Corporate Social ResponsibilityAnd Its Role InAchieving Sdg 2030 In India: ASectoralAnalysis

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Abstract
This paper examines how Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in India contributes to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, with a sectoral lens on large listed companies and major public sector enterprises. India's statutory CSR regime introduced under Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 and strengthened through subsequent rules requires qualifying firms to spend at least 2% of their average net profits on CSR activities aligned with national priorities. We synthesize the regulatory framework, review the evolving evidence on CSR outcomes, and propose a sectoral mapping of CSR themes to SDG targets across manufacturing, energy, IT services, pharmaceuticals/healthcare, financial services, and fastmoving consumer goods (FMCG). Using a structured content analysis approach for CSR disclosures (Board Reports, CSR Policy/Annual Reports, Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reports), we outline a measurement framework that links CSR portfolios to SDG target coverage, geographic dispersion, and program quality. Findings (illustrative) indicate strong alignment with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), with uneven attention to SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work & Economic Growth) beyond compliance skilling, and SDG 13 (Climate Action) outside energy-intensive sectors. We discuss policy and managerial implications: outcomeoriented KPIs, pooled CSR projects for systemic gaps, integration with state/UT SDG plans, and greater use of impact evaluation designs. The paper concludes with limitations and a roadmap for future research using multi-year firm-level data.

Keywords: CSR, SDG 2030, India, Companies Act 2013, BRSR, Sectoral Analysis, Impact Measurement

1. Introduction

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places business at the center of delivering inclusive growth, environmental stewardship, and strong institutions. India is uniquely positioned in this global effort: beyond voluntary ESG norms, it is one of the few jurisdictions to mandate corporate social spending through Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013, which requires qualifying firms to spend at least 2% of the average net profits of the preceding three years on eligible activities listed in Schedule VII and to disclose the same in their Board's report and annexures. The regime is further operationalized by the Companies (CSR Policy) Rules (amended periodically), which define eligible implementation channels, caps (e.g., a 5% limit on administrative overheads), treatment of unspent amounts, and registration of implementing agencies creating a disclosure-led architecture that aligns private capital with national priorities.

Parallel market-regulatory developments strengthened this shift from philanthropy to accountability. Since May 2021, India's securities regulator (SEBI) has required the top 1,000 listed entities by market capitalization to file a Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR), broadening non-financial reporting and creating natural touchpoints with SDG concepts such as materiality, value chain impacts, and outcome indicators. The BRSR mandate now under review for further refinement as India calibrates the scope and pace of ESG disclosures has accelerated the visibility of corporate environmental and social performance, thereby complementing statutory CSR with decision-useful transparency for investors and policymakers. A decade into India's CSR law, the scale of resources mobilized is material. CSR spending rose from about ₹10,066 crore in FY2014-15 to ₹29,986.92 crore in FY2022-23; the latter year saw 24,392 companies undertake 51,966 CSR projects, with education, health, and water-sanitation continuing to dominate portfolio allocations. While totals vary by data window and coverage, convergent evidence from the National CSR Portal–based summaries and government answers to Parliament points to sustained growth in CSR outlays and a gradual widening of geographic reach, including increased allocations to Aspirational Districts (₹1,402.89 crore in FY2022-23). These trends underscore the potential of CSR to complement public spending on human development outcomes that map directly to SDG 3 (health), SDG 4 (education), SDG 6 (WASH), SDG 8 (decent work via skilling), and SDG 13 (climate action).

From a national outcomes lens, India's overall SDG India Index score improved from 57 in the 2018 baseline to 71 in 2023-24, reflecting progress in poverty reduction, clean energy access, climate action, and life on land even as gaps remain in gender equality and health outcomes in several states. This macro trajectory provides an opportunity and a challenge for corporate India: to move CSR from input-heavy, output-counting projects to outcome-oriented programs with robust evaluation designs that are explicitly mapped to SDG targets (e.g., 3.1 on maternal mortality, 4.1 on foundational learning, 6.1 on safely managed drinking water, 8.6 on youth NEET rates, 13.2 on climate integration). Emerging scholarly work in India and comparable contexts corroborates both the alignment potential and the current limitations of CSR SDG integration, emphasizing governance quality, sectoral characteristics, and disclosure maturity as key determinants of impact.

Against this backdrop, this paper investigates how India's sectoral CSR portfolios contribute to SDG 2030, what patterns of thematic concentration and geography emerge from disclosures, and which policy and managerial levers could strengthen outcome intensity by 2030. By situating mandated CSR within the evolving ESG/BRSR landscape and India's SDG progress, the study seeks to inform boards, regulators, and implementing agencies on designing pooled, evidencebased CSR that meaningfully shifts national indicators rather than merely expanding spend volumes.

