Preface

This research attempt is a product of a communication perspective of a management concept and brinks on being interdisciplinary because it delves into the area of communication which has been largely accepted as a crucial facet of management but still fails to attract a great deal of attention and importance in management study and research. Communication prevails as one subject in most management schools and in pure communication schools the management perspective of communication fails to be attended to.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is the management concept which has been researched upon in this study. The term CSR has almost become a fad and needless to say that it has drawn attention from varying ends ranging from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to highest governmental agencies both in India and abroad. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs in India has put up voluntary guidelines for CSR in India in 2009 detailing the fundamentals, core principles and implementation guidelines. Internationally, several countries have made CSR activities legally binding and have devised policies accordingly, along with getting into partnerships with the social and the private sector to encourage CSR.

CSR is simply understood as firms playing an active role and shouldering the three-fold responsibility – social, environmental and financial such that a harmonious equilibrium between the three is maintained and therefore since CSR is about the way firms choose to do business. With increasing stakeholder awareness and demand for transparency and deepening of media’s hold, it is of consequence for organizations to communicate their CSR for creating awareness, conveying the image of an ethical and sensitive organization and provide the cutting competitive edge and therefore create a bond between the firm and its stakeholders.

The make-up of the Indian industry shows that the Information and Technology (IT) and the Information and Technology Enabled Services (ITES) sector is one of the fastest growing sectors both in terms of production and exports. According to ‘IT-BPO Sector in India: Strategic Review 2011,’ a research report published by National
Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM), the IT and the ITES sector (excluding hardware), is estimated to aggregate revenues of US$ 88.1 billion in FY2011, with the IT software and services sector accounting for US$ 76.1 billion of revenues. There is a presence of most leading multinational companies (MNCs) and huge foreign direct investments as well resulting in creating a competitive market with the presence of leading Indian and MNCs. This sector was in news during the tenure of this study because of the Satyam debacle which further brought to light the importance of ethical practices, which comprises of CSR, in business.

The present study analyses and compares the communication of corporate social responsibility of the Indian Companies and the MNCs in the IT and ITES operating in India. The external forms of communication used by corporate were analysed since access to internal forms of communication is very difficult and often not made public on grounds of confidentiality. To make the study as comprehensive as possible all the four channels of external communication - websites, annual reports, sustainability reports and press releases of the Indian Companies and the MNCs of the IT sector were analysed. The study was conducted in the year 2009 based upon a list of top 50 Indian IT companies and the 42 MNCs operating in the IT sector in India. Most of these company’s are involved in CSR of some nature though not much has been communicated. Both the Indian Companies and the MNCs lack an exhaustive, cohesive and targeted communication of their CSR. Though the MNCs are largely more active in their CSR communication as against their Indian counterparts yet in publishing of sustainability reports which is one of the most internationally discussed and comprehensive CSR communication medium the Indian company’s are reflecting proactive inclination and assertive and praise worthy actions.

Several best practices have been marked out and the findings of this study will help both academicians and practitioners in gaining a sound understanding about CSR, its manifestation in India and the key stakeholders. It will help the corporate to shape up and plan their CSR communication.
There are four ways, and only four ways, in which we have contact with the world. We are evaluated and classified by these four contacts: what we do, how do we look, what we say and how do we say it. (Dale Carnegie)

The above quote encapsulates the spirit of this study because what we do is business, how do we look to others (Others are the stakeholders) what we say and how we say that is the communication of what we do.