**Review of literature**

Nowadays, increased competition in markets has saturated the possibility of brand differentiation based on traditional attributes such as price and quality (Marin and Ruiz, 2007). Brands need to be associated with symbolic values (e.g. altruism or civic mindedness) to become meaningful entities for consumers to identify with them, building stable committed relationships beneficial for both parties (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2003). In this context, linking the brand to corporate social responsibility (CSR) is a very effective positioning strategy that can become a competitive differentiation attribute (Brammer and Millington, 2006; Du et al., 2007). Over 3,000 leading companies in 116 countries have joined the UN Global Compact (UNGC, 2007a), another 1,000 follow Global Reporting Initiative (UNGC, 2007b) guidelines and 90 per cent of Fortune companies have CSR programmes (Kotler and Lee, 2005). This growth in CSR culture is behind the development in business environments of promotional strategies that seek to project a socially responsible brand image through association with a social interest cause.

**Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR):**

Corporate social responsibility has not any generally accepted definition, though it is often used interchangeable with different terms like, business ethics, corporate accountability or corporate governance. Corporate Social Responsibility refers to “the continuing commitment by business to behave ethically and to contribute to economic development while improving the quality of the life of the workforce and the families as well as the local community and society at large”. According to Kotler, it is “a commitment to improve community well-being through discretionary business practice and contribution of corporate resources” (Kotler & Lee, 2005). Today, companies in the global market are expected to assume responsibility for the impact of their activities on society, in ethical, social and environmental terms. So, CSR has become a “vital tool in promoting and improving the public image of some of the world’s largest corporation” (Christian Aid, 2004). Companies adopt corporate social responsibility (CSR) which applies to everything from human rights to environmental care (Bjering Åsa, S 2007). So it is about being responsible for the environment and well being of people as according to European Commissions definition CSR is a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis (Commission of the European Communities, 2001).
Definitions of CSR

According to Dahlsrud (2008), that a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis Gutierrez & Jones (2005). There has been a myriad of CSR definitions by numerous scholars, but there is no universally accepted definition of CSR. One of the primary reasons is that CSR is an evolving concept, which over the years has been used to describe an increasingly wider range of corporate activity (Gutierrez & Jones, 2005).

Steiner & Steiner (2006) relates the practice of CSR to the philanthropic work of wealthy business owners John D. Rockefeller and Andrew Carnegie, who gave away millions of dollars to social causes.

Muniapan and Dass (2008) in their study on Vedic CSR highlighted a similar development of CSR in the ancient India. Early conceptualization of CSR was broadly based on religious virtues and values such as honesty, love, truthfulness and trust. In Vedanta, business is viewed as legitimate and an integral part of society, but essentially it should create wealth for the society through the right means of action. ‘Sarva loka hitam’ in the Vedic literatures referred to ‘well-being of stakeholders’. This means an ethical and social responsibility system must be fundamental and functional in all business undertakings. The CSR requirements are found in the Vedic literatures which stresses on the concept of “Dharma” which is also given great importance in the Bhagavad-Gita.

Muniapan (2006), “Dharma” has been explained to be that which helps the welfare of all living being. In the Mahabharata, Karna-Parva, Chapter 69 Verse 58 eulogizes it as follow: “Dharma” sustains the society, “dharma” maintains the social order; “dharma” ensures well being and progress of humanity, “dharma” is surely that which fulfils these objectives.

Prabhupada (2003), In the Bhagavad-Gita, Sri Krishna motivates and encourages Arjuna to perform his “dharma” and not to run away from the battlefield. (B.G. 3.8) – “Perform your prescribed duty, for doing so is better than not working, one cannot even maintain one’s physical body without work”
Muniapan and Dass, (2008). In the teachings of Bhagavad-Gita, it has been advised that perfect actions lead one to the ‘gateway to liberation (moksha)’. Evidently, this Hindu philosophy on “karma” has set a framework for organizational action for good corporate “karma” by the promotion of CSR.

Kodandaramayya, (2004); Muniapan and Shaikh, 2007; Muniapan and Dass, 2008).

The Bhagavad-Gita also promotes the concept of nishkama karma; a perspective on action and decision making that emphasizes performing one’s deeds without attachment to the fruits thereof– and where both the action and the fruits are offered to the divine. In the CSR context, the societal contribution must not have with any expectations in return but rather as a duty need to be done to the society.

McWilliams and Siegel (2001) defines CSR in terms of actions that appear to further some social good, beyond the interest of the firm and that which is required by law.