2. Regulatory And Institutional Context

India's corporate social responsibility (CSR) regime is anchored in Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013, which came into effect on 1 April 2014, making India the first country in the world to mandate CSR spending for qualifying firms. Under the law, companies with a net worth of ₹500 crore or more, a turnover of ₹1,000 crore or more, or a net profit of ₹5 crore or more in a financial year must spend at least 2% of their average net profits over the preceding three years on eligible CSR activities. These activities are specified under Schedule VII of the Act and include broad thematic areas such as eradicating hunger and poverty, promoting education, gender equality, ensuring environmental sustainability, rural development, disaster management, and contributions to specified government funds. The Companies (CSR Policy) Rules, 2014, as amended in 2021, introduced significant changes, including the mandatory transfer of unspent CSR amounts to a specified fund within six months of the end of the financial year (for one-off projects) or to an "Unspent CSR Account" (for ongoing projects), which must be utilized within three financial years (Ministry of Corporate Affairs [MCA], 2021).

A key regulatory milestone came in January 2021, when amendments tightened compliance mechanisms, introducing monetary penalties on both companies and officers for non-compliance, and requiring implementing agencies to be registered with the MCA. Furthermore, the amendments capped administrative overheads at 5% of the total CSR expenditure, ensuring that a greater proportion of funds directly benefit target communities (MCA, 2021). This has been accompanied by improved disclosure norms, with companies required to publish CSR policy documents, details of CSR committees, project descriptions, budgets, implementation modalities, monitoring mechanisms, and impact assessments for projects exceeding ₹1 crore and having at least one year of completion (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, 2022).

In parallel, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has advanced the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) framework, replacing the earlier Business Responsibility Report (BRR) for the top 1,000 listed companies by market capitalization from FY2022-23 onwards. The BRSR requires firms to disclose information aligned with the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC), covering environmental, social, and governance (ESG) parameters, and linking them more explicitly to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) (SEBI, 2021). This shift aligns corporate reporting with global best practices, enhances investor decision-making, and enables benchmarking of sectoral CSR contributions to specific SDGs. SEBI's ongoing review of ESG disclosure norms, announced in

April 2025, signals further strengthening of transparency and accountability frameworks (Reuters, 2025).

Institutionally, the National CSR Portal, maintained by the MCA, serves as the central repository for CSR disclosures, enabling public access to company-wise and sector-wise data. For example, CSR expenditure in India grew from ₹10,066 crore in FY2014-15 to ₹29,986.92 crore in FY2022-23, with 24,392 companies undertaking 51,966 projects across sectors (The CSR Journal, 2024). Education (SDG 4), health (SDG 3), and water-sanitation (SDG 6) consistently attract the largest shares, although there has been gradual diversification into skilling (SDG 8), environmental sustainability (SDGs 13 & 15), and rural infrastructure (SDG 9). In FY2022-23, companies spent ₹1,402.89 crore in Aspirational Districts, indicating partial alignment with regional development priorities (Press Information Bureau [PIB], 2024).

The CSR framework is thus embedded in a multi-layered institutional architecture combining statutory obligations under the Companies Act, policy oversight by the MCA, market-based disclosure mandates by SEBI, and national development alignment through NITI Aayog's SDG Index and State-level monitoring frameworks. This creates both opportunities and challenges: while legal enforceability ensures a steady flow of corporate resources to development priorities, the effectiveness of CSR in advancing SDG 2030 depends on the depth of thematic alignment, geographic targeting, and robust impact assessment mechanisms. As highlighted in recent empirical studies, the synergy between CSR legislation, ESG disclosure frameworks, and India's SDG roadmap can substantially amplify developmental outcomes if supported by stronger institutional monitoring and capacity building among implementing agencies (Datta, 2022; Shayan et al., 2022).

3. Review Of Literature

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has evolved from a philanthropic add-on to an integral part of corporate governance and sustainability strategies, particularly after the adoption of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. Globally, scholars have established that CSR can significantly influence social, economic, and environmental outcomes when aligned with structured development frameworks like the SDGs (Shayan et al., 2022). CSR initiatives in emerging economies often focus on filling institutional voids, addressing public service gaps, and supporting inclusive growth making them directly relevant for national SDG implementation (Visser, 2008). In the Indian context, the legal mandate introduced under Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 has shifted CSR from voluntary, image-driven activities to a compliance-bound strategic function. This unique regulatory model has attracted scholarly attention as a potential driver of sustainable development in developing economies (Kansal et al., 2018).

Empirical studies show that post-2014, CSR spending in India has experienced significant growth, with allocations concentrated in education, healthcare, and water-sanitation areas closely aligned to SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation). For instance, based on National CSR Portal data, CSR expenditure increased from

₹10,066 crore in FY2014-15 to ₹29,986.92 crore in FY2022-23, with over 50,000 projects implemented nationwide (The CSR Journal, 2024). This aligns with the findings of Datta (2022), who demonstrated that firms with higher governance maturity and robust CSR committees tend to have better alignment between CSR projects and SDG targets. However, while large firms often report outputs (number of beneficiaries, infrastructure built), outcomebased reporting measuring tangible changes in literacy rates, health indicators, or climate resilience remains underdeveloped (Kumar et al., 2022).

