Cross-sector Partnerships between NGOs and Business: The Indian Context

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Abbreviations

CC	Collaboration Continuum
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CSV	Creating Shared Value
GCNI	Global Compact Network - India
ISO 26000	International Organization for Standardization – Social Responsibly
MNC	Multinational Corporations
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPP	Public-Private Partnerships
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNGC	United Nations Global Compact
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene

Abstract

There is growing awareness that the current global challenges are too vast and complex for any one sector to solve on its own. In recent years, corporations have been increasingly broadening their agenda to address social and environmental issues, and cross-sector partnerships are gaining momentum. Partnerships are a pivotal part of reaching society at large, and by combining forces, NGOs and corporations, supported by government, can achieve change on a deeper level.

In the Indian context, economic growth parallel with pressing developmental issues and growing disparities has put pressure on the business sector to take action. In 2013, the Indian government passed a law making CSR mandatory for businesses of a certain turnover, putting CSR firmly on the agenda. The law encourages partnerships as a means of implementing CSR initiatives, and due to this partnerships are becoming an integral part of the CSR framework.

This study aims to gain insight in to the current state of cross-sector collaboration between NGOs and business in India, through the perspectives of CSR practitioners of both sectors. Based on semi-structured interviews with CSR practitioners and participant observations within a partnership network for CSR, the study describes the different components of the changing partnering landscape. The results reflect that with the change and transitional environment that India is currently experiencing, becoming a developed country in one aspect, while having to deal with major social issues, NGO-business partnerships can provide a means to bridge the developmental gap.

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1 Introduction

"The 21st century will be the age of alliances. In this age, collaboration between nonprofit organizations and corporations will grow in frequency and strategic importance"
James E. Austin

In the last decade, corporations have been increasingly broadening their agenda to include responsible practices that address issues on human rights and environmental concerns within their sphere of influence (Skagerlund, Westman, Berglund, 2015).

This development has led to a growing trend of collaboration across sectors, particularly visible within Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) implementation (Seitanidi and Crane, 2009). Partnerships between NGOs and corporations are particularly prominent in this context, as this type of collaboration has the potential to address a range of issues and opportunities. A successful partnership can create opportunities for both partners, as well as creating a positive outcome for the community or the environment.

There is growing awareness that the current global challenges are too vast and complex for any one sector to solve on its own. While businesses and NGOs have traditionally been perceived as being on opposing teams, pursuing vastly different organizational goals (Argenti, 2004) during recent years there has been a noticeable change in the approach to cross-sectorial partnerships and collaboration initiatives between private and civil sectors, ranging from purely philanthropic partnerships to strategic, long-term partnerships have been established (Neergaard, 2009:3). Literature on business-NGO partnerships is a relatively new research field, and has to en extent been built upon existing theories on public-private partnerships (PPPs) and strategic partnership theories (Neergaard et al, 2009).

In the Indian context, there is a high demand to address socio-developmental issues and society is increasingly expecting business to take action in this regard. In 2013, the Indian government passed a law making CSR initiatives mandatory for companies of a certain turnover. The law stipulates that CSR should be undertaken in the form of projects or programs within certain categories. This new law further encourages corporations to partner with NGOs, as they often don't have the expertise needed to implement such projects. This emerging CSR agenda has impacted the

partnership landscape in India, and there is increased focus on collaboration across sectors.

1.1 Study objective and research questions

This thesis seeks to explain the complex factors that shape partnerships between corporations and NGOs in the Indian context. The objective of the study is to gain an insight into the perspectives of CSR practitioners as well as exploring the process of partnering.

More specifically, the aim is attain deeper knowledge on the field of cross-sector collaborations between NGOs and business in India, as described by CSR practitioners from both sectors.

For this purpose, the following research questions have been developed:

According to the perspectives of CSR practitioners in the Indian context:

1. *What's the importance of partnerships in connection to implementing CSR?*
2. *What are critical factors for partnerships?*
3. *What types of partnerships are prevalent?*
4. *What are the major challenges that companies and NGOs face when engaging in cross-sector partnerships?*
5. *Which emerging trends are evident in the current partnership architecture?*

In fulfilling the thesis objective the field of CSR and collaboration in India will be shown in a historical, as well as a modern context. Theories on cross sector partnerships will be reviewed, and theoretical models for analysis will be presented. Lastly, the analysis will reveal the findings derived from the data collected, aiming to describe partnerships according to the perspectives of CSR practitioners, exploring their importance, critical factors, types, emerging themes and challenges.

1.2 Structure of study

The table below demonstrates the steps taken during the research process:

Identifying scope	Preparing for data collection	Collecting data	Analyzing data
Winter 2014	December to January 2015	February to April 2015	May 2015-Febuary 2016
Stavanger	Stavanger	New Delhi	India/Stavanger
Research on existing literature on CSR partnerships Looking into frameworks applicable to research	Research questions developed Contacted GCNI and other CSR practitioners in India Drafting of interview guide	Interview guide finalized Participant observations Informal interviews with CSR practitioners Attending and participating in CSR related conferences Semi-structured interviews (4)	Re-evaluation of interview guide with minor changes made Semi-structured interviews with NGOs, corporations, and experts (9) Data reduction and analysis

Figure 1

2. Context

In recent years, researchers have attempted to analyze the effect of business-NGO partnerships and their role in CSR implementation. Collaboration theory, research and practice has been accelerating rapidly in the last decade, and significant inputs to partnership theory have been made during this time (Bryson et al, 2015). Terminology for cross-sector relationships between NGOs and corporations vary in partnership literature, and includes *social partnerships, intersectoral partnerships, social alliances, issues management alliances and strategic partnerships* (Selsky and Parker, 2005).

Waddock (1988:18) defines social partnerships as,

"a commitment by a corporation or a group of corporations to work with an organisation from a different economic sector (public or nonprofit). It involves a commitment of resources - time and effort - by individuals from all partner organisations. These individuals work co-operatively to solve problems that affect them all. The problem can be defined at least in part as a social issue; its solution will benefit all partners. Social partnership addresses issues that extend beyond organisational boundaries and traditional goals and lie within the traditional realm of public policy - that is, in the social arena. It requires active rather than passive involvement from all parties. Participants must make a resource commitment that is more than merely monetary".

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a phenomenon has been gaining increased focus and recognition in the last decades. The field of CSR represents a vast landscape of theories, as well as a proliferation of complex, sometimes controversial, approaches (Garriga and Melé, 2004:51). The definition of CSR has evolved immensely in the last decades, and several scholars and academics have taken on the tedious task of defining the responsibilities of corporations.

According to ISO 26000, an international standard launched in 2010 to help organizations in defining and addressing the social responsibility connected to their operations, CSR is defined as follows:

The responsibility of an organization for the impacts of its decision and activities on society and the environment, through transparency and ethical behavior that:

- Contribute to sustainable development, including health and welfare of society

- Takes into account the expectation of stakeholders
- Is in compliance with applicable law and consistent with international norms of behavior
- Is integrated throughout the organization and practices in its relationship

The ISO 26000 definition of CSR correlates with the Brundtland Comissions definition of Sustainable development, which in their report was defined as *"the kind of development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."* (Brundtland, 1988). It is also closely related to the notion of a *triple bottom line* for business, a term coined by Elkington (1994). Triple bottom line measuring company performance by going beyond merely measuring monetary profits. The framework incorporates three dimensions of performance; social, ecological and financial, and aims to measure company performance over a period of time based on these dimensions.

In relation to partnerships, the ISO26000 strongly encourages organizations to define their stakeholders, and relevant partners as a means to fulfilling their social and environmental responsibilities (ISO26000, 2010:14). Furthermore, partnerships are highlighted in several other guidelines for CSR. The United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) is a voluntery sustainability initiative for business based on ten principles in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anticorruption. It has become the largest global governance initiative that focuses on the social and ecological responsibilities of multinational corporations (MNCs) (Voegtlin and Pless, 2014:6). The GCNI encourages it´s signatories to engage in partnerships, as a step towards integrating sustainability within their activities.

