



Duty calls

“Every company has a special continuing responsibility towards the people of the area in which it is located and in which its employees and their families live. In every city, town or village, large or small, there is always a need for improvement, for help, for relief, for leadership and for guidance.” — JRD Tata

JRD Tata’s words echo the memorable words of Tata group Founder Jamsetji Tata’s iconic statement on the relationship between a business and the community: “The community... is in fact the very purpose of its existence.”

The idea — indeed the ideal — of responsible corporate citizenship has been at the core of the Tata way of doing business for over a century now. At Tata corporate sustainability is much more than lip service to propriety; rather, it is ingrained in the group’s DNA. Be it enabling the education of thousands of children, empowering India’s youth and women through skills and self-confidence, providing safe drinking water, or extending a hand of support to marginalised sections of the society, Tata companies believe they need to make a genuine difference wherever possible.

Sangeeta Menon talks to the corporate sustainability teams at four Tata companies to find out more about the causes that keep them going.





The first batch of graduates from the Khaultabad (Maharashtra) hospitality training centre, a joint initiative by the Taj and the nonprofit Pratham

Training for tomorrow

The Taj group of hotels has taken up education and employability as the principal points of its corporate sustainability efforts across India

Not that long ago, the Taj group's approach to corporate sustainability (CS) found expression largely in various acts of charity — for example, offering food to 'old age' homes and orphanages. But, around five years ago, the hotel group realised that it had the reach and the opportunity to do something much more meaningful for society.

"We began to see that charity only made the beneficiaries dependent on us; also, they often just took us for granted. We realised that there was greater meaning and

value in helping people become self-reliant," says Vasant Ayyappan, director, CS, Taj group.

With 'Building Sustainable Livelihoods' as its company-wide CS theme, the Taj group has now zeroed in on its key aim — providing access to skill-based education and training to India's underprivileged youth.

The group also leverages its core competencies in hospitality to look at ways to reduce malnutrition, promote indigenous artisans and craftsmen and increase employability.

MUCH NEEDED SKILLS

In 2007, Taj set up its first training centre in partnership with Pratham, an NGO (non-government organisation) that works for the cause of providing education to underprivileged youth. The centre aimed to provide training in hotel industry processes such as food production, housekeeping and food and beverage services to disadvantaged youth from the rural areas of Maharashtra's Aurangabad district. Pratham built a training facility in Khaultabad and persuaded local youth to participate in the training programmes, while Taj provided the curriculum, training of faculty, guidance for setting up the training infrastructure, industrial exposure and on-the-job training; it even provided Taj staff as visiting ▶▶



The Taj conducts training programmes for the differently abled

faculty. With the success of this pilot, Taj went on to tie up with other NGOs across the country to set up more such hospitality training centres.

Taking this training model further, the Taj group tied up with several government Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) in rural India to offer skill-based training to local youth. The group helps the institutes update their curriculum and make it relevant to the job market, facilitates the infrastructure required for the training programmes and also helps students find internship opportunities. “At the end of this year, we would have trained over 3,000 students through these tie-ups,” says Mr Ayyappan.

“These training courses prepare the students for entry-level jobs in the industry,” says Foram Nagori, manager, corporate sustainability, Taj Hotels. “More than 90 per cent of those who have undergone training so far have found employment, while the rest have either chosen to study further or help with family occupations.”

Hunar Se Rozgar (expertise to employment) is a project born

during the Delhi Commonwealth Games. In the run-up to the Games, the Delhi government had asked hotels in the national capital to train local unemployed youth in hospitality skills; with the success of the pilot, the tourism ministry is now keen on taking this model nation-wide. “Taj is a key member of the national advisory team on this initiative, which will see millions of underprivileged youth getting a chance at skill-based, industry-relevant learning and potential employment,” says Ms Nagori.

THE INCLUSIVE APPROACH

The growing spa industry in India — by 2012, the industry will need an estimated 300,000 spa therapists — provided Taj one more opportunity to build sustainable livelihoods, while feeding into business needs. The Taj group’s Jiva Spa offers three-month, intensive training in spa-services to deserving candidates from marginalised sections of society. The added incentive is an opportunity for employment with the Taj chain.

The Taj group’s Safari ventures — in the national parks in Madhya Pradesh — which showcase a unique and responsible way of enjoying nature and wildlife, also have livelihoods as an underlying idea, along with environment conservation. All safari properties are built around locally available, environment-friendly materials and local skills — terracotta walls, interiors done up with local handicrafts, structures that blend into the natural landscape and so on, and more than 60 per cent of the staff are locals who have been trained to take on various hospitality roles.