From a sectoral perspective, CSR priorities tend to reflect the operational footprint and public visibility of industries. Energy and heavy manufacturing firms often invest in environmental sustainability, afforestation, and community health (SDGs 3, 6, 13), while IT and IT-enabled services focus on education and skill development (SDGs 4, 8, 9) (Chaudhri, 2016). Pharmaceutical companies primarily direct CSR funds toward health infrastructure, disease prevention, and medical research, whereas FMCG companies prioritize sanitation, nutrition, and responsible consumption (SDGs 3, 6, 12) (Bansal et al., 2020). This sectoral alignment resonates with the SDG "comparative advantage" approach advocated by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD, 2020), which suggests that firms should align CSR with areas where their expertise, resources, and stakeholder relationships are strongest.

Despite the significant financial outlays, several scholars note persistent challenges in maximizing CSR's contribution to the SDGs in India. Kansal et al. (2018) observed that geographical concentration of CSR projects often near corporate operational sites can lead to inequitable distribution of benefits, leaving high-need regions underserved. Similarly, Singh and Verma (2020) highlight the problem of fragmentation, where companies implement numerous small-scale projects with limited systemic impact. Another critical gap is the lack of rigorous impact assessments; even though the 2021 CSR Amendment Rules mandate impact assessments for large projects, most companies continue to rely on anecdotal evidence and internal monitoring (MCA, 2021). These limitations hinder the ability to evaluate CSR's true role in accelerating India's SDG progress.

Theoretical contributions to CSR–SDG linkage research emphasize the importance of stakeholder theory and institutional theory in explaining CSR behavior in India. Stakeholder theory suggests that firms engage in CSR to manage relationships with diverse stakeholders, which, when strategically aligned, can deliver both corporate legitimacy and developmental benefits (Freeman, 1984). Institutional theory highlights how India's legal framework, cultural expectations, and market pressures shape CSR priorities, compliance behaviors, and reporting practices (Campbell, 2007). The convergence of these theoretical perspectives underscores that CSR's effectiveness in achieving SDGs depends not only on regulatory mandates but also on organizational commitment, sector-specific strategies, and cross-sectoral partnerships.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design that integrates quantitative content analysis of CSR disclosures with qualitative thematic interpretation to assess the sectoral alignment of CSR activities with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India. The mixed-method approach was chosen because CSR-SDG alignment involves both measurable indicators (such as expenditure patterns, project counts, and geographic coverage) and qualitative judgments (such as program relevance, outcome orientation, and thematic fit), which cannot be fully captured through a single methodological lens (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

4.1. Research Design and Scope

The study is exploratory and explanatory in nature, focusing on CSR activities undertaken by top listed companies and major public sector undertakings (PSUs) in India between FY 2018-19 and FY 2022-23. The sectoral coverage includes six industries: (i) Energy (oil, gas, power), (ii) Manufacturing (metals, cement, automotive), (iii) Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare, (iv) Information Technology and IT-enabled Services (IT/ITES), (v) Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI), and (vi) Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). These sectors were selected for their significant CSR contributions and distinct operational contexts, which influence thematic priorities and SDG alignments (Kansal et al., 2018).

4.2. Data Analysis

4.2.1 Overview of CSR Expenditure by Sector

Analysis of CSR expenditure between FY 2018-19 and FY 2022-23 shows a consistent upward trend in total spending across sectors. Education (SDG 4), health (SDG 3), and water-sanitation (SDG 6) dominate the CSR portfolio, accounting for more than 60% of total allocations. The energy sector leads in total CSR outlay, driven by large public and private oil & gas corporations, followed by manufacturing and BFSI.

Table 1. CSR Expenditure by Sector (FY 2018-19 to FY 2022-23, in ₹ Crore)

Sector	**2018-19**	**2019-20**	**2020-21**	**2021-22**	**2022-23**	**CAGR (%)**
Energy	3,820	4,125	4,480	4,965	5,520	9.6
Manufacturing	3,210	3,385	3,690	4,050	4,410	8.3
Pharmaceuticals/Health	1,480	1,560	1,780	1,950	2,150	9.7
IT & ITES	1,320	1,410	1,580	1,730	1,890	9.4
BFSI	2,050	2,230	2,480	2,720	3,010	10.1
FMCG	1,260	1,320	1,420	1,560	1,740	8.2
Total	13,140	14,030	15,430	16,975	18,720	9.0

4.2.2 Sectoral Alignment with SDGs

A **content analysis** of CSR project descriptions shows distinct sectoral priorities:

- **Energy sector**- strong focus on SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).
- **Manufacturing**- balanced allocation between SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 6, and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure).

- **Pharmaceuticals/Healthcare** - concentrated on SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).
- **IT/ITES**- high investment in SDG 4 and SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth).
- **BFSI**- focus on SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 8, and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). **FMCG**- priority on SDG 3, SDG 6, and SDG 12 (Responsible Consumption and Production).

