

CSR RESEARCH “BACK HOME”: A CRITICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND FUTURE RESEARCH OPTIONS IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to provide a review of the current state of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in Pakistan and captures review of literature of most important work to date. This paper aims to systematically assess existing research chronologically, to analyse methodological tools and to explore future research option in the context of Pakistan. The review indicates vividly that companies practice CSR as short term, reactive and based on philanthropic activity. Most of the studies state that CSR is “an emerging idea” in Pakistan but limited number of academic and non-academic research on CSR clearly does not support this argument. Moreover, focus of most of CSR research is towards child labour issues and leather and textile industry. We establish on the basis of review of the literature that the currently popular methodological approach among researchers is either a micro-level case study approach or a macro-level exploratory approach. It is concluded therefore, that the limited number of researches in Pakistan on CSR provides opportunity for further research in different sectors. In addition to this, the scope of CSR in Pakistan can be extended towards a wide range of CSR issues including environment, stakeholders and corporate social disclosure. Moreover it is suggested, a more predictive, pragmatic and empirical research methodologies should be adopted in future.

INTRODUCTION

Tracing the developmental history of CSR during the author's doctoral studies, it became clear at the early stages of the degree that CSR is a highly contested topic these days among both academics and business practitioners. Especially, in the last decade CSR has emerged as an important economic, social and political phenomenon in both the developed and the developing countries (Carroll, 1999; Matten & Crane, 2005).

Despite the fact, that extensive debate on CSR have generated considerable body of literature offering a number of philosophies (Geva, 2008), yet new thinking and innovation in this field is evident due to global trends of political transformation and economic liberation. With enormous opportunities these global trends have created a major divide between have and have nots. It has given rise to insurmountable issues like poverty, water and food shortages, human rights violations, environmental pollution, flawed education and unemployment, (Zadek, 2001 & Rischard, 2002). In this context, Rischard (2002) argues that many of these global issues are strongly interwoven with the emerging economies in Africa, Latin America and Asia as compared with the industrialized nations. The developing countries are lagging behind in trained labour force, technical capability and the functioning of national and social organizations and due to this a global divide is created between the developed and the developing economies.

According to Blowfield & Frynas (2005, p. 506), “...we know very little about the impact of CSR initiatives in developing countries...”. Pakistan is not an exception to this case. In 1990s, perhaps for the first time CSR issue was realized in Pakistan, when the child labour issue in football industry (Saikot, Pakistan) hit the headlines of international media (Winstanley *et al*, 2002). As a result of this uproar the birth of several international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs) was inevitable; especially those working for CSR related issues to increase the awareness (SECP, 2005). Although since then different organisations and NGO's such as International Labour Organisation (ILO), Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and Responsible Business Initiative (RBI) etc are involved with business community and initiated research on CSR issues but academic research is very limited both in terms of scope and in numbers.

Business practitioners and scholars has been concern regarding role of business in society for long (Salzmann *et al*, 2005). It is obvious and perhaps undebatable that CSR academic research and CSR as academic discipline can play a vital role in shaping responsible business Leaders but in Pakistan there is not a single university where CSR is taught as subject and no faculty member of sample universities were carrying out research on CSR issues SECP (2005). Moreover this report states:” There are examples of conferences where

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CSR is made a topic for panel session, but it is often observed that the focus of these presentations labelled as CSR tends to examples of corporate philanthropy and the examples cited as CSR best practice often describe charitable acts by companies. In a situation where there is a lack of both theoretical and practical CSR knowledge and experience, this attitude invariably goes unchallenged." (ibid, 24).

These facts obviously indicate that CSR is an area ignored at large, but at the same time limited research provides more potential and opportunity for wider scope for research to academic researches in Pakistan context.

To bring more awareness of academic researchers towards this issue, this paper intends to examine the state of CSR in Pakistan through review of literature mainly by looking at published academic and key white papers. The purpose of considering only published and key white papers (and leaving out the contribution of other sources such as NGOs reports, web pages and news paper articles etc) are because of quality, authenticity, reliability and validity of published academic research work is higher than other non published sources of researches. All the available published papers and white papers have been accessed through web, journals and personal requests from their authors.

