



Evaluating the Impact of ONGC's CSR on Socio-Economic Development in Assam: A Doctrinal Analysis

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Abstract

In India's fast-growing economy, which is centred on sustainable development, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has emerged as a crucial instrument for fostering inclusive growth and equitable development. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), India's largest oil and gas producer, has started a number of CSR initiatives to help the community and address societal problems. This chapter provides a thorough examination of ONGC's CSR programs that support equitable development and inclusive growth in Assam. To assess the overall impact of CSR initiatives on several socioeconomic variables, the researcher has employed doctrinal research. The findings indicate that the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) approach is in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and has helped achieve sustainable development goals in the regions where the organisation operates. As a result of these initiatives, marginalised groups have been more actively involved in social and economic development, improving access to healthcare, education, and sanitation. Additionally, they have

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more opportunities for a living. The need of community collaboration and involvement in ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of CSR initiatives is also emphasised in the chapter.

Keywords: ONGC, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Marginalised Communities, Equitable Development.

Introduction

The biggest state-owned oil production and exploration business in India is Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC). It has been essential to India's energy security since its founding in 1956. With the inspiring guidance of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, ONGC was established. When the Oil and Gas division of the Geological Survey of India was established in 1955, Pandit Nehru placed his trust in Shri Keshav Dev Malviya, who laid the groundwork for the ONGC. It was transformed into an Oil and Natural Gas Directorate a few months later. On August 14, 1956, the Directorate was transformed into a Commission and given the name Oil & Natural Gas Commission. "India had not only established its own resources for oil exploration and exploitation, but also established a well-functioning oil commission that employed numerous talented young individuals who had received training and were producing quality work," Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the country's first prime minister, stated to Lord Mountbatten in 1959 on ONGC. After becoming a corporation in 1994, the Oil and Natural Gas Commission was later named one of India's Navratnas in 1997. Later on, it was granted the Maharatna distinction in 2010. ONGC has accomplished a great deal in its 60 years of remarkable service to help India achieve its energy goals (ONGC -Our Growth Story - En - ongcindia.com, n.d.). The story of ONGC's journey over the years is one of unwavering belief, bravery, and dedication. ONGC's exceptional endeavours have successfully transformed previously unexplored regions into newly discovered hydrocarbon-rich regions. After starting off small, ONGC is now one of the world's leading exploration and production (E&P) businesses. As part of its liberalised economic policy, the Indian government took steps in July 1991 to partially disinvest its equity in Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs), deregulate and de-license key industries (particularly the petroleum sector), and other initiatives.

ONGC was reorganized in February 1994 under the Company's Act, 1956, as a result, becoming a limited company. Through competitive bidding, the government divested 2% of the shares of the Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited after its 1993 rebranding from the Oil & Natural Gas Commission. Then, by giving its workers shares, ONGC increased its ownership by an additional 2%. In March 1999, ONGC, the sole gas marketing business in India, and the downstream behemoth Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) reached an agreement to engage in cross-holding of each other's shares. This cleared the path for energy value chain participants to form lasting strategic agreements that would benefit their respective domestic and international businesses. ONGC ventured into the downstream industry in 2002–03, following the acquisition of MRPL from the A V Birla Group. A wholly owned subsidiary of ONGC, ONGC Videsh Ltd. (OVL), has also expanded into international markets. ONGC has made significant investments in Vietnam, Sakhalin, Columbia, Venezuela, Sudan, and other countries. Its first revenue from overseas hydrocarbon ventures was generated from its investment in Vietnam. To the tune of over 75% of India's total domestic production, Maharatna ONGC stands as the country's biggest crude oil and natural gas Company (ONGC - History - En - ongcindia.com, n.d.-b). More than just breaking records for deep-water drilling in the Krishna Godavari Basin and discovering uncharted energy territories, ONGC's energy quest has broader implications. Regardless of the worldwide drop in crude prices, it has aggressively and carefully reversed the production trend in offshore by making substantial investment decisions. In order to ensure a steady supply of energy, they are currently exploring plays further offshore. Our adventure has earned us a spot on Fortune's list of "World's Most Admired Companies."