In Goa, the Taj group has tied up with Goa-based NGO Anyay Rahit Zindagi (ARZ, stands for A Life Free of Injustice) for the unique Swift Wash laundry project that is a response to Goa’s increasing sex tourism problem. The project aims to socially and economically rehabilitate sex workers who are looking for a better life. Taj supports the initiative by providing training in operating the laundry equipment, running the machines at optimum levels without wasting water and energy, maintaining high standards of hygiene and managing distribution and account books. Today Swift Wash is not only one of Taj’s Goa vendors, it also handles laundry requirements of other companies, hospitals and commercial establishments.

The CS team of the Taj group is now looking to engage in new areas for community development — energy and water management, safety management, etc. But the big idea is still the same — creating a larger impact, scaling up its efforts and making a difference in more lives. □



Taking the long-term view

By enabling community participation and focusing on the future, Tata Chemicals ensures that its corporate sustainability initiatives are meaningful

Last year, when 17 young men in north India's Babrala region, where Tata Chemicals has its fertiliser operations, set up their own individual mobile phone repair shops, it was a proud day for the company. The boys, part of a skills-building and enterprise development programme conducted by the Tata Chemicals Society for Rural

Development (TCSRDR), had evolved from unemployed youth to smart entrepreneurs earning ₹8,000-10,000 a month and managing their own business.

The Tata Chemicals corporate sustainability philosophy is based on a strong foundation of long-term vision and community participation, of which the famous Okhai project is a sterling example. Started in

Okhamandal, Gujarat, the initiative began by bringing local women together to form self-help groups (SHGs), enabling them to generate a livelihood from their traditional skills in creating exquisite applique work.

Today, Okhai has 450 members, its own retail outlets in Mithapur and Ahmedabad, and branded products sold at leading stores in Mumbai, Pune and Kolkata. "The women themselves will be taking over the initiative soon; we will withdraw from the day-to-day affairs, but continue to provide design and marketing support," says Alka Talwar, head of corporate sustainability (CS) at Tata Chemicals.

The Okhai brand has become the umbrella brand for all of TCSRDR's handicrafts and livelihood projects ➤

and has also been introduced in Babrala, Uttar Pradesh, where local artisans are involved in the traditional Mughal art of karjobi with enterprise management support from TCSRSD.

Inclusion is a crucial element in the Tata Chemicals' approach. When the company was looking to expand its Babrala plant operations, TCSRSD tied up with Larsen & Toubro (L&T) to train youth from the village of Gouripura in some of the skills required for the plant expansion programme. "Not only did the youth learn and participate, many of them went on to get employed by L&T," says Ms Talwar.

Another example of the company's commitment to inclusive and affirmative action is the rural BPO (business process outsourcing) project in Mithapur, run by the Uday Foundation, which trains rural youth to work in local BPOs. In addition to creating employment opportunities, these BPOs have also stemmed the migration to urban areas and brought hope to those often marginalised in India's growth story.

THE NATURAL WAY

TCSRSD's Natural Resources

Management (NRM) programme takes another tack – that of helping communities work responsibly with limited natural resources such as water and land.

In Gunnour, Babrala, where land salinity is a big problem, TCSRSD, in partnership with the community and the RD Tata Trust, kicked off a land reclamation project aimed at improving soil quality through a combination of efforts such as building bunds, manual ploughing, using green manure, etc. So far, 1,600 acres of land has been reclaimed and agricultural productivity has been improved by about 75-80 per cent, increasing the region's annual income by ₹40 million.

A similar project has been started in Mithapur, Gujarat by TCSRSD (in partnership with the Sir Ratan Tata Trust) that addresses coastal salinity, improved productivity and water management, focusing currently on 18 villages of Okhamandal. A drinking water project has created local sources for drinking water, along with promoting the adoption of roof rainwater harvesting systems by the community.

In Haldia, West Bengal, where ponds are the most valuable resource that people own and are integral to every village and household, the NRM programme took up the task of helping the community maximise the returns from these ponds and also improve the quality of the water. In Akubpur village, for instance, women have taken to fish culture in a big way and are looking to take it to a commercial scale.

EARTH FIRST

As a chemicals company, Tata Chemicals is deeply conscious of the impact its operations may have on the environment. The *Dharti Ko Arpan* (dedicated to the earth) programme runs several initiatives for ecology preservation, species conservation and protection of biodiversity, including the mangrove regeneration project near Mithapur, the hugely successful "Save the Whale Shark" initiative and creation of Eco Clubs to generate awareness of environmental issues.

In 2002, Tata Salt created a fund called *Desh Ko Arpan* (dedicated to the nation) to support education. For the last two years the programme has specifically targeted children of salt-pan workers whose jobs are migratory in nature; the initiative allows these children to pursue education by offering them hostel facilities, extra nutrition and also additional training in computer skills and the English language.

