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## UNIT 2 COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

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- 2.2 Meaning of Community Ownership in CSR Activities
- 2.3 Effective Community Engagement and Ownership
- 2.4 Strategy to be Adopted for Developing Community Ownership
- 2.5 Realizing the 'True Value' of Communities: A Case Study
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- 2.9 Check Your Progress – Possible Answers

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

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Corporate social responsibility (CSR) in India is going through an interesting phase where the need for community centered impact is increasingly becoming more important than ever before. It is not just about compliance with the laws and regulations but also about transitioning beyond the mandated CSR. Stakeholder engagement is a critical tool to ensure a comprehensive approach in carrying out responsible business and within that community ownership holds an important place. It is important because it helps in ascertaining the type and magnitude of the intervention. While most companies try and develop a comprehensive approach to engaging with communities, sometimes certain gaps restrict the efficiency of an intervention and can decrease the impact. It is, therefore, necessary to understand why there must be a shift in implementation approach i.e. from top down to bottom up. Participatory project implementation helps in developing sustainable systems and empowers the community to successfully take charge of the project.

Corporations cannot function in isolation. Their relationship with society needs to be nurtured and maintained both for sustainable business and inclusive development. Over the years, CSR has become an important aspect of Indian corporations, more so since the enactment of the CSR law in 2014. There are various ways in which the community can be integrated for the effective and efficient CSR strategy. In this unit, we will discuss how few practices not only make the community an integral part of the decision making process but also act as a catalyst for growth of the business.

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

- Define community ownership
- Discuss the factors contributing to effective community engagement and ownership
- Analyse the key strategies to be adopted for developing community ownership

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## 2.2 MEANING OF COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP IN CSR ACTIVITIES

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Community is generally defined as a group of people sharing a common purpose, who are interdependent for the fulfillment of certain needs; people who live in close proximity and interact on a regular basis. There are shared expectations for all members of the group and responsibility taken from those expectations. The group is respectful and considerate of the individuality of other persons within the community. In a community there is a sense of community, which is defined as the feelings of cooperation, of commitment to the group welfare, of willingness to communicate openly, and of responsibility to and for others as well as to one's self. Responsibility implies that the community takes ownership of the system, with all its attendant obligations and benefits/liabilities while authority indicates that the community has the legitimate right to make decision about the system. Control implies that the community has the power to implement the decisions regarding the system. Mc Common et al. (1990) are of the opinion that the control element as contained in this definition distinguishes community participation (where the government and other institutions may have control) from community management (where the community has control). The community may receive external support, but it must be the community itself that actually owns the system, makes the decisions on when to call for this support, and exercises control over access to the system. It is a model in which professionals are "on tap, not on top" (Brennan, 1994).

According to Paul (2008), Enhancing public involvement in community planning and development efforts has been promulgated on developing and acquiring "buy-in" which signifies the support, involvement or commitment of interested or affected parties to a community development proposal, plan, strategy or decision. Buy-in is a term used in securities markets, business management and even poker playing to signify the commitment of stakeholders to a decision by agreeing to and supporting the formulation of a process with an interest and influence in the outcome. The term ownership (or sense of ownership) is increasingly cited as a critical element in determining the potential for buy-in and, consequently, public involvement in community planning and development efforts. For example, the term ownership has been specifically used in community development contexts. The term is popular in environmental policy literature and in sociology, education and curriculum development, and organizational behavior. As with the term "sense of place," the term ownership is also referred to as "sense of ownership".

Community ownership here refers to ownership undertaken by community in partnership with external organizations or corporation to empower individuals and groups of people by providing these groups with the skills they need to effect change in their own communities. These skills are often concentrated around making use of local resources and building political power through the formation of large social groups working for a common agenda. Community organizers or key persons must understand both how to work with individuals and how to affect community's position within the context of larger social institutions. Community ownership is the process of developing active and sustainable communities based on social justice and mutual respect. It is about influencing power structures to remove the barriers that prevent people from participating in the issues that affect their lives. Community workers facilitate the participation

of people in this process. They enable linkages to be made between communities and with the development of wider policies and programmes.

Community ownership is the combined processes, programmes, strategies, and activities that make a community sustainable as compared to economic development, which is the marketing of its potential for growth followed by local efforts to act on opportunities. The entire set of approaches to community development practice may be considered a specialized form addressing, coordinating and building the social infrastructure at a location. Community ownership is people working together voluntarily to achieve their own initiatives using available resources.

