



## Impact of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on Women's Empowerment: A Case Study of a Flagship Teacher Training Programme under the HDFC Bank Parivartan Scheme and SIES Institute of Comprehensive Education

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### Abstract:

*Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has progressed from being viewed as a voluntary philanthropic activity to becoming a core element of sustainable business strategy. Today, organisations increasingly understand that long-term growth and credibility are closely linked to ethical governance, environmental stewardship, and social inclusion. In the Indian context, the Companies Act, 2013 institutionalised CSR by mandating corporate engagement in socially relevant initiatives, with particular emphasis on education, skill development, and the empowerment of women as key areas of investment.*

**Keywords:** *Corporate Social Responsibility, Women Empowerment, Teacher Training Programme, HDFC Bank, SIES Institute.*

### Introduction:

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has progressed from being viewed as a voluntary philanthropic activity to becoming a core element of sustainable business strategy. Today, organisations increasingly understand that long-term growth and credibility are closely linked to ethical governance, environmental stewardship, and social inclusion. In the Indian context, the Companies Act, 2013 institutionalised CSR by mandating corporate engagement in socially relevant initiatives, with particular emphasis on education, skill development, and the empowerment of women as key areas of investment.

Within this framework, CSR initiatives have become meaningful drivers of social change, especially for women from marginalised socio-economic backgrounds. Investment in education and skill development extend beyond improving employability; they foster self-confidence, decision-making ability, and long-term economic independence. This paper explores the impact of our flagship CSR supported teacher training programme implemented through a collaborative partnership between HDFC Bank's *Parivartan scheme* and the SIES Institute of Comprehensive Education (SIES-ICE), highlighting our role in advancing women's empowerment and promoting sustainable development.

### CSR & Sustainable business practices

CSR as a driver for Sustainable practices for holistic development:

Sustainable business practices encourage and guide organizations to reduce environmental impact, foster

inclusiveness for growth and ensure that economic progress is attained by contributing and supporting for holistic development.

Sustainable business practices emphasise responsible growth by encouraging organisations to minimise environmental impact, promote inclusive development, and balance economic progress with the needs of future generations. In the Indian context, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is formally embedded within this framework through the Companies Act, 2013, which mandates eligible companies to allocate 2% of their average net profits towards CSR initiatives. Among the prescribed focus areas, education and skill development hold particular importance, as they play a critical role in advancing Sustainable Development Goal 5—Gender Equality—by creating opportunities for empowerment, inclusion, and long-term social progress.

**CSR intervention for women’s empowerment through education and skill development:**

Women from low-income communities often face barriers such as limited access to higher education, early marriage, restricted mobility and lack of financial independence. CSR-driven educational programmes can bridge these gaps by offering affordable or free professional training, exposure to career pathways, mentorship and confidence-building, and opportunities for employment or entrepreneurship.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) is an expanding sector with an increasing demand for qualified and trained professionals. It provides flexible working hours, community-based employment opportunities, and a supportive, nurturing environment that complements women’s caregiving abilities, making it a suitable and accessible entry point for first generation learners.

**HDFC – SIES PARIVARTAN CSR PROJECT - One Year Diploma in Early Years’ Teacher Training**

“Let us remember: one book, one pencil, and one teacher can change the world,” said Malala Yousafzai. This belief in the transformative power of education forms the foundation of the HDFC–SIES Parivartan CSR initiative. Recognising that education not only uplifts individuals but also shapes a more equitable and positive society, SIES Institute of Comprehensive Education (SIES ICE) and HDFC Bank, under the Parivartan Scheme, launched a collaborative effort to empower women through professional teacher training. In 2024, SIES ICE and HDFC Bank entered into a three-year partnership (2024–2027) to design and implement two flagship programs in Early Childhood Development: Diploma in Early Childhood Development (DECD) and Post Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Development (PGDECD). These programs were conceptualised to provide accessible, high-quality professional training to young women—particularly those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds—enabling them to become self-reliant, financially independent and professionally confident.

Name of the Courses	<i>Course 1: Diploma in Early Childhood Development (DECD)</i> <i>Course 2: PG Diploma in Early Childhood Development (PGDECD)</i>
Goal of the Project	To offer professional training to empower youth/ women willing to work with young children.
Specific Objectives of the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop professionals in the field of Early Childhood Teacher Education equipped with strategies to handle responsibilities &amp; tasks in an early years’ classroom.</li> <li>• To devise &amp; design developmentally appropriate programs, activities and projects in the field of early childhood education</li> <li>• To foster optimum development of skill sets related to early years education that will enable the futuristic professional to be industry ready.</li> <li>• To focus on empowerment of our students, especially girls and women to attain financial stability and independence.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To strengthen the innate self by resolving conflicts &amp; blossoming to be successful individuals and to take up challenges in life.</li> <li>• To prepare futuristic professionals keeping in mind the impact of globalization &amp; its influences.</li> <li>• To be able to contribute significantly &amp; bring about a transformation in the society as a vital stakeholder.</li> </ul>
Duration of the Project	<i>Three years 2024-2027</i>

Alignment with SDG-4, NEP 2020 and Institutional Social Responsibility (ISR) This initiative aligns with SDG-4 (Quality Education) and NEP 2020's emphasis on quality teacher education. The goal is to empower 300 women to enter the teaching profession, achieve financial independence and contribute to nation-building. As part of SIES ICE's triadic ISR approach, students also engage in value-based activities.

A blend of innovative and inclusive teaching strategies for holistic development. The Institute integrates hands-on learning experiences, field visits, skill-based modules, and reflective practices within its curriculum. This comprehensive approach ensures that learners develop not only strong technical competencies but also emotional maturity, professional confidence, and a well-rounded educational foundation.

#### **Beneficiary impact stories:**

The narratives given by students highlights the impact of the programme. Their stories consistently reflect journeys toward financial independence, growing self-confidence, improved social mobility, a stronger sense of identity. These stories demonstrate the power of CSR initiatives, that helps in shaping not just individuals but the families and and clearer long-term goals. These narratives show that CSR initiatives have the power to create change that goes beyond individual participants, positively influencing entire families and strengthening the communities they belong to.

#### **Why CSR matters for Women's Empowerment:**

CSR interventions in women's education create a multiplier effect: increased household income, improved decision-making power, better early childhood outcomes. It is in alignment with SDGs 4 – Quality Education, SDG 5 – Gender equality and empower women and girls, SDG 8 promote employment for sustainable economic growth, thereby creating strengthened communities and long-term societal progress.

In conclusion, the HDFC Bank Parivartan scheme and SIES Institute of Comprehensive Education (SIES – ICE) Teacher Training program envisages women empowerment through training and employability. Through education, skill development and structured professional training, the programme equips women with the competencies and confidence needed to enter the workforce and transform their lives. CSR-driven educational initiatives thus serve as catalysts for sustainable development, social progress and gender equity.

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