CSR initiatives represent the efforts business organizations take in order to meet their economic and social responsibilities, and respond to the pressure from their stakeholders (Gupta, 2014:19). In the last couple of decades, there has been a clear shift in the nature of the relationship between governments, companies and society, and there is increased expectation that corporations contribute to society. Corporations are increasingly engaging in voluntary social responsibility initiatives and reporting, which points to an emerging norm of CSR as a strategy rather than merely an obligation (Pereira and Patel, 2014:101). There is a general consensus among researchers, as well as business practitioners, that CSR is gaining importance

and can no longer exist only in the periphery of business activities but rather at its core. Companies are increasingly realizing their environmental and social impact and the need for them to address that. The increasing level of the importance of CSR in the field of business can be linked to such initiatives providing a competitive edge, and not engaging in CSR activities may result in negative impact on the brand image (Ward and Smith, 2006; Blowfield and Murray, 2008). In other words, there is a demand for companies to assess possible negative impacts as well as opportunities connected to their operations and their value chain (Shukla and Donovan, 2013:151).

NGOs work towards particular social or environmental issues or causes. The term NGO can be used to refer to a variety of organizations, often differentiated in terms of geographic scope, some being focused on national or local grassroots organizations with others being international in scope (Betsill and Corell, 2008:4). Civil society organizations (CSOs), or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are critical actors in the advancement of universal values around human rights, the environment, labor standards and anti-corruption. Their role has grown increasingly important as the global market has become more aware of the importance of aligning their business activities with social and environmental priorities (UNGC, 2014). NGOs can provide new perspectives, expertise and partnership-building capabilities that advance the implementation of corporate social responsibility strategies. While the interaction between the private sector and CSOs has become an increasingly important topic in the debate on CSR, the exact role of NGOs often remains unclear (Baur, 2011:vii). In terms of motives for partnering, there are a variety of factors that push NGOs to partner across sectors. According to a recent study, accessing funds is still the primary motivator for NGOs engaging in partnerships with business. (C&E, 2014). However, other reasons include gaining access to managerial or technical knowledge of business partner (Googins and Rochlin, 2000) or accessing expertise, experience and skills of their counterpart (C&E, 2014).

While the main priority of a business has traditionally been to increase the value for their shareholders and owners, stakeholders are increasingly starting to *"ask what companies can do for society and not what society can to for companies"* (Heap, 2000:559). As a result, companies are increasingly focusing their attention to stakeholder interests (Googins and Rochlin, 2000).

Stakeholders can be defined as *"any group of individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives"* (Freeman, 1984:46). Stakeholder theory assumes that values are an integral part of doing business, and looks to its broader responsibilities beyond profit maximization, thus is can be viewed as a counterpoint to the views of Friedman (1970) that *"the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits".*

According to Beaulieu and Pasquero (2002) traditional stakeholder theory is somewhat limited in scope, as it focuses on the perspective of the organization and its needs and conceptions of important stakeholders. Due to this one-sided view, it fails to account for the complex dynamics of communication between different stakeholders, and often demonstrates a homogenous, simplistic view of stakeholder groups.

However, in recent years stakeholder theory has shifted focus from a business-centered approach where stakeholders are seen as static subjects to be managed, towards viewing stakeholders as multifaceted groups who engage in dynamic, shifting interactions with the company (Friedman and Miles, 2006). Since the expectations of stakeholders are constantly shifting, which creates a need for constant dialogue between a company and its stakeholders (Andrioff and Waddock, 2002). This shift in focus means that rather than building on competitive strategies, stakeholder engagement is increasingly building upon collaborative strategies, including strategic and social partnerships (ibid.). NGOs often function as representatives of certain environmental or societal needs, and rather than addressing multiple stakeholders on an individual basis, companies may choose to engage with an NGO representing the demands of a stakeholder group (Warhurst, 2005). This type of stakeholder management approach, where companies and NGOs work on specific issues that can only be solved jointly, are trust-based and collaborative in nature (Andrioff and Waddock, 2002). Looking at collaborations through the lens of stakeholder theory, cross-sector collaboration can be viewed as a beneficial approach, as it allows for a high level of communication across stakeholder groups, enabling exchange of knowledge and information between stakeholder groups. Additionally, it can provide a tool for understanding the increased interest in NGO-business partnerships.

It's important to note that the concept of CSR in continuously evolving as the market and society changes, and is as such not static but rather a dynamic

phenomenon (Moratis and Cochius, 2011:10). It has evolved parallel as both a management approach (Porter and Kramer, 2006) and an academic concept (Bowen, 1953), with multiple theoretical perspectives and definitions. For the purpose of this study, the viewpoint of Dalhsrud (2006), who stated that *"the challenge for business is not so much to define CSR, as it is to understand how CSR is socially constructed in a specific context and how to take this into account when business strategies are developed"* is relevant. It is not a goal of the study to define CSR as such, as the focus is on gaining insight to the perspectives of Indian CSR practitioners from different sectors. However, it is important to have an overview of the history of CSR, from a global as well as a contextualized viewpoint.

2.1. Importance of collaboration within the new development agenda

Cross-sector partnerships have gained importance within the international development architecture, and were strongly featured in the dialogue leading up to the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda (Hazlewood, 2015: 6). This is partially due to the issue of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and it is now widely acknowledged that collaboration is needed to meet the global developmental challenges. Sustainable development represents a balancing act of the interests of various sectors that usually operate with different priorities (Tulder and Pfisterer, 2014:107). The traditional responsibilities of the different sectors, where NGOs deliver the services, donors do the funding and governments regulate are blurring, and every sector is now exploring new roles and partnerships are becoming the *"preferred mechanism for delivering sustainable development "* (Tennyson et al, 2008:5).

2.2 History of Indian CSR

Since gaining its independence in 1947, India has witnessed a remarkable transformation in its economic policies, development and structures (Ganguly and Mukherji, 2011). CSR is not a new concept in the Indian context, and traditionally CSR has been viewed as a philanthropic and charitable activity. However, parallel with the development of India as a country, the concept of CSR is evolving. The evolution of CSR in India is commonly divided into four phases, which run parallel with India's historic and economic development (Sushmita, 2013). The evolution of

these chronological phases of Indian CSR consists of four theoretical approaches: ethical, statist, liberal and stakeholder (TERI, 2001).

2.2.1 Ethical

In pre-industrialized India, CSR was largely driven by charity and philanthropy. Additionally, other CSR drivers included culture, religion, tradition and industrialization had a strong influence during this era. In the 19th century, industrial families such as Tata, Godrej, Modi and Birla made strong efforts towards economic, social and industrial development (Sushmita, 2013). These families shared their wealth with society by building temples as well as providing food and money in times of famine and epidemics in the country (Gowda, 2013:2). The motives for them taking social action were influenced by political objectives, in addition to religion and will to give back to the community (Sushmita, 2013:12).

2.2.2 Statist

The independence movement led the notion of CSR into a new stage, under the influence of Gandhi and his human value based approach to economy (Chavan, 2013:1). The ethical approach to CSR is largely based on the Gandhian concept of trusteeship (Shukla and Donovan, 2013: 152). Gandhi put pressure on corporations to emphasize socio-economic development, referring to Indian companies as "temples of modern India" (Sushmita, 2013), introducing the notion of trusteeship, which in his own words meant that, *"supposing I have come by a fair amount of wealth – either by way of legacy, or by means of trade and industry – I must know that all that wealth does not belong to me; what belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community."* Being against strict government regulations and force, Gandhi suggested trusteeship as a voluntary practice. During this era, CSR activities of businesses typically involved them establishing trusts for schools and collages, as well as setting up scientific and training institutions (Gowda, 2013:2).

2.2.3 Liberal

India's independence sparked a series of policy reforms, and the period after independence can be described as an "era of command and control", with strict regulating of business activities under the rule of India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru (Gowda, 2013:2). CSR revolved around the newly independent India introducing labor and environment laws, and the companies in the forefront of CSR during this era were mostly public sector undertakings (Sushmita, 2013:12). This focus left the private sector in the background of CSR activities. However, the strict regulations imposed on the private sector resulted in several accounts of corporate misconduct, legislations on corporate governance, labor and environmental issue were enacted (Gowda, 2013:2). In the 1990s, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, India's economic policies changed drastically and economic liberalization as well as globalization boosted the Indian economy (Roy, 2012:238). The economic growth reached to corporations, helping them grow at a rapid rate (Gowda, 2013:2). During this era, Indian companies started integrating sustainability into their core strategy, rather than engaging in CSR activities purely on a philanthropic level (Sustmita, 2013:12).

2.2.4 Stakeholder

Until the 1990s, Indian CSR were purely philanthropic, meaning that CSR programs and initiatives were done in the form of charity indicating the virtues of the company rather than their obligations. Post-liberalization Indian CSR has witnessed a fundamental shift from a philanthropy based model of CSR to an empowerment and partnership based approach to CSR.