Karikari (1996) and Yelbert (1999) identified the key principles of community ownership and management as a situation where the community has legal ownership and control of the services, including formal agreements with the project agency. Ownership requires that the community contribute real (not token) cash of between 5 - 10% to the capital cost of facilities and setting up a committee/board for managing the facility. Community ownership and management therefore implies community participation, willingness and ability to pay for services to ensure sustainability of the services.

**Example: Bajaj Auto Ltd. (BAL) Project on Sanitation Programme in Collaboration with Government and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)**

Bajaj Auto Ltd. (BAL) is a flagship company of the Bajaj group. It is one of the leading 2 and 3 wheeler companies of India. For years, BAL has been providing quality 2 and 3 wheelers at an affordable price while maintaining the highest ethical standards within the industry. The Company started a Samaj Seva Kendra in 1974 near its plant in Akurdi, Pune to meet the socio-economic requirements of the community around it. Later, in 1987, it established the Jankidevi Bajaj Gram Vikas Sanstha (JBGVS) at Pune for the development of the rural poor. JBGVS now implements integrated rural development programmes in selected 85 villages in Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

**Genesis:** The situation of the villages around Pune, 25 years back was very different than what we see today. People were living in abject poverty and unhygienic conditions; hardly any sanitary latrines existed in the villages around. The workers of Bajaj Auto used to come from nearby villages. In the mid 80's they started requesting for both financial and technical support for the construction of latrines and biogas plants. Initially Bajaj Auto used to give interest free loans for the above mentioned programmes, but after JBGVS took up the cause, these programmes were supplemented with small scale lift irrigation schemes to make water available for both household use and irrigation. The latrines were constructed with technical and managerial support from JBGVS, the Government subsidy and the contribution from the co-partner. Biogas plants were also established in a similar way. Soon, the sanitation programme became the center point of all activities. Slowly other programmes like education, income generation, environment, social development etc., evolved and took shape in form of an integrated model, as we see it today.

**Sanitation Programme:** As mentioned above, JBGVS has been in the forefront of implementing the environmental sanitation programme, which entails, construction of latrines, biogas plants, soak pits, improved cooking stoves, etc.

**Selection of project area:** JBGVS works in selected villages (85) around the Bajaj Auto plants in Pune, Aurangabad & Uttarakhand and districts like Sikar in Rajasthan, which is the birth place of late Shri. Jammalal Bajaj, the founder of the Bajaj group, and Wardha in Maharashtra, his place of work. However, for the sanitation project, JBGVS has worked in partnership with the Government & other NGOs to cover a large number of villages particularly in Pune.

**Toilet design and model/technologies:** JBGVS, since its inception has been promoting two pit latrines using bricks & cements. The UNICEF and the Government of Maharashtra approve this model. The latrine pans are especially designed to reduce water consumption. For the school sanitation project, toilets are being constructed separately for boys and girls in Government schools using the two pits and septic tanks technology. The selection of design depends on the number of students in the school.

**Stakeholders:** For proper implementation of the project, they partner with the villagers, Government agencies, members of gram panchayats, mahila mandals, women SHGs, other NGOs, etc. The stakeholders are called co partners and not beneficiaries.

**Implementation Model:** In the beginning of the 90's, JBGVS used to construct low cost household latrines using their own manpower. While the masons used to work on contract basis, the beneficiaries provided the unskilled labor and the materials were supplied by JBGVS. Technical support was also provided by JBGVS to a few NGOs for construction of latrines. Presently, JBGVS works in partnership with *gram panchayats*, and provides technical & financial support. The construction part is taken care of by the respective *gram panchayats*.

**Partnership with Government agencies:** JBGVS works with *gram panchayats*, *panchayat samittee* and *zilla parishads* for the implementation of the sanitation programme. Because of longer involvement in the sanitation programme, the Maharashtra Government recognized JBGVS as the key resource centre for the state. JBGVS represents the Maharashtra Government to inspect villages for screening under the Nirmal Gram Scheme of the Central Government.

**Linking with Government schemes:** Presently JBGVS works with *gram panchayats*, provides technical & financial support to successfully implement Government schemes under which subsidies are available.

