

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY IN INDIAN INDUSTRIES



EARTH SUSTAINABILITY SOLUTIONS

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AUTHORS



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KEY FINDINGS

- CSR spending in India has grown steadily, with the highest investments directed toward education, skill development, and healthcare.
- In FY 2023–24, CSR expenditure was highest in Maharashtra, followed by Gujarat and Karnataka, reflecting strong regional corporate engagement.
- Spending on environmental CSR remains substantially lower in comparison to social sector investments.
- In FY 2023–24, the environmental sector received ₹3,459.05 crore from 5,280 companies, with Maharashtra contributing the largest share.
- In 2023–24, Kerala received ₹387.91 crore in CSR funding from 633 companies across 14 districts, with Ernakulam receiving the highest share.
- Kerala reported ₹22.23 crore in environmental CSR spending in FY 2023–24 from 84 contributing companies, ranking 18th nationally.
- Although Kerala shows gradual progress in CSR adoption, the state's overall contribution remains low, underscoring the need for significantly greater scale and sustained commitment to CSR initiatives.

CITATION

Noorja S. Anand, Vaishnavi V. J., & Feba S. Paul. (2025). Corporate Social Responsibility in Indian Industries: Info & Policy Brief No.011. Earth Sustainability Solutions, Kochi, India.

WHO WE ARE

Earth Sustainability Solutions is a climate-focused organization dedicated to advancing global efforts toward sustainability and Net Zero targets. We offer comprehensive services in carbon offsetting, environmental clearances, CSR initiatives, and nature-based education to support the Sustainable Development Goals. With decades of combined experience across global and local projects, we provide innovative, scalable, and impact-oriented solutions for climate change and environmental resilience.

INTRODUCTION

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a sustainability-driven business approach that promotes ethical, accountable, and socially responsible practices. Globally, CSR has evolved from philanthropy to a strategic governance tool shaped by frameworks like the UN Global Compact, with developed economies emphasizing climate action, labour rights, diversity, and community development. In India, CSR rooted in ancient welfare traditions and industrial philanthropy was formalized through the Companies Act, 2013, evolving into structured, SDG-aligned initiatives with measurable outcomes. In Kerala, CSR plays an important role in sustainable development, with companies focusing on education, healthcare, women empowerment, environmental protection, and livelihood enhancement, aligning with state and national priorities (Government of Kerala, 2022; Government of India, 2023; MCA, 2023).

CSR COMPANIES ACT, 2013

Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 mandates CSR compliance for companies with a net worth of ₹500 crore or more, turnover of ₹1,000 crore or more, or net profit of ₹5 crore or more in a financial year. Eligible companies must establish a CSR Committee with at least three directors, including one independent director, to formulate CSR policy (aligned with Schedule VII), recommend annual expenditure, and oversee implementation and reporting of CSR activities.

CSR SCHEDULE VII ACTIVITIES

-  Eradicating Hunger, Poverty and Malnutrition
-  Promoting Education and Skill Development
-  Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
-  Environmental Sustainability
-  Cultural Preservation and National Heritage
-  Support Armed Forces and Veterans
-  Encouraging Sports
-  Contributions to National Relief Fund.
-  Support for Research and Development
-  Rural Development Projects.
-  Slum Area Development and others

METHODS

This study used a mixed-method approach, combining secondary data from the MCA CSR portal, reports, and publications with primary data from surveys and interviews with CSR representatives in Kerala. The analysis focused on CSR spending from 2019–2024, with emphasis on FY 2023–24, examining sectoral allocations, regional trends, and environmental initiatives. This approach provided both quantitative and qualitative insights into CSR practices, highlighting sustainability efforts nationally and in Kerala.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A sector-wise comparison of CSR expenditure for the period 2019–2024 is presented in Table 1. Between FY 2019–20 and FY 2023–24, CSR allocations in India reflect a strategic emphasis on education and skill development, which saw a near 70% increase to ₹16,287.78 crore. Significant investments were also directed toward poverty alleviation and environmental sustainability, while sectors such as gender equality, sports, and cultural heritage demonstrated consistent year-on-year growth, indicating a broadening scope of corporate engagement.