2.3 Current state of CSR in India

Indian CSR has evolved rapidly in the last decade, with several companies focusing their CSR efforts towards nation building. An increasing number of corporations are now aligning their CSR with issues such as public health, education, livelihoods, water conservation and natural resource management (Ernst and Young LLP, 2013:12).

At a policy level, The National Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Environmental and Economic Responsibilities of Business, issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs in 2009 (revised in 2013) marked the start of a formal focus on

CSR engagement. The Guidelines provide a common standard for business to improve their CSR efforts, and how to deal with current issues regarding inclusive growth and climate change within the framework of national policy (E&Y, 2013:13). The nine principles of the Guidelines are as follows:

Principle 1: Businesses should conduct and govern themselves with ethics, transparency and accountability.
Principle 2: Businesses should provide goods and services that are safe and contribute to sustainability throughout their life cycle.
Principle 3: Businesses should promote the wellbeing of all employees.
Principle 4: Businesses should respect the interests of, and be responsive toward all stakeholders, especially those who are disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized.
Principle 5: Businesses should respect and promote human rights.
Principle 6: Business should respect, protect, and make efforts to restore the environment. Businesses should support inclusive growth and equitable development.
Principle 7: Businesses, when engaged in influencing public and regulatory policy, should do so in a responsible manner.
Principle 8: Businesses should support inclusive growth and equitable development.
Principle 9: Businesses should engage with and provide value to their customers and consumers in a responsible manner.

Figure 2

Building upon the CSR Voluntary Guidelines, a legislative bill containing CSR provisions was passed by the Indian Parliament in August 2013, and became the Companies Act. This law affirms the social and environmental responsibility as one of the purposes of corporations. Additionally, companies of a certain yearly turnover have an obligation to CSR, as stated in section 135 (1): *"Every company having net worth of rupees five hundred crore or more, or turnover of rupees one thousand crore or more or a net profit of rupees five crore or more during any financial year...."* Furthermore, Section 135 (5) (1) states that "the company spends, in every financial year, at least two per cent of the average net profits of the company made during the three immediately preceding financial years, in pursuance of its Corporate Social Responsibility Policy" (Shin et al, 2015: 379). This has created a shift in Indian CSR, as it is no longer being done solely on a voluntary basis. The law, also called the Companies Act, has mandated CSR for the companies who fall under its criteria, with effect from April 2014.

The issues raised by the law are diverse, ranging from education, water and sanitation and hygiene (WASH), hunger, poverty and malnutrition as well as other developmental challenges, and the overarching aim is to achieve measurable impact at

the grassroots level. The current government of India, lead by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has put increased pressure on the corporate sector to engage in social innovation. His main focus areas have been access to banking and sanitation. He has encouraged collaboration across sectors to spur development, a fact evident in a recent speech where he challenged the country to *"walk together, we move together, we think together, we resolved together and together we take the country forward."*

3 Design and methodology

Blaikie (2010:39) defines research design as *"the process that links research questions, empirical data and research conclusions"*. It is a working document, developed by a researcher or a research team in the preparatory process of a research project. As a technical, private document it should be utilized as a guide for carrying out the project, and ought to be used as a constant reference point throughout the execution of the research (Blaikie, 2010:12). Essentially, the intention of the research design is to ensure *"that the evidence obtained enables us to answer the initial question as unambiguously as possible"* (de Vaus, 2001: 9).

The aim of this chapter is to describe the methods used for the study, as well as identifying potential strengths and weaknesses of the research design that has been chosen. Nevertheless, the overall aim of this thesis is to provide insight in to cross-sector collaborations, specifically gaining insight into the perspectives of CSR practitioners and experts on the situation affecting Indian partnerships.

Academic research can generally be divided into two main approaches; qualitative and quantitative methods. Within the field of social sciences, qualitative research is a more common approach than quantitative research. According to Weick (2007), the qualitative approach to research can provide a rich, thick description of real phenomena and actions. They offer insights into how behaviors, relationships and systems are maintained and change. Doz (2011) claims that qualitative research creates close contacts with the respondents and is therefore helpful in providing insight in to different contexts and perceptions. While it can be challenging to quantify and measure qualitative data, it has the valuable advantage of revealing perspectives and attitudes that are harder to obtain with a quantitative approach.

Early on in the process of designing the study, qualitative methods were identified as most aligned with the research questions, as the complexity of the research problem is unlikely to be sufficiently addressed through quantitative data. As most qualitative research, the aim of this study is to provide *"descriptive accounts of the phenomenon under investigation"* (Smith, 2008:1).

3.1 Data collection

As stated by Blakie (2010:23) the process of selecting the sources of data are a critical stage in any research. The collecting and subsequent analysis of data is often regarded as a core task of social research.

Qualitative studies ought to involve a variety of data collection methods. In order to ensure that what is being studied is not purely explored through one lens but rather a variety of lenses; thus gaining understanding for multiple facets of the study object (Baxter and Jack, 2008:544). Using multiple sources of data is a way of triangulating the evidence, making sure that there is consistency in the information collected, or making sense of eventual inconsistencies (Eisenhardt, 1998). This thesis employs a triangulation approach to data collection: combining primary data from semi-structured interviews with business and NGO practitioners involved in partnership projects, participant observations made while working as an intern at GCNI, secondary data in the form of CSR reports from the respected companies and NGOS, as well as, relevant research on NGO-business partnerships.

The data-collection strategy employed to obtain the necessary qualitative data for the study is a combination of the snowball sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Snowball sampling can be used by having an informant identify other potential informants, thus creating a network of informants. In this study, the starting point for gaining access to informants was through the Global Compact Network India. Often informants referred me to their peers that could be useful for my research. Judgmental or purposive sampling is used in situations where it is impossible to identify and study all members of a particular group, due to lack of time and resources or lack of available data. In this case, research subjects are chosen strategically by identifying a target demographic of the study, choosing study subjects that represent particular groups (Blaikie, 2010:178). This study has strategically selected informants representing two main groups within the field of CSR: NGOs and corporations. Additionally, a series of expert interviews were conducted to provide a deeper insight into the theme of the research.

While the primary data is derived from the interviews, the analysis will employ the use of two additional sources of data: documents and participant observations. As stated by Flick (2007:xi) *"qualitative researchers are interested in*

accessing experiences, interactions and documents in their natural context in a way that gives room to the particularities of them and the materials in which they are studied". Observation and interviewing are often used in tandem within qualitative research, as complementary tools to gather information (Sayre, 2001). Therefore, it is of great interest to the study to employ multiple sources of data, as this will provide a more nuanced picture of cross-sector collaborations in the Indian context.

3.1.1 Documents

Documents are of relevance to most research topics, and play an important role in the data collection process (Yin, 2014:107). In order to gain a more holistic picture of business-NGO collaboration, several documents provided important data for the analysis. UN Global Compact-Accenture CEO Study on Sustainability (2013): the report provides an in depth review of the current situation in India, and is based on large case studies of member companies. Secondly, a report by SOS Children Villages called; 'Changing trends in business NGO relationships in India' (2011) was used as a document source for the study. The report draws on data from a large number of publications as well as a survey of 20 Indian businesses on their CSR practices and their partnerships with NGOs.

3.1.2 Participant observations

According to Yin (2014), participant observation can provide a depth to the topic being studied. Most frequently used within the field of Social Anthropology, the participant-observation technique can provide an insight and access to events or a group otherwise inaccessible to a study (ibid: 116). Dewalt and Dewalt (2010:5) describe the key elements of participant observation as:

- Living in the context for an extended period of time
- Learning and using local language and dialect
- Actively participating in a wide range of daily, routine and extraordinary activities with people who are full participants in that context
- Using everyday conversation as an interview technique
- Informally observing during leisure activities
- Recording observations in field notes
- Using both tacit and explicit information in analysis and writing

As demonstrated in the process-model of the research depicted in figure 1, I worked as an intern for GCNI for a period of three months (February to April). GCNI is a major platform for multi-stakeholder interactions within the field of CSR, so working for them gave exposure to Indian CSR on a multitude of levels.

As a main goal of the study was to get an insight in to the perspectives of professionals involved in NGO-Business collaborations, GCNI provided an excellent arena for me to emerge myself into the CSR community.

Everyday tasks were focused on attending meetings with other staff, producing content for GCNI publications and website and other general tasks under close observation and assistance of my supervisor, while working on my own research. I also got the opportunity to attend most of the events planned by GCNI, where I got to network with CSR practitioners from all fields. Through these interactions my understanding of the CSR agenda deepened from being purely theoretical to a broader awareness of the current context. Throughout the process, I noted down my observations while in the field and attempted to identify patterns according to the model of analysis, which will be presented in chapter four.

