

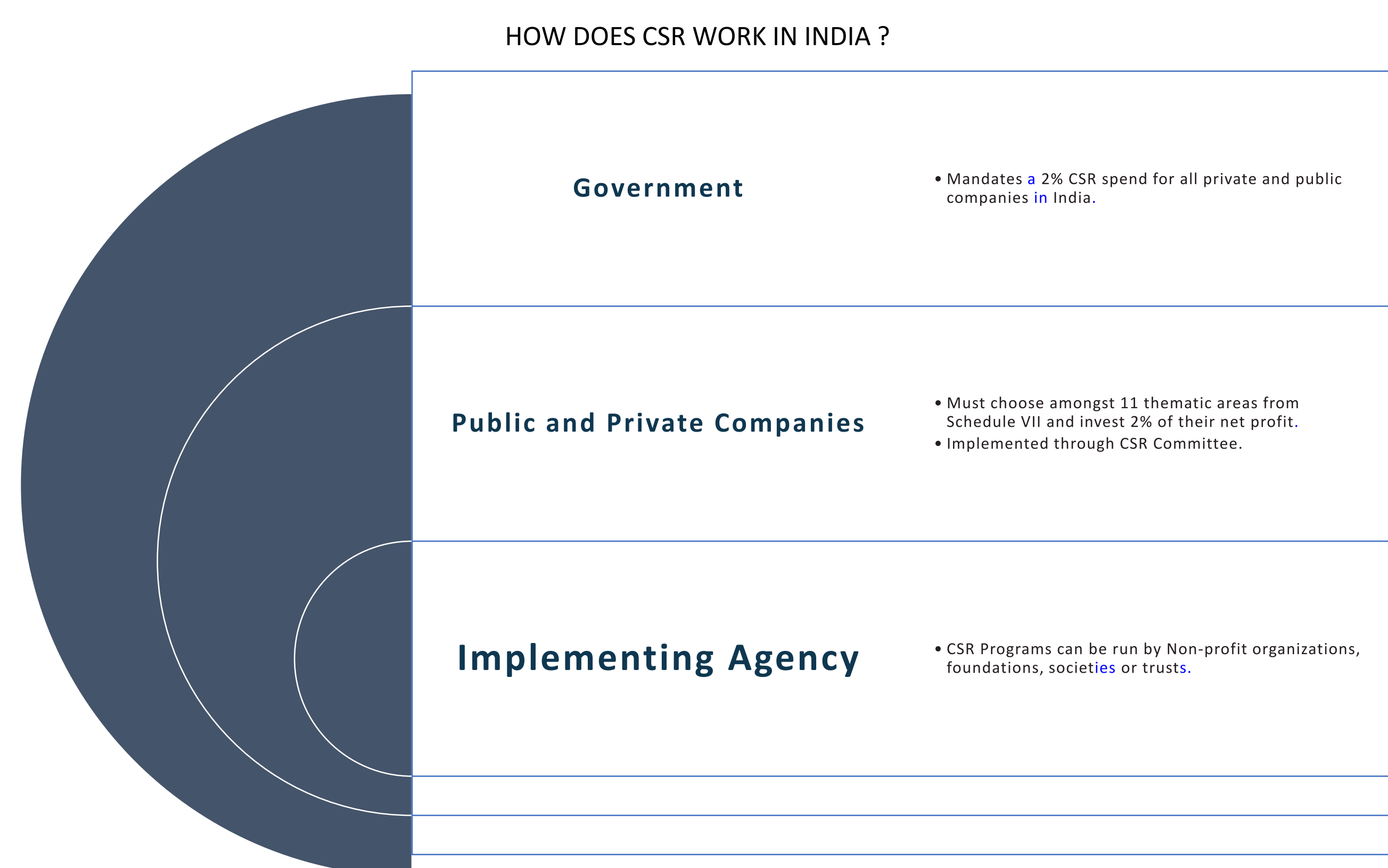
### Sport for Social Change: Two of Seven Indian Olympic Athletes Engage in Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives

**RAVI SHANKAR PANDIT**

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#### Introduction

- Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development requires heaps of financial investment.
- It is vital for the private sector, with their economic strength, to engage in nation development – a practice more commonly known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- In 2013, Indian become the first country in the world to make spend under CSR mandatory for the private sector.
- The corporate philosophy has always gravitated towards financial gains seldom philanthropy. If we do not tackle this issue at the earliest, it is likely to threaten CSR to a mere corporate slogan.
- Thus, the purpose of the study was twofold: (i) To provide a case study analysis of India's CSR Act (RQ1 & RQ2); (ii) Examine the perceived application of CSR by Indian Olympic Athletes in relation to the CSR Act (RQ3).