"We are now looking at a five-year strategy for this initiative," says Ms Talwar, adding that "CS is part of the way we do business at Tata Chemicals, part of the vision, part of the business structure; it is not, and cannot be, separate from the business." □



Women in Okhamandal, Gujarat, have benefited thanks to Tata Chemicals



Beneficiaries of the skills training programme run by Tata Motors at its plant in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

Strong bonds

Tata Motors goes the extra mile to engage with the communities that live around its plants and sites — through initiatives in spheres such as health, education, employment and environment

Growth with a commitment to social responsibility has always been the Tata Motors way of doing business. Be it in Jamshedpur (Jharkhand), Pune (Maharashtra), Pantnagar (Uttarakhand) or, more recently, the location of the Nano plant in Sanand (Gujarat), the company has built a strong

engagement with the communities surrounding its operations. Even at the new Tata Motors facility in Dharwad (Karnataka), which becomes operational at the end of FY 2011-12, the company's corporate sustainability (CS) team is already working with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences to determine opportunities for intervention based

on needs analysis. In 2010-11, the company spent ₹14.79 million on community initiatives around its plants.

Over the years, Tata Motors' community-based programmes have largely focused on four broad areas — health, education, employability and environment. Its health initiatives touch over 300,000 people every year in various ways. Its anti-leprosy campaign in Jamshedpur, for example, is one of its longest-running and most successful health initiatives: the project has seen a dramatic drop in the prevalence of leprosy in the region — from 21 cases per 1,000 persons in 1989-90 to one per 1,000 now.

Another CS effort is to improve availability of potable water in water-stressed villages. "So far, ▶▶

over 61 villages and 5,000 families have benefited from the 'Amrutdhara' project (run in collaboration with the Sumant Moolgaonkar Foundation), which aims to make safe drinking water a reality in 100 villages by 2012," says GS Uppal, head of CS, IR and administration at Tata Motors. Last year, the company contributed ₹2.78 million towards this cause.

Tata Motors also works with local NGOs and village authorities to reduce health risks by improving sanitation and hygiene — every year, it builds around 300 low-cost toilets around its plants in Pune, Sanand, Jamshedpur and Dharwad.

SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

Programmes that focus on employability and boost income-generation capabilities form a core area of the company's CS agenda — helping farmers practice new methods of farming, training women in handicraft skills, imparting skills in computers, motor mechanics, welding and so on, to youth: "It's like teaching a person to fish instead of giving them the fish — you make them self-reliant for life," points out Mr Uppal.

The apprenticeship programme at its facilities offers youth a chance to improve their technical and vocational skills and also imbibe a work ethic; around 7,000 people benefit from this programme every year. Tata Motors has also adopted 21 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) under public-private partnership initiatives to help improve their infrastructure and curriculum.

With 120,000 deaths every year, India has the highest number of road fatalities in the world and 78 per cent of accidents are caused



A member of the self-help group set up by Tata Motors at its Pune facility

by driver error. In an effort to counter this, Tata Motors launched the Driver Training Programme in August 2011, a unique initiative that enhances employability and safety by offering training in driving skills, including defensive driving, basic vehicle maintenance, stress and anger management and first aid skills. "The programme aims to train about 3.4 million drivers of light and heavy commercial vehicles over the next 10 years," says Mr Uppal.

The plan is to set up 1,690 driver-training centres in 10 years, in partnership with driving schools and other agencies, with Tata Motors providing training content and monitoring the quality of training.

GROWTH FOR ALL

In recent years, affirmative action has become a CS focus area and the company is involved in a constant process of dialogue with its dealers and suppliers to sensitise them to the issue and garner their support.

"In collaboration with the Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, we have incorporated level-2 and -3 suppliers from the marginalised sections and are enabling their inclusion in our ecosystem, including the company, supply chain and dealer network," says Mr Uppal.

Education is a vital component of the affirmative action initiative. For instance, at Sakwar, a tribal hamlet in Thane district of Maharashtra, young tribal boys (grades 8 to 12) at the Ramakrishna Mission School are given a chance to pick up life and employability skills as part of a mechanic motor training project.

"More than 170 students have undergone training so far, with 85 per cent finding employment at auto dealerships and service stations. We work with our network of dealers to help provide these students with hands-on training and experience," says Vinod Kulkarni, assistant general manager, CS, at Tata Motors. As many as 13 students have gone on to become entrepreneurs with their own garages.