There are several challenges related to participant observation as a research method. The researcher, having to take on one or several roles as a participant, may lose the ability to act as an external observer and may even become biased towards the organization studied (Yin, 2014: 117). During this research, the complexity of my role, being both a researcher and an intern, as well as entering other informal roles when needed became apparent. Attending to the main role as a researcher sometimes became challenging when other tasks demanded attention. Another challenge is working in a cultural context vastly different from ones own. However, the internship provided an opportunity to spend a prolonged period of time within the organization, as a result, sufficient amount of data was retrieved.

3.1.3 Interviews

Interviews are an important source of research data, and are commonly used within qualitative research (Yin, 2014:110). When gathering knowledge on complex issues, interviewing can provide rich and detailed information (Ringdal, 2001). Cross-sector collaborations consist of complex dynamics, and in order to get the information

needed in-depth interviews allowing for close proximity with the interview objects was needed.

As previously mentioned, GCNI provided the basis for choosing the interview objects. Accessibility can often provide a major challenge in collecting data, but by establishing a connection and working for the GCNI gaining access to its member organizations became an easier task. This was done by using a snowball method of getting informants to point out other potential candidates. In some cases informants were approached during conferences and meetings, in other cases informants were contacted via e-mail or telephone.

Using a purposive approach, the goal was to get interviews with CSR representatives of corporations, as well as NGOs. A total of 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted, with the first four interviews taking place in the time period of February to April. The second round of interviews took place in May, with minor changes to the interview guide. After careful consideration it was decided that the earlier interviews would not be used as a basis for the analysis, as it was concluded that the substantial changes made in the research aims deemed them irrelevant to this thesis. However, the interviews did help in providing an overview of the perspectives of CSR practitioners, as well as providing training for interviewing informants in a cross-cultural setting.

The interview objects are depicted in the table below:

	February-April 2015	May 2015
NGOs	2	3
Corporations	1	3
Experts	1	3

Figure 3

The interview data was collected through individual, semi-structured interviews. The interview time ranged from 60-90 minutes, and an audio recorder was used to record the interviews, later to be transcribed by the researcher. Recording the interviews proved to be useful as it allowed for a better flow during the interview situation.

In order to create a balanced, comparable data, equal numbers of NGO

representatives, business representatives and experts were selected to provide the primary data for the study.

The interviews were started with the researcher presenting the study and its aims, as well as briefly reviewing the themes to be discussed. Then a semi-structural interview was conducted, based on predefined question relating to the research topic. When appropriate, follow up questions were asked, and the interview objects got a chance to elaborate further on questions that were of particular interest to them.

According to Ringdal (2001), semi-structured interviews have the advantage that they have a formal component in the form of specific questions and topics to be discussed, while also allowing for a certain degree of flexibility, which can help capture information otherwise not available. They require thorough preparations, and in order to provide rich and detailed data the interviewer must employ effective interview techniques, avoid leading questions and make the interview object feel comfortable in the interview setting (Boyce and Neale, 2006:4). All of the interviews conducted in May 2015 had similar structure and content and were conducted in a similar setting, in the offices of the respective interview objects. The qualitative approach used for the interviews is relevant when aiming to provide a descriptive overview of the characteristics of a group. By interviewing key actors in charge of CSR projects within NGOs and corporations made it possible to gain a deeper understanding for the perspectives of the participants (Malhotra, and Birks, 2009).

3.1.3.1 Anonymity

During the research, several interview objects did not wish to be directly quoted under their own name. Due to these requests, it was decided that the informants interviewed would all be anonymous. A main ethical concern in social research is to protect vulnerable research participants from any exploitation or potential harm due to the research process (Bell and Bryman, 2006). As the interview objects were asked to provide delicate information about their experiences and perspectives on cross-sector collaboration, this could put some of them in a vulnerable position, which could potentially lead to negative consequences for the participants in a professional context. The study requires truthful and honest insights in to the perspectives of the interview objects, and it was believed that this would be easier to achieve if participants were promised anonymity. Additionally, due to the fact that the study

does not aim to look into specific partnerships, but rather gain an insight in to the field of collaboration on a general basis, anonymity of informants is irrelevant to the quality of the study.

In order to protect the anonymity of the informants, each one of them was assigned a code consisting of the letter N for NGO, C for Corporation and E for expert, as well as a numerical code between one and three, as indicated in the informant matrix below:

Informant code	Background	About the organization
C1	Business informant	A real estate company working on developing residential, commercial and retail properties. Their CSR interventions are mainly within the area of community empowerment and rural development.
C2	Business informant	An infrastructure enterprise working on a variety of projects, within energy, airports, transportation and infrastructure. Their CSR initiatives mainly revolve around skill development.
C3	Business informant	A recruiting company servicing a variety of companies in Indian and international markets.
N1	NGO informant	The NGO has an overarching goal of poverty reduction. They collaborate with business on projects revolved around health, education, livelihoods and disaster preparedness and response.
N2	NGO informant	A charity trust focused on strengthening development and community empowerment, mainly through agricultural interventions.
N3	NGO informant	An international NGO present in 5 continents. They mainly work within the field of education and literacy.

E1	Expert informant	A partnership network focused on CSR.
E2	Expert informant	An NGO enabling sustainable business.
E3	Expert informant	A consultant hub for CSR.

Figure 4

The informants chosen represent a variety of sectors and issues, which provides this study with broad insight in to the field of collaborations. However, the study does not aim to differentiate between the distinctive issues faced by different sectors, but rather to paint a picture of the field of CSR and partnerships from the perspective of practitioners in the Indian context.

3.2 Analysis strategy

According to Yin (2014:133) analyzing data collected is often a challenge. A study lacking in a strategic approach to analyzing the data is likely to come to a halt in the analytic stage.

This study relies on a combination of inductive and deductive research strategies. The aim on an inductive research strategy is to *"establish descriptions of characteristics and patterns"* (Blaikie, 2010:84). This is done by collecting data and then producing descriptions that are then related to the original research question. Deductive research strategies aim *"to test theories, to eliminate false ones and corroborate the survivor"* (ibid). According to Ali and Birley (1998:2), researchers aiming to collect data through an inductive approach can use existing theory to form the interview questions. While there is traditionally a clear distinction between inductive and deductive approaches within academia, with the former not relying on existing theory, Ali and Birley (1998:6) argue for a potential middle ground, *"one where existing theory is used but is presented in the form of constructs rather than variables"*. Within this study, this was completed in the form of a model, adapted from Gray and Stites (2013). In contrast to most analysis strategies, thematic analysis allows for new categories to emerge from the data.

When presenting rich qualitative data, it is critical to do so in a manner that gives a comprehensive picture of the information gathered (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). In this thesis, the data material collected through interviews, direct observations and secondary data will be intertwined with the theoretical model for cross-sector partnerships presented in chapter 5. This will be done by embedding the

data in to the core themes presented by the model through a comprehensive use of relevant quotes gathered from the empirical data.

3.2 Data reduction and analysis

When sufficient data has been collected, data reduction techniques are utilized to make the data suitable for analysis (Blaikie, 2010:208).

As previously explained, this study employed a hybrid of inductive and deductive research strategies. There are several strategies feasible for the analysis of data involving the individual experience of informants, but for the analysis of this study a thematic analysis has been chosen. Thematic analysis *"focuses on identifiable themes and patterns"(*Aronson, 1995). Themes are identified by *"bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which are often meaningless when viewed alone"* (Leininger, 1985:60 in Aronson, 1995). As defined by Braun and Clarke (2006:82), *"a theme captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set"*. Due to themes representing patterns in the data, pattern matching is an appropriate tool for the goal of the study. Patten matching is when patterns based on the empirical data collected is compared to a preconceived pattern according to theory. During the interview process the model there was room for adaptation of the theoretical background according to the trends and patterns discovered through data collection. The raw interview data of the study was transcribed and notes from direct observations were organized. Transcribed data was coded and analyzed to generate themes relating to the aims of the study. The data was analyzed in an inductive manner, by closely reading the text and identifying text segments containing meaning units, and subsequently matching them with existing categories from the initial model, or adding relevant themes and categories (Thomas, 2003). In order to successfully analyze emerging themes in the data, the guidelines of Braun and Clarke (2006) were used. These are becoming familiar with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes and lastly producing the findings.

