Chapter 6
Recommendations, Limitations and Scope for Further Research
**Recommendation**

To ensure effective CSR communication and an impactful stakeholder interaction it is essential that the IT companies operating in India should have a more holistic approach to communication which syncs well with the overall business strategy of the organization as an individual entity and leverages the positives attached with the concerned sector.

**Recommendations for Websites**

Companies should try and ensure that the home page of their website carries a link to CSR which would help take the reader directly to CSR related information. In case the home page is too populated and scope for carrying a direct link is not possible, CSR should feature in a category which indicates the company’s close association to CSR related activities and its integration into the company’s vision and mission like *About Us* category.

Technology should be better employed because the sector of study is information and technology which would have professionals who would be capable of providing technology aids to communication professionals such that the CSR related communication have a larger reach and easy access to stakeholders. Over years the IT sector should be able to show way to the other industries and sectors about the use of appropriate and optimum use of online formats. Websites will be the dominant information carrier since communication through the website is an efficient and economical way of communication.

Rearranging and archiving old communication data and up-dation of the latest CSR information should certainly be made because display of out-dated CSR information clearly indicates not only a lack of any recent activity but a complete apathy and neglect towards CSR issues from organizations.

CSR communication through the websites fulfill the basic criterion of developmental communication where all concerned parties can be involved in the process of decision making and the opinion and participation from all stakeholders can be seek. So, websites should be used as a medium of two-way communication implying that communication managers should be more interactive and responsive to the stakeholder’s expression. Stakeholder engagement would help in more results in terms
of relationship building and creating a positive image about the organization as its brings out a more holistic CSR communication.

Use of social media for CSR communication should also be engaged in by organizations because blogs and social network sites are gaining popularity as online tools for communication. Corporate CSR blogs and organizations presence on social media sites is likely to become an integral part of CSR communication. Online communication will in coming times to come no longer restricted to company’s websites and home pages.

**Recommendations for Annual Reports**

The use of rhetoric while providing CSR details in the annual reports is very high and the firms must begin to report CSR supplemented by figures and qualify statements. There is a pressing need to infuse objectivity in CSR reporting especially in annual reports where a lot of statements are reflections of intent and expressions and self praise often devoid of data and statistics. This makes it difficult to segregate CSR related information as genuine CSR communication from public relations or marketing communication exercise.

Therefore CSR communication should aspire to move beyond the confines of reporting to communicating to stakeholders the difference made through the socially responsible activities. So, communication would graduate from a description of decisions, plans, and actions to evaluation and assessment of the actual impact which has been made.

Since the term CSR has a fluid understanding and lacks a definitive meaning, so if organizations begin communicating their CSR by explaining and expounding the organizations understanding and stance to CSR, it will add to the stakeholders understanding. Such clarity will certainly ensure that stakeholders are able to relate better to the activities of the organizations as they will be able to associate the organizational goals and values with the CSR activities.

Involvement of employees in the entire CSR process should also be included into the annual reports because the employees are the key stakeholders addressed through this channel. Their inclusion in the strategic level of deciding upon the socially responsible
activities and their suggestion in its communication if included in the CSR disclosure made through the annual reports would help add credibility and employee engagement. No clear section is earmarked in the annual reports for CSR information and its ranges from the director’s messages to a separate section details CSR. Need for a standardized template or format for CSR reporting in annual reports would help in ensuring that necessary CSR disclosure is done which can be easily identified and analysed.

Recommendations for Sustainability Reports

Government attempts at creating an industry initiative to sustainability reporting seems to be rendering better results and therefore the exercise of furthering programmes which ensure that sustainability reporting becomes a norm supported and encouraged by the industry is essential. The number of coloured pictures in sustainability reports should be kept minimal because they create a visual aura and becomes an embellishment but do not often add much to the content. Instead of big glossy pictures which show smiling and happy employees, satisfied customers or large stretches of green land, the use of bars and graphs and caricatures and stylized representations of data is a much better option because it helps in keeping the attention to the information and yet add to the understanding and simplify comprehension and analysis of information. Wipro’s sustainability report is a good example of this.

Disparity and variation in sustainability reports can be avoided by bringing in standardization in CSR reporting. This is essential because several organizations sustainability reports focus only upon environment while the others include details about the four key stakeholders – Human Resource, Customers, Environment and Community.

Beyond publishing the sustainability reports focused reports carrying details about specific projects could also be produced because these could then be used as case studies for implantation of CSR activities by other players. Companies in other sectors have begun to publish such initiative specific reports like L’Oreal’s report on diversity or Nestle’s report on Diet and Nutrition.
Recommendations for Press Releases

Increase in the number of press releases on non-financial issues is pertinent because that would help bring to focus the CSR activities conducted by organizations and this is especially relevant in the present times when advitorials (advertisements presented as editorials) are common and organizations present an analytical picture of their organization not just as an article in a newspaper but also as part of their overall communication strategy.

Limitations

- CSR communication varies from industry to industry (Brammer and Millington, 2003; Sweeny and Coughlan, 2008) and is dependent upon the country of operation (Wanderley et al, 2008; Lattemann, et. al, 2009) and the present study is focused upon the communication made by the company’s in the IT and the ITES sector operating in India, therefore the findings may not be generic enough to be applicable to other companies operating in other sectors or to companies in the IT and ITES sector operating outside India in other countries.

- The Indian and the MNCs vary in their average age, revenues, area of operation, employee strength and mix and therefore a few results are could be affected by those factors which are external factors beyond the researchers bounds.

- CSR communication in India is still in a nascent stage and therefore lack of standardized reporting environment finds scope for subjectivity and variance.

- The study is limited to the communication made by the company’s through websites, annual reports, sustainability reports and press releases in the year 2009.

Scope of Further Research

- CSR communication is growing field of research and new forms of media are being added into the communication channels so research including blogs and
social media would help in making CSR communication research more exhaustive and holistic.

- A bifurcation of the companies of the same sector by size and comparing the CSR communication of the SME Indian and MNCs will help bring out a sharper picture of the CSR communication because most MNCs operating in India are large sized company’s whereas several Indian companies are much smaller in terms of revenue, history and area of operation and employees.

- Analysis of pictures and semantics and linguistic analysis would help bring out a sharper picture of communication from the point of view of language used and its interpretations and implications.