**Awareness programme to change mindset:** JBGVS has been designated as the Key Resource Centre by the Maharashtra Government. It conducts awareness programmes in villages in association with several NGOs, villages selected by the Government under Nirmal Gram etc. JBGVS's technical team conducts these programmes. Three aspects are emphasized, namely- the importance of cleanliness of villages from the health point of view,

technologies available and advantages of having a latrine at home. Pamphlets, booklets etc. are prepared by JBGVS and used for this purpose.

**Reaching out:** JBGVS implements the sanitation programme in the project villages, besides helping the government and other NGOs. Under the programme, the entire gamut of 'Environmental Sanitation' is covered, i.e., promotion of low cost latrine, biogas plants, soak pits, improved cooking stoves, etc. These technologies help in keeping the home as well as the village clean.

**Sustainability:** Sustainability is a major issue in any development programme. The partnership model involving the village community, local Government agencies and opinion leaders ensures sustainability of the sanitation programme. Once the construction is complete, JBGVS has a regular monitoring & follow up mechanism, which has been built-in, in the 'Integrated Rural Development Programme'. This helps a lot in the sustainability.

**Ensuring ownership of the community members:** JBGVS promotes only low-cost household level latrines, sanitation units in schools, family size bio-gas plants & soak pits to name a few. Since the households own the latrines, biogas plants and soak pits, they focus on the beneficiaries and their education. Village level institutions like *mahila mandals*, *gram panchayats*, youth groups, etc., are also involved so that there is community level pressure on co partners. School sanitation units are handed over to the respective schools and the school management is responsible for the maintenance.

**Lessons learnt:** Being an implementing agency that has worked in the field of rural sanitation for more than 26 years, the following lessons were learned:

- Before taking up the sanitation programme, it is essential to take up extensive motivational and awareness programmes as the intervention involves changing habits of people.
- Involve the entire community, *gram panchayats*, local institutions and particularly women at every stage (from planning to implementation) to ensure sustainability.
- Choose a technology/model, which is long lasting & user friendly.
- Ensure that water is available near the latrine to maintain cleanliness.
- Teach the use of latrines to the community.
- If the programme is implemented under CSR-NGO model, the company should study the credibility of the NGO, model selected and the ability of the NGO to motivate the community.
- The NGO should not act as a contractor.
- Try to leverage CSR funds with the Government and other agencies to increase outreach.

**Impacts:** During and after the implementation of projects, a survey was conducted, which indicate that the programme has created the following impacts:

**Key Outcomes of CSR**

- Reduced water borne diseases.
- Reduced foul smell at village surroundings.
- Changed the habit of open defecation by using toilets.
- Increased participation in all village development activities.
- Provided social security and saved embarrassment to women.
- School attendance increased due to reduction of various diseases.
- General health condition improved.

**Activity 1**

Make a visit to one non government organization or any development project funded under CSR in your locality/state/district/field site and document the process and phases of the development of ‘sense of ownership’ among the community people, towards the projects undertaken by the organization. Compare their views as given in this section and write your observations.

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**Check Your Progress - 1**

**Note:** a) Use the spaces given below for your answers.  
b) Check your answer with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) What do you understand by community and community ownership?  
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- 2) What are the key principles of community ownership and management as identified by Karikari (1996) and Yelbert (1999)?  
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- 3) What do you understand by ensuring ownership of the community members in CSR funded project on Sanitation Programme as discussed in the given example from the field?

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## 2.3 EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OWNERSHIP

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Some of the critical factors that contribute to effective community engagement leading to ownership are as follows:

- 1) **Intervention Area:** It is important that the company is familiar with the area and its people where it is planning an intervention. One of the primary things to keep in mind is to spend as much time as possible in understanding the dynamics of the community. Stakeholder analysis and engagement activities play a vital role in this. Connecting with people directly associated with the community gives insightful information regarding the type of necessary interventions required, the relevant approach and appropriate method. NGOs play an important role in bridging this knowledge gap if the intervention area is new. Another thing to keep in mind while determining the area is the monitoring and evaluation cost associated with the intervention. Such costs shouldn't be too high since it takes away the necessary resources allocated to the community and diverts it to the operational costs, which minimizes the impact of the project intervention.
- 2) **Needs Assessment:** No amount of secondary data on a community can validate the needs of the community as much as they themselves. The nature of the existing relationship between the company and the community is important because the ease of community engagement depends on that. If the company has been working with the community for long, group discussions within the community with target groups like women, children, institutional members, etc. can suffice the necessary information required. However, if the community is new then it is advisable that a thorough baseline survey coupled with exhaustive group discussions and stakeholder discussions are held.
- 3) **Alignment with CSR Policy:** While the needs of the community can vary from the CSR thematic focus of the companies, it is important to find ways of integrating and aligning them. For example, if one of the primary needs of the community surfaces as food and nutrition requirements of the school going children but health is not amongst the focus area of the company; it can still be addressed by designing an intervention in such a way that proper nutritional requirements of school children are ensured through midday meals which are mandated in schools. This way, the company is still focusing

