

## Research Article

# A Study Concerning the Social Responsibilities of E-Commerce and Digital Platforms with Specific Reference to the Vodafone Company in India

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## I N F O

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## A B S T R A C T

The short history of Vodafone and its attempts to reach consumers, in addition to its CSR initiatives, are included in the study on social responsibilities in e-commerce and digital platforms with special attention to Vodafone network in India. In addition to that, it throws light on an analysis of the present problems that the Vodafone Company is experiencing in India, and the main objective of this article is to draw conclusions that will assist Vodafone in resolving their problems. The secondary data, as well as several popular websites, traditional newspapers, and scholarly publications, were sourced for the material necessary for this study. In addition, the study sheds light on Vodafone's CSR initiatives and the people who have benefited from them.

**Keywords:** Corporate Social Responsibilities, CSR Initiatives, E-Commerce, Customer Satisfaction, Digital Infrastructure

## Introduction

The term "VODAFONE" is derived from the three words "VO-ice," "DA-ta," and "FONE," and it was chosen so that it would "Reflect the provision of voice and data over mobile phones." After forming a partnership (joint venture) with Millicom in 1981 and changing its name to 'Racal,' the company that would eventually become known as 'Vodafone' was originally a military radio tech company known as 'Racal strategic radio ltd.'

In the 1980s, Mr. Ernest Harrison, who was serving as the chairman of Racal electronics at the time, made the decision and agreed to make a deal with Lord Weinstock, who was serving as the head of the General Electric company, to allow Racal access to some of GEC's tactical battlefield radio tech. This is where everything got started. After being informed by Ernest Harrison to push the company into commercial mobile radio, the head of Racal's military radio division, Mr. Gerry Whent, made a visit to a mobile radio facility operated by the GEC in Virginia, United States to

grasp how to commercially exploit the military radio tech. In the year 1982, Jan Stenbeck, who was the president of a Swedish conglomerate at the time, established an American company known as 'Millicom Ltd.' He then called Gerry Whent in the month of July to discuss about bidding jointly for the United Kingdom's second cellular radio license. In the end, the parties were able to reach a compromise and reach a deal in which Racal was awarded sixty percent of the newly formed company, while Racal-Millicom limited and Millicom were each awarded forty percent of the business.

Racal-Millicom partnership was given the 2<sup>nd</sup> UK mobile phone network license in December 1982. According to the UK secretary of state for industry, "The bid submitted by Racal-Millicom Ltd., provided the best prospect for early national coverage by cellular radio."

Initially, Vodafone was established at the beginning of January in 1985 under the name Racal-Vodafone Ltd., and its initial office was located in the courtyard of a building in Newbury. Shortly after this, the RSR (Racal strategic

radio) was rebranded as RTGL (Racal telecommunications group Ltd.). After a year, at the end of December in 1986, Racal electronics granted a number of shares to the minority owners of Vodafone that were worth millions of British pounds. This continued until Vodafone became a completely owned brand of Racal.

### Objectives of the Study

- To study research on the social responsibilities that are held by the Vodafone company regarding e-commerce and digital platforms
- To study the degree of satisfaction experienced by customers in relation to the social responsibilities of the Vodafone customer
- To provide suggestions based on the feedback received from customers

### Research Methodology

The research is mostly a conceptual study that is based on secondary sources of information. In order to obtain the necessary information, both the official websites of the Vodafone Company and prior research publications are studied.

### Review of Literature

Otto Bartok (2018) wrote an article titled "The use of CSR in E-commerce as a way to compete" in which he discussed the role of e-commerce in small and medium companies in relation to corporate social responsibilities. In the article, he stated that the application of e-commerce as a part of CSR not only provides a competitive advantage but is also one of the ways to maintain sustainable corporate development with ethical codes and transparent corporate policy.

In his paper titled "Are Sustainability and Social Responsibility Feasible in E-Commerce," which was published on March 8, 2020, Ingo Willems focused on examining the mentality of younger generations. According to him, young people place a high value on social responsibility and sustainability in the things they purchase; as a result, small and medium-sized e-commerce shops make it a priority to guarantee that their wares satisfy these criteria.