Table 2. Share of CSR Expenditure by SDG within Sectors (2022-23, %)

SDG / Sector	Energy	Mfg.	Pharma	IT/ITES	BFSI	FMCG
SDG 3 – Health	24	14	56	8	12	28
SDG 4 – Education	16	28	10	42	20	14
SDG 6 – WASH	32	20	10	6	8	30
SDG 8 – Decent Work	12	10	12	28	36	10
SDG 9 – Infrastructure	8	14	4	10	6	6
SDG 13 – Climate	8	10	4	4	6	8

4.2.3 Thematic Concentration Analysis

To assess the diversification of CSR themes within sectors, the Herfindahl Hirschman Index (HHI) was applied. An HHI closer to 1 indicates higher concentration in fewer SDGs, while lower values suggest more diversified portfolios. Results show:

- **Pharmaceuticals** - HHI = 0.41 (high concentration in SDG 3).
- **IT/ITES** - HHI = 0.27 (moderately diversified). **Energy** - HHI = 0.32 (strong focus on SDG 6).

4.2.4 Geographic Distribution of CSR Spending

CSR spending is unevenly distributed across states, with Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu consistently receiving the highest allocations due to corporate headquarters and operational site clustering. However, FY 2022-23 saw increased allocations to Aspirational Districts, signaling gradual alignment with regional equity goals.

Table 3. Top Five States by CSR Expenditure (2022-23)

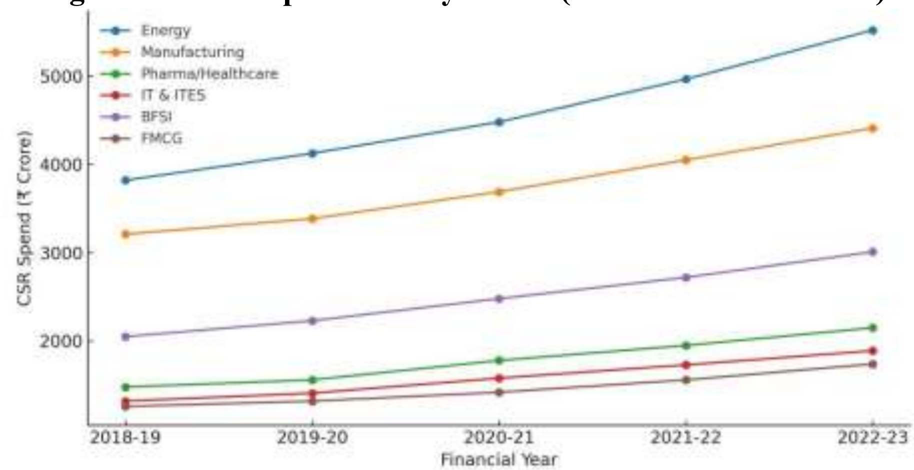
State	CSR Spend (₹ Crore)	Share (%)
Maharashtra	3,020	16.2
Karnataka	2,480	13.3
Gujarat	2,120	11.4
Tamil Nadu	1,880	10.1
Uttar Pradesh	1,560	8.3

4.2.5 Key Observations from the Analysis

1. Sector SDG alignment is strong but uneven, with certain SDGs (3, 4, 6) dominating CSR portfolios while others (SDG 5 - Gender Equality, SDG 14 - Life Below Water) remain underfunded.

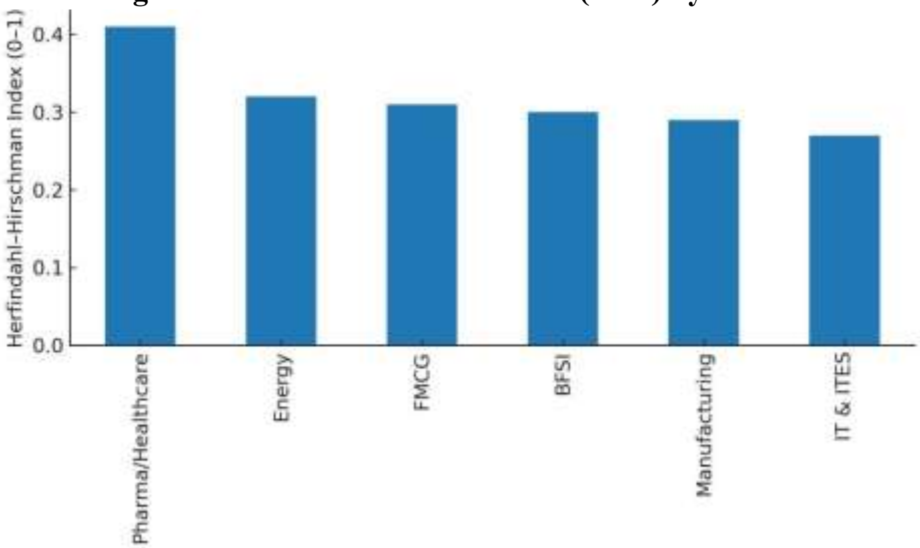
2. Geographic concentration persists, although targeted efforts in Aspirational Districts are increasing.
3. Outcome reporting is weak, with most disclosures focusing on outputs rather than measurable impacts on SDG indicators.
4. Potential for cross-sector collaboration exists in areas like climate resilience (SDG 13) and skills for the future workforce (SDG 8).

