

A Comparative Study of Awareness Towards Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives Among Rural and Urban Beneficiaries in Udaipur District

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Abstract:

Corporate Social Responsibility has become an important mechanism through which organisations contribute to community welfare, yet the effectiveness of such initiatives depends partly on whether beneficiaries are aware of their purpose, source and accessibility. The present study examined awareness towards Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives among rural and urban beneficiaries in Udaipur District. The objective was to compare the level of CSR awareness between the two beneficiary groups. A quantitative comparative research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 225 respondents, comprising 107 rural and 118 urban beneficiaries. Awareness was measured through eight Likert scale statements, and the reliability of the scale was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha of 0.823. Descriptive statistics and an independent samples t test were used for analysis. The findings showed that urban beneficiaries reported a higher mean awareness score than rural beneficiaries. The t test confirmed a statistically significant difference between the two groups, $t(223) = -4.84$, $p < .001$, with a moderate effect size. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The study indicates that CSR awareness differs according to area of residence and highlights the need for stronger rural communication and beneficiary engagement strategies.

Keywords: CSR communication; community welfare; beneficiary awareness; rural outreach; urban participation

CONTEXTUALISING CSR AWARENESS AMONG BENEFICIARIES

Corporate Social Responsibility has increasingly gained significance as a structured means through which organisations participate in community welfare and local development. In districts where industrial, institutional or organisational initiatives interact with local communities, CSR activities often address areas such as education, health, livelihood support, environmental protection and infrastructure improvement. However, the presence of CSR initiatives alone does not ensure meaningful beneficiary engagement. Awareness among beneficiaries is essential, as it shapes their ability to recognise CSR activities, understand their purpose and access the benefits intended for the community.

In the Indian context, CSR has moved beyond organisational image building and has become closely linked with inclusive development. Even so, the reach and visibility of CSR initiatives may vary across social and geographical settings. Rural and urban beneficiaries may not receive information through the same communication channels, nor may they have equal exposure to organisations involved in CSR implementation. These differences make beneficiary awareness an important area of empirical investigation, particularly in regions where development activities are experienced differently across rural and urban locations.

The present study focuses on Udaipur District and compares awareness towards CSR initiatives among rural and urban beneficiaries. The study is based on the understanding that awareness is not a single behavioural response, but a broader construct involving familiarity with CSR initiatives, knowledge of their welfare purpose, recognition of implementing organisations and understanding of how beneficiaries may access or participate in such activities. By measuring these aspects through structured Likert scale statements, the study offers a focused assessment of how beneficiaries perceive and recognise CSR related interventions in their locality.

The research problem emerges from the possibility that CSR initiatives may be visible to some beneficiary groups while remaining less clearly understood by others. The findings show that both rural and urban beneficiaries possess some level of awareness, but urban beneficiaries demonstrate comparatively higher awareness. The statistically significant difference between the two groups confirms that area of residence is relevant in explaining variation in CSR awareness. This study therefore contributes to the discussion on CSR communication and beneficiary engagement by identifying the need for more context sensitive awareness efforts, especially in rural areas, while also recognising the importance of sustaining effective outreach among urban beneficiaries.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Papadopoulos et al., 2025) examined the role of CSR awareness, communication and trust in shaping ethical consumerism among Generation Z in a recovering economy. Using a quantitative design with a structured questionnaire administered to 322 respondents in Greece, the research applied descriptive and inferential techniques, including factor analysis and regression. The results indicated that CSR awareness was moderate, while simplified communication and trust supported stronger ethical consumer responses. This work is relevant to the present study because it shows that CSR awareness alone may remain limited unless supported by clear communication and beneficiary understanding.

(Ahmad et al., 2025) investigated how CSR initiatives influence consumers' attraction towards company identity, with consumer awareness treated as a moderating factor. The study used data from 349 Pakistani consumers and analysed the proposed model through partial least squares structural equation modelling. The findings showed that CSR positively influenced identity attraction and consumer company identification, while CSR awareness strengthened these relationships. Its relevance lies in demonstrating that awareness can shape how stakeholders interpret and respond to CSR initiatives, which directly supports the present focus on awareness differences among rural and urban beneficiaries.