In the article titled "loyalty in internet promotion of tourist services," which was published in January 2015 by TijanaMaric et al., the authors discussed the global on-line buying and selling of tourist services in order to test the null hypothesis regarding the existence of a statistically significant correlation between the concept of social responsibility and the satisfaction and loyalty of customers.

Zhao, Wei (2018). Research on Social Responsibility of E-commerce Platform, in their research analyzed the social responsibility of e-commerce platform by adopting international standard ISO 26000 and explores the main reasons of the dilemma of social responsibility of

e-commerce platform and then makes some suggestions on how to improve the social responsibility of e-commerce platform.

Jul (2015) The purpose of this article is to identify, based on theoretical and empirical research, whether and to what degree the application of the social responsibility concept in e-commerce and marketing influences the satisfaction and loyalty of the consumers choosing for online purchases. The findings thus obtained served as a foundation for recommended measures essential for defining the model of social corporate social responsibility in e-commerce, which will be broadly bidding for all online advertising.

### Research Gap

The study addresses the role of e-commerce, as well as social responsibilities, customer satisfactions, and existing expectations, as indicated by the examination of the relevant literature. This particular research piece presents the findings of a study that focuses only on the social responsibilities that Vodafone has under E-commerce and digital platforms in order to reach its consumers and ensure that those customers are satisfied with the service that is delivered. This is a conceptual piece of work for the study. Using empirical research methods allows for more study to be conducted.

### Finding and Suggestion

The social responsibilities of Vodafone in the context of e-commerce and digital services, as well as the happiness of customers:

Vodafone is one of the major telecommunications companies, and it offers a diverse selection of services to businesses as well as individual consumers. The firm offers tele-connectivity, as well as signal boosters for wireless connections, headsets and headphones, including Bluetooth-enabled headphones, memory cards (both micro and mini), chargers (portable mobile and tablet charges), and a wide variety of additional goods and services.

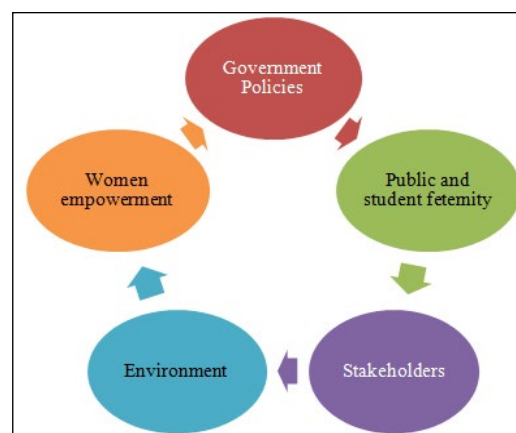


Figure 1

CSR as a supporting factor to government policies: DigiSakshar.org is an online digital skills portal that was recently introduced by the Vodafone India Foundation in collaboration with the CGI and the NASSCOM Foundation. Its primary objective is to assist Indian citizens in achieving greater levels of independence through increased digital literacy.

DigiSakshar is a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) project that was launched by Vodafone Idea as part of their "Connecting for Good" campaign. Its primary objective is to assist neglected communities in becoming a part of the digital economy. DigiSakshar was established to assist communities in graduating to digital literacy and using this knowledge to construct and strengthen their livelihood. This will encourage those who do not have access to digital technology or who are digital novices to become a part of the technological revolution. The self-learning portal not only teaches communities how to use digital literacy, but it also steers them toward better employment and entrepreneurial prospects, which ultimately helps them become more self-sufficient.

CSR towards public and student fertility: The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Vodafone concept are geared at fostering promotion and growth, in addition to empowering people. The present emphasis on Vidya (Education), Swasth (Health care), Aamdani (Livelihood and Women Empowerment), and transformational initiatives has the potential to enhance the quality of life for millions of people in India. Students are improving their education and increasing their chances of winning scholarships because to the increased use of technology, which is helping to close the achievement gap in learning. Additionally, the company offers an economic diagnostic service to marginalized communities, with the goals of closing the gender gap, promoting financial literacy, realizing the advantages of mobile technology for women, youth, and other demographics, and so on. These few CSR initiatives take over 70 lakh people and enhance their lives on a yearly basis, and they have a good influence on 4,000 communities. Over 7,000 educational institutions were helped in the student sector.