In the villages around Pune, a Tata Motors employee volunteer initiative called 'Vidyadhanam' helps disadvantaged students from grades 7 to 10 with their school lessons, involves them in a range of skill-building activities, and offers scholarships to meritorious students. The project currently covers some 20 villages and 200 students.

Both these projects are in line with the Tata group's strong commitment to affirmative action, and form the foundation of its efforts to include and provide for the disadvantaged and marginalised sections of Indian society. □

The all-round approach

The long term is at the core of Tata Steel's corporate sustainability activities, which span health, education, environment, livelihoods, and land and water management

To impact a million lives. At once simple and powerful, that is the overarching corporate sustainability (CS) theme at Tata Steel. For over a century, the company has been making a difference to communities in and around its areas of operations in the Indian states of Jharkhand, Orissa and Chhattisgarh.

"Tata Steel's vision is to set global benchmarks in value creation and corporate citizenship and this journey can never be complete unless our activities encompass and impact the community," says Biren Bhuta, who heads CS at the steel major.

Continuous interaction with communities and detailed mapping of stakeholder expectations have ▶



Tata Steel's CS initiatives include the running of training projects (above) and the promotion of tribal art and culture, music and dance (below)



helped the company zero in on its focus areas for CS: sustainable livelihoods, education, health and the environment. Earlier, the company's activities were dispersed widely, and the impact of its interventions were less visible. There were no long-term plans or any well-defined manner by way of which support would be withdrawn. "The present shift is to make a much deeper impact on communities," says Mr Bhuta.

It takes the concerted effort of several departments and societies at Tata Steel to make the kind of impact that the company aims for, including medical services, urban services, the sports department, the Tata Steel Rural Development Society, the Tribal Cultural Society and the Tata Steel Family Initiatives Foundation.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Tata Steel's interventions in the area of health have brought much-needed preventive and curative facilities to communities that would otherwise have no access to medical help. "More than 200,000 people benefit annually from the company's healthcare services, ranging from primary care to specialised services like eye-care, family planning, mother and child health, TB control, HIV / Aids, leprosy and corrective operations for cleft lip and palate," says PC Mahapatra, head of the Tata Steel Family Initiatives Foundation.

Land and water management is a critical part of Tata Steel's activities aimed at fostering sustainability, where programmes for rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharging and improving agricultural yields have helped reduce distress migration.

"Our efforts have helped bring more than 10,000 acres of land under vegetable cultivation that were not being cultivated after the kharif season," says Debdoot Mohanty, secretary of the Tata Steel Rural Development Society. "In Jharkhand, where around 9 per cent of the total land is wasteland, around 13,000 acres of land have already been covered under horticulture crops, mainly cashew and mango, benefiting 4,600 farmers from 160 villages."

EMPLOYABILITY ENABLER

Thanks to the company's employability interventions, around 2,000 youth have been trained over the past three years in masonry, driving, fitting, plumbing, site safety supervision, repairs of autos, mobile phones, refrigerators and other electrical goods, and also in high-end skills required for the BPO, IT and healthcare industries. The company encourages rural enterprise development by providing financial and other assistance to set up small business units in areas such as pisciculture, vermicomposting, rice-processing, animal husbandry, etc, as well as supporting the formation of self-help groups (SHGs) among women from poor families.

Around 700 women's SHGs are operating successfully today, with members' savings amounting to about ₹35 million.

MAKING EDUCATION WORK

The company's interventions in early childhood education have showed a tremendous return with an average of 1,000 students undergoing a pre-school education programme every year. Older students get merit

scholarships. "Every year, we give scholarships to more than 650 students from the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe communities, for secondary and higher education, as well as professional courses. For 2011-12, ₹7.5 million has been earmarked for scholarships," says Urmila Ekka, the joint secretary of the Tribal Cultural Society.

For the girl child, Tata Steel conducts Camp School, a nine-month intensive residential learning course offered to students aged 9-14 years to qualify them for admission to Class VI. Run in partnership with the Jharkhand Education Society under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, India's flagship programme for countrywide elementary education.

The camp school enables around 200 girls, who have dropped out of the formal education system, to pursue courses that can help them get back into the educational mainstream. Then there are adult literacy classes for women where, every year, around 3,000 women become functionally literate.

Affirmative action is yet another focus area where Tata Steel is working to build self-belief and self-esteem among the indigenous tribal communities. The Tribal Cultural Society promotes tribal art and culture, music and dance and works towards preservation of tribal languages like Santhali and Ho.

Tata Steel has a long and well-established reputation for pioneering corporate sustainability activities, an area that today is poised for a big leap forward. Says Mr Bhuta, "The paradigms have changed; we need to shift orbits as well. We need to take that leap of faith to ensure sustainability, in the true sense, for all." □