The lay out of the paper is such that it is divided into six sections:

- The first section comprises of definitional construct. In this part, CSR is defined with the help of renowned author's definition. It is believed that definitions provide a mind map for a questioner to take one on the journey of knowledge about any subject (Firestone & McElroy 2003). The knowledge provided in definitions may not be enough but it is the quality of definitions that it sets off the process of enquiry (ibid).
- The second section is devoted to the chronological review of the literature on CSR in Pakistan. The justification behind adopting the chronological review approach instead of a conceptual review of literature is to present a historical development of CSR phenomena in the local context of Pakistan.
- The second section of this paper explores the key issues and findings from the literature.
- The third section focuses on analysis of the scope and methodology of existing research.
- The fourth section gives directions for future research on CSR in Pakistan. Some key area which have not yet explored are.
- Finally, the fifth section of the study concludes with few comments on the scope, currently popular methodology of CSR research in Pakistan and suggests future research option.

Chronological review of CSR literature in Pakistan

Research on CSR has started almost a decade ago in Pakistan. Perhaps, the first ever study on CSR appears to be Ray (1999), which is a comparative study focusing on child labour and its key determinants from Peru and Pakistan. This empirical study was conducted on the basis of two hypotheses relating child labour with family income and adult labour as substitute of child labour. This study indicates few significant differences between Pakistani and Peruvian working children. The results of study indicate that there is a positive association between child labour and family income and negative association between child schooling and poverty in Pakistan. Both of these hypotheses were rejected in Peruvian data. It has been concluded that in Pakistan, child labour has been significantly decreased due to increase in education of adult females and infrastructure investment.

Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI, 2002) issued a white paper which focused on the issue of CSR and natural disasters in Pakistan. The aforementioned report reveals that social response of business is reactive in the case of natural disasters and only those businesses which are directly involved in that disaster get involved through public private partnership to help the society. This study also suggests that businesses in Pakistan have not "internalized" CSR concepts and that CSR practices are mostly enforced from "external factors" (ibid, p.34). This report pinpointed that multinationals companies (MNCs) in Pakistan are involved in short term investment like landscaping, billboards and cultural events which can be considered for better image. This study also exhibits few best CSR practices of companies including Sell, Reebok, Saga sports (Nike), Liver Brother Pakistan (now known as Unilever) and Engro chemical Pakistan limited (ECPL) in areas such as environment, education, child labour and health.

The next account one comes across on CSR in Pakistan is conducted by Lund-Thompson (2004). He suggests that corporate social and environmental responsibility (CSER) problems are not merely failure on the part of companies' management, but should also be understood in the local context and seen from the perspective of how international political and economic forces interact. He argues that to understand environmental hazards to locales "global value chain analysis" is a helpful tool (ibid, p. 108). He attempts to link this conceptual critical framework to analyse the case in Kasoor (Pakistan) as company community conflict. He explored that although, few companies consider themselves committed to CSER in theory, but were actually not changing their polluting practices in the area. Moreover, study indicates that one cause of pollution in is international political and economic forces. Cheap labour in this region (Kasoor, Pakistan) has attracted pollution intensive leather industry from North and as a result

local community was facing and suffering from environmental hazards. He concluded that there is a need for more in-depth research regarding the contextual understanding of CSER.

Khaliq (2004) presented a case study to understand that how International Labour Organisation (ILO) and SAGA sports has eliminated child labour in football stitching industry in Pakistan. This study debated issues like "value of export lead social consciousness", and difference between "child labour" and "child work" (ibid, p. 101). It has been indicated that with joint efforts of ILO and SAGA sports, child labour problem has been put to an end. Besides that, in the same industry other CSR issue like employee's rights and social investment have also been improved but he concludes that SAGA sports might have abolished the problem of child labour but it is assumed that the children working there might have moved to other industry because of the lack of consciousness in other local industries in Pakistan.

Yet another study on CSR but first of its kind on the behalf the government of Pakistan appeared in 2005 by the governmental regularity authority, "Securities Exchange Commission of Pakistan" (SECP). It was a white paper on "Evaluation of the state of CSR in Pakistan and a Strategy for Implementation". According to this report there is very low awareness of CSR in Pakistan, companies are still in initial policy development stage and are going through their first wave of CSR i.e. of philanthropy and legal compliance. Companies' vision is predominantly situational, short term, not part of a continuous strategic process and also not embedded as a corporate value but it is perceived as a necessity. Moreover, this report exhibits MNCs and large local national companies with international affiliation adopt and implement CSR. It has also been concluded that a small number of companies take environmental protection measures including waste management, recycling and energy conservation. Usually companies do not focus on areas such as corruption control, subsidized food and transport facilities for the employees and discourage employee unions, and stakeholder engagement. More over, CSR reporting is considered to be low priority issues. This report also suggests that CSR policy should evolve through business and institutions (stakeholders) engagement.