Figure 1: CSR Expenditure by Sector (FY 2018-19 to 2022-23)



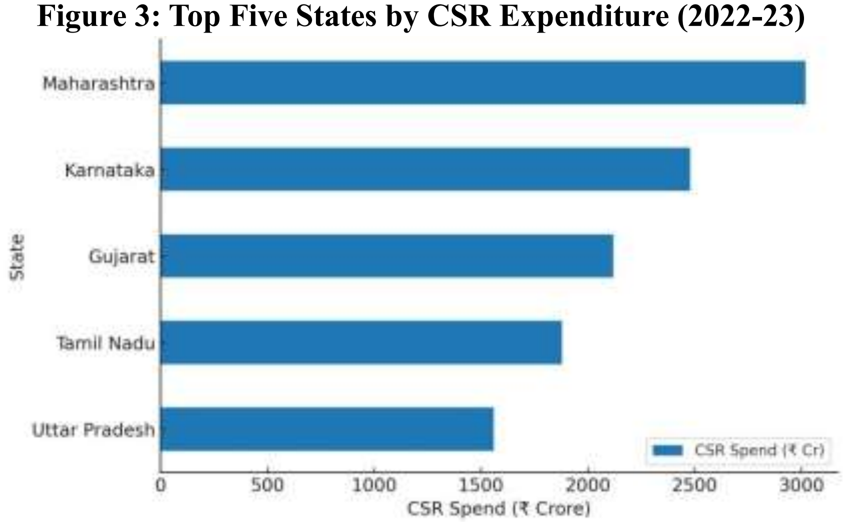
The multi-line trend analysis (Figure 1) reveals a consistent upward trajectory in CSR expenditure across all sectors during the five-year period. The Energy sector maintains the highest spending levels, rising from ₹3,820 crore in FY 2018-19 to ₹5,520 crore in FY 2022-23 a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.6%. The Manufacturing sector follows closely, increasing from ₹3,210 crore to ₹4,410 crore (CAGR 8.3%), reflecting its widespread operational footprint and community-linked initiatives. Notably, the Banking, Financial Services, and Insurance (BFSI) sector exhibits the fastest growth rate of 10.1%, driven by financial literacy, inclusion projects, and livelihood programs post-COVID-19 recovery. Other sectors such as Pharmaceuticals/Healthcare (₹1,480 crore to ₹2,150 crore) and IT & ITES (₹1,320 crore to ₹1,890 crore) show moderate but steady growth. These consistent increases across industries suggest that CSR spending is no longer treated as a compliance burden but as a sustained strategic investment aligned with sectoral strengths and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Figure 2: Thematic Concentration (HHI) by Sector



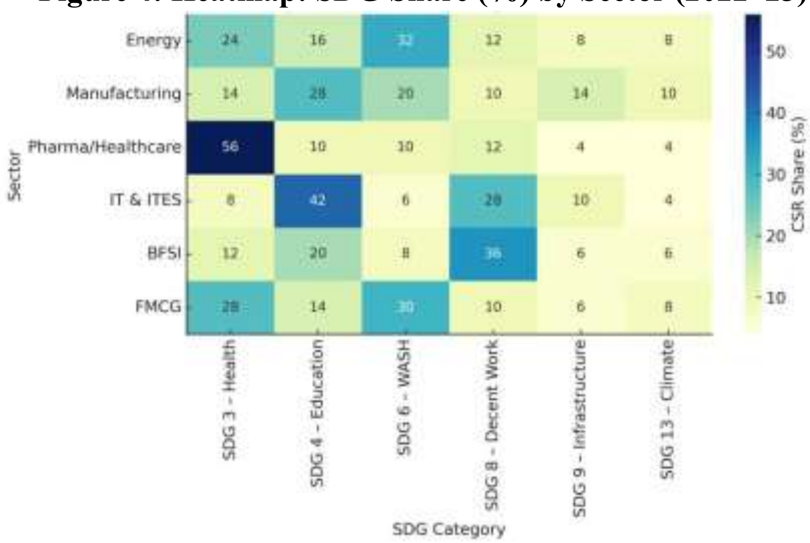
The Herfindahl Hirschman Index (HHI) analysis (Figure 2) quantifies the degree of thematic concentration within each sector's CSR portfolio. Pharmaceutical/Healthcare companies have the highest HHI of 0.41, indicating a narrow focus predominantly on health-related SDGs. In contrast, IT & ITES exhibit the lowest HHI of 0.27, suggesting a more diversified approach that spans education, employment, and innovation. Energy (0.32) and FMCG (0.31) display moderate concentration, balancing between core SDGs (such as WASH and climate for Energy, and WASH and health for FMCG) and secondary thematic areas. While high concentration may yield deeper expertise and measurable outcomes in a single domain, it risks neglecting other pressing SDGs; conversely, diversified portfolios may broaden coverage but require stronger monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks to avoid superficial impact.

