



**CII Eastern Region, First Edition**

**June, 2009**

**Overview of the Affirmative Action Initiatives among CII Members**

Till early 2007 private sector Indian Industry was caste blind, unlike the public sector which had job reservations for SC/ST youth. Several Indian companies had a significant number of employees from the SC/ST communities but there were no figures as industry had no data on the casts affiliation of its employees.

However after Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s call to CII in 2006 to pro-actively adopt an Affirmative Agenda to obviate the need for legislation CII set up a Task Force a National Council and companies began implementing their Affirmative Action from January, 2007.

Indian industry had assured Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that it would draw up a robust Affirmative Action plan and two years later, it is Indian industry contention that an encouraging beginning has been made. Awareness has been created in Industry of the importance of Affirmative Action to further social stability and cohesion, so necessary for business. A beginning has been made in many companies to embed Affirmative Action for the SC/ST communicates in the HR and business processes.

Nearly 100 CII member companies have drawn to Affirmative Action agencies for SC/ST youth under four heads **Employability, Entrepreneurship, Education** and **Employment** already making a difference to the lives of over 28222 SC/ST youth in all regions of Indian.

**CII Code of Conduct for Affirmative Action**

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Company affirms the recognition that its competitiveness is interlinked with the well being of all sections of the Indian society.</li> <li>2. The Company believes that equal opportunity in employment for all sections of society is a component of its growth and competitiveness. It further believes that inclusive growth is a component of growth and development of the country.</li> <li>3. The Company affirms the recognition that diversity to reflect socially disadvantaged sections of the society in the workplace has a positive impact on business.</li> <li>4. The Company will not practice nor support conscious discrimination in any form.</li> <li>5. The Company does not bias employment away from applicants belonging to disadvantaged sections of society if such applicants possess competitive skills and job credentials as made public.</li> <li>6. The Company’s selection of business partners is not based on any considerations other than normal business parameters. In case of equal business offers, the Company will select a business partner belonging to a socially disadvantaged section of society.</li> <li>7. The Company has/ will have a written policy statement on Affirmative Action in sthe workplace.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8. The Company has/ will have an employment policy that is in the public domain. It may place such policies and employment opportunities on its website to encourage applications from socially disadvantaged sections of society.</li> <li>9. The Company makes / will make all efforts for upskilling and continual training of employees from socially disadvantaged sections of society in order to enhance their capabilities, and competitive skills.</li> <li>10. The Company has / will have a partnership programme with educational institution/s to support and aid students from socially disadvantaged sections of society.</li> <li>11. The Company has / will have a senior executive accountable to the CEO to oversee and promote its Affirmative Action policies and programmes. The senior executive presents / will present a biannual report to the Board of the Company about such policies and programmes.</li> <li>12. The Company further has a policy to maintain records on Affirmative Action.</li> <li>13. The Company makes available its learning and experiences as a good corporate citizen in Affirmative Action to other companies desiring to incorporate such policies in their own business.</li> </ol>
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### A Success Story

#### **Usha Martin Limited**

#### **Developing Skills for Sustained Livelihood**

Saranda Forest is one of the largest rain forests of Asia and located at the borders of Jharkhand and Orissa. If one climbs on the top of one of the hills of Saranda Forests he can see amazing greenery, filled with flora and fauna. Tribes, who are known as 'HO', inhabit this place. These tribes are ancient and still follow social norms and rules, which are traditional and medieval.

It was Indian Iron and Steel Company (IISCO), which started its first mining activity in Kiriburu, early 20<sup>th</sup> century and now the Steel Authority of India owns the same establishment. After the Government's decision of privatizing mines for captive use by the companies, Usha Martin got its mining lease from the Government in 2005 and it started its mining operations in the year 2006.

The Company Representatives who were totally astounded by the natural beauty were also shocked to see the existing poverty of the locals, coupled with lack of education, poor agriculture and low living standards. Poverty and lack of employment forced the local youth to the path of crime through indulging in extortion and other petty crimes.

The Company after commencing the mining operation pledged to improve the livelihoods of the locals and focused on the following areas:

- a) Health and sanitation
- b) Education
- c) Livelihood
- d) Agriculture

While all the efforts are continuing, one of the success stories was to develop skill in order to increase employability of the locals to ensure that they earn their livelihood, honestly.

The company found out that the mining operations in the local area were accelerating and a huge demand for operations and maintenance of heavy earth- movers is on increase. The mining companies were bringing trained drivers from outside and the drivers were earning handsome monthly emoluments. The company through its CSR arm **Krishi Gram Vikas Kendra (KGVK)** organized a training program to train the locals in driving and maintenance of the earth- movers.

The program was of 2 months duration and the training was divided into 70% practical and 30% theory. A total number of 20 school dropouts with 18 years minimum age and having education upto 8<sup>th</sup> Standard (for auto mechanic and welder training), upto 5<sup>th</sup> standards (for truck driver training) were selected with assistance of Village Development Committee.

The syllabus included Attitudinal & Behavioral Development, basic workshop on simple mathematical calculation, primary English and accurate Hindi writing along with technical and driving lessons both practical and theoretical. On completion of two months training the trainees were attached with some of the contractors/garages at Barajamda for a period of 6 months, On the Job Training.

On successful completion of their association with the respective organizations, they were awarded a Certificate by **Krishi Gram Vikas Kendra (KGVK)**.

At present all these trainees are gainfully employed under various contractors/companies and are also very keen in educating their children and keeping them healthy. They are now leading a life of honest earning and trying to influence others to follow the success.