Assam & Assam Arakan Basin

The Assam and Assam Arakan Basin E&P operations rely heavily on the work of the Basin Manager's office in Jorhat. As an integrated whole, the Basin Manager's Office (BMO) aids the Basin Manager in carrying out executive and administrative duties by giving practical assistance and disseminating information gathered from different sources, both internal and external. This, in turn, helps Basin with decision-making. Moreover, BMO plays a crucial role

in informing inter- and intra-basin authorities on E&P operations and the Basin's performance. Assisting the Basin Manager with technical, executive, and administrative matters is one of the main goals of the basin. Working within the context of ONGC's corporate goals and identifying and meeting statutory requirements are the primary functions of the Basin Manager. Make a contribution to the Basin's overall development. Consistent with the goals and policies of the company, keep and improve records, systems, and procedures. Keep official records up-to-date and accessible so that people can receive the information they need. Assist with the creation and delivery of associated documents, including reports, proposals, budgets, and the like. Establish and nurture connections with partners and stakeholders. Important decision-making materials were prepared.

Primary undertakings Surveillance of the daily operations within the Basin. Assisting the Basin Manager with data monitoring, analysis, and evaluation. Giving the Basin Manager timely technical and administrative feedback to help with day-to-day operations and decision-making. Evaluating proposals and files and making sure they are cleared and moved quickly based on their priority and value. Gathering and submitting the Annual Exploration Program. Preparation and submission of a Performance Contract (PC) between the Basin Manager and the Director (E), as well as reporting on the Basin's performance on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. Interaction between the Basin Manager and the Chief of Services to draft and submit SLAs. Create internal service level agreements and evaluate their effects. Performance of various sections is monitored through Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between the Basin Manager and L-II/L-III executives. Issuing memoranda of understanding (MoMs) and coordinating meetings, such as the Virtual Corporate Committee (VCC), the Progress Review Meeting (PRM), and other unplanned gatherings. Creating and submitting a wide range of reports (weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, annually, etc.) Cooperation across disciplines, both within and outside of the Basin, to ensure the free flow of data and information. Cooperation between various internal and external entities facilitates the efficient operation of Basin initiatives.

AAFB Exploratory Asset Silchar Basin

Tectonic evolution has occurred in two important phases in the shelf-slope-basinal system that is the Assam-Arakan Basin. The majority of the oil fields are located in the shelf portion of the basin, but the basinal portion offers moderate to substantial hydrocarbon potential. The Barail Group and the Kopili Formation are the main source rocks. The Tipam Sandstone, Barail Formation, and Lakadong Formation are among the principal reservoir rocks, which are sandstones of different ages. The Barail Coal-Shale Unit, the Girujan Clay, and the Kopili Formation are the main cap rocks. About 27% of the basin's estimated 3180 MMt of resource base has been transformed as in-place geological reserves (Assam-Arakan Basin, n.d.). Northeastern India is home to the AAFB Exploratory Asset Silchar Basin. The extent of this sedimentary basin is roughly 10,000 square kilometres. The Patkai Range borders the basin on the east, the Naga Hills on the south, the Himalayas on the north, and the Brahmaputra River on the west. In 1959, the first oil was discovered. Since then, the basin has seen the discovery of several oil and gas reserves. The Rudrasagar Field, Digboi Field, and Moran Field are the three most significant oil fields.

The potential for hydrocarbons in the AAFB Exploration Asset Silchar Basin is substantial. About 3 billion barrels of oil and gas are thought to be recoverable. Additionally, the basin is a good location for the development of unconventional resources like gas and shale oil. The Silchar Basin is a difficult and intricate exploration region. The basin's geology is complicated, and exploration carries a number of geological dangers. But there is also a lot of exploration potential in the basin. There is a lot of uncharted territory in the basin, and fresh discoveries could be made. India's energy security plan heavily relies upon the AAFB Basin. India's increasing energy needs will be met in part by the development of the hydrocarbon resources in the basin. In addition to being a difficult and complex exploration environment, it presents other exploration options. There is a lot of uncharted territory in the basin, and fresh discoveries could be made. India's energy security plan heavily relies on this Basin. India's increasing energy needs will be met in part by the development of the hydrocarbon resources in the basin.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainable Development