Table 1. CSR Spent Development Sector-Wise

Sl. No	Development Sectors	Financial Year				
		2019-20 (INR. Cr.)	2020-21 (INR. Cr.)	2021-22 (INR. Cr.)	2022-23 (INR. Cr.)	2023-24 (INR. Cr.)
1	Promoting Education and Skill Development	9635.35	8559.05	8845.27	13644.83	16287.78
2	Eradicating Hunger, Poverty and Malnutrition	6840.56	9275.51	10460.14	8997.92	9087.41
3	Environmental Sustainability and Ecological Balance	1804.64	1336.6	2926.58	3985.4	3459.05
4	Rural Development Projects	2301.02	1850.71	1847.07	2059.41	2408.09
5	Gender Equality and Empowering Women	694.71	522.52	744.09	946.01	1092.38
6	Contributions to National Relief Fund	798.43	1698.38	1229.35	855.23	589.61
7	Encouraging Sports	304	243.39	311.71	542.53	692.09
8	Cultural Preservation and National Heritage	933.57	493.13	260.39	449.21	704.04
9	Others	1653.54	2231.66	516.84	451.52	588.31

(Source: National CSR Portal)

The top 10 states by CSR expenditure are illustrated in Figure 1. In FY 2023–24, CSR spending was led by Maharashtra, followed by Gujarat, Karnataka, and others.

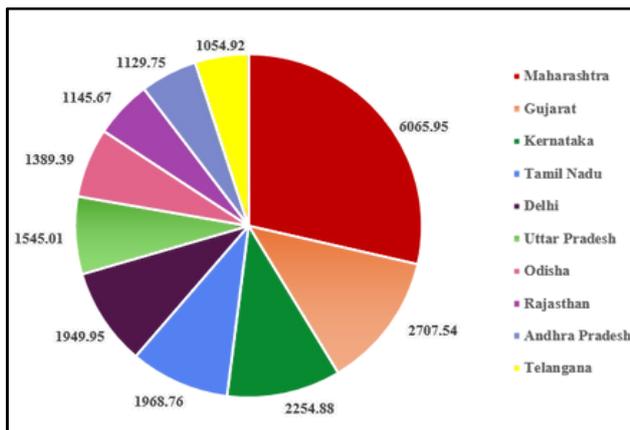


Figure 1. Top 10 States by CSR Expenditure in FY 2023–24

The top 10 companies by CSR expenditure are illustrated in Figure 2. In FY 2023–24, CSR spending in India was led by HDFC Bank, Reliance Industries, and Tata Consultancy Services, each contributing over ₹800 crore, signaling strong private sector commitment to social impact. Public sector entities such as ONGC and Indian Oil Corporation also ranked among the top spenders, highlighting a balanced mix of corporate participation.

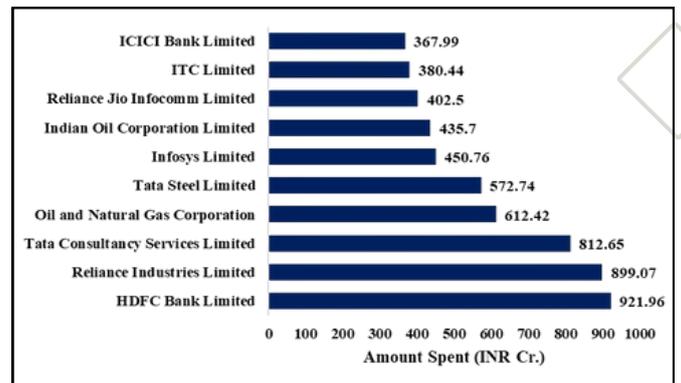


Figure 2. Top 10 Companies by CSR Expenditure in FY 2023–24

Environmental Sustainability Expenditure in India

In FY 2023–24, ₹3,459.05 crore was spent on CSR initiatives in the Environment, Animal Welfare, and Conservation of Natural Resource sector by 5,280 companies; Figures 3 and 4 show the top ten contributing companies and states, with Maharashtra ranking first and Kerala 18th.

