal resources, it is ITC's belief that a company's performance must be measured by its Triple Bottom Line contribution to building economic, social and environmental capital. As an Indian enterprise, ITC believes that this approach can unleash strong drivers of growth to make it more inclusive and equitable for even the most marginalized sections of society, through the creation of sustainable livelihoods, and to ensure

long-term business sustainability and competitiveness.

As a public sector enterprise, ONGC has a long and cherished tradition of commendable initiatives, institutionalized programmes and practices of Corporate Social Responsibility. The vision of sustainable growth drives both business decisions as well as their Corporate Social Responsibility works. Mission of SBI is to be prompt, polite and proactive with customers and to create products and services that help customers achieve their goals. SBI believes in honesty, transparency and ethics and is ready to do everything which can contribute to the community it works in.

It recognizes the need of respect for customers and fellow associates. SBI strongly believes in fair banking practices and gaining and sharing of knowledge. ICICI Foundation believes that with proper education, children become empowered to take ownership of their lives and the lives of their families. Education is necessary to build a society that is capable of actively driving the social, economic and political processes of the country.

Vision of Reliance Industries is to create value for the nation, enhance quality of life across the entire socio-economic spectrum through sustainable measures. It believes in Creating value for all stakeholders, growing through innovation, leading through good governance practices, using sustainability to drive product development and enhancing operational efficiencies, ensuring energy security of the nation and fostering rural prosperity. Reliance values care, citizenship, fairness, honesty, integrity, purposefulness, respect, responsibility, safety and trust to ensure growth and success. Tata steel by following responsible practices and procedures ensures that all aspects of Tata Steel's business are conducted with the utmost respect for the environment. Corporation believes that every major business has an impact on the communities and societies in which it operates. Tata Steel contributes to local and regional economic and social development in myriad ways. Making sure that their employees and contractors return home from work safely each day is more important than anything else. Tata Steel believes in adopting the best practices in terms of corporate governance that have been and continue to be developed. The company conducts all aspects of its business with full transparency and accountability.

Tata Steel explains its ideology like this-“We do not tolerate corrupt or fraudulent practices. We expect honesty, integrity and transparency in all aspects of our business from our employees, contractors and other business counterparts. Our ethical principles are clearly and unambiguously articulated in the Tata Code of Conduct, to which all Tata Group companies subscribe”. Originally written in 1998, the Code was updated in 2008 to better reflect changing expectations within society and the increasingly global scale of the Group's activities.

The Tata Steel Group is proud of its longstanding reputation as a fair and caring employer, and respects all human rights both within and outside

the workplace. The Tata Code of Conduct stipulates that all employees have a personal responsibility to help preserve the human rights of everyone at work and in the wider community.

## Conclusion

In true sense the concept of CSR goes beyond the simple compliance to the legal requirements under different statutes. It rather refers to voluntary adoption of ethical policies and programmes by the business communities towards its key stakeholders and sparing a portion of business profits for the upliftment and betterment of the living standards of their employees and countrymen. The adoption of this kind of behaviour demands for existence of certain human values amongst those who are empowered to take decisions of business institutions. Feeling of oneness, genuine concern for the well-being of others, desire for happiness, health and harmony all around are the kinds of values which lead to ethical and responsible behaviour. Spiritual intelligence can prove instrumental in inculcating this kind of value based behaviour amongst people.

Above given Ideologies of companies under study are reflection of a deep understanding of the purpose of human life on this earth. It shows that the people behind these ideologies are aware of oneness and interconnectedness of the whole universe. That is why they think in larger terms and believe that the whole world is an extended family. Profit earning is not the only goal for these companies rather service and well-being of others is equally important. Spirituality has been transforming people from ages and making them better persons who then prove more useful to their families, communities and organisations. Spirituality has to be an essential part of organizational culture. It has become need of the hour. Modernity, materialism and selfish approach has destabilised the whole society and has finished values in personal and professional lives. Selfish motives, unconcerned attitude of corporate sector towards environment, have put the planet earth in danger. Organisations have to be ethical as well as effective in their approach. Effective leadership can be assured if Intelligence Quotient, Emotional Quotient and Spiritual Quotient are present in managers at all levels. Presence of a higher level of SQ will help owners/managers to think beyond self and in the larger interest of the society. Every individual and Every corporate house must realise that they have no right to contaminate air, water and earth. They are not the only generation to live on this earth. There are a large number of generations yet to come on this earth. It is our duty to pass on a clean and green environment and a heritage of value based practices to our coming generations.

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# Periodic Research

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