

CHAPTER-III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The environmentalism became a worldwide movement in the decade of 1970s. New dimensions are added to the process of environment protection which primarily include – ethical, cultural, educational, social, political, economic, legal, managerial, communicative and so on. Preserving the environment has become the salient feature of contemporary development plans across the globe. Several environmental movements have highlighted the need for achieving sustainable development on the basis of systematic environment protection. They have realized the importance and value of conducting business operations from sustainability perspective. Communications strategies are becoming a vital source to build and develop relationships with a wide range of stakeholders. Hence, corporate sustainability communication is a key corporate strategy and it can be of value and import for the organization to integrate sustainability into corporate communications to respond promptly to stakeholders' concerns and demands. This chapter enumerates research in corporate communication, conceptual framework of the study, hypotheses of the study, study variables, study sample, research design, primary data collection, secondary data collection, computation of data, statistical analysis, period of the study and definitions of the terms used in the study.

3.2 Research in Corporate Communication

Research in corporate communication has to focus the relationship between corporate communication and organizational performance. The characteristic of corporate communication research centers on the corporate identity, corporate reputation and orchestration of communication. Scholars have noted that research in corporate communication could be found in several disciplines. The factors associated with corporate communication management and developments have to be scientifically evaluated through corporate communication research. The corporate leaders have to take into account the findings and recommendations of the researcher in order to boost the status of corporate communication. Corporate communication

research is carried out to standardize the process of integrated corporate communication. The corporate leaders and communicators should improve the quality of their work on the basis of effective communication tools, technologies and strategies. In future, corporate communication research agenda needs to focus on questions that derive from both qualitative and quantitative data analyses and provide understanding of corporate communication processes. In the long run, theorizing and research would enable corporate leaders and communicators to improve the effectiveness of their communication efforts.

3.3 Conceptual Framework of the Study

The subject of corporate sustainability and responsibility is a promising theoretical concept in social science and humanities. Scholars have examined the corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate sustainability communication (CSC) over a period of time. Scholars have also focused the attention of corporate leaders and corporate communication professionals on the linkage between corporate social responsibility and corporate sustainability communication. In the light of the past empirical work and theoretical underpinning throughout the last years, the present research reveals that strategic approaches to CSR and CSC would lead modern corporate houses towards a competitive advantage for the business in the long run. Porter and Kramer (2006) recognized that ‘CSR can be much more than a cost, a constraint, or a charitable deed’. Apparently they perceived CSR, ‘as a source of opportunity, innovation and competitive advantage’. The present research is grounded on the theory of Porter and Kramer (2006) who emphasized the linkage between competitive advantage and corporate social responsibility from the point of view of corporate sustainability communication.

3.4 Hypotheses of the Study

The present study is based upon the following set of null hypotheses. They include:

H1: The corporate houses have not cultivated positive attitude towards corporate good governance.

H2: The corporate houses have not adopted healthy CSR practices.

H3: The corporate houses have not implemented adequate environment protection Programs.

H4: The corporate houses have not practiced sound corporate sustainability communication.

3.5 Study Variables

Keeping the above hypotheses in view, the following variables were selected for the present study on the basis of review of literature and discussion with subject experts.

3.5.1 Independent Variables

- a. Gender
- b. Age
- c. Education
- d. Professional Status
- e. Duration of Service
- f. Nature of Service

3.5.2 Dependent Variables

- a. Corporate good governance of corporate houses.
- b. CSR Practices of corporate houses.
- c. Environment protection Programs of corporate houses.
- d. Corporate sustainability communication practices of corporate houses.