on its thematic focus area - Education and yet can meet the critical needs of the community.

- 4) **Building Stakeholder Inter linkages:** Developing inter linkages between stakeholders helps in increasing transparency and accountability between them. The intervention should focus on regular engagements within the stakeholders where problems are raised, addressed and solutions are talked about collectively.
- 5) **Regular Participatory Review and Reflection Meetings:** Regular meetings with the communities help in understanding the progress of the intervention as well determining measures to fill the gaps. The community also feels that the company is genuinely interested in their betterment and therefore a mutually benefitting relationship is formed. Such regular meetings also help in improving, rethinking strategies so that impact can be improved.
- 6) **Capacity Building of the Community Key Members:** One of the key ways in improving community participation and empowerment is to build the capacity of community members that can be identified at the onset of the intervention. Key members of the community can either be a part of the project implementation team or can act as extended team members. Such members can prove to be huge assets to the project but they need appropriate guidance and skill building avenues first. It is vital to understand that the community members have different skill sets and are not completely devoid of them. They just need the correct guidance to complete the project team loop. Companies should, therefore, spend sufficient resources on their capacity building so that they can be local leads of the project and primary representatives of the project within the community.
- 7) **Community-based MIS:** community based systems are very helpful in developing community ownership of the project. One of the key factors contributing to an impactful project is the extent of community ownership integrated within the systems. Capacitating the community to set up an information management system locally is a powerful empowering tool. It helps the community to track progress independently and focus on gaps.
- 8) **Community-led Monitoring:** Monitoring and evaluation are typically seen as a top down approach. Even in the very detailed collaborative approaches, we fail to recognize the importance of community-led monitoring of interventions. It is important to etch out the frontline monitoring of activities through the identified community members as it helps in avoiding day-to-day glitches of the interventions. These day-to-day hindrances can be quite cumbersome and costly for the project team alone to handle. A well networked inward and outward information flow from the community through the project teams and subsequently to the stakeholders is an ideal form of communication, which impacts an intervention positively.



**Activity 2**

Visit any government or non government organization implementing MGNREGA programme and ask how they are assessing community needs in Gram Sabha. Write your observations.

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**Check Your Progress - 2**

**Note:** a) Use the spaces given below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) What are some of the critical factors that contribute to effective community engagement leading to ownership?

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- 2) What do you understand by community-led monitoring in CSR projects? Give an example to support your answer.

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**2.4 STRATEGY TO BE ADOPTED FOR DEVELOPING COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP**

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Key factors have to be kept in mind by companies that are willing to launch a community engagement and ownership strategy. As a matter of fact, for a company that has already gained some local license to operate, a wrong step can mean going back to starting point again, and lose all legitimacy that it struggled to conquer.

Four key aspects are identified that a company should keep in mind when launching local CSR programmes:

- i) Sustainability
- ii) Co-creation
- iii) Local team
- iv) Long-term investment

**i) Sustainability**

Ensuring that a CSR initiative is sustainable is primarily achieved by developing a healthy relationship with local communities and working with them as partners. Rather than treating them like beneficiaries and mere receptacles of corporate donations, the company should work on teaming up with the community, and other local stakeholders like the government, rural entrepreneurs, etc., to create winning collaborations that can sustain over the/ long-term.

**Example**

A leading materials manufacturing company with plants across India has worked on the creation of institutional structures that are community owned and community-led and can create a strong foundation for the sustainability and in the long term, self sufficiency of CSR operations. This/ company is now working with local community based organizations that have a deep relationship with the local community, and funds the formation of self help groups, producer co-operatives and farmer groups, including support in provision of financial access, training, capacity building and development of local infrastructure. Over the last 3-4 years, the company has managed to create over 4,000/ such groups and leveraged over one third of the investment in partnership with the government.