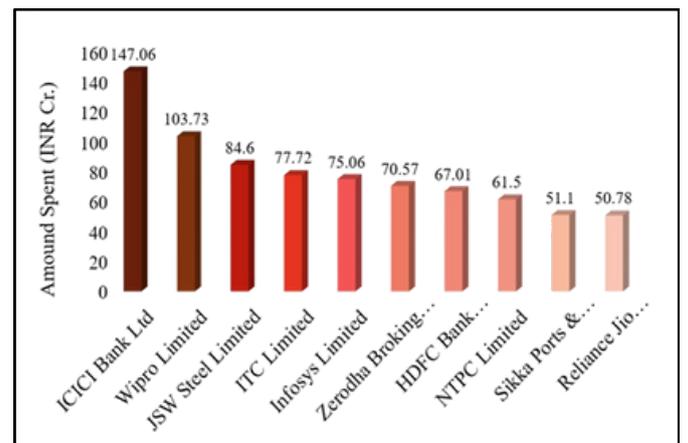


Figure 3. Top 10 companies under the Environment, Animal Welfare, Conservation of Resources sector and their CSR expenditure FY:23-24

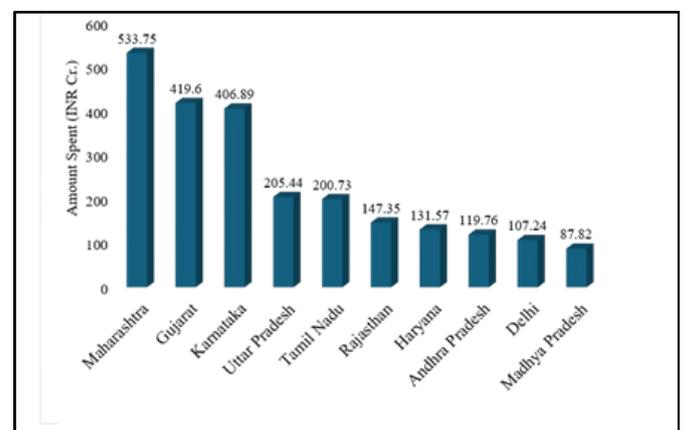


Figure 4. Top 10 states under the Environment, Animal Welfare, Conservation of Resources sector and their CSR expenditure FY:23-24

Environmental Sustainability Expenditure in Kerala

In FY 2023–24, CSR expenditure in Kerala under the Environment, Animal Welfare, and Conservation of Natural Resources sector amounted to ₹22.23 crore, contributed by 84 companies across 11 districts (Table 2). Figure 5 highlights the environmental contributions of the top ten companies, showcasing variations in spending and focus on sustainability initiatives. Thiruvananthapuram emerged as the leading district in terms of CSR investment.

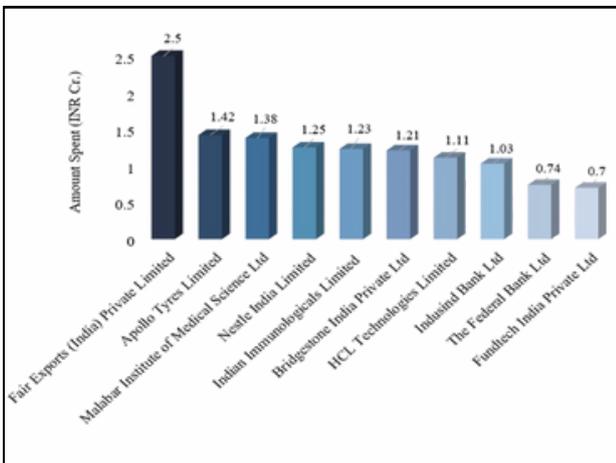


Figure 5. Top 10 companies total CSR Spent and Contribution towards the Environment in Kerala (FY:23-24)