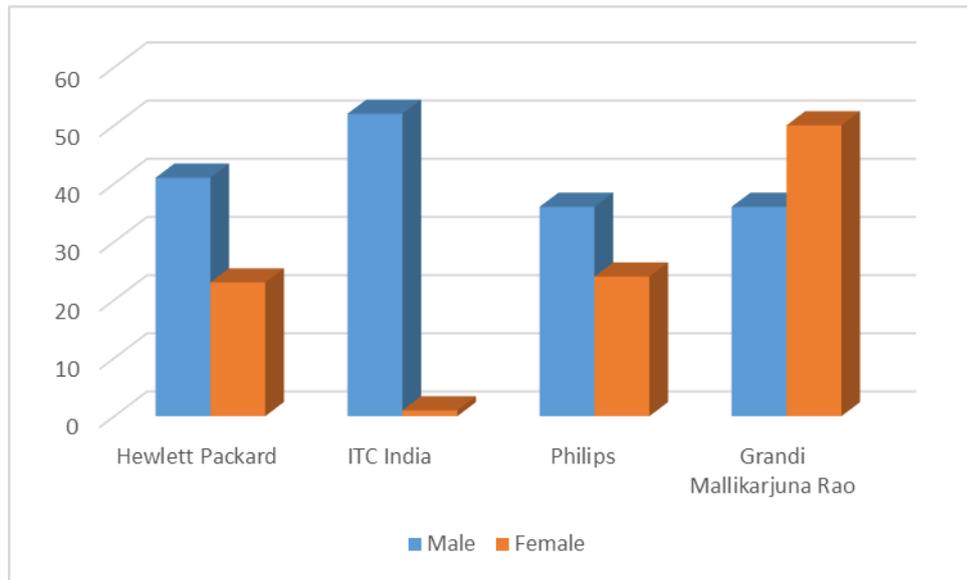
3.6 Study Sample

Table 3.1 – Distribution of the Study Sample

Sl.No.	Name of Corporate Houses	Male	Female	Total
1.	Hewlett Packard	41	23	64
2.	ITC India	52	01	53
3.	Philips	36	24	60
4.	Grandi Mallikarjuna Rao	36	50	86
Total		165	98	263

N=263

Graph 3.1 – Distribution of the Study Sample



The present study was conducted with a view to understand the uses and impact of corporate sustainability communication services rendered by Hewlett Packard, ITC India, Philips and Grandi Mallikarjuna Rao companies based in Bengaluru city of Karnataka state. These four organizations have earned international reputation for business management. They have also adopted healthy CSR practices and delivered corporate sustainability communication services to the people. About 86 respondents (male-36 and female-50) from Grandi Mallikarjuna Rao company, 64 respondents (male-41 and female-23) from Hewlett Packard company, 60 respondents (male -36 and female-24) from Philips company and 53 respondents (male-52 and female-01) were selected on the basis of incidental and stratified sampling techniques for the purpose of primary data collection.

3.7 Research Design

The present evaluation was carried out by the researcher on the basis of scientific survey research method. A structured and pre-tested interview schedule was administered to the representative sample consisting of corporate professionals representing top management, middle management and lower management. Primary data were gathered from about 263 respondents. Appropriate statistical tests were conducted to analyze the primary data, draw inferences, test the hypotheses and make recommendations. The pre-test was conducted in the month of June 2011 after

choosing the respondents in Mysore city, a non-sample area. Primary data were collected through questionnaire and interview tools personally by the researcher from about 263 respondents. The questionnaire was administered to the corporate professionals representing top management, middle management and low management. It was designed to explore the understanding of these professionals have of environmental concerns and corporate sustainability communication services of these four major corporate houses. There were specific questions on attitude of the corporate houses towards environment protection, environmental concerns of corporate houses, corporate sustainability communication of corporate houses and impact of corporate sustainability communication services. Primary data were collected in the year 2013.

3.8 Primary Data Collection

The primary data was gathered by administering the interview schedules to the professionals who worked in different areas such as human resources management, finance management, production management and corporate communication in the four leading corporate houses. The respondents were directly associated with the management of corporate houses and implementation of CSR activities. Incidental and stratified sampling techniques were used to select the subjects. Further, the study was conducted in two phases. In the first phase, general information regarding the profile and performance of corporate houses were collected from human resources management department. In the second phase of the study, the standardized interview schedules were administered to the respondents in order to understand the environmental concerns and corporate sustainability communication of select corporate houses in Karnataka state. Thus, primary data was collected from 263 stakeholders of CSR and corporate sustainability communication.