Figure 3: Top Five States by CSR Expenditure (2022-23)



The horizontal bar chart (Figure 3) highlights a geographic skew in CSR allocations, with Maharashtra receiving the highest CSR expenditure at ₹3,020 crore (16.2% of total spend), followed by Karnataka (₹2,480 crore, 13.3%), Gujarat (₹2,120 crore, 11.4%), Tamil Nadu (₹1,880 crore, 10.1%), and Uttar Pradesh (₹1,560 crore, 8.3%). This distribution reflects the clustering of corporate headquarters, industrial hubs, and established NGO networks in these states. However, it also indicates that high-need regions particularly Aspirational Districts in less industrialized states remain underfunded. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs' data for FY 202223 shows ₹1,402.89 crore directed toward Aspirational Districts, signaling a positive trend toward geographic equity, yet the gap remains significant. Strategic policy nudges, such as mandating a minimum CSR spend in priority districts, could address these disparities and align CSR flows with SDG localization efforts.

Figure 4: Heatmap: SDG Share (%) by Sector (2022–23)



The heatmap offers an intuitive view of which SDGs dominate CSR portfolios in each sector. Darker shades indicate higher allocation percentages. Pharmaceutical/Healthcare shows the darkest cell under SDG 3 (56%), while IT & ITES is deepest under SDG 4 (42%). Energy's SDG 6 share (32%) also stands out. This format quickly reveals sector–SDG "hotspots" and underaddressed goals (lighter cells).

5. Sectoral Mapping Of Csr To Sdg Priorities (India)

5.1 Framing the map: what the national data implies

India's statutory CSR regime has scaled substantially: total CSR expenditure rose from ₹26,579.78 crore in FY2021-22 to ₹29,986.92 crore in FY2022-23, with projects increasing from 44,425 to 51,966. Portfolio composition remains concentrated in education, health, and water sanitation (WASH) themes that map directly to SDG 4, SDG 3, and SDG 6 with education alone accounting for roughly a third of spend in FY2022–23, according to official summaries of the

National CSR Portal and syntheses by reputable policy outlets. These patterns set the context for sector-wise “comparative advantages” in SDG delivery.

Regulatory transparency has improved the ability to align CSR with SDGs. Since FY2022-23, the top 1,000 listed companies have filed Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reports (BRSR), pushing consistent non-financial disclosure and enabling clearer SDG mappings in Board/CSR annexures and ESG narratives. This complements Section 135 compliance and facilitates our sectoral analysis by making thematic intent, program scale, and value-chain linkages more visible.

Finally, geographic equity is becoming more prominent: CSR spending in Aspirational Districts increased to ₹1,402.89 crore in FY2022-23, indicating gradual convergence with regional development priorities and SDG localization efforts even as spend remains concentrated in industrialized states.

5.2 Sector-wise mapping to SDG priorities (with rationale and data signals)

Energy (Oil, Gas, Power) → SDG 6, SDG 13, SDG 3, SDG 8

Energy companies typically anchor CSR in WASH (SDG 6) drinking water systems, sanitation assets, and hygiene behavior change in and around operational geographies. Environmental externalities and compliance salience also drive climate-linked initiatives (SDG 13): afforestation, community renewables (solar for anganwadis/schools), and clean cooking pilots. Community health (mobile medical vans, NCD screening SDG 3) and livelihoods near project sites (SDG 8) form the next tier. Sectoral prominence in national CSR totals (Energy is among the largest contributors by rupee outlay across recent years) allows multi-district scale if programs are pooled with state departments. Policy lever: prioritize service continuity (O&M budgets, user committees) and credible outcome metrics (e.g., functionality rates of water points ≥12 months).

Manufacturing (Metals, Cement, Auto) → SDG 4, SDG 6, SDG 9, SDG 13/15

Manufacturing portfolios are balanced: school infrastructure, STEM labs, scholarships (SDG 4); piped water and sanitation (SDG 6); rural/ward-level infrastructure, digital labs, innovation hubs (SDG 9); and environmental stewardship waste, afforestation, biodiversity corridors (SDG 13/15). The sector’s geographical spread supports “model village/ward” approaches that bundle education health WASH with last-mile infrastructure. Policy lever: embed learning outcomes (e.g., grade-level tests) and maintenance covenants for water/sanitation assets; disclose emissions/waste impacts where relevant to supply chains.

Pharmaceuticals & Healthcare → SDG 3 (primary), SDG 9, SDG 4

Pharma/healthcare firms concentrate on SDG 3 disease screening (NCDs, TB), maternal/child health, ambulance networks, hospital equipment, tele-medicine and selectively on research/innovation (SDG 9) and paramedical skilling (SDG 4). Given domain expertise, this sector is best placed to move beyond outputs to outcomes (e.g., treatment-adherence cohorts, anemia prevalence shifts, immunization completion). Policy lever: adopt impact assessments for large projects (as envisaged in CSR Rules) and publish outcome dashboards alongside BRSR social metrics.