In the context of sustainable development, corporate social responsibility, or CSR, refers to a business's commitment to conducting its operations in a way that balances its financial goals with the welfare of the environment and society. This dedication goes beyond merely following the law; it incorporates sustainable practices into the foundation of a business's strategy to address the effects of its activities on the environment, society, and economy. Fundamentally, CSR is based on three principles: sustainability, which emphasises current needs without endangering the ability of future generations to meet their own; responsibility, which recognises a company's accountability to all stakeholders, including customers, suppliers, employees, communities, and the environment; and transparency and accountability, which demonstrates openness regarding their initiatives and their impact (Ashurov et al., 2024). CSR initiatives usually focus on three main areas: Economic Responsibility, which ensures the sustainability of the economy through ethical conduct, innovation, and sustainable growth; Social Responsibility, which supports community development, promotes fair labour practices, respects human rights, and fosters diversity and inclusion; and Environmental Responsibility, which focuses on minimising the ecological impact through optimal resource utilisation, pollution reduction, and conservation. There are several advantages to putting strong CSR initiatives into practice. Businesses frequently see an improvement in their reputation, which boosts consumer loyalty and creates a favourable brand image. Additionally, CSR promotes better stakeholder relations by fostering cooperation and trust. Additionally, a focus on sustainability can lead to increased innovation in processes, goods, and services. In the end, CSR helps create long-term value by reducing risks, increasing productivity, and building a sustainable company (Stobierski, 2021). Most importantly, CSR is essential to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN. By coordinating corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), companies help address global issues such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and environmental degradation. Finally, a comprehensive corporate

strategy that acknowledges the interdependence of businesses with society and the environment is required for CSR in sustainable development. Businesses that include sustainability into their fundamental strategy not only build long-term value for themselves, but they also actively help ensure that everyone has a more sustainable future (SBN Software, 2024).

Making a Real Impact: ONGC's CSR Initiatives

A well-organised framework for ONGC's dedication to ethical business practices and constructive social and environmental effects is provided by its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainability Policy. The policy's foundation is a vision of sustainable development that strikes a balance between social justice, environmental responsibility, and economic growth. Its goal is to continuously improve performance in these areas while involving stakeholders. The main goals of ONGC's strategy are to reduce its negative effects on the environment and enhance community well-being, especially in operational areas (CSR and Sustainability Policy, 2021). Key societal and environmental issues are addressed by ONGC's CSR programs, which concentrate on environmental sustainability (reducing operational impact, advancing green energy, and bolstering marine and coastal ecology) and community development (enhancing access to drinking water, healthcare, education, and nutrition, as well as upliftment of coastal communities). The organisation has a methodical approach to execution and governance. The selection, oversight, and implementation of projects are managed by the Board of Directors and a specialised CSR Committee. Specific initiatives, procedures, funding, and monitoring are covered in depth in annual action plans. Projects are carried out by registered agencies and comply with Schedule VII of the Companies Act of 2013. At least 2% of ONGC's average net income over the last three fiscal years are devoted to CSR initiatives. Unused money is either put into designated coffers or put towards upcoming projects. The Finance Director ensures openness and certifies the use of funds. Project surplus is put back into CSR initiatives. Field visits, beneficiary input, external assessments, real-time digital tracking, and required impact assessments for projects above 1 crore are all components of a strong monitoring and evaluation framework. In addition to producing yearly CSR and Sustainability Reports and

making disclosures as required by law, ONGC keeps thorough records of all its CSR activities. The business complies with the Companies Act of 2013 and its implementing regulations. A Build & Transfer process guarantees the sustainability of generated assets, administrative overheads are limited, and projects are carried out by registered organisations.