In 2005, PCP published a survey based research on the philanthropic activities of public listed companies in Pakistan. The study defined corporate philanthropy limited only to donations which means its scope is not captured fully as represented by the broader CSR concept. This report reveals that 64% of all public limited companies are involved in some social development activities. It also indicates that companies contribute to society mostly due to humanitarian and faith-based reasons. Moreover, few of companies also indicated that their tax benefits, marketing advantages and improved public image might also be a good reasons for charity based activities.

In 2006, PCP conducted a sequel of 2005 (PCP) survey report on corporate philanthropy in Pakistan. This year report shows that there was a significant increase in philanthropic activities of public limited companies. It has been also argued that although corporate philanthropy is on rise but it is still neither adequately organised, nor properly documented and mostly focused on health and education.

Janda & Wilson (2006) addressed the issue of CSR from the perspective of social investment in Pakistan. The study claimed that local Pakistani firms can maximise economic benefit by two ways. First, if they follow MNCs best CSR practices and second through Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) funds. Like SECP (2005) report this particular study also reveals that MNCs are the leaders in taking initiative in CSR practices. Furthermore, they claim that local Pakistani based firms are not active members of global impact and global reporting initiatives, and suggest that participation of Pakistani firms in these international bodies can bring more sophistication to CSR practice in Pakistan. Janda & Wilson (2006) do not agree with SDPI (2002) and claim that MNCs in Pakistan operate on a broader stakeholder oriented CSR practices.

Khan (2006) made an attempt to understand conflict between CSR and firm competitiveness in 18 Pakistani textile manufacturing factories exporting goods to United States. Her findings clarified that no child labour issues from CSR perspectives were raised in selected sample, which was once a big concern of international community in the 1990s. This study also demonstrates considerable improvement in the safety and health conditions due to new compliance standards. She also discovered that, factory owners contend that CSR brand is not properly working in local context of Pakistan and imitates "Western norms" (ibid p. 7). Moreover, factory owners are concerned about the tedious CSR audits (sometimes up to 22). She concluded that CSR mandatory regulation is not on horizon but firm's collaboration among public, private and non profit organisation is in progress.

Ahmad (2006) has conducted a study regarding CSR perceptions and practices in Pakistan using questionnaire based interviews. He explored the key CSR issues, the importance of different stakeholder, the varieties and types of CSR activity prevailing in the Pakistan from non-randomly selected sample of 16 companies. He claims that there is substantial divergence in the CSR issues in the country. Most of CSR activities focus only on employee welfare and corporate philanthropy. Like SDPI (2002), this study also indicates that business is involved in short term especially making donation in the case of natural disasters. Interestingly, not of the single respondents indicated that their company's CSR initiatives were result of pressure from government regulatory bodies, NGOs, media, suppliers or employees etc. Ahmad further claims that industry type, size of the com-

pany and financial performance has moderating effect on social obligations however financial performance has been explored as first priority of most of business managers. Furthermore, he concludes in agreement with Khan (2006) that based on the western-style CSR is emerging but it is nascent in Pakistan.

Khan (2007) conducted a fieldwork based on both theoretical as well as empirical case study of child labour in Pakistan's soccer ball industry. His study focuses on the risk of "representational practices" of international business involved in "social inequalities" (ibid, p. 87). He suggested a conceptual framework through four possible basic choices to represent ethical issues faced by international businesses in the developing world. He emphasised that representational practices are important when international business operates in the developing countries. He found that if businesses do not involve stakeholders in their practices, the well being of the poor would be at stake then in the developing world. Moreover, he urged that even those foreign actors who wish to pursue ethical business practices if unable to understand the complexities of representation can result in inaccurate representation.

BRIEF DEBATE ON KEY FINDINGS FROM LITERATURE

Is CSR is an emerging idea in Pakistan?

Since 2002 most of the research studies indicate that CSR is an emerging phenomenon in Pakistan (SDPI, 2002; SECP, 2005; Janda & Wilson, 2006; Ahmad 2006). Perhaps, it cannot be claimed that this article covers all historical CSR research in Pakistan but this carefully developed chronological list (appendix A) of CSR studies in Pakistan shows that at least from CSR research and literature perspective CSR phenomena is not emerging in literature.

