

IICA organises National Conference & Exhibition on Leveraging CSR Excellence for Tribal Development in New Delhi

The Initiative marks 2nd Annual CSR Day; aims to promote CSR excellence through innovation, inclusion and sustainable partnerships for holistic tribal development across India

DG & CEO, IICA, Shri Gyaneshwar Kumar Singh notes a notable rise in CSR spending by Indian companies, surpassing the 2% threshold, reflecting a deeper commitment to social welfare

CSR efforts should reach every part of society, fostering inclusivity and equitable development: Shri Chanchal Kumar, Secretary, MDoNER

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The National Conference & Exhibition on Leveraging CSR Excellence for Tribal Development, a two-day event was inaugurated on 6th October 2025 at New Delhi. The Conference was organised by the Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.

The event was organised to mark the 2nd Annual CSR Day in India, commemorating the Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, and to promote the Gandhian philosophy of trusteeship in CSR initiatives with a focus on advancing CSR excellence for tribal development.



The inaugural ceremony was graced by Shri Durgadas Uikey, Union Minister of State, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, and Shri Harsh Malhotra, Union Minister of State, Ministry of Corporate Affairs who visited the Exhibition and took a detailed tour of the vibrant stalls showcasing CSR best practices, along with a special delegation of tribal artisans marketing their merchandises from Pan-India, supported by TRIFED. Shri Chanchal Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region; Shri M. Raja Murugan, Managing Director, TRIFED; Shri Gyaneshwar Kumar Singh, Director General & CEO, IICA; Shri Shombi Sharp, UN Resident Coordinator in India; and Prof. Garima Dadhich, Head, School of Business Environment, IICA inaugurated the conference.



Shri Chanchal Kumar, Secretary of MDoNER, delivered an insightful keynote address emphasizing the importance of diversity and inclusion in CSR initiatives. He urged corporations to focus on small, impactful projects that provide tangible benefits to all sections of society. He highlighted the need for qualitative resource expenditure rather than large-scale investments, aiming for measurable outcomes by 2047. Shri Kumar stressed that CSR efforts should reach every part of society, fostering inclusivity and equitable development. He also pointed out the North East Region's readiness to attract greater investment, with enhanced infrastructure and improved project implementation capabilities. This, he noted, would contribute to the region's development and serve as a model for balanced growth. Shri Kumar underscored the role of

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in improving efficiency, creating job opportunities, and addressing social inequalities, particularly in tribal and rural areas. AI can play a pivotal role in sectors like healthcare, education, and agriculture, transforming the lives of underserved communities. Focusing on education and skills, Shri Kumar emphasized their critical role in reducing inequality. He called for CSR initiatives to prioritize these areas, as they empower individuals, provide economic opportunities, and create a more skilled workforce for sustainable national development.

In his welcome address, Shri Gyaneshwar Kumar Singh, DG & CEO of IICA, highlighted the growth and transformation of India's CSR landscape, emphasizing its shift towards community-driven, impact-oriented initiatives. He noted a notable rise in CSR spending by Indian companies, surpassing the 2% threshold, which reflects a deeper commitment to social welfare. He urged CSR programs to evolve beyond just financial contributions, advocating for stronger support in the form of technology, management, and knowledge sharing to empower local communities, particularly in tribal areas. As India's social sector continues to make tangible impacts through CSR, he stressed the importance of aligning CSR efforts with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. CSR, he noted, has shifted from being demand-driven to supply-driven, with companies now investing more than the required 2%. He emphasized the urgent need for capacity building within implementing agencies, underscoring IICA's role in supporting these partners to drive sustainable development effectively.

In his **special address**, **Shri M. Raja Murugan** emphasized the role of value addition and entrepreneurship in tribal economies, stressing the need for skill development, branding, and digital market access to empower tribal artisans. **Shri Shombi Sharp** lauded India's CSR framework, which he described as a global model of corporate accountability and social innovation, noting that India is now a leader in aligning private sector creativity with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



The session concluded with a Vote of Thanks by Dr Garima Dadhich, Head, School of Business Environment, IICA, who expressed gratitude to the distinguished speakers and attendees for their valuable contributions. She reaffirmed IICA's commitment to strengthening CSR governance, capacity building, and cross-sectoral partnerships that drive sustainable and inclusive development, empowering India's tribal communities through knowledge, innovation, and collaboration.

The day featured three high-impact panel sessions that explored diverse dimensions of CSR's role in advancing tribal livelihoods, health, and entrepreneurship.

The first High-Level Panel, *Leadership Dialogue: Leveraging CSR Excellence for Tribal Development*, brought together eminent corporate leaders and development thinkers including Mr. Pradeep Fellow, Executive Director, REC Limited, Mr. Anil Kumar Jadli, Director, NTPC Limited; Mr.

Pravir Krishna, Former Managing Director, TRIFED, Mr. Bibhuti Ranjan Pradhan, Executive Director, Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Ms. Ruchi Sadhana, Vice President –Corporate Audit, HCLTech, Mr. Mathew Cherian, Chief Executive Officer, HelpAge India; and Prof. Garima Dadhich, Head, School of Business Environment, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA).

The second High-Level Panel, *CSR for Sustainable Livelihoods & Tribal Entrepreneurship: Glocal Case Studies*, convened thought leaders from government and industry, including Mr. Santanu Mitra, Senior Economic Adviser, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India; Dr. Raji N.S., Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India; Dr. Bhaskar Chatterjee, Former Director General & CEO, Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs; Mr. Gaurav Majumdar, Lead – Skill Development & Livelihood, HCL Foundation; Mr. Binu Nair, Chief – Program and Operations, Bharti Airtel Foundation; Mr. Ujas Dave, General Manager, Tata Chemicals, and Mr. Stanley Joseph, Lead – Programmes, Dialectics.

The third High-Level Panel, *CSR for Health & Nutrition in Tribal Areas*, featured a cross-section of experts and practitioners, including Mr. Lucas L. Kamsuan, Joint Secretary (Administration & Coordination), Department of Public Enterprises, Government of India; Ms. Ashwini Deodeshmukh, CSR Head, Godrej & Boyce, Dr. Vivek Virendra Singh, Health Specialist, Health Section, UNICEF India, Mr. Keshav Kanoria, Partner, The Bridgespan Group, Ms. Gayatri Subramaniam, Director, Association for Women in Business, and Director, International Centre for Socially Responsible Businesses, and Mr. Praveen Karn, Group Head – Sustainability & CSR, Spark Minda Group.

The event witnessed the participation of over 300 delegates from government, academia, industry, and civil society, reaffirming India's collective resolve toward sustainable and inclusive development. The accompanying exhibition showcased exemplary CSR initiatives by leading corporations, PSUs, and foundations, highlighting projects that promote tribal entrepreneurship, education, healthcare, and environmental conservation.

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