To sum up, ONGC's CSR & Sustainability Policy seeks to achieve long-term social, environmental, and economic impact while coordinating with the SDGs and national agendas. In order to achieve inclusive growth and a sustainable future, ONGC has made environmental stewardship, community welfare, and ethical business practices a priority by incorporating CSR into its fundamental strategy. Through the implementation of multiple programs aimed at uplifting communities and advancing sustainable development, the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has shown an immense dedication to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Assam. In order to meet urgent requirements and advance the region as a whole, ONGC's CSR programs in the state concentrate on a number of important sectors. In Assam, ONGC's CSR initiatives are centred on healthcare and education. The business has invested heavily in improving educational facilities, aiding educational institutions, giving scholarships to students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and financing skill-building initiatives. Additionally, ONGC has strengthened healthcare facilities in Assam, especially in rural regions where access to healthcare is frequently limited, by implementing free medical camps, better hospital infrastructure, and mobile health units. In keeping with the government's emphasis on these areas, ONGC has also taken an active position in the creation of Assamese aspirational districts. In order to guarantee sustained success in these areas, specific initiatives have been put into place to enhance livelihoods and basic services, with an emphasis on healthcare, education, and skill development.

Driving Sustainable Development and Empowering Communities

In FY 2021–2022, M/s Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP, an impartial agency, was hired to assess the social impact produced by 11 significant ONGC-implemented CSR projects.

These initiatives complied with the framework requirements set forth by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Assam, Gujarat, Uttarakhand, Maharashtra, Jammu & Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, and Andhra Pradesh were among the beneficiaries of the projects evaluated, which were implemented in theme areas like healthcare, skill development, education, water, sanitation, hygiene, and the environment. Utilising a mixed methodology approach and selective sampling, the independent agency evaluated the impact on ONGC-supported beneficiaries in FY 2021–2022 (CSR Initiatives in India | ONGC Major CSR Projects by Oil & Gas Companies - En). To guarantee a thorough investigation, the sample was drawn using statistical sampling techniques. In accordance with the project execution model, the results-based framework was used to identify task-specific inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes/impact. This was done after consulting with implementing partners and reviewing the material that was available. In order to gather both qualitative and quantitative data, purposeful sampling was employed, along with specially designed instruments like beneficiary encounters, document and report reviews, and key stakeholder interviews. Semi-structured sample surveys, in-depth key informant interviews, and targeted group discussions with stakeholders and beneficiaries were among the principal data collection techniques employed.

The Siu Ka Pha Multispecialty Hospital in Sivasagar (Phase I), Assam, was one of the significant CSR initiatives evaluated. For severely ill patients in Sivasagar and surrounding areas like Jorhat, Dibrugarh, and Golaghat, as well as even extending to Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, and Mizoram, the project has greatly increased access to multispecialty care, including therapy, diagnostics, and intensive care (CSR Annual Reports - En - Ongcindia.com, 2024). As of February 2024, the hospital had recorded 102,742 OPD registrations, 11,327 IPD admissions, 3,746 operations, and 25,772 dialysis procedures and has served a significant number of patients since the beginning of Phase I in April 2019. With over 5,800 dialysis patients treated in FY 2023, empanelment under Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY has greatly boosted the number of dialysis patients. Of these, 54% were PMJAY

recipients, 36% were ONGC patients, and 9% were cash patients. Service delivery has been further reinforced by the participation of visiting nephrologists and internal medicine specialists. With 97% of patients questioned expressing satisfaction with staff behaviour and service quality, the hospital's healthcare services are widely trusted due to their affordability and quality. Additionally, 66% of the patients requested a mix of treatment and curative medications, such as tests, diagnostics, and operations, and 67% of the patients were from rural and peri-urban areas. Financial accessibility for individuals in need has improved due to partnerships with eight private insurance providers, corporate empanelment, and connections to insurance programs like Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY and ESIC. The enhancement of community awareness campaigns has been another significant accomplishment. From 1,983 awareness sessions in 2022 to 4,019 sessions in 2023, there was a 130% increase in comparison to the prior year. Increased patient traffic has been brought about by partnerships with City Clinic and Sepon Clinic, where physicians regularly treat 10–20 patients per visit, 1-2 sessions per week, for primary care and diagnostic services.