**ii) Co-creation**

As sustainability, co-creation is crucial to ensure that the community has a stake in the development scheme, and hence fully engages in order to achieve the success of the CSR initiative. Co-creating solutions with the community, rather than adopting a top down approach, is the best way to ensure these will be feasible, accepted, and successful. This means that the company will not necessarily implement the exact strategy it had planned. On the contrary, it requires a sense of compromise and adaptation to how the community envisions its own development.

**Example**

Danone has adopted this principle in its CSR activity. The Danone Ecosystem Fund has been created to support all stakeholders involved in Danone's ecosystem (small agricultural producers, small suppliers, proximity distributors, etc.) in order to generate powerful social change. The Fund is designed to support initiatives with general interest purposes, which are identified by Danone subsidiaries in the territories where they operate. Selected initiatives add value in three areas: employment, skills and employability, and micro entrepreneurship. The Fund works with a manager from Danone and a partner from the non profit sector to co-design, co-manage and co-monitor the project over time. NGOs or community-based organizations facilitate dialogue between communities and provide expert knowledge of the local context. This co-creation process commits Danone to evolving its practices and models through partnerships with local experts.

### iii) Local Team

Having a dedicated implementing team on the ground is an essential feature. A local team, contrary to a corporate one, lies at the interface between the company and the community. By its knowledge of the field, it can easily avoid mistakes and it can re-orient the strategy as soon as difficulties or blockages emerge. In addition, its proximity with the community is the guarantee of continuous corporate/community dialogue and personal engagement of team members in initiatives that affect their own community.

#### Example

A large health insurance company, Max India, has adopted this approach in its nationwide immunization programme in India, as part of its CSR initiatives: the programme is solely run through partnerships with local non profits in remote villages. These local non profits work intimately with the community, understand the socio-cultural context and are able to track the patients' progress and issues throughout the year making health a year-round activity rather than merely during the health camp. Complementing the efforts of these non profit partners, local units of the insurance company (doctors and other health professionals) volunteer skills and expertise to the health camps over week ends, thus ensuring that local teams are strong from both a technical and community linkage perspective.

### iv) Long term investment

Finally, long term investment is the condition for success of local CSR initiatives and of their most valuable outcomes. As a matter of fact, what is most valuable in CSR initiatives is also what takes more time to be built: trust, social license to operate and reputation, and the belief that the corporate will stay with the community in attaining the long term social outcomes like better health, infrastructures or livelihoods. Long term engagement is thus crucial if the company is willing to achieve these objectives, by establishing a trustful relation with the community. Without mutual trust, the money invested can be frittered away in mere activities and the initiative's impact can become unsustainable.

#### Example

This principle guided Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), a technology company of the TATA group, when 12 years ago it started a pioneering Computer Based Functional Literacy programme following their core philosophy of "bringing together your core competencies to serve the community". The project has been using computers, multimedia presentations and printed material to teach uneducated adults the most basic of the three R's: reading. Through partnerships with NGOs, TCS' training programme has reached over 200,000/ people, and emphasizes how long term vision in programme design and investment can lead to significant social innovation that brings together the core expertise of a company with the social expertise of non profit partners. Since its launch, the software has been translated in nine/ Indian languages and in Arabic, has travelled to Africa, and has cut learning time for each learner from 200/ hours to just 40 hours.

**Check Your Progress - 3**

**Note:** a) Use the spaces given below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) What are four key aspects that a company should keep in mind when launching local CSR programmes?

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- 2) Discuss how to ensure that a CSR initiative is sustainable. Give example to support your answer.

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- 3) Why is long term investment crucial for the success of local CSR initiatives?

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**2.5 REALIZING THE ‘TRUE VALUE’ OF COMMUNITIES: A CASE STUDY**

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**CSR at Ambuja Cements: A Case Study**

The CSR interventions cannot be uniform across different regions. A company/foundation should design an area specific plan based on the potential of the village and its dwellers. The range of activities has to be diverse and updated according to the demand of the villagers and the market. Field based reports on CSR interventions suggest that a particular activity can be running successfully in one village but can be a failure in another village. There were socio-economic factors at play such as religion of the beneficiaries, the average age of the villagers, the accessibility to the market, etc. The company/foundation should be able to identify the different factors that might interact with their CSR strategy and then plan the interventions accordingly.