This table demonstrates the application of thematic analysis in this study:

Steps in thematic analysis[1]	Application of the steps in this research
Stage 1: Identification of coding template	• Creating a literature review relevant to the study • Clarifying the theoretical framework of NGO-business partnerships
Stage 2: Identification of data set	• Identifying relevant data for the study
Stage 3: Analysis of the data: applying template codes to the set	• Identifying collaboration trends according to the theoretical framework chosen • Identifying patterns and themes
Stage 4: Examining the emerging themes	• Examining transcribed interviews for patterns • Identifying new categories for framework according to findings

Figure 5

The process of analysis for this study started with transcribing the interview data, and organizing notes taken during participant observations. The coding process started with reading through written data, and noting down recurring patterns to prepare the data for further analysis. For this process, three steps were taken: initial coding, focused coding and axial coding. The initial coding process consisted off determining potential categories based on the transcribed data as well as theoretical categories from relevant literature. During this process, it is important to maintain a neutral perspective of what the data collected will reveal, without regard to preconceived assumptions (Charmaz, 2006). During the stage of focused coding, careful attention was given to "identifying moments" that could reveal relevant themes or categories, while still maintaining a neutral perspective. The codes noted in the initial coding process were summarized in to more general themes. Lastly, the axial coding process

[1] Adapted from Dereday and Muir-Cochraine (2006)

aimed to generate broader categories and subcategories for the purpose of answering the research questions of the study.

The aim of identifying emerging themes in the data collected is to create and overview that depicts the current situation of cross-sector collaborations within the Indian context, as described by CSR practitioners and experts. During the initial phase of the study, no updated, context-specific models describing cross-sector partnerships in India were found, which leads to the assumption that there is a gap in research of the phenomena in the Indian context.

3.3 Credibility criteria

A researcher must take into consideration the questions of the validity, reliability and credibility of the research design (Blaikie, 2010). Validity of a study relates to whether the research approach chosen is suitable to answer the research questions and subsequently draw conclusions from the data and generalize on the findings. In this study, the aim is to gain understanding for cross-sector collaborations in the Indian context through exploring the views of CSR practitioners in the business and NGO sector. Additionally, experts working in the intersection of the two sectors were interviewed, to create a more holistic understanding of the unique factors important to the successful or unsuccessful outcome of collaboration. While the interview data is the main source of analysis, the study does employ triangulation in its data collection strategy, which strengthens the validity of the research design.

Reliability of a study regards the consistency of the results if the study is to be repeated (Ringdal, 2001). The goal of reliability is *"to minimize the errors and biases in a study"* (Yin, 2014:49). Given the flexible, adaptive form of qualitative research, the research process is bound to fluctuate according to the context and the researcher conducting the research (Blaikie, 2017). In this study, it is difficult to judge whether a repeated study would produce similar results, as it explores the perspectives of particular CSR practitioners at a particular point in time. Being set in the specific context of India, it is unlikely that the study would produce similar results were it to be repeated in another geographical setting. However, it is likely that a study utilizing the same research approach could be repeated in another geographical and cultural context.

While the study may not accomplish a basis for generalizing, it has the potential of providing current insight into collaborations between NGOs and corporations, seen from the perspective of experts and practitioners in the field. According to Flyvberg (2006:236) *"the most advanced form of understanding is achieved when researcher place themselves within the context being studied. Only this way can researchers understand the viewpoints and the behavior which characterizes social actors"*. Working from this assumption, the research approach chosen is strong in the sense that a prolonged amount of time was spent within the context of Indian CSR.

3.4 Limitations of the study

While limitations occur in all types of studies, it is important to reflect upon potential limitation of ones own research. After careful consideration, the following challenges have been identified:

➢ Informants interviewed for the study are all "high performers" within   CSR, as they are already members of Global Compact Network India. This could distort the generalizability of the study.

➢ Researcher neutrality/bias: researcher being from a different cultural background can be a hindrance due to not fully understanding the cultural context.

➢ Possibility of personal bias: only one person was interviewed from each organization. This could pose a risk of personal bias, and the views of that particular person might not represent that of the organization or give an accurate overview of the context of Indian CSR and partnerships.

➢ Possibility of informants wanting to portray their company in a positive manner, not giving the full picture.

➢ CSR agenda is changing fast in India due to the recent legislation change. The study is set in a particular point in time and may not represent the reality of the situation.

3.5 Ethical reflections and avoiding bias

When conducting research, it is important that the researcher avoids being biased towards a preconceived position (Yin 2014:76). Research bias is when *"systematic error [is] introduced into sampling or testing by selecting or encouraging one outcome or answer over others"* (Pannucci and Wilkins, 2010). Bias can occur at any stage of the research: planning, data collection, analysis or the publication phase of the research (ibid). Yin (2014:76) suggests that researchers are *"open to contrary evidence"* during data collection, and reflect the data collected neutrally in their findings. It is crucial to maintain neutrality throughout the process of collecting data, in particular during the interviewing process (Andersen, 2006). When conducting semi-structured interviews, the opinion of the respondent should be given priority regardless of researchers theoretical standpoint, and the questions should be open and *atheoretical* (Ali and Birley, 1998). This has been taken into careful consideration during every phase of this research, but in particular during the data collection stage. Although a theoretical background for the study was established before data collection, and the interview guide was designed according to these theoretical assumptions, the interview guide was designed in a neutral manner, allowing respondents to answer according to their own standpoints.

3.6 Reflections on cultural complications

When conducting research in a cross-cultural setting, cultural sensitivity is of great importance. Cultural sensitivity is defined as *"knowing the cultural context of the group with whom the researchers wish to work"* (Liamputtong, 2008: 4). This was taken into careful consideration during the course of this study, and before embarking upon gathering data, thorough preparations were made to gain understanding for the cultural context of the study. The preparations consisted of extensive research of the cultural context. Additionally, the participant observation and internship provided the researcher with a unique opportunity to gain insight to the cultural setting of India and of the CSR field. Thirdly, the initial interviews mentioned in chapter, not to be used for this thesis, also served as a preparation for conducting interviews in the Indian context.

When doing research in a cross-cultural context, language can often be a hindrance for effectively communicating the purpose of a study. In this type of

setting, a researcher must *"exhibit culturally appropriate communication and willingness to learn" (*Liamputtong, 2008: 4). Communication in the interview setting did prove challenging at times, as informants were often unclear in terms of directly answering the questions asked. However, giving the participants the room to elaborate without too much intervention, while carefully guiding them back to the original question when needed, proved to be effective in terms of getting the data needed for the study.

4 Theoretical framework

There is growing awareness that the current global challenges are too vast and complex for any one sector to solve on its own. While businesses and NGOs have traditionally been perceived as being on opposing teams, pursuing vastly different organizational goals (Argenti, 2004) during recent years there has been a noticeable change in the approach to cross-sectorial partnerships and collaboration initiatives between private and civil sectors, ranging from purely philanthropic partnerships to strategic, long-term partnerships have been established (Neergaard, 2009:3). Literature on business-NGO partnerships is a relatively new research field, and has to en extent been built upon existing theories on public-private partnerships (PPPs) and strategic partnership theories (Neergaard et al, 2009). In recent years, literature has attempted to analyze the effect of business-NGO partnerships and their role in CSR implementation. Collaboration theory, research and practice has been accelerating rapidly in the last decade, and significant inputs to partnership theory have been made during this time (Bryson et al, 2015)

Selsky and Parker (2005) note that the main challenge of the research of Cross-Sector Partnerships is that studies of the phenomena emerge from a variety of sectors, outside of organizational studies. According to them, there are two main platforms or theoretical approaches to studying social partnerships within the field of management and organizational studies; resource dependence platform and social issues platform.

Literature on resource dependency maintains the core argument that *"organizations collaborate because they lack critical competencies they cannot develop on their own or in a timely fashion"* (Selsky and Parker, 2005:851). Through this lens, collaboration is a result of organizations being interdependent in terms of their resources, which can cause uncertainties (Arya and Salk, 2006). The need of an organization to expand their resources as well as reducing competition is essentially what drives them to collaborate, according to this approach (Tschirhart et al, 2009). To cope with the turbulence in their environment organizations collaborate on a voluntary basis, with the primary focus on serving their own interests with the perquisite serving societies interests. As defined by Selsky and Parker (2005:852), social partnerships seen through the lens of resource dependency are "conceived in a narrow, instrumental and a short-term way; they are viewed as a way to address organizational needs with the added benefit of addressing a social need."