ONGC was essential in helping the communities of Assam during the COVID-19 outbreak. The organisation provided those in need with sanitisation kits, food packs, and necessary medical supplies. Additionally, ONGC organised immunisation drives, gave PPE kits to frontline staff, and made sure that medical facilities around the area would continue to get support. To help Assam and the country combat the pandemic, ONGC made a donation to the PM CARES Fund in addition to its local initiatives. According to Reach India Trust's independent impact evaluation, the hospital has effectively addressed the problem of bed shortages while offering affordable care at 70% of the going rate. Since the hospital's founding, 35,850 people have been treated, including 7,369 dialysis patients. This has greatly improved access to healthcare in the area because dialysis was not previously offered in Sivasagar. In 2020, during the COVID-19 outbreak, 100 patients were treated in a 30-day emergency COVID ward (CSR Annual Reports - En - Ongcindia.com, 2022). Feedback from various patient categories showed that 76% of respondents thought medical facilities were good or excellent, 82% had very positive

experiences with doctor visits, and 90% thought overall treatment was good and inexpensive. With 96% of workers being local hires, employment creation has also been noteworthy, guaranteeing regional economic advantages.

As part of its CSR initiatives in Assam, ONGC also supports the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), which gives BPL families access to cleaner cooking fuel. In collaboration with local healthcare organisations, the firm has set up mobile medical units to deliver vital healthcare services to senior citizens living in distant places. In order to promote improved cleanliness and health for kids, ONGC has been working to enhance sanitation in schools throughout Assam under the Swachh Vidyalaya Abhiyan. The organisation has introduced the ONGC Super-30 program in the sphere of education, which helps students become ready for competitive tests. Furthermore, the region's pupils now receive higher-quality education thanks to infrastructure development projects like the creation of RCC buildings for tribal villages, digital classrooms, and school libraries. In Assam, ONGC has also prioritised clean water and sanitation projects. The company has provided funding for the installation of drinking water facilities and communal restrooms at a number of public locations and schools. ONGC's dedication to fostering environmental sustainability in Assam is further demonstrated by the waste management initiatives and the installation of solar lighting (Hussain & Rajkonwar, 2019). Additionally, by giving ration packages and offering financial support for community welfare initiatives, ONGC has helped with disaster relief and efforts to eradicate poverty. Projects to provide jobs and enhance skills have also been put into place to empower young people in the area and increase their prospects for a living.

As part of its CSR efforts, ONGC's Shrikona Unit gave air conditioners to Satindra Mohan Dev Civil Hospital in Silchar in March 2024. The donation was made in partnership with the Rural Development and Social Service Organisation (RDSSO). Important people like Dr. Khaleda Sultan, Additional District Magistrate, and Bipul Gohai, Asset Manager of ONGC Shrikona, were present at the official transfer ceremony, which was held in the hospital's conference hall. ONGC's dedication to improving healthcare facilities in Silchar and creating a more comfortable

atmosphere for patients and medical personnel is demonstrated by the contribution (AC & Equipment Donated to Silchar SM Dev Civil Hospital by ONGC Cachar, 2024). By adding 65 additional ambulances to its fleet in Sivasagar, ONGC improved its emergency response capabilities in Assam in January 2025. These ambulances, which are leased for five years from the Assam State Transport Corporation (ASTC), have all the necessary equipment, including 2.2-litre oxygen tanks, autoloader stretchers, swivelling fans, and folding seats (PTI, 2025). They will be positioned strategically throughout all of ONGC's operational sites, such as production installations, workover rigs, and drilling sites. Additionally, the ONGC Hospital in Sivasagar and the dispensary in Nazira have been assigned two advanced life support ambulances that are equipped with vital life-saving devices, including ventilators and defibrillators. This program demonstrates ONGC's dedication to putting its stakeholders' and employees' safety and well-being first.

The way an economy develops is greatly influenced by corporate social responsibility. CSR and sustainability go hand in hand. CSR is an effort to make people happy by engaging in community-benefitting initiatives. Even though Assam has benefitted much, there is still much more that can be done to help it meet its sustainability goals (Dutta, 2020). In Assam, ONGC has also prioritised clean water and sanitation projects. The company has provided funding for the installation of drinking water facilities and communal restrooms at a number of public locations and schools. ONGC's dedication to environmental sustainability in Assam is further demonstrated by the waste management initiatives and the installation of solar lighting. Additionally, by giving ration packages and offering financial support for community welfare initiatives, ONGC has helped with disaster relief and efforts to eradicate poverty. Projects to provide jobs and enhance skills have also been put into place to empower young people in the area and increase their prospects for a living. ONGC's commitment to promoting sustainable development and raising the standard of living for local populations is demonstrated by these CSR initiatives in Assam.

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