Table 2. List of Districts and their CSR Expenditure under the Environmental Sector

Sl. No.	DISTRICTS	TOTAL CSR SPENT (INR Cr.)
1	Thiruvananthapuram	5.87
2	Ernakulam	4.09
3	Idukki	2.15
4	Kottayam	1.73
5	Kozhikode	1.40
6	Kannur	1.06
7	Wayanad	0.89
8	Palakkad	0.89
9	Thrissur	0.71
10	Kollam	0.11
11	Alappuzha	0.09
12	Nec/ Not Mentioned	3.23

Survey on CSR implementation in Kerala

A survey was conducted among 22 companies in Kerala, and the list of the surveyed companies are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. List of Survey Companies in Kerala

Sl. No	COMPANY NAME
1	Ocean Network Express (India) Private Limited
2	Penver Products Limited
3	Manjilas Food Tech Private Limited
4	KSE Limited
5	Cochin Shipyard Limited
6	Acumen Capital Market (India) Limited
7	Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited
8	Cherian Varkey Construction Company Private Limited
9	India Gateway Terminal Private Limited
10	ESAF Small Finance Bank Limited
11	Dhanlaxmi Bank Limited
12	The South Indian Bank Limited
13	Jos Alukkas Group
14	Josco Bullion Traders Private Limited
15	Muthoot Finance Limited
16	AVT Natural Products Limited
17	Tata Elxsi Limited
18	Malabar Institute of Medical Science Ltd
19	Petronet Lng Limited
20	Apollo Tyres Limited
21	Mane Kancor Ingredients Private Limited
22	Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited

Key CSR Activities of Surveyed Companies

Environmental: Mangrove plantation, afforestation, renewable energy, wildlife conservation.

Social Development: Education, skill training, sanitation, employment support

Water & Waste: Conservation, recycling, solid/liquid waste management

Healthcare: Primary care, awareness campaigns, medical camps

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance CSR adoption and strengthen strategic contributions to environmental sustainability.

CSR LITERACY

- Incorporate CSR into academic curricula.
- Build awareness among employees at all levels to embed CSR into corporate culture.

COORDINATION MECHANISMS

- Facilitate state-level consultations with government, civil society, and industry.
- Conduct district-level meetings led by district collectors to align initiatives with local needs.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

- Strengthen engagement through awareness campaigns.
- Promote skill-based training to ensure long-term sustainability.

INTER-COMPANY COLLABORATION

- Pool resources across firms.
- Implement integrated, large-scale environmental projects for collective impact.

MONITORING & EVALUATION

- Establish regular reviews and feedback systems.
- Ensure ethical personnel selection.
- Encourage NGOs to follow need-based rather than incentive-driven approaches.

TRANSPARENCY & AUDITING

- Develop clear protocols for CSR data sharing to enhance accountability.
- Auditing of CSR funds will enhance the accountability of funding and ensure effective utilization.
- Support credible research through transparent reporting practices.

CONCLUSION

CSR is emerging as a strategic priority in Indian industries, with the environmental sector requiring greater focus. While companies continue to allocate significant resources to education and healthcare, the findings underscore the urgent need to strengthen environment-specific investments. Advancing environmental CSR in Kerala will require targeted capacity-building, widespread public awareness, and structured state-level consultations, supported by collaborative platforms that connect district collectors with CSR leaders for effective policy coordination. Looking ahead, safeguarding natural ecosystems will be central to sustainable development, and the expansion of environmental CSR will be pivotal in building a resilient and sustainable future.

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