Importance to its Stakeholders: It interacts with several stakeholders as well as any problem that is significant to the business. Therefore, this takes into account the social and environmental effect that Vodafone has all over the globe. Accessing the social and environmental risks and possibilities posed by a business, as well as locating a variety of essential audiences, including as employees, suppliers, non-governmental organizations (NGO), consumers, and investors, are all part of this excess. The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) roadshow that Vodafone put on was aimed at investor communities and social responsibility.

Throughout the course of the previous fiscal year, Vodafone Group maintained its position in both the FTSE4 Good Index and the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (DJST). In order to have a better understanding of workers' perspectives on a variety of employees, Vodafone conducted a survey. It was the first ever group-wide employee survey for Vodafone, and it included 53000 employees in 16 countries. The purpose of the survey was to quantify the level of satisfaction felt by employees. Additionally, the survey offers a chance to share ideas and best practices from around the Vodafone community. Even in the direction of the suppliers, the government, the regulators, and the communities.

CSR towards the Environment: Vodafone is committed to ensuring that the health problems related with the usage of phones and radio base stations are appropriately addressed and that they are remedied in a timely manner. The publishing of the report titled "mobile phones health and environment 2002," which provided responses to all of the inquiries that customers had about mobile phones, was an essential component of this strategy. Vodafone has built a financing structure for worldwide, regional, and national research programs because the company holds the belief that it is typically ideal for research to be done by independent specialists. In addition to contributing monetarily to government and other independent research that is in line with WHO priorities, the Vodafone group is committed to the improvement and cleaning up of the industry as a whole through the implementation of extensive planning policies. A significant portion of the population is worried about the state of the environment and the effects of climate change. Customers can lessen their impact on the environment by using certain goods and services. They also acknowledge the need for us to accept responsibility for the influence that we have on the environment. Additionally, it emphasized the company's aims to cut greenhouse gas emissions by fifty percent by the year 2025 and to acquire power that is entirely derived from renewable sources by that same year.

CSR towards Women Empowerment: RUDI SANDESHA VYAVHAR is a novel program that was initiated by Vodafone with the goal of assisting rural women in obtaining a fundamental education, maintaining excellent health, and emerging as women who are financially independent in modern community. They started a few initiatives in the rural areas of India, and about 5,000 people ended up benefiting from the plan. Utilization of technology, collaboration, and long-term viability are its three pillars. The result was an increase in the number of work options available to those people, particularly women from rural backgrounds.

The efforts that Vodafone is doing to combat hunger in

Africa are highlighted by the fact that it has linked more than 50 million African women to mobile technology in business to assist them in learning how to manage businesses and communicating with one another. Additionally, seek security if you feel attacked. In relation to the battle against climate change, Vodafone is of the belief that the company's triumphs in business should not come at the expense of the environment since the environment is also an essential component of the business.

### Present Problems of Vodafone

According to Vishal Malhotra, who is the tax head for the telecommunications practice at EY India, Vodafone Idea still has major issues from a business point of view since they are sitting on a significant liability. "A great deal rides on how the government responds to the verdict; specifically, on whether or not they will pursue any legal remedy or whether or not they will accept the judgment. Vodafone would have a stronger commitment to their Indian business in the event that they accept it. It's possible that there may be some further investment coming in."

The Indian telecommunications telecom already has a significant financial burden because of the high cost of spectrum. Every single telecommunications company that does telecom in India is obligated to hand up a portion of its adjusted gross revenue (AGR) to the Indian government in the form of licensing fees and spectrum costs. According to AbhimanyuSofat, head of product, investment, and research at IIFL Securities, "The problem with Vodafone Idea is about managing the capital expenditure (Capex), and they are facing challenges from Jio."

### Conclusion

According to the analysis presented above, it has been determined that Vodafone is unable to provide its services to its customers at prices that are lower and more affordable due to the increased costs associated with its operations. In this regard, having a tie up with network-based business entities could enable them to find solutions to the cost of cost management.

- Why Because Vodafone is assisting the government in the development operations it is doing, the government has the ability to negotiate a somewhat reduced proportion of Vodafone's margins
- Vodafone may choose to consider updating its digital infrastructure, since doing so would not be prohibitively affordable and would guarantee simple accessibility for the company's customers
- In order to connect with members of society, Vodafone may form partnerships with charitable organizations and other organizations with a good reputation

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