#### Literature Review

- Mitra and Schmidpeter (2016) summarize the evolution of CSR in the corporate culture of India; philanthropy and charity during the industrialization period (1850-1914); then to social development during the independence of India (1914-1960); again to the mixed economy paradigm, bound under legal regulatory framework of businesses, activities, and the emancipation of public-sector undertakings (1960-1980); finally to a globalized world in a confused state, characterized partly by traditional philanthropic engagements and partly by steps taken to integrate CSR into a sustainable business strategy (1980-present)
- Despite the concept of CSR being debated and reviewed by several scholars, a universal definition has not been reached. Considered as one of the most compelling and comprehensive research regarding the lack of a definition for CSR, the research conducted by Alexander Dahlsrud, examined 37 of the most commonly used CSR definitions and through his content analysis, five dimensions of CSR were surfaced: environment, social, economic, stakeholder, and voluntariness (Dahlsrud, 2006).
- The use of sports to support development and peace is not new; international agencies such as United Nations Development Programme, World Health Organization, and International Labor Organization have been using sports to promote social change (Kay and Dudfield, 2013).
- Utilizing CSR funds, the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) was formed, in September 2014, to help India achieve medals at the Rio 2016 and Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games (Sports Authority of India, 2019).
- The selected athletes of TOPS can seek assistance under the Scheme for the following: (a) "Customized training under reputed coaches at institutes having world-class facilities; (b) Participation in international competition; (c) Purchase of equipment; (d) Services of support staff/personnel like Physical Trainer, Sports Psychologist, Mental Trainer and Physiotherapist etc; (e) Any other support specific to the sport discipline; (f) Out-of-pocket allowance of Rs. 50,000/- (Rupees fifty thousand only) a month to the athletes as an incentive" (Sports Authority of India, 2019)

#### Methodology

- Based on the complex nature of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sport (RQ1 & RQ2), document analysis shall be the preferred method in examining these questions. This research uses qualitative research methods as the main purpose of the study is to understand, describe, and interpret the Olympic Athletes involvement in CSR (RQ3).
- Based on past research of Carter (2013), it was concluded that n=7 would be a reasonable sample size for interviews. Accordingly, the researcher interviewed 7 Indian Olympic athletes comprised of males (n=3) and females (n=4) aged 20-29 years (Table 1). The interviews were taken in English. The samples were selected through the selection by the CEO, Target Olympic Podium Scheme.

Table 1: Details of the Interview Participants (n=7)

Participant	Age	Gender	Achievement
Participant 1	26	Male	Indian Table Tennis Player ranked in top 25 of the world
Participant 2	20	Male	Indian Long Jumper Athlete who holds the national record of 8.20 meters
Participant 3	28	Male	Indian middle-distance runner who holds the national record in 1500 meters race
Participant 4	26	Female	Indian double and mixed double badminton player who holds the gold medal at the South Asian Games
Participant 5	29	Female	Indian 25m pistol shooter who holds the gold medal at the 2008 Commonwealth Games
Participant 6	25	Female	Indian Rifle Shooter
Participant 7	26	Female	Indian 10m air rifle and holds a gold medal at the ISSF World Cup

#### Results

- RQ1: What are the stipulations of the Indian Corporate Social Responsibility Act?:** These rules apply to every company which has a net worth of INR 500 crore or more, or turnover of INR 1,000 crore or net profit of INR 5 crore needs to spend at least two percent of its average net profit for the immediately preceding three financial years on CSR activities (Ramesh and Mendes, 2015).
- RQ2: What are the implications of the sports clause of the Indian Corporate Social Responsibility Act?:** It is a difficult task to precisely define sport (Pandit, 2019). Online dictionaries define it in various ways. Governments of countries, sport bodies, online dictionaries and international organizations define it in various ways (Pink (2008), World Health Organization (2011), Wood (2013), Commonwealth Secretariat (2013), Institute for Human Rights and Business (2018)). Also, sport carries different "definitions" to different group of people based on social background (age, gender, class) and type of sport activity (team sport versus individual sport, competitive level) (Seippel, 2006).
- RQ3: What is the perceived impact and understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility by Olympic Athletes?:** (1) Family and Societal Influence; (2) Lack of facilities and coaches; (3) The voluntariness dimension of Corporate Social Responsibility; (4) Financial support from TOPS; (5) Lack of involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility Activities

#### Conclusion

- The first finding denotes a gap in the current Act by failing to address the definitions of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sport.
- The second finding suggests for Corporate Social Responsibility to be defined as a social construct under the five dimensions of environmental, social, economic, stakeholder, and voluntariness.
- The third finding considers the Olympic Charter as the "widely" accepted definition of sport.
- The fourth finding displays the understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility by TOPS athletes to coincide with only the voluntariness dimension of Corporate Social Responsibility.
- The final finding indicates two out of the seven athletes (~29%) interviewed to be engaged in CSR.