Social issues management focuses on the characteristics of social issues and how they evolve. There is a growing external pressure on organizations of all sectors to address social issues, thus managers are forces to bring them on the business agenda. Within the social issues management literature, collaboration can be defined as *"a temporary social arrangement in which two or more social actors work together toward a single common end requiring the transmutation of materials, ideas, and/or social relations to achieve that end"* (Roberts and Bradley, 1991:212 in Selsky and Parker, 2005:852).

Cross sector partnerships can be divided into four different categories: Public-Private Partnerships, Public-NGO Partnerships, Private-NGO Partnership and Tripartite Partnerships (Selsky and Parker, 2005). They can be defined as *"the linking or sharing of information, resources, activities and capabilities by organizations in two or more sectors to achieve jointly and outcome that could not be achieved by organizations in one sector separately"* (Byrson et al, 2006:44). Partnership literature mainly focuses on partnerships between two actors, from a one-sided perspective, not giving consideration to the actual interaction that happens when two sectors collaborate (Tulder and Pfisterer, 2014:106).

While there are commonalities as well as differences in approaches and processes across all of the types of cross-sector collaborations, the scope of inquiry in this case applies solely to business-NGO collaboration, and the theory presented is therefore focused to these types of partnerships.

4.1 The partnering process

This section will present a framework on partnering processes, adapted from normative literature on collaboration. There is common consensus within partnership theory that cross-sector collaborations can be examined through chronological stages, and several researchers have developed stage models for this purpose (Jamali and Keshishian, 2009; Googins and Rochlin, 2000; Selsky and Parker, 2005). However, the number of stages and the variables viewed under each stage vary (Selsky and Parker, 2005:854).

In this study, the partnership stages will be divided in to three components. First stage is *planning and initiation*, second stage is the *implementation,* and the final stage is the *outcome and evaluation*. This approach to the partnership stage model is

partially inspired by Selsky and Parker (2005) and Bryson et. al (2006). However, as Crane and Seitanidi (2008:414) point out, it is important to look beyond the stage model and unveil the underlying components to each stage, thus conceptualizing the CSR implementation process on a more detailed micro level, allowing for a deeper understanding of the partnership phenomena.

In the following segments, the three stages identified will be presented, and potential variables within each stage will be defined. Due to the research approach, which is focused on identifying emerging themes within the data collected, the variables within each stage will be kept to a minimum, as the aim is to elaborate further on the themes identified in the analysis.

4.1.1 Planning and initiation

Organizations are increasingly entering partnerships and alliances across sectors in order to achieve a common purpose, as well as sharing responsibilities, risk, cost, resources and benefits (Utting and Zammit, 2009:40). The initiation phase includes motivations for partnering, finding suitable partners, aligning goals and designing management structure of the partnership.

4.1.1.1 Motivation

Within the first stage of a partnership, motivation and drivers are an important topic of research (Selsky and Parker, 2005). In order to gain understanding for the logic of engaging in a partnership, it is important to understand the motivation for both partners to enter such a partnership. Huxman and Vangen (1996) suggest three levels of motivation: common cause, organizational goals and individual goals. It is commonly stated in partnership literature that the motives of NGOs for partnering tend to be altruistic, while businesses enter partnerships to pursue their own self-interests (Selsky and Parker, 2005). When engaging in partnerships, partners often aspire to gain access to the different contributions and skills of each partner. However, this can be challenging in practice (Gray and Stites, 2013) and requires that both partners have a clear idea of what resources they are bringing in to the partnership, as well as, the resources of their partner.

4.1.1.2 The "marketplace" for partnerships

Partnerships are initiated in a number of ways. As NGOs and business belong to different sectors, there is a need for a platform for them to network and connect across sectors. For this purpose, several multi-stakeholder initiatives have emerged. Multi-stakeholder initiatives can be defined as *"interactive processes in which business, CSOs and possibly other stakeholder groups interact to make business processes more socially and/or environmentally sustainable"* (Huijstee, 2012:15). In recent decades, there has been a growing reliance on such initiatives to address governance gaps on the global level. In India, there are several networking platforms where corporates and NGOs come together.

4.1.1.3 Goal alignment

Collaboration literature accentuates the importance of defining clear, common goals that are aligned to the core of each partner's operations and interests (Cohen, 2003). Goals need to be clearly expressed and preferably contractually binding (Austin, 2000).

4.1.1.4 Management structures

According to Bryson et al (2006:47), *"formal agreements have the advantage of supporting accountability."* Research has demonstrated the importance of both parties participating in the drafting process of formal agreements, involving major stakeholders and implementers in the process. The initial agreements of a partnership greatly affect the outcome of the collaboration (ibid) Partnership structure is strongly influenced by context and *"collaborative structure is influenced by environmental factors such as systematic stability and the collaboration's strategic purpose"*, and is likely to change over time due to *"ambiguity of membership and complexity in local environments"*(ibid).

4.1.2 Implementation

The implementation phase of a partnership essentially means putting the goals set during the initiation phase into action (Cohen, 2003). Partnerships are important for

business in terms of effectively implementing CSR activities, as well as ensuring the sustainability of such projects (E&Y, 2013).

4.1.2.1 Employee engagement

Corporations are increasingly seeking to involve their employees in their CSR initiatives. According to Gray and Stites (2013),*"employee engagement is an accessible entry point that helps communicate company values to staff and engage them personally as corporate citizens."* Furthermore, CSR initiatives can make a company more attractive as a workplace (ibid).

4.1.2.2 Accountability

Accountability within cross-sector collaborations is a complex issue, and a lot of research points to the importance of developing assessment criteria of joint goals in partnerships (Gray and Stites, 2013). According to Bryson et al (2006:52) *"cross-sector collaborations are more likely to be successful when they have an accountability system that tracks inputs, processes, and outcomes"*.

4.1.2.3 Communication

Communication is crucial for partners to achieve in developing a common partnership culture. This can be complicated in cross-sector partnerships, where there are different structural and cultural backgrounds for each partner.

For a partnership to be successful, it is critical that the goals are transparent and communicated clearly (Austin, 2000). The compatibilities and the differences of partners collaborating can enable a distinct combination of the partner resources, which can create synergistic value not only for the partners in question but also for society (Seitanidi and Crane, 2012b). While partners may have aspirations to gain access to the partners' resources and contributions, this can often prove challenging in practice as this requires that the partners to "*acknowledge their respective experience and identities*" (Gray and Stites, 2013).

To align the expectations, partners ought to agree on a realistic time frame of partnership implementation early on in the process, also allowing for

adjustments underway due to contextual, external factors (Gray and Stites, 2013).

4.1.2.4 Longevity of projects

In partnerships, there are often different expectations in terms of a partnership timeline. In many cases, the partner providing the financial resources will expect documented impact within an unrealistic timeframe (London and Rondinelli, 2003).

4.1.3 Outcomes and evaluation

The primary assumption of entering a partnership is that collaborating will create a better outcome than working alone (Gray and Stites, 2013:49). In other words, cross-sector collaborations aim to create a "*collaborative advantage*" for the partner organizations (Franco, 2007:267). Literature on collaborations between business and NGOs make an implicit distinction between organizational and social outcomes (Seitanidi, 2010:46). Organizational outcomes relate to the impact on the organizations collaborating, while the social outcome related to the impact on the social issue addressed.

4.1.3.1 Learning and sharing knowledge

Knowledge sharing and learning is an important part of a partnership outcome, and an important motivation factor for entering a partnership (Rondanelli and London, 2001; Gray and Stites, 2013,).

NGOs often possess skills, local information or knowledge crucial for business to access. They have an expertise of developmental issues outside the sphere of corporate activity (Rondanelli and London, 2001). In regards to accessing the skill-set of a collaborating partner, knowledge sharing mechanisms are a valuable tool, that can be catalyst to partnership success (Kale, Dyer and Singh, 2002). Knowledge can be shared formally through codification, and on an ad hoc basis through personalization. Codification entails carefully codifying the knowledge, and storing it in form of a database or documents, which makes it easily accessible for employees.

Personalization is mainly shared through direct personal contact, meaning that it is closely tied to the people engaged in the knowledge sharing process (Boh, 2007:30).

4.1.3.2 Monitoring and measuring impact

For a successful partnership, goals should be equally distributed in terms of cost and benefits, responsibilities of partners clearly communicated and performance indicators should be put in place early in the process in order to measure and monitor implementation of the project (Lister, 2000)

When measuring the effects of CSR initiatives, there are challenges in terms of deciding the parameters of assessment. According to Lemon et al (2011:4) there are two primary challenges. Firstly, given that the outcomes of partnerships often can be realized over different time periods, the metrics chosen must be adequate to measure effects on both short-term and longer-term basis. Secondly, there is a challenge in choosing which metrics to assess, as there often are multiple types of interests and utility embedded in one partnership project.