Philanthropic Activities

Carroll (1998) suggested that economic responsibilities (profitability), compliance with legal responsibilities, engagement in ethical behaviour and philanthropy are four characteristics of good corporate citizen. He emphasised that each of these four dimensions does not exist in isolation and each dimensions is important element of good corporate citizen.

Corporate social responsibility and corporate philanthropy are terms that have been used more or less interchangeably in Pakistan. CSR literature in Pakistan reveals without any difference of opinion that except few MNCs, companies consider CSR as short term charity based or philanthropic activity (SDPI 2002; SECP 2005; Janda & Wilson 2006; Ahmad 2006). However, there is no clear evidence from the literature regarding economic, legal and ethical dimensions of Carroll (1998) model.

CSR strategy in Pakistan: Political economy or organizational legitimacy

Woodward *et al* (2001) presented a framework based on the concepts of organizational legitimacy (OL) and political economy (PE). He presented these concepts as two different dimensions of corporate social behaviour. He assert "businesses operate under a mandate from that society, but which can be withdrawn if organizations are seen not to be doing the things society expects of them" (ibid, p. 360) and as a result business takes appropriate action to justify their existence. This reactive justification of business was presented as OL. He also suggested PE as an alternative proactive view in which business attempts to set agenda to influence society.

If we use Woodward *et al* (2001) conceptual framework in the context of Pakistan to understand companies CSR strategies, it has been argued in the literature that most of the companies adopt reactive strategies (SDPI 2002; SECP 2005; Ahmad 2006). So it can be concluded that most of business responsible actions are to meet societal expectation to prove them as legitimate entity in the society.

Non-contextual

MNCs as global citizen are operating in different countries and in different cultures. Every country, culture and industry is unique so it is vital for companies to understand the local meaning of CSR. Jackson & Artola (1997, p. 1164) indicate that it is important for managers (particularly from western countries) working across the borders need to understand the "difference in ethical and behaviour". It is vital to understand that the operating contexts for companies in South clearly different from West due to cultural environment (Ramasamy & Ting 2004). However, in Pakistan it has been widely claim that MNCs from the West are practicing western type CSR which is non-contextual (SECP 2005; Khan, 2006; Ahmad 2006 & Lund-Thomsen 2004).

MNCs leader in CSR practices

In the case of Pakistan it was clearly evident that MNCs (both from Pakistani origin and foreign) are leader in initiating CSR activities (SECP 2005, Janda & Wilson 2006, Khan 2006; Ahmad 2006). CSR literature (Goodstein 1994, Powel 1991, Adams & Hardwick 1998; Boatman & Gupta 1996) exhibits that large companies or the size of a company is a key determination factor for CSR practices therefore, MNCs ought to practise CSR in Pakistan.

Situational and short term

Greening & Gray (1994) believes that crisis events may be considered as indirect factor for CSR initiatives. Those companies facing crisis may show

greater interest to adopt CSR activities to reduce pressures (King & Lenox, 2000). This idea is quite obvious in Pakistan where SDPI (2002) report reveals that businesses are more involved in welfare initiatives and activities when they are part of disaster or crises event and these welfare activities are situational. Moreover, Hess & Warren (2008 p.63) claims that social initiative is "sustainable" and has "potential" for a positive impact on society. However, in Pakistan it has been found that business activities are event oriented and not part of long term strategic process. (SDPI, 2002; Ahmad 2002).

Business Good Practices: Result of pressure groups

Hess & Warren, (2008 p.178) believes that if business do not act responsibly they may face new regulations or non legal sanctions such as "boycotts" and "negative publicity" from different pressure groups. In mid 90s when NGOs and international media as pressure group raised the issue of child labour in Pakistan football industry (Winstanley, et al., 2002), international business community boycott purchasing football as result child labour issue has been eliminated from all export oriented companies, and working condition are also considerably improved (Ray, 1999; Khan 2006 ; Khan 2007)

The Stakeholder's engagement:

Brown & Dacin (1997) define CSR as a company's status and activities with respect to its perceived societal or, at least, stakeholder obligations. It is also acknowledged that in order to define precisely what CSR means to a company it needs to engage with its stakeholders and take into account their needs and aspirations when formulating CSR strategies and programs (Welford, et al., 2007). Moreover, stakeholder identification and involvement may not only prove business as legitimate entity in the society but also will provide opportunity to business to be aligned with public and private benefit in a balanced ways (Hess & Warren, 2008). It is unanimously accepted amongst the scholars that it is vital to understand the priorities of stakeholders in local context but Steiner & Steiner (2000) claim that in less developed countries; there is often no local sense of responsibility in business. To summarise, CSR is an idea that needs contextualizing in the relevant social context. To understand the CSR concept in local context stakeholder engagement is considered as a key strategy. In Pakistan, a review of the literature reveals that different NGOs have taken the initiative to be involved with companies on CSR issues. But still, companies do not involve stakeholders in their CSR strategic process (SECP 2005; Khan 2006). Moreover, stakeholders are weak actors and have weak institutional representation in Pakistan (Ahmad 2006; Khan 2007).

Critical analysis of scope, quality and quantity of CSR research in Pakistan

CSR literature in Pakistan is limited in terms of number (see annexure A) and narrow in scope but also methodology, validity and reliability is questionable.

Survey research

SECP (2005) is an exploratory study which adopted triangulation methodology and addressed the large sample of 100 both local and multinationals from different sectors. The report on CSR includes a large sample size but it does not clearly indicates whether, probability sampling is used or not in it and there is no information about the number of responding companies from various sectors. On the basis of this argument it can be claimed that this study is not purely empirical scientific research. Therefore, results of (SECP, 2005) cannot be generalized with full confidence on whole population. Moreover literature of the report hardly shows citation from academic peer review journals, almost all citations are from non-published white papers. Similarly, Ahmad (2006) conducted an exploratory study to explore the drivers of CSR in Pakistan. His study consists of in-depth interview with non random small sample of 16 companies' also limits the generalisability.

Ray (1999), Khaliq (2004), Lund-Thompson (2004), Khan (2006) and Khan (2007) used case study approach to address the issue of CSR in specific industrial sectors (leather, textile and soccer/football respectively). Although case studies have been criticized because it is often based on qualitative data (lack hard evidence) and limited applicability in a specific or company sector (Salzmann, 2005) but pragmatic approach towards case studies can bring more reliability and if so results of these case studies could be generalised to similar setting.

SDPI (2000) report's scope is limited on CSR in the case of the disaster events. The report includes both national and multinational companies from different sectors of business. But, this report also does not approach the idea through pragmatic methods and like SECP (2005) report, these researches are not tailored in the fashion of academics and that has caused lack of rigour in literature review.

PCP (2005 & 2006) survey was based on documentary analysis of audit report of large sample size of public listed company. Although, data is collected from large sample of firm and descriptive statistics (percentages) were used but topical scope of both studies are limited towards charitable and donation activities which means these report do not cover the broader aspect of CSR, such as legal, economic and ethical dimension (Carroll, 1998).

Janda & Wilson (2006) study, which is one of the working papers of Centre for Management and Economic Research (CMER) lacks rigour and is not yet on

Annexure: A

Year	Author	Paper	Key Findings
2002	SDPI Pakistan	White paper	Charity base CSR, Short term responsibility, reactive in case of disasters.
2004	Thomsen, L., P.	Peer review Paper	CSR should be seen from the perspective that how international political and economic forces interacts and understand in local context.
2005	SECP Pakistan	White paper	CSR is driven by legal requirement customer Image, International exposure creates better understanding of CSR, Most Companies are still in the initial Policy Development stage, SECP's Code implemented fairly uniformly by listed companies, Compliance vision is predominantly situational not strategic, Supplier practices considered less relevant to companies' own practices.
2006	Janda and Wilson	Working Paper	MNCs are Leading in CSR practices, those Pakistani local companies which are not expose to international environment are not initiating contemporary CSR practices.
2006	Khan, A	Paper	No sign of child labour in selected sample companies, improvement in safety due new compliance standards, CSR practices are not contextual.
2006	Ahmad	Peer review paper	CSR is emerging idea, activities focus only on employee welfare and corporate philanthropy, industry type, size of the company and financial performance has moderating effect on social obligations.
2007	Khan, R.F.	Peer review paper	Proposed a 4 dimensional model to deal with stakeholder representations. Stakeholders are weak actors in developing countries. If business do not adopt appropriate representation approach well being of stakeholders is on stake.

list of published researches on CSR. It is suggested here, that if methods are improved and citations improved with respect to quality then it would be worth publication as a paper.