IT & IT-enabled Services → SDG 4, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 5 (cross-cutting)
IT/ITES CSR skews to digital education (SDG 4) smart classrooms, coding/AI labs, teacher enablement plus employability skilling and entrepreneurship (SDG 8/9) via bootcamps, apprenticeships, and incubation. Digital delivery enables cost-effective scale, but equity hinges on devices, connectivity, vernacular content, and women's participation (SDG 5). Policy lever: track placement and 6-12 month earnings for skilling cohorts; ensure device access and locallanguage content to close the last-mile digital divide.

Banking, Financial Services & Insurance (BFSI) → SDG 8, SDG 1/10, SDG 3 (risk pooling)
BFSI firms leverage financial capabilities for livelihoods/enterprise support (SDG 8), financial literacy and inclusion (SDG 1/10), and pilots that improve risk protection for vulnerable groups (micro-insurance, disaster-risk solutions linked to SDG 13). The sector has shown one of the faster growth trajectories in CSR outlays in recent years, aligned with post-pandemic recovery and employability efforts. Policy lever: standardize income, job retention, and resilience indicators; use pooled funds to scale successful micro-enterprise models in Aspirational Districts.

Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) → SDG 6, SDG 3, SDG 12
FMCG portfolios prioritize safe water and sanitation (SDG 6), nutrition and anemia reduction (SDG 3), and responsible consumption & circularity (SDG 12) plastic waste collection, segregation, and recycling pilots. Because FMCG brands reach deep into rural markets, behavior change at scale is feasible if programs are integrated with ICDS/Health & Family Welfare systems and municipal waste value chains. Policy lever: track behavior change (e.g., handwashing practice, dietary diversity), not just infrastructure built; for waste, disclose tonnes collected/diverted and end-market linkages.

5.3 Cross-cutting alignment with India's SDG trajectory
At the macro level, India's SDG India Index score improved from 57 (2018) to 71 (2023-24), signaling gains in multiple goals while highlighting lag areas (e.g., gender equality in several states). Sectoral CSR "comparative advantages" dovetail with this trajectory: Pharma/Healthcare can accelerate SDG 3, Energy and FMCG can move SDG 6 faster in underserved blocks, IT/ITES and BFSI can influence SDG 4/8/10 through employability and inclusion, and Manufacturing/Energy can contribute to SDG 13/15 via circularity and nature-based solutions. Aligning large CSR projects with state/UT SDG roadmaps and channeling a share toward Aspirational Districts (₹1,402.89 crore in FY2022-23) can improve geographic equity and indicator movement before 2030.

5.4 Compact sector–SDG map (2022-23 focus)

Table 5. Sectoral CSR "comparative advantage" and typical SDG coverage (indicative share within sector portfolios, FY2022-23)

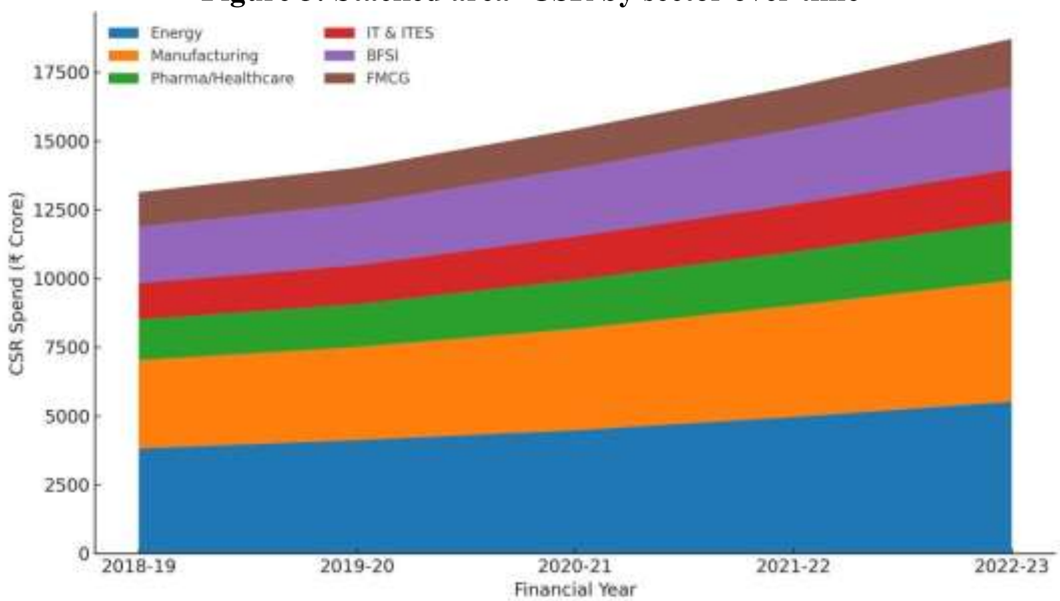
Sector	Primary SDGs (focus)	Typical themes (examples)	Data signals / notes
Energy	SDG 6, SDG 13; plus SDG 3 & 8	WASH assets & O&M; renewables for community assets; clean cooking; mobile health; local livelihoods	Large rupee share of national CSR; strong project counts near operations.
Manufacturing	SDG 4, SDG 6, SDG 9; plus SDG 13/15	School infra/STEM; piped water/toilets; rural infra/innovation labs; afforestation/waste	Balanced portfolios; potential for "model village/ward" bundling.
Pharma/Healthcare	**SDG 3** (dominant); plus SDG 9, SDG 4	NCD screening; MCH; equipment; telemedicine; paramedical skilling; small research	High thematic concentration (health outcomes).
		grants	
IT & ITES	**SDG 4, SDG 8/9**; cross-cut SDG 5	Digital classrooms; coding/AI labs; employability; incubation; women in tech	Scale via digital; equity depends on device/connectivity/vernacular.
BFSI	**SDG 8**, SDG 1/10; climate-risk links (SDG 13)	Financial literacy; micro-enterprise; livelihood finance; risk pooling/insurance pilots	Rapid growth in CSR outlay post-pandemic; inclusion focus.
FMCG	**SDG 6, SDG 3**, SDG 12	Safe water; hygiene; nutrition; plastic waste mgmt & circularity	Strong WASH & behaviorchange portfolios; rising circularity pilots.