4.2. Collaboration typology

As theoretically established, cross-sector collaborations can vary significantly in nature and form. There are several typologies to describe how collaborations vary, but this thesis has adapted the approach of Austin and Seitanidi (2012), which is derived from the Collaboration Continuum model originally created by Austin (2000).

Austin (2000) conceptualized the changing nature of the relationship of partners in his collaboration continuum (CC). According to the collaboration continuum there are three relationship stages for partnerships: philanthropic, transactional and integrative.

It is important to note that business-NGO partnerships are not static in nature, and often develop and evolve over time (Austin, 2007). Additionally, a partnership can potentially fit in to more than one typology simultaneously, thus the classification is merely illustrative and meant to demonstrate potential forms and dynamics that partnerships can take (Austin, 2000).

	Philanthropic	→	Integrative
Level of engagement	Low	→	High
Importance to mission	Peripheral	→	Strategic
Magnitude of resources	Small	→	Big
Scope of activities	Narrow	→	Broad
Strategic value	Modest	→	Major

Figure 6. Adapted from Austin (2000).

4.2.1. Philanthropic collaboration

Philanthropic collaboration implies that the partnership is mainly a donor-recipient relationship. In philanthropic collaborations the resources flow unilaterally, from the corporation to the non-profit organization. In this case, corporations seek out organizational capabilities from the NGO in order to address a societal need, and contribute only in the form of monetary resources. There is a degree of resource complementarity but it is generic in nature as it only involves financial resources and additionally, associational value can be created through these types of partnerships. As such, traditional philanthropic collaborations mostly involve sole creation of value, rather than a co-creation, as interaction is limited. Philanthropy is often managed through trust or foundation entities within a corporation (Strickland, 2014).

However, in more recent research, there has been a turn towards so-called strategic philanthropy. According to Porter and Kramer (2002:61) *"Philanthropy can often be the most cost-effective way to improve its competitive context, enabling companies to leverage the efforts and infrastructure of non-profits and other institutions"*.

4.2.2 Transactional collaboration

Transactional collaborations incorporate a bilateral resource flow; meaning that there is a clear exchange of resources and value is created through reciprocal processes.

Resource complementarity is higher than in philanthropic partnerships, and partners have linked interests. Transactional collaborations often include corporate volunteering. Rather than only transferring monetary resources volunteers with specialized knowledge can potentially transfer nonmonetary value to the NGO, which produces a more closely intertwined partner relationship. By gaining access to resources from each other, the partners increase their competitive advantage and generate value in the form of social capital (Austin og Seitanidi, 2012:15). According to Selsky and Parker (2010) transactional collaboration stem from the "resource dependency platform" as identified above, meaning that the main objective is that of self-interest with social good being a positive secondary effect. When the relationship between partners is closer and more visible as is the case in transactional partnerships, there is an added risk in terms of potentially creating negative value for the partners, especially in cases where the organizations collaborating are poorly fitted. Having a clearly aligned mission from the initiation of a partnership is of great importance in this context; a good fit will generate synergistic value for the partners.

4.2.3 Integrative collaboration

In integrative collaborations, collaboration is seen as pivotal for each of the organizations strategic success, and simultaneously greater priority is given to producing benefits for society. Partnerships who reach this stage demonstrate an even deeper interaction value (Seitanidi and Crane, 2012). Organizations engaged in integrative collaboration often show a tendency to compiling their core competencies in a complimentary manner, co-creating innovative solutions that would not be achievable in isolation (Kanter (1999). This type of collaboration requires a higher degree of leadership efforts, resources and commitment than transactional or philanthropic collaborations, but has the potential of creating more value for society as well as the partners (Seitanidi and Crane, 2012:18).

4.3 Trends and challenges in the Indian context

Corporate philanthropy and NGO involvement is often debated in Indian business and civil society communities. In September 2012, the Credibility Alliance organized a national consultation on evolving the role of philanthropy in India. Approximately

120 representatives attended the event from the voluntary sector and discussed the role of NGOs in government policy framing and CSR. At the national consultation, the NGO sector demanded that the government should seek the participation of NGOs at the time of policy framing and not just of the time of implementation (Credibility Alliance, 2013:13) This point of view is further supported by the Confederation of Indian Industry, that stresses the need for NGOs to move beyond just implementing the CSR-projects and start helping the companies in strategizing (Kumar, 2013).

According to SOS Children Villages' report on "Changing Trends in Business-NGO Relationships – Evolving patterns and Emerging opportunities to maximize the benefits of innovative collaborations, there are 7 emerging trends in Business-NGO partnerships in India today:

1) Growing demand that corporations evolve community programs and engage with NGOs.
2) Moral imperatives stronger than the business case for driving corporate engagement.
3) Innovation among business, government and NGOs partnerships.
4) Corporate foundations leading actors to development.
5) Growing demand for employee engagement and high incidence of 'true voluntarism'.
6) Increasing acceptance of contributions of the community and the important role and drive for NGO transparency and professionalism.
7) Growth in demand for partnering expertise and intermediaries/brokers.

There are several challenges for NGO-Business partnerships in the Indian context. In a report by SOS Children Villages (2011), five major obstacles for business to NGO collaboration. The five major obstacles for business are paraphrased as follows:

1) The developmental challenges India faces are daunting in scale, which can lead to corporations being hesitant to address them, leaving the responsibility to the government.
2) There is a common misperception among corporates that NGOs are corrupt and inefficient. The bad reputation of NGOs can hinder collaboration and create barriers between the two sectors.

3) Companies engaging in partnerships often demand NGOs to supply them with highly skilled staff, but are unwilling to pay administrative costs of the NGO or fund their core and capacity building expenses. This is a challenge for NGOs who lack the means to cover these costs.

4) Business is often focused on short-term impact of as opposed to providing lasting, long-term impact. This is in part due to the prominent work ethic within the business landscape where impact, profit maximization and increasing market share is valued most. With NGOs often having an entirely different approach, where lasting impact is valued, this can be a barrier for collaboration.

5) In the Indian context, there is a certain acceptance to the disparity of resources between the rich and the poor. While there has been a shift from philanthropic CSR to a more integrated strategic approach, the notion that CSR and stakeholder engagement is "nice to do" rather than a sustainable and profitable way of doing business still prevails.

While several trends and challenges identified in the report are highly relevant to the current context, recent developments, in particular the CSR regulation and other government initiatives have changed the partnership landscape. In the analysis the current trends and challenges, as identified through participant observations, interviews and secondary data sources, will be elaborated on.

4.4 Theoretical Summary

The theoretical framework for analysis will consist of three levels which are modified in part from some of the mechanisms described earlier in the chapter and will be best used to analyze the data according to the research questions.

The first level of the framework for analysis is the "Process of partnerships" model, which is adapted from several academic contributions, mainly those of Selsky and Parker (2005) and Bryson et al (2006). The model incorporates the chronological components of partnerships, which consist of: planning and initiation, implementation and outcome and evaluation.

Planning & Initiation	Implementation	Outcome and Evaluation
Goal alignment	Creating shared value	Learning and sharing knowledge
Management Structures	Maximizing resources	Monitoring and measuring impact
	Employee engagement	Communication
	Accountability	Longevity of projects

Figure 7. A table demonstrating the partnering process.

The second level for the framework of analysis is the Collaboration Continuum, adapted from Austin (2000). The framework used in this study has been altered, as several components of the original model were deemed as irrelevant for the analysis.

Lastly, the third level of the framework consists of analytical findings in terms of challenges and trends in Indian cross-sector collaboration. This part of the analysis is exploratory in nature, and is not built upon specific theory present in this chapter. As explained in Chapter 3, Design and Methodology the thesis employs a thematic analysis strategy. Thus, the last two segments of the analysis will aim to capture themes and perspectives based on the views of CSR practitioners as well as other sources of data in regards to challenges and trends in the current collaboration scenario.

5 Analysis

In this chapter, the results of the empirical study on collaboration between NGOs and business will be presented. The discussion is based on an analysis of the transcripts made after the interviews, as well as extensive notes from direct observations and secondary data. The data collected has been categorized in to themes, which focus on the most important aspects of collaborations according to the perspectives of the interview subjects.

As the goal of this chapter is to sufficiently answer the research questions, they will provide the structure for the analysis, in combination with themes taken from the existing theory on collaborations. The sections of the analysis are as follows: the importance of partnerships in the context of CSR, critical factors for cross-sector partnering, partnership typology, challenges for partnerships, and lastly emerging trends.

