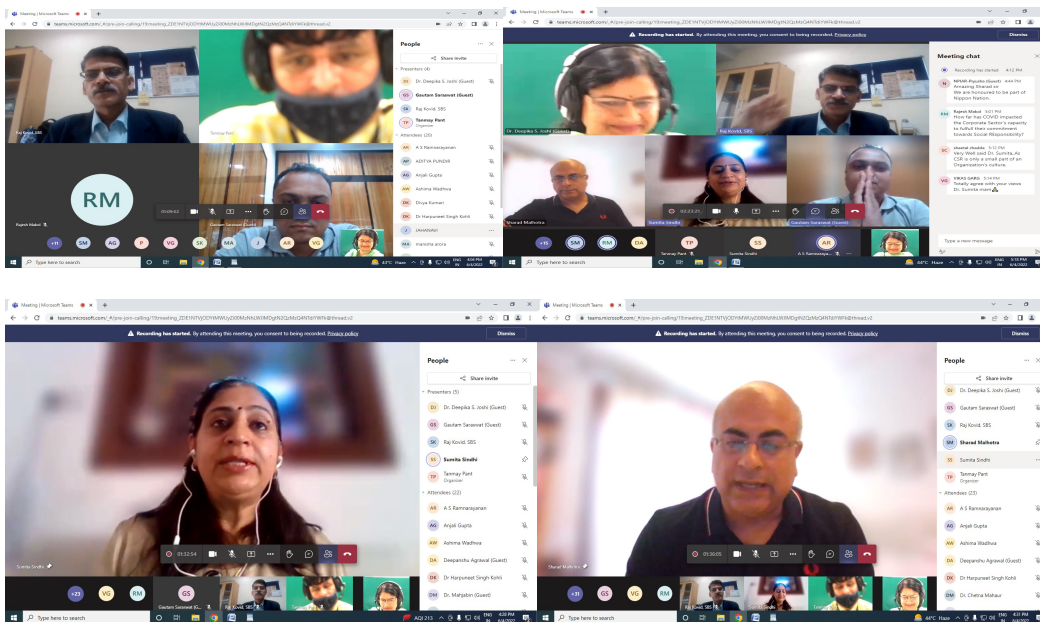


NATIONAL SYMPOSIA: EMPLOYER BRANDING THROUGH CSR

4th JUNE, 2022

Gitarattan International Business School (GIBS) organized National Symposia on ‘Employer Branding through CSR’ in the online mode on 4 June, 2022. Conducted in a panel mode, experts from both academia and the corporate graced the occasion and deliberated keenly upon the topic that, of late, has received a lot of attention. The academic experts were two reputed names in the field of CSR – Prof. Sumita Sindhi, Faculty CSR, at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Sambalpur, and Prof. Raj K Kovid, HOD, General Management, School of Business Studies, Sharda University. The corporate experts were Mr. Sharad Malhotra, President (India) and Group Sr. Vice President (Automotive Refinishes Business), Nippon Paints (India) and Mr. Gautam Saraswat, Chief of Growth, Strategy & Marketing, Aludecor.



Dr. Tanmay Pant, coordinator for the symposia along with fellow coordinator, Prof. (Dr.) Deepika S. Joshi, introduced the experts and shared the format for the symposia wherein panel experts were requested to give their perspective on the topic. Starting with the academic perspective, firstly, Prof. Raj K. Kovid, highlighted the significance of CSR as a source of competitive advantage by sharing an interesting anecdote. He told the audience that he was well aware in advance that CSR would be a source of competitive advantage. His insight was truly visionary as employers these days brand themselves through CSR activities. Stressing on the felt need for employer branding through CSR, Prof. Kovid opined that it is still evolving and a changing environment has warranted changes in the companies. On the challenges front, Prof. Kovid said that with the advent of the social media and the gig economy setting in, defining workforce would be a real challenge. Continuing with the academic perspective, Prof. Sumita Sindhi, IIM Sambalpur, saw CSR as a combination of functional, economical, and psychological benefits employees get from a company; economical benefits being the most important. Citing Ruchir Sharma, Prof. Sindhi opined that ethics will play a huge role in the future when potential aspirants will apply for a job. CSR as normative concept can play an important role in employer

branding, she added. With CSR as an antecedent to company's reputation, she cited various examples like the Tata group (trusteeship model) and ITC (with its green hotels) as relevant instances of communicating CSR. Communication of CSR is going to be of immense importance as we move forward. Lastly, the concerns about the fact that SMEs, smaller companies, and start-ups don't have larger resources to brand themselves through CSR were discussed.

Moving on to the corporate perspective, Mr. Sharad Malhotra, started with the conviction that his company and the other corporate friends he knew were doing much more than the mandatory provisions set forth for CSR. Sharing details of his organization, the Nipsea group (Nippon Paints, India) he emphasized upon CSR as a strategy for companies. He mentioned the global campaign being run in his organization – Colouring Lives/Lights that involves Education, Empowerment, and Engagement. He cited the importance of the triple bottom line and said that profit will follow once the people and plant part is looked after well. Further, he shared CSR activities from his organisation, Pragati School, Tamanna NGO, etc. and how dedicatedly they supported their painters during the Covid19 pandemic for months together. Even company employees made sure that the painters survived the pandemic onslaught. Summing up, Mr. Malhotra said that CSR is not charity but it is about integrity and a source of competitive advantage, seconding what the esteemed academicians had spoken before him.

The corporate perspective was furthered by Mr. Gautam Saraswat. He strongly advised that a 360 degree approach by companies should be adopted, CSR being the focal point. He opined that aspirants were keen to join companies that addressed the triple bottom line of people, planet, and profit. With a sense of pride, he shared that India was the first country in the world to legally mandate CSR and the big Indian companies like TCS and ITC are doing commendable work in the field of CSR. On an emotional note, he cited the efforts of his firm during the pandemic wherein company employees pooled funds to help the fabricators in time of need for six months, forgoing some part of their salaries in the process. He rounded-off by stressing upon the consistency of messages for the current employees and future employees with respect to CSR communication thereby doing a fantastic job of internal as well as external branding.

A short question answer part of session ensued where the esteemed panel speakers satiated the answer seekers – faculty members, management students, and working professionals – with their insights and experience.

The vote of thanks was given by Prof. Deepika S. Joshi. The symposia achieved all the broad objectives set forth and reinforced GIBS' identity as an institute advancing scholarly knowledge through timely interventions.

Prepared by: Dr. Tanmay Pant, Assistant Professor, GIBS