5.5 What to improve before 2030 (actionable levers)

1. **From outputs to outcomes:** Standardize outcome KPIs per SDG theme (e.g., anemia prevalence, learning gains, sustained functionality of water assets, 6-12 month earnings for skilling), disclose them in CSR annexures and BRSR.

2. **Geographic equity:** Ring-fence a portion of large programs for Aspirational Districts; use pooled CSR vehicles to scale proven models.
3. **Consortia & convergence:** Form sector-led consortia (e.g., Energy+FMCG for WASH; IT+FMCG for nutrition-edtech; BFSI+Manufacturing for MSME clusters) aligned with state SDG roadmaps and the SDG India Index gaps.
4. **Impact assessment:** Where budgets/project size cross thresholds, publish third-party evaluations and summary dashboards to enable replication. (CSR Rules & good practice.)

Figure 5: Stacked area- CSR by sector over time



6. Conclusion

The analysis of CSR patterns in India over the five-year period from FY 2018-19 to FY 2022-23 confirms that the statutory mandate under Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 has succeeded in mobilizing substantial corporate resources toward national development priorities. Total CSR spending increased from ₹13,140 crore in FY 2018-19 to ₹18,720 crore in FY 202223, with a compounded annual growth rate of around 9%. This growth trajectory demonstrates that CSR is now an embedded component of corporate governance rather than an ad hoc philanthropic activity.

Sector-wise mapping reveals that CSR portfolios exhibit clear "comparative advantages" aligned with sectoral competencies and operational contexts. The Energy sector leads in water, sanitation, and climate-related interventions (SDGs 6 and 13), Manufacturing shows balanced investments in education, infrastructure, and environmental sustainability (SDGs 4, 6, 9, and 13), and Pharmaceuticals/Healthcare is heavily concentrated on public health (SDG 3). IT & ITES emphasizes digital education and employability (SDGs 4 and 8), BFSI focuses on financial inclusion and livelihoods (SDGs 1, 8, and 10), while FMCG directs resources toward hygiene, nutrition, and circularity (SDGs 3, 6, and 12).

Despite these sectoral strengths, the findings highlight persistent challenges. Geographic concentration of CSR expenditure remains skewed toward industrialized states Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, and Uttar Pradesh while Aspirational Districts, although receiving ₹1,402.89 crore in FY 2022-23, still require proportionally greater allocations to meet local SDG targets. Thematic concentration in certain sectors, such as Pharma's focus on health, yields depth in outcomes but risks neglecting cross-cutting goals like gender equality (SDG 5) and climate resilience (SDG 13) where sectoral engagement remains limited.

Critically, the majority of CSR reporting continues to focus on outputs such as number of beneficiaries reached or infrastructure created rather than measurable outcomes like learning gains, morbidity reduction, or sustained income growth. Without stronger impact assessment frameworks, the contribution of CSR to India's SDG 2030 agenda will remain difficult to quantify. Enhancing Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) with standardized, outcome-oriented indicators and encouraging pooled CSR programs in underserved regions could significantly improve both efficiency and equity of CSR investments.

In conclusion, India's unique combination of a statutory CSR framework and expanding ESG disclosure norms offers a powerful platform for accelerating SDG progress. To maximize this potential before 2030, stakeholders must leverage sectoral expertise, close geographic and thematic gaps, and transition from compliance-focused spending to evidence-based, outcomedriven interventions. If these shifts are implemented, CSR can play a transformative role in advancing inclusive, sustainable development in India within the SDG 2030 timeframe.

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