Campbell(2006):CSR sets a minimum behavioral standard that aims at doing no harm to stakeholders and if it has happened then rectifies it as soon as it is identified.

Carroll(2001):Strategic CSR or “strategic philanthropy” is done to accomplish strategic business goals i.e. good deeds are believed to be good for business as well as for society. With strategic CSR, corporations “give back” to their constituencies because they believe it to be in their best financial interests to do so.

Lantos(2001):The term altruistic or humanitarian CSR suggests,” genuine optional caring, even at possible personal or organizational sacrifice”

Garriga and Mele(2004):CSR as an obligation of the firm to use its resources in ways to benefit society, through committed participation as a member of society, taking into account the society at large, and improving welfare of society independently of the direct gains of the company.

Crook(2005):Crook questions the locus standing of corporate in taking up social issues(The Economist 2005)and that it is the responsibility of Government and its elected representatives to set goals for the society, dealt with externalities, to meditate amongst different interests, to attend
to the demands of social justice and provide public goods. The corporations cannot take decisions on what society wants.

Hindustan Times (2010) Thus the question of deciding whether and to what extent a business is socially responsible rests mostly with those communities and groups who are directly affected by the business decisions of the company. Of course, this is not to deny that there can be multiplicity of stakeholders in any given situation.

Kallio(2007) There is no denying that looking from certain perspective CSR can be called a social construction. However, the concepts used in CSR are not just abstracts or illusions without any reference to the ‘real world’.

**Contribution to society, to a Higher Purpose; Serving Others**

Matten and Moon(2008): There are two distinct elements to CSR-the implicit and the explicit. Explicit CSR refers to the corporate policies that assume and articulate responsibility for some societal interests. They normally consist of voluntary programs and strategies by corporations that combine social and business value and address issues perceived as being part of the social responsibility of the company. “Implicit CSR” refers to corporations’ role within the wider formal and informal institutions for society’s interests and concerns. Implicit CSR normally consists of values, norms, and rules that result in mandatory and customary requirements for corporations to address stakeholder’s issues and that define proper obligations of corporate actors in collective rather than individual terms.

Kinjerski and Skrypnek(2004,2006): They focused on the cognitive dimension of spirit at work that is associated with a belief that one is engaged in meaningful work that has a higher purpose; it is about a sense of accomplishment, making a contribution and serving others, giving gifts of love, power, authority and significance. Whatever work is done, the ultimate purpose is the higher/greater good. Work is to be done selflessly considering one’s own welfare to be incidental to service for the larger good.

Smith,(2007):Companies must be prepared to take full responsibility for its actions and be held fully accountable at all times.
Mohan,(2001): CSR is considered inbuilt in the business existing of the traditional firms in the emerging markets like India.

Davis,(2009): In times of global recession, there is an increasing public demand on business leaders to include social issues as part of their strategies in the present-day social and political business climate.

Alsop(2004): Corporate reputation has never been more valuable or vulnerable than today. The public has been slow to forgive business for scandals such as Enron. Companies also have to be careful that their promises to be socially responsible are not self-serving or contain hollow promises.

Pfeffer,2003: It is these inner urges to serve and to be of some use to others, which is inherent in humans, that make many people seek not only competence and mastery in their work but also work that has some meaning or social value.

Bhatta(2009a): He cites a well-known Vedic verse that prays for the universal; happiness and peace. It runs as follows:

Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah, Sarve Santu Niramayah,

Sarve Bhadraani Pashyantu Maa Kaschid Dukha Mapnuyat

Om! Shanthi Shanthi Shanthi

(May everyone in this world be happy, may everyone be free from disease,

May everyone see prosperity, may none come to grief,

Om! Let there be Peace! Peace! Peace! )

Sharing and caring: Understanding and Adjustment
Millman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, (2003): There is some type of relationship between one’s inner self and the inner self of other people.

**Striving for Excellence and Perfection**

Premji, (2004) We must feel the need for excellence within. It must become an obsession. It must involve not only our mind but our heart and soul too. Excellence is not an act but a habit’. The best person one can compete with is one’s own self.

**Interconnectedness**

Ashmos & Duchon, (2000): Spirit at work is a feeling of being connected with one’s work and with others.

**Recognition of Inner Life**

Steingard (2005): An exclusive materialistic outlook in one’s work life, promoted by the Preyas path or the ‘outer life’ approach leads to an excessive dependence on mere numbers and a narrowed focus on the economic bottom line. However, being sensitive to the triple bottom line, the 3Ps: profits, people and the planet, as good business ought to, demands attention to the Shreyas path or the ‘inner life’ approach, which takes into account even those variables for decision making that cannot be reduced to just numbers. Current business dialogue opines that one needs to address the wider concerns of social justice, environmental sustainability, spiritual renewal, positive human evolution and global peace, apart from financial results alone. And many of these aspects involve non-quantifiable parameters.