To illustrate our point, a detailed case study of a company, which has implemented an ambitious CSR programme in India is hereby presented. Ambuja Cements - a part of the global cement conglomerate, Lafarge Holcim, and one of the leading cement industry players in India since 1986. The community has always been a primary stakeholder for Ambuja Cements Ltd. (ACL) and the company has a long history of innovating for sustainability and social impact, presented at the forefront by its 'True/ Value' initiative.

ACL believes that 'True value' is the result of environmental and social value adding to economic value. The core objective of the corporate responsibility projects at Ambuja is to empower communities to recognize their true value and work towards its fulfillment - with Ambuja serving as a catalyst to help the community develop with the same strides as the company. ACL focuses on agro- and skill-based livelihoods and entrepreneurship, water management, women's empowerment, health and sanitation and other related issues across the communities around its factories and areas of operations (21 locations in 11 States).

All CSR initiatives at Ambuja are driven by a dedicated foundation –

Ambuja Cement Foundation (ACF), with over 439 members in its countrywide CSR team – that was set up 23 years ago with the idea of bringing together professionals working with a systematic and strategic approach towards solving community issues.

The reach and impact statistics achieved by ACL over the last 3-4/ years reveals a sustained process of community development and empowerment:

- 25,000 youth trained in over 38 locally relevant trades with a 75 % placement rate;
- 28,000+ farmers supported in capacity building, cost optimization and yield increase through the Better Cotton Initiative;
- 1,142 SHGs promoted and supported with a focus on livelihoods and empowerment (two federations have been promoted as apex organizations);
- ACF has extensively worked on water resources development management at several locations by supporting communities for construction and/or renovations of more than 2,000 different water harvesting structures. The extensive programme on water has helped ACL achieve the water positive status four times (assured by Det Norske Veritas - DNV).

The following CSR practices and principles at Ambuja Cements have ensured buy in, whole hearted participation and ownership among the community and are worth emulating:

### 1) A bottom up approach to assessing needs

All ACL programmes are designed through bottom up need assessment discussions. Ambuja's Foundation has set up a rigorous process of assessing local community needs through multiple rounds of focused discussions that bring together women's groups, farmers, youth, village administration and local panchayats (elected local governing boards in India). The programme design is

based solely on what the community resonates with as important issues to them. This ensures subsequent buy in and cooperation in all activities undertaken by the Foundation.

## **2) Collectivization and community empowerment**

ACF actively promotes community ownership, control, access and maintenance of resources through peoples' participation and strengthening of community based institutions. ACF has funded and encouraged the formation of many such groups like associations gathering water users, Pani Samitis (local committees on sanitation and water), Watershed Committees, Farmer Groups, co-operatives or self help groups (SHGs). For instance, in Sanand, Ahmedabad, the Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) project was implemented with 36 Irrigation Cooperative Societies and 3,408 farmers with 5,150 ha of land. Their work has earned the 21 Water User Associations a one time functional grant of INR 4.6 million (€ 60 000) from Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Ltd., and other grants. In Chandrapur, Maharashtra, ACF has been focusing on Community-led Total Sanitation since the last 2 years – village development committees are promoted and strengthened through rigorous processes and capacity building programmes. This has resulted in nine villages achieving 100 % toilet coverage and overall improvement in general sanitary condition. A similar programme is being replicated at other locations as well.

Several SHGs and farmer groups trained 3-4 years ago have now further aggregated as federations at the district level. These federations have also been able to take up and replicate models like the Open-Defecation Free efforts of the ACF in neighboring villages, furthering the impact.

## **3) Leveraging native wisdom**

ACF has always worked by leveraging the traditional knowledge systems of the local community to craft local solutions to issues. For example, in the water scarce areas of Rajasthan, ACF worked by reviving traditional water harvesting structures called khadins, which prolong irrigation throughout the year. ACF has local teams, numbering anywhere between two and 40, to implement programs on the ground, supported by the last mile community mobilizers such as sakhis (healthcare) or bal mitras (education).