(Guillen-Godoy et al., 2025) presented a bibliometric analysis of the relationship between CSR and community health. Drawing on Scopus indexed literature, the study mapped the growth, contributors and

thematic directions within CSR linked health and sustainability research. The analysis revealed increasing academic attention to CSR as a mechanism connected with community wellbeing and public health concerns. This study is useful for the present research because it reinforces the importance of examining CSR from the perspective of community level outcomes and beneficiary awareness rather than limiting CSR evaluation to organisational reporting.

(Joshi et al., 2025) reviewed forty five years of CSR and sustainable development research through bibliometric and thematic analysis. The article identified the intellectual development of CSR scholarship and highlighted its growing connection with sustainability, development goals and stakeholder centred inquiry. Its contribution is important because it positions CSR as a field increasingly concerned with social relevance and development outcomes. For the present study, this supports the need to assess how CSR initiatives are understood by beneficiaries, particularly when awareness may differ across rural and urban social contexts.

(Eisele et al., 2024) explored the moral foundations of responsible business by analysing CSR communication across 5,010 corporate reports from 277 corporations in Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States over a twenty two year period. Using computational text analysis, the research showed that morality remains a stable element of CSR communication, although differences were observed across countries and sectors. The study is relevant because it highlights CSR communication as a key medium through which stakeholders become informed about corporate responsibility, thereby linking directly with beneficiary awareness in the present research.

(Khalili Nasr et al., 2024) analysed CSR marketing through social media and stakeholder engagement across countries and industries. The research focused on how stakeholders responded to CSR and non CSR posts on Twitter, considering engagement through likes, retweets and replies. The findings showed that CSR related posts could increase stakeholder engagement, although the effect varied by industry and national context. This is relevant to the present study because it demonstrates that communication channels and contextual conditions influence the visibility and reception of CSR, which may help explain why rural and urban beneficiaries differ in awareness.

(Nguyen et al., 2023) reviewed CSR related consumer scepticism through an antecedents and consequences framework. The article synthesised 89 studies published between 1998 and 2021 and identified gaps in how CSR communication, credibility and stakeholder perceptions shape scepticism. The review is important because it shows that CSR initiatives are not automatically accepted or understood by stakeholders unless communication is credible and clear. This has direct relevance to the present study, where awareness of CSR initiatives among beneficiaries is treated as a necessary condition for recognition, trust and meaningful community engagement.

(Mamo et al., 2023) investigated the socio economic effect of CSR on local community development in Southern Ethiopia. The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods, including data collected from local communities, interviews with officials and focus group discussions. Its findings suggested that CSR contributions to community development remained limited where follow up, governance and implementation were weak. The article is relevant to the present research because it places local

communities at the centre of CSR assessment and shows that community awareness and perceived benefits are essential for understanding the practical reach of CSR initiatives.

(Luo et al., 2023) examined the relationship between informative and factual CSR communication, perceived motives, organisational identification and corporate reputation. Based on an online survey of 811 respondents, the study showed that clear and factual CSR communication helped shape perceptions of CSR motives and organisational reputation. Although the focus was employee communication, the findings are useful for the present study because they underline the importance of accurate, understandable CSR information. In beneficiary based CSR settings, such communication may influence whether people can recognise initiatives and understand their community welfare purpose.

(Sattayapanich et al., 2022) examined factors affecting community participation in environmental CSR projects through evidence from a mangrove forest management project in Thailand. Using questionnaire data from 355 community members and multiple regression analysis, the study showed that perceived ecological values, CSR credibility and organisation public relationship quality influenced participation across different project stages. This study is closely relevant because it connects CSR credibility, community knowledge and participation, suggesting that beneficiary awareness is a practical requirement for effective CSR engagement. It also supports the present research concern that community members may differ in their ability to identify, understand and participate in CSR initiatives.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

To compare the level of awareness towards Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives among rural and urban beneficiaries in Udaipur District.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a comparative research design to examine differences in awareness towards Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives among rural and urban beneficiaries in Udaipur District. This design was appropriate because the objective of the study was not merely to describe awareness, but to compare the awareness levels of two distinct beneficiary groups. By structuring the study around rural and urban respondents, the design enabled a focused empirical assessment of whether beneficiaries' place of residence was associated with variation in CSR awareness.