**Sense of Connection and Community**

Kinjerski and Skrypnek (2006): The workplace of late is being recognized as a kind of community, ‘a sense of community’ that is characterized by a feeling of connectedness to others and a common purpose.

Duchon & Ashmos (2005): Connectedness to others includes the notions of sharing, mutual obligation and commitment, where as common purpose consists of mutually set goals and
objectives. A community is a place where people can experience personal growth, be valued for themselves as individuals and have a sense of working together. Community extends even beyond the notion of a team to include aspects of brotherhood and kinship, to include matters and concerns that are not merely work related but personal in nature too.

**CSR as a Karma Yoga with Indian Perspective of Spirit at Work**

Sharma(2007):‘Work’ in the Indian tradition needs to be translated as ‘Workship’, as an offering to the higher Self. Karma is ‘Udyog’, which is the Indian word for industry(enterprise/trade/job/duty),itself has the word’ Yog’ in it. According to Karma Yoga, work may be understood as a quest/striving for excellence and perfection in action at an operational level, coupled with an aim of seeking union with the higher Self, intended to result in a deep sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. This would hold good for ant type or nature of work, be it the most material; labour to most artistic and intellectual work. He opines that an employee working with the attitude of a Karma Yogi(practitioner of Karma Yoga)would have a broader view of life with greater awareness of her/his actions, and would be willing to go beyond the call of her/his duty with a greater commitment to the job at hand and the organization.

There are three important characteristics of a Karma Yogi. A Karma Yogi performs work

1. Seeking meaning and purpose with a focus more on the process than on the outcome,
2. with a sense of selfless service to people around and the larger community
3. Regarding the work as an offering to one’s own higher self with which she/he aspires to unite and achieve a sense of fulfillment.

It is clear that such qualities in an employee would be highly desirable for any business organization’s success. If so, practice of Karma Yoga would turn out to be a win-win situation for both the employee and the business organization: job satisfaction, personal growth and fulfillment for the employee; and higher productivity and quality performance for the organization.
Indian psycho-philosophy considers this consummation as the ultimate aim of life, which is not to be mistaken to be akin to the concept of ‘self actualization’ as proposed by Abraham Maslow in his Hierarchy of Needs as it goes even beyond that and relates to the state of ‘self-realization’ in his Basket of needs.

**CSR in the Vedic literatures**

Kodandaramayya, 2004 (cited in Muniapan and Shaikh, 2007) in their article says, In *Santiparva*, the subjects of *Rajadharma*, mentioning the duties of the kings are elaborated (R. Shamashastry was the librarian of Oriental Library in Mysore found a copy of the *Sanskrit* text of the *Arthashatra* in a palm-leaf book, edited, and brought out an English version in 1909, it created waves in the western world. It was discovered that the *Arthashatra* written hundreds of years earlier provides a complete manual for running the state efficiently in all the branches, legislature, executive and judiciary. It also includes all aspects of state administration such as establishing a governing hierarchy, selecting people, levying taxes, to laying down laws, to decide punishments for breaking the law, etc.

**Improved Financial Performance and Reduced Operating costs**

Ruf et al, and Brown (2001): A number of studies conducted in past arrived at positive association between CSR and financial performance.

**Increased Sales and Customer Loyalty**

Mohr and Webb, (2005): Also evidenced in their study that customers prefer to purchase from the companies which are conscious about CSR.

**Enhanced Brand Image and Reputation**

Rashid and Ibrahim, (2002): A company considered socially responsible can get benefit both by its enhanced reputation with the public as well as its reputation within the business. Contrast to this, the companies which are poor in social responsibility suffer damages in the form of low sales, less investments, etc. Social action programs create favorable public image.

**Key outcomes and Lessons learned from the Coco-Cola Case**
Coors and Winegarden,(2005): One of the lessons that can be learnt from this case study is that large corporations are never out of the limelight, even when conducting business in developing countries many thousands of miles from global headquarters. Public concern over multinational(mal)practice has grown in recent years.

**Increased Ability to Recruit and Retain**

Luce, Barber, and Hillman (2001): In a subsequent study it was evidenced that corporate social performance is positively related to a firm’s familiarity which in turn affects organizational attractiveness as an employer.