## **4) Partnerships and sustainability**

ACF has actively reached out to build partnerships with local banks, non profit institutions, other companies, development agencies, policy makers and the Government in a process to make ACF projects sustainable through effective collaboration. Examples of partnering are many : ACF implemented 550/ rooftop harvesting systems under the Coastal Area Development Programme supported by WASMO, an agency of Government of Gujarat ; Gruh Finance has provided revolving fund to federations promoted by ACF for sanitation and income generation programme; NABARD has partnered on watershed projects, micro irrigation promotion, skill training etc. at several locations ; Apollo Tyres partnered for awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS at four locations ; Schneider, Taj and other companies have partnered on various skill development initiatives, etc. In 2014-15, 14 % of the total budget spent on ACF programmes was leveraged from the Government and donor agencies, 13 % came from people's contribution and 18 % was facilitated directly to communities on various development projects.

**5) Empowering women in the community**

ACF supports as many as 1,142 self help groups (SHGs) across locations, facilitating change through the creation of empowered women’s groups. ACF supports the entrepreneurial activities of these SHGs through funding, regular training, and promoting income generating activities.

Women from various villages have been stepping out of the shadow and creating a difference in their roles as a sakhi, a bal mitra, an artisan, a farmer or an entrepreneur. Across locations, women in SHGs are involved in activities such as dairy development, nurseries, vegetable farming, mushroom cultivation, incense stick making, handicrafts and food processing. These activities have been instrumental in creating a value for women’s work while strengthening their entrepreneurial spirit.

**6) Process and Systems Rigor**

From utilizing the strengths of a central management and distributed implementation team for efficient functioning, to creating rigorous field reports and documentation, comprehensive monitoring of outputs and third party audits for completed programmes, case study booklets and knowledge dissemination, ACF has put in place the necessary rigour and systems to realize a strategic long term CSR programme that is deeply connected to the local contexts and communities around the 22 plants across the country. For Ambuja Cements Ltd, the 2013 Companies Act has only served to enhance reporting of work as the company has always been spending more than the stipulated two percent of its profits on community development.

**Check Your Progress – 4**

**Note:** a) Use the spaces given below for your answers.

b) Check your answer with those given at the end of the unit.

1) What do you understand by the term ‘true value of the community’?

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2) What CSR practices and principles ensure buy in, whole hearted participation and ownership among the community?

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## 2.6 LET US SUM UP

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While the terms ownership and a sense of ownership have been applied in various disciplines and contexts, no formal or comprehensive description and explanation has yet been offered in the context of CSR initiative development projects. However in the unit, an attempt is made to understand the process and steps involved in handing over the ownership of development programmes to the community. The factors contributing to it, the strategy required and the importance of realizing the true value of the community is discussed using case illustration from the CSR projects.

At the same time, the term, sense of ownership is frequently cited as a significant characteristic of community development. While there is increasing use of the terms ownership or sense of ownership, there is a paucity of research regarding what these terms mean, how this body of knowledge influences community development, and the various approaches that can be applied in contemporary community research and practice. A sense of ownership in community development is described as a concept through which to assess whose voice is heard, who has influence over decisions, and who is affected by the process and outcome. Applying the concept of ownership can determine how the strategic interests and actions of individuals or organizations contribute to community development efforts. In addition, the potential for ownership can be understood in part by examining the capacity for and quality of trust. Implications are discussed regarding how the concept of ownership advances the current field, specifically regarding CSR's community development initiatives.

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## 2.7 KEYWORDS

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**Community-owned assets:** Community owned assets or organizations are those that are owned and controlled through some representative mechanism that allows a community to influence their operation or use and to enjoy the benefits arising. Benefits of community ownership in infrastructure projects such as dams and irrigation are claimed to include increased responsiveness to needs of that community and the community valuing the projects more highly.

**CSR Initiatives** : The term 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR) can be referred as a corporate initiative to assess and take responsibility for the company's effects on the environment and impact on social welfare. They use CSR to integrate economic, environmental and social objectives with the company's operations and growth.

**Development Projects** : A project that sets up organizations, networks and tools that have an impact in terms of synergy and development for the community, a sector, region, etc. A development project can generate or drive other projects and gather actors from



different horizons to work towards a common objective.