5.1 The importance of NGO-business partnerships

The first question the interviewees were asked was *"How important are partnerships as a tool for CSR implementation?"* There was clear consensus among the companies, NGOs and experts on the importance of partnerships, with all of them judging them as very important and gaining importance in light of recent developments in India. The CSR legislation was often highlighted as a catalyst to the changing perspectives on partnerships, as well as developmental challenges in India that need a broad approach not achievable by one sector alone. Additionally, there is an increased pressure that business attends to the developmental issues. As one of the business informants phrased it, "*People planet and profit, the three Ps are now a requirement. You cannot think of only profit, and ignore thinking of the planet and its people.*" (B#2, 2015).

NGOs and business have different roles in society, and different sets of capabilities. When asked about the role of the private sector in terms of partnerships for sustainability, one informant said "*What companies can bring to the table is the managerial expertise, reducing the time of achieving results, and of course, to some extent, finances*" (B#1, 2015).

Partnerships are important to scaling up development, a challenge that is pressing in the Indian context. In the SOS Children Villages (2011) report, the potential of partnerships across sectors as a means to a more equal, fair society was

highlighted. *"The responsibility for creating equity among larger sections of society rests with Government. However, we do see a hybrid model emerging. There is a role for NGOs to be the catalyst, facilitator and watchdog for development initiatives. Corporations are facilitators through initiatives that are either implemented by them or by their NGO partners via financial and non-financial support."* (SOS Children Villages, 2011).

In the context of India, it is clear that the vast developmental issues present are impossible to solve without a holistic approach. Partnerships are a pivotal part of reaching society at large, and by combining forces, NGOs and corporations, supported by government, can achieve change on a deeper level.

5.1.1 CSR Legislation

When interviewing the informants, the 2013 legislation on CSR was frequently mentioned as a factor contributing to companies engaging in CSR partnerships. In this context, the fear and confusion of companies who fall under the legislation was often highlighted, as the language of new law is rather ambiguous and open for interpretation. This was also evident during direct observations at a conference on the new law, where many of the companies present talked about the distress in defining what type of activities could be defined as CSR under the new law. The Company's Act has resulted in a certain degree of pressure on corporates, those who fall under the parameters of the law now have to "comply or explain". Some informants experienced a sense of panic among some companies falling under the law, as the first reports were due in May of 2015. Especially those not previously engaged in CSR get desperate in seeking ways to comply with the law.

Most of the informants were positive towards the law, and were convinced that it will bring about a lot of change within the CSR framework in India. *"The law is a great thing, and a foundation for much more partnerships and conversations and openings between both parties"*(E#1).

As told by one of the informants, *"Now because of the compulsory CSR, more companies are coming [to partner]. So I think it's important we accept that there are companies that are realizing that they have to (engage in CSR). Otherwise, if you are*

not spending, you have to inform for what reason you haven't spent. So that I think creates fear for corporations." (N#1, 2015).

While there seems to be anticipation among NGOs that the law will increase their funding opportunities, that was not reflected in the findings of this study. However, it was estimated by most informants that as the Act settles and becomes integrated in the business architecture, it will result in an increase in NGO-business partnerships. Based on the information gathered for this study, business has not gained clarity in terms of the Companies Act, there is still a high level of confusion on what constitutes as CSR.

5.1.2 Bridging the gap

The government of India is not capable of solving India's social problems alone, which it has acknowledged by starting initiatives, guidelines and regulation to promote the responsibility of corporations and other actors in terms of CSR (SOS Children Villages, 2011).

The predicted annual income from the Company's Act per year is approximately 50 million dollars, which is only one tenth of the budget of one Ministry of the Indian government. When asked how this money could best be utilized, one informant said: *"As far as money is concerned, it's not that much, so how do we bridge the gap? How do we improve the efficiency of the government parts? We need to utilize this money in the right way. I think at best it will be bridging the gap where the government services are yet to reach or there are other problems with efficiency and efficacy. It can make a huge impact."* (B#1, 2015).

Cross-sector collaborations can help bridge the vast developmental gap India is faced with, and the combined strengths of NGOs and business can be of great importance in terms of accelerating social inclusion, poverty reduction and other social issues.

5.1.2 Benefits of partnering

As identified in previous chapters, there are presumably several benefits for both sectors of the study to partner. All of the informants viewed cross-sector partnerships as potentially beneficial for all stakeholders.

Literature differs on whether partners should create *shared goals* or a *shared vision* within which individual or organizational goals can be pursued (Gray and Stites, 2013:42). Although partners agree on a shared vision they may not have the same goals for the outcome of the partnership. A shared vision between independent actors *"typically means developing a common culture held together by shared values, common interests, and clear communication."* (Selsky and Parker, 2005:856).

Enhanced reputation is a major factor for partners to engage in collaboration projects (C&E, 2014). For corporate and NGO partners, the reputation of the potential partner has a strong effect on the processes and outcomes of a partnership (Gray and Stites, 2013). Partnering with an organization with positive reputation can enhance ones legitimacy, while partnering with an organization with negative reputation can be damaging to an organizations' image (Baur and Schmitz, 2012).

5.2 Critical factors for cross-sector collaborations

The informants were asked to describe their perspectives on critical factors in the process of partnering across sectors. They were asked the question *"What are critical factors in the partnering process"* which gave them the opportunity to explain the steps they usually take when partnering across sectors.

The process of a partnership refers to the interactions that happen between the partners during the initiation and implementation phase of a partnership. Unlike partnership drivers, which are largely controlled by external factors outside of the partners' sphere of influence, the partnership process and dynamics is generally subject to control by the partners (Gray and Stites, 2013).

The data collected indicates that there are certain steps that are common for both sectors, but according to the respondents there are some differences in the structural approach of businesses versus NGOs to partnerships. Aligned with partnership literature, the informants of the study agreed that the key steps of cross-sector partnerships are firstly the *planning or initiation of a partnership*, *project implementation* was identified as a second step in the partnering process and the *evaluation phase* of a partnership was identified as the final step of a partnership project. The critical factors of partnerships will be elaborated on in the following segments. However, it is important to note that several of the factors are overlapping and may be present throughout the process.

5.2.1 Planning and initiation

5.2.1.1 Motivations for partnering

NGOs and business have different motivations for engaging in partnerships. There was a distinction in the motivations of NGO partners and business partners in this aspect. While businesses partner because they need the grass-roots expertise of NGOs to implement their CSR projects. As one of the business informants stated, *"from a cost-benefit analysis it doesn´t seem to be appropriate [for us to implement CSR projects], as it would require a lot of time and cost in terms of building the right capabilities. From a time factor [perspective] is doesn't seem to be appropriate since the expertise already exists [with NGOs]"* (B#1). Many corporations have a variety of CSR initiatives revolving around multiple issues, which makes partnering with an organization that has expertise on the topic a feasible option.

The NGOs choose partnerships to access funds and/or scale up their interventions. As explained by an NGO informant, *"we started engaging in partnerships because we realized that on our own we could only have limited impact"* (N#3, 2015).

5.2.1.2 The "marketplace" for partnerships

When asked where they usually found their partners, many respondents claimed that networking platforms were an important source of partnerships. Cross-sector networking was also observed during participant observations, and many CSR practitioners seemed to be attending events solely for the purpose of making connections. This was especially prominent amongst smaller NGOs trying to get corporate connections for funding.

In terms of which sector is more prone to initiating partnerships, the data indicates that it goes both ways. Smaller NGOs that have not yet proven their credibility often struggle finding partners, and are more proactive in terms of finding funding. As identified by one of the NGO informants, visibility is a big issue. The informant explains, *"the more credible [an NGO is] the more visible your organization is, the higher the chances that you will be approached by corporates."*(NGO#2, 2015). The notion of NGOs need to be visible is supported by the SOS Children Villages report (2011), *"there is no substitute to making credible*

work visible to establish trust among society members. Seeing is believing and NGOs have to make more efforts to create visibility of their work."

5.2.1.3 Goal alignment

When asked to define critical factors of partnerships in the planning stage, *determining clear goals* early on in the process was highlighted by several informants. Partnerships that have objectives connected to the core activities of each organization are more likely to bring added value for both partners (Jamali and Keshishian, 2009). This fact was acknowledged by CSR practitioners of both sectors, as well as experts. Many NGOs commented on businesses often being vague in terms of their objectives when they approach them for collaboration, and not having a clear strategy in