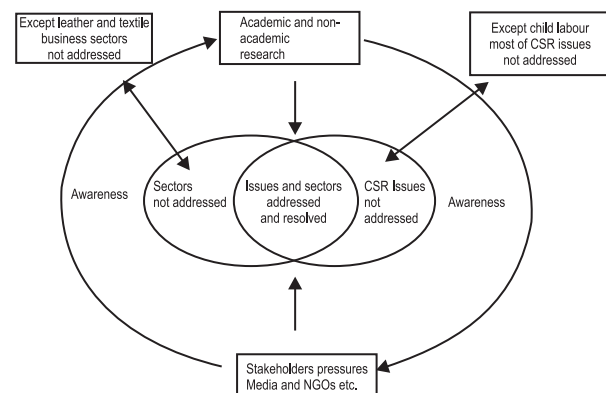
It can be concluded from the above discussion that CSR research in Pakistan is in fancy. Most the research is non academic and non rigor. Moreover, the wide majority of academic and non academic research appears to be focused towards child labour in leather, textile and soccer industry perhaps due to concern of international community in these sectors.

Issues yet to be investigated: Suggestions for future research options

Different scholars have noticed that western business is ahead of Asian business in many aspects of CSR (Ang, 2000; Low, 2004; Welford, 2004; Westwood & Posner, 1997). Evidence reveals that particularly in Pakistan, CSR level is much below than average found in Europe, America, Africa and Asia (Salzmann, 2005). However, this review of literature indicates that there is considerable improvement in few CSR issues such as child labour, health and safety in textile and leather industry in Pakistan (Ray, 1999; Khan, 2006 and Khan, 2007). In last ten years, two factors i.e. pressure groups

(Media, NGOs etc) and research (Both academic and non academic) has targeted child labour in leather and textile industry.

Figure 1 is created on the basis of CSR review of literature in Pakistan. Perhaps, an argument can be generated through figure 1. If research and pressure group focus on any specific societal issue and particular business sector, as a result business act responsibly and conflicting CSR issues are resolved (child labour issue is completely abolished from textile and leather industry in Pakistan).



This figure also suggests that different CSR environmental and social factors yet to be explored investigated and examine in Pakistan. To address these issues it is suggested that the future research should cover more CSR dimensions, such as

- It is obvious from review of literature that business especially MNCs practice Western style CSR practices and lack local contextual understanding (SECP 2005; Khan, 2006; Ahmad 2006; Lund-Thomsen 2004). So CSR issues such as Cross-cultural implications of CSR and CSR in local context (Muller, 2006; Jamali, 2006; Imbun, 2006; Min-Foo, 2007) might be useful to investigate.
- Environmental issues such as air and water pollution, industrial waste management, energy conservation etc (Roarty, 1997; Hussain, 1999; Shrivastava, 1999; Fig 2001; Menguc & Ozanne 2005) and green business still to be addressed and not examined from CSR perspective in Pakistan.
- SECP (2005) & Ahmad (2006) claims that there is no stakeholder engagement in business. Moreover, there is not a single study which focus on this issue in Pakistan. Stakeholder's management issues like Stakeholder's identification and mapping, stakeholder's engagement and conflict management (Donaldson & Preston, 1995; Abma 1999; Vos, 2003) research topic are proposed for future research.
- SECP (2005) indicated low level of corporate social reporting in Pakistan. Perhaps, there is no single study on Corporate social disclosure (CSD). Issues like identification and examination of reporting, medium of reporting, key variables reported and ignored in reporting processes, accountability, credibility and audit etc. (Gray, Kouhy & Lavares 1995; Tsang, 1998; Belal, 2001).

CONCLUSION

This study might be a surprise on the basis of its antithetical result. The myth of CSR being an emerging phenomenon is disproved, here, on the basis of quite a few studies conducted in research. Few exploratory and case studies researches are on the scene. And it is observed that very little academic research is available on CSR in Pakistan. Scientific, pragmatic and empirical approach is missing in both academic and non-academic research which is the factor of lack of rigour in research. The companies practising CSR are involved in short term, reactive, charity based activities. More over, they are practising it without involving stakeholders. Only NGOs have started to initiate in term of research and engagement with business.

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