**Community Engagement:** It is “a dynamic relational process that facilitates communication, interaction, involvement, and exchange between an organization and a community for a range of social and organizational outcomes. As a concept, engagement features attributes of connection, interaction, participation, and involvement, designed to achieve or elicit an outcome at individual, organization, or social levels. Current research acknowledges engagement’s socially situated nature. Community engagement therefore offers an ethical, reflexive, and socially responsive approach to community-organizational relationships with engagement practices that aim to both understand and be responsive to community needs, views, and expectations.” ([http://itss.uok.edu.in/Files/7a3103e5-b5fc-4a26-aae3-f0b5049e7faa/Menu/Community\\_Engagement\\_199c96e4-7290-48c9-928c-21e8405ae577.pdf](http://itss.uok.edu.in/Files/7a3103e5-b5fc-4a26-aae3-f0b5049e7faa/Menu/Community_Engagement_199c96e4-7290-48c9-928c-21e8405ae577.pdf))

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## 2.9 CHECK YOUR PROGRESS – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress – 1

**Answer 1:** Community is generally defined as a group of people sharing a common purpose, who are interdependent for the fulfillment of certain needs, who live in close proximity and interact on a regular basis. Community ownership, here, refers to ownership undertaken by community with partnership with external organizations or corporations to empower individuals and groups of people by providing these groups with the skills they need to effect change in their own communities.

**Answer 2:** Karikari (1996) and Yelbert (1999) identified the key principles of community ownership and management as a situation where the community has legal ownership and control of the services, including formal agreements with the project agency.

**Answer 3:** It means involving village level institutions like *mahila mandals*, *gram panchayats*, youth groups, etc., so that there is community level pressure on co-partners. For example, JBGVS promotes only low cost household level latrines, sanitation units in schools, family size biogas plants and soak pits to name a few. Since the households own the latrines, biogas plants and soak pits, we focus on the beneficiaries and their education. School sanitation units are handed over to the respective schools and the school management is responsible for the maintenance.

### Check Your Progress – 2

**Answer 1:** Intervention Area; Needs Assessment; Alignment with CSR Policy; Building stakeholder inter linkages; Regular Participatory Review and Reflection Meetings; Capacity Building of The Community Key Members; Community based MIS; Community led Monitoring.

**Answer 2:** It is the frontline monitoring of activities through the identified community members as it helps in avoiding day-to-day glitches of the interventions. These day-to-day hindrances can be quite cumbersome and costly for the project team alone to handle.

### Check Your Progress – 3

**Answer 1:** Four key aspects are identified that a company should keep in mind when launching local CSR programmes:

- Sustainability

- Co-creation
- Local team
- Long-term investment

**Answer 2:** Ensuring that a CSR initiative is sustainable is primarily achieved by developing a healthy relationship with local communities and working with them as partners. Rather than treating them like beneficiaries and mere receptacle of corporate donations, the company should work on teaming up with the community, and other local stakeholders like the Government, rural entrepreneurs, etc. to create winning collaborations that can sustain over the/ long term. For example, a leading materials' manufacturing company with plants across India has worked on the creation of institutional structures that are community owned and community led and can create a strong foundation for the sustainability and in the long term, self sufficiency of CSR operations. This/ company is now working with local community based organizations that have a deep relationship with the local community, and funds the formation of self help groups, producer co-operatives and farmer groups, including support in provision of financial access, training, capacity building and development of local infrastructure. Over the last 3-4 years, the company has managed to create over 4,000/such groups and leveraged over one third of the investment in partnership with the government.

**Answer 3:** Long term investment is the condition for success of local CSR initiatives and of their most valuable outcomes, in terms of building trust, social license to operate and reputation, and the belief that the corporate will stay with the community in attaining the long term social outcomes like better health, infrastructures or livelihoods. Without mutual trust, the money invested can be frittered away in mere activities and the initiative's impact can become unsustainable.

#### Check Your Progress – 4

**Answer 1:** The community has always been a primary stakeholder for any CSR initiatives. 'True value of the community' is to empower communities to recognize their true value and work towards its fulfillment. For example Ambuja Cements Ltd. (ACL) and the company has a long history of innovating for sustainability and social impact, presented at the forefront by its 'True/ Value' initiative, serving as a catalyst to help the community develop with the same strides as the company.

**Answer 2:** A bottom up approach to assessing needs; collectivization and community empowerment; leveraging native wisdom; partnerships and sustainability; empowering women in the community.