3.9 Secondary Data Collection

The present study was also systematically carried out on the basis of relevant secondary data such as – annual reports of select corporate houses, articles of professional journals, proceedings of national and international seminars and conferences, media reports and other publications related to the research topic. These sources naturally contained authoritative comments and criticisms on various aspects

of corporate communication management, corporate social responsibility and corporate sustainability communication in the organizations under study. These writings were also systematically analyzed for the purpose of gathering additional information and drafting the foundation chapters namely – introduction, review of literature and profile of select corporate houses.

3.10 Computation of Data

The primary data gathered from the survey from about 263 respondents on the environmental concerns of corporate houses and corporate sustainability communication in select corporate houses of Karnataka State were consolidated and computed by using descriptive analyses which consisted of advanced statistical tests. The statistical tests revealed the relationship between the independent and dependent variables considered in the study.

3.11 Statistical Analysis

The study being descriptive in nature, no parametric statistical tests were involved to draw inferences based on the sample results. The interpretation of the chi-square and contingency table analysis justify the assumption of independence which was primarily carried out at the 0.05% level of significance. A brief description of the statistical tests applied given below:

a. Frequencies and Percentages

The frequencies procedure provides statistics which are useful for describing many types of variables. A perusal of the primary data collected on environmental concerns and corporate sustainability communication services delivered by select corporate houses clearly suggests the application of the frequencies procedure as an appropriate statistical test.

b. Chi-square Test

The Chi-square test procedure tabulates a variable into categories and computes a chi-square statistics. This goodness-of-fit test compares the observed and expected frequencies in each category to test either that all categories contain the same proportion of values or that each category contains a user-specified proportion

of values. In the present study chi-square test was applied to find out the significance of difference between frequencies of various responses under each statement, tool or channels of communication.

c. Contingency Table Analysis

The cross tabs procedure forms two-way and multi-way tables and provides a variety of tests and measures of association for two-way tables. The structure of the table and whether categories are ordered determine what test or measure to use. In the present study contingency table analysis was applied to find out the association between independent variables like – age, gender, educational qualification, professional status and nature of service with the responses obtained (5 point scale) under each statement, tool or channels of communication.

3.12 Period of the Study

The actual data collection from the selected respondents in the sample area was done during June – December 2013.

3.13 Definitions of the Terms Used in the Study

3.13.1 Organizational Culture

Organizational culture is the basis for the conduction of business affairs in modern corporate houses. The quality of corporate governance affects the culture of corporate houses. The norms, guidelines and operations of modern organizations are also primarily dependent upon the culture of the organization cherished by the founders and builders over a period of time. Organizational culture is understood as a multidimensional subject with the scope of organizational values.

3.13.2 Corporate Culture

Corporate culture is influenced the integrity and performance of modern corporate houses. Corporate culture plays a crucial role in the management of modern corporate houses on the basis of a high level of integrity. The first necessary step is to understand the potential sources of this link and show that they appear to be present in the operations management of corporate houses.

3.13.3 Corporate Communication

Corporate communication is also the process; a company uses to communicate all its messages to key constituencies, combinations of meetings, interviews, speech reports, image advertising and online communication. Ideally corporate communication is an attitude towards communication or a set of mental habits that employees internalize. The result is good communication practices that promote an organization and are present in all its communication with its constituencies.

3.13.4 Corporate Responsibility

Corporations have a responsibility to those groups and individuals that they can affect, i.e., its stakeholders, and to society at large. The responsibility to society at large may well be identical with the responsibility to its various communities. Corporate responsibility constitutes an organization's respect for society's interests, demonstrated by taking ownership of the effects its activities have on key constituencies including customers, employees, shareholders, communities, and the environment, in all parts of their operations. In short, corporate responsibility prompts a corporation to look beyond its traditional bottom line, to the social implications of its business organizations.