Research Approach

The study followed a quantitative research approach, as the awareness of beneficiaries was measured through structured Likert scale statements and analysed using numerical techniques. This approach was suitable because the research objective and hypothesis required the comparison of mean awareness scores between two independent groups. The quantitative approach was therefore aligned with the use of descriptive statistics, reliability testing and an independent samples t test. While the research design established the comparative nature of the study, the research approach defined the numerical and statistical basis through which the comparison was carried out.

Population and Sample

The target population comprised rural and urban beneficiaries who were exposed to or associated with Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives in Udaipur District. The study was conducted on a sample of 225 beneficiaries, consisting of 107 rural beneficiaries and 118 urban beneficiaries. Proportionate stratified sampling was used, as the study required separate representation of rural and urban beneficiary groups for meaningful comparison. This technique was suitable because it allowed the sample to reflect the two relevant strata of residence while supporting group based statistical analysis. The sample size was considered adequate for a comparative quantitative study using mean based analysis and an independent samples t test.

Research Variables

The independent variable of the study was area of residence, classified into rural beneficiaries and urban beneficiaries. The dependent variable was awareness towards Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives. Operationally, CSR awareness referred to the extent to which beneficiaries were familiar with, informed about, and able to recognise CSR initiatives undertaken in their locality. The awareness construct was measured using eight Likert scale statements, and a construct mean score was calculated by averaging the responses across all eight items for each respondent. This construct mean score represented the overall awareness level of each beneficiary and was used for hypothesis testing.

Instrument Development and Measurement

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire developed to measure beneficiaries' awareness towards CSR initiatives. The questionnaire included eight Likert scale statements related to CSR awareness. Each statement was measured on a five point scale, where 1 represented Strongly Disagree, 2 represented Disagree, 3 represented Neutral, 4 represented Agree and 5 represented Strongly Agree. Higher scores indicated a higher level of awareness, while lower scores indicated a lower level of awareness. The use of multiple statements helped capture CSR awareness as a broader construct rather than as a single item response.

Data Collection Procedure

Data were collected from rural and urban beneficiaries in Udaipur District using the structured questionnaire. Respondents were approached according to the defined rural and urban strata, and their responses were recorded in numerical form for analysis. The data collection procedure was designed to obtain comparable responses from both groups, ensuring that the same set of awareness statements was administered to all respondents. The completed responses were coded and entered into the dataset for reliability testing, descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing.

Reliability of the Instrument

The internal consistency of the awareness scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability analysis was conducted for the eight CSR awareness items, and the Cronbach's alpha value was 0.823. This value indicates acceptable internal consistency for the awareness construct, as it exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 for reliability in social science research. The result suggests that the eight items were sufficiently consistent for measuring beneficiaries' awareness towards CSR initiatives.

Statistical Tools and Techniques

Descriptive statistics were used to summarise the awareness responses of rural and urban beneficiaries. Mean and standard deviation were calculated to understand the central tendency and variation in awareness scores. The construct mean score was used to represent the overall awareness level of each respondent. Reliability testing through Cronbach’s alpha was applied to assess the internal consistency of the awareness instrument. The hypothesis was tested using an independent samples t test, as the study compared the mean awareness scores of two independent groups, namely rural and urban beneficiaries. The test was appropriate for examining the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in awareness towards Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives between rural and urban beneficiaries in Udaipur District.

LIKERT STATEMENTS

Table 1.1: Responses of Rural and Urban Beneficiaries towards CSR Awareness Statements

	Rural					Urban				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I am aware of the Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives undertaken in my area.	4	25	53	20	5	1	16	52	44	5
I know the purpose of Corporate Social Responsibility activities carried out for community welfare.	3	22	47	34	1	1	12	52	36	17
I am familiar with the organisations or companies involved in CSR initiatives in Udaipur District.	9	25	45	25	3	4	15	53	36	10
I have received information about CSR initiatives through local representatives, meetings, or communication sources.	4	27	52	23	1	2	12	55	36	13
I understand the types of benefits provided through CSR initiatives for local communities.	0	18	56	30	3	1	17	37	50	13
I am aware of CSR activities related to education, health, livelihood, environment, or infrastructure development.	3	20	53	30	1	2	13	50	40	13

	Rural					Urban				
I can identify whether a development activity in my locality has been supported through CSR initiatives.	4	33	51	19	0	3	28	48	34	5
I have sufficient awareness of how beneficiaries can access or participate in CSR initiatives.	3	16	50	34	4	1	14	41	51	11

CSR Awareness: The Likert scale responses indicate a moderate to favourable awareness pattern among beneficiaries, with urban respondents showing comparatively stronger agreement across most awareness statements than rural respondents. The responses suggest that beneficiaries generally recognise CSR initiatives, their community welfare purpose, and related development areas, although awareness regarding access, participation, and identification of CSR supported activities remains comparatively uneven.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in awareness towards Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives between rural and urban beneficiaries in Udaipur District.

The independent samples t-test was applied to examine whether awareness towards Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives differed between rural and urban beneficiaries in Udaipur District. The dependent variable was Awareness towards Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives, and the independent variable was Area of residence

Table 1.2: Descriptive Statistics

Construct	Area	n	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Awareness Mean	Rural	107	3.01	0.53	0.05
	Urban	118	3.36	0.58	0.05

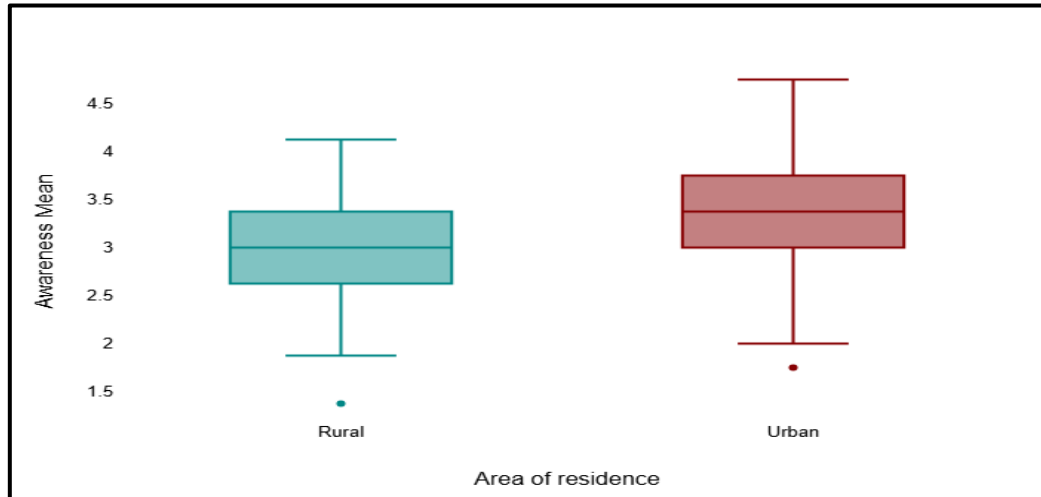


Figure 1.1: Descriptive Statistics

The group statistics show that urban beneficiaries reported a higher mean awareness score ($M = 3.36$, $SD = 0.58$, $n = 118$) than rural beneficiaries ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.53$, $n = 107$).

Table 1.3: Levene's Test (Mean)

Test	F	df1	df2	p
Levene's Test (Mean)	0.90	1	223	.343

Levene's test was not significant, $F(1, 223) = 0.90$, $p = .343$, indicating that the assumption of equal variances was satisfied. Therefore, the equal variances assumed result was interpreted.

Table 1.4: t-Test for independent samples

Construct	Variance	t	df	p
Awareness Mean	Equal variances	-4.84	223.00	<.001
	Unequal variances	-4.86	222.94	<.001

The t test result showed a statistically significant difference in awareness scores between the two groups, $t(223) = -4.84$, $p < .001$. The direction of the mean scores indicates that urban beneficiaries had comparatively higher awareness of CSR initiatives than rural beneficiaries. The estimated effect size was moderate, Cohen's $d = 0.63$, suggesting a meaningful group difference in awareness levels within the study context. Decision

For H_{01} , the independent samples t test was applied to examine the difference in awareness towards Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives between rural and urban beneficiaries in Udaipur District. Since the p value was less than .05, the result is statistically significant. The null hypothesis is rejected.

Finding

The finding indicates that awareness towards CSR initiatives differs between rural and urban beneficiaries. Urban beneficiaries appear to have a higher level of awareness than rural beneficiaries, which suggests that residence based differences are relevant in understanding beneficiaries' awareness of CSR initiatives in Udaipur District.

Conclusion

Since the null hypothesis is rejected, the researcher concludes that there is a significant difference of area of residence on awareness towards Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

The study examined awareness towards Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives among rural and urban beneficiaries in Udaipur District. The findings show that awareness is present among both groups, but the level is not uniform. Urban beneficiaries recorded a higher mean awareness score than rural beneficiaries, indicating that residence based differences are relevant in understanding how CSR initiatives are recognised and understood by beneficiaries. The reliability result also supports the internal consistency of the awareness scale, which strengthens the suitability of the instrument for measuring the construct.

The hypothesis testing result confirms a statistically significant difference in awareness towards CSR initiatives between rural and urban beneficiaries. As the null hypothesis was rejected, the study concludes that area of residence is associated with variation in CSR awareness. Overall, the study contributes to understanding how CSR communication and beneficiary engagement may differ across rural and urban contexts, and it indicates the need for more focused awareness building among rural beneficiaries while maintaining effective outreach among urban beneficiaries.

SUGGESTIONS BASED ON FINDINGS

1. CSR implementing organisations should strengthen awareness activities in rural areas, as rural beneficiaries reported comparatively lower awareness than urban beneficiaries.
2. Local level communication channels such as Gram Panchayats, community meetings and village representatives should be used more actively to share information about CSR initiatives.
3. CSR information should be communicated in simple regional language so that beneficiaries can clearly understand the purpose, benefits and eligibility conditions of each initiative.
4. Organisations should display clear information boards near project sites to help beneficiaries identify whether a development activity has been supported through CSR.
5. Rural awareness campaigns should include practical explanations on how beneficiaries can access or participate in CSR initiatives.
6. Urban outreach practices that appear to support comparatively higher awareness may be reviewed and adapted for rural beneficiary groups where suitable.
7. CSR implementing agencies should prepare short awareness leaflets or community notices explaining the areas covered by CSR, such as education, health, livelihood, environment and infrastructure.
8. Regular community interaction programmes should be organised so that beneficiaries receive updated information rather than relying only on informal sources.
9. Local representatives should be trained to communicate CSR related information accurately, especially regarding the purpose and community welfare focus of CSR activities.

10. Organisations should maintain a beneficiary friendly information system where people can ask about ongoing CSR schemes, eligibility and participation procedures.
11. Special attention should be given to improving beneficiaries' ability to distinguish CSR supported activities from other government or private development activities.
12. Awareness initiatives should not be limited to project launch events, but should continue during implementation and after completion to improve public understanding.
13. CSR communication should include examples of completed community welfare activities so that beneficiaries can connect the concept of CSR with visible local outcomes.
14. Rural and urban beneficiary feedback should be collected periodically to identify gaps in awareness and improve future communication strategies.
15. CSR planners should treat awareness building as an essential part of CSR implementation, because beneficiaries can engage more effectively when they understand the purpose, source and process of the initiatives.

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