3.13.5 Corporate Social Responsibility

CSR policy functions as a self-regulatory mechanism whereby a business monitors and ensures its active compliance with the spirit of the law, ethical standards and national or international norms. With some models, a firm's implementation of CSR goes beyond compliance and engages in 'actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interests of the firm and that which is required by law.' CSR strategies encourage the company to make a positive impact on the environment and stakeholders including consumers, employees, investors, communities and others.

3.13.6 Corporate Reputation Management

Corporate reputation management occurs from a company's uniqueness and from identity-shaping practices, maintained over time, that lead stakeholders to perceive the company as credible, reliable, responsible and trustworthy. Corporate

houses can build and sustain reputation on the basis of noble ideas, worthy actions, professional credibility and operational reliability which fetch economic dividends.

3.13.7 Corporate Branding

A corporate brand is the perception of a company that unites a group of products or services for the public under a single name, a shared visual identity, and a common set of symbols. The process of corporate branding consists creating favorable associations and positive reputation with both internal and external stakeholders. The purpose of a corporate branding initiative is to generate a positive halo over the products and businesses of the company, imparting more favorable impressions of those products and businesses.

3.13.8 Corporate Identity

Scholars have identified four types of corporate identity such as perceived identity (collection of attributes that are seen as typical for the ‘continuity, centrality and uniqueness’ of the organization in the eyes of its members), projected identity (the self presentations of the organization’s attributes manifested in the implicit and explicit signals which the organization broadcasts to internal and external target audiences through communication and symbols), desired identity (the idealized picture that top managers hold of what the organization could evolve into under their leadership) and applied identity (the signals that an organization broadcasts both consciously and unconsciously through behaviors and initiatives at all levels within the organization). Modern corporate houses are required to build and sustain identity which matters most from successful business management point of view.

3.13.9 Environment Protection

Environment protection has become an important challenge of our times. The earth, mankind, animals, flora and fauna cannot survive for a long time if proper environment protection measures are not implemented all over the globe. There is a proven correlation between environment and development. There is absolutely no dispute over the significant issue of environment protection since the survival and progress of the world primarily depends upon the stable, secured and sustainable environment.

3.13.10 Corporate Sustainability Communication

Scholars have examined the relationship between corporate communication and environment protection and reported that the risk perception was an obstacle to corporate communication practice in relation to environment protection. Organizations are required to build and enhance the corporate reputation through portrayal of environment friendly products and services rendered by them.

3.13.11 Survey Research

Survey research method is very popular in the research mainstream. It is nothing but surveying the minds of the people who matter most from the point of view of achieving organizational development. It is a systematic and scientific research method which facilitates generation of comprehensive authentic data on various aspects of organizational management and development. Primary data from about 263 corporate communicators and external stakeholders was gathered on the basis of survey research methodology.

3.13.12 Headquarters

The word 'headquarters' denotes the location where most, if not all, of the important functions of an organization are coordinated. The corporate headquarters represents the entity at the center or the top of a corporation taking full responsibility for managing all business activities. A headquarters is the entity at the top of a corporation that takes full responsibility for the overall success of the corporation, and ensures corporate governance. The corporate headquarters is a key element of a corporate structure and covers different corporate functions such as strategic planning corporate communications, tax, legal marketing, finance, human resources, information technology, and procurement. Bengaluru city is the headquarters of these four prominent corporate houses.

3.14 Summary

The environmental concerns and corporate sustainability communication with respect to four prominent corporate houses based in Bengaluru city are less understood due to lack of comprehensive and scientific communication investigations. The primary data were gathered from 263 respondents who represented the different branches of corporate management and levels of organizational management. The

respondents were selected on the basis of incidental and stratified sampling techniques. The present study approached the problem through a systematic survey method. Besides survey method, non-participant observation, informal discussion and secondary sources of information were also used as other methods to study the environmental concerns and corporate sustainability communication services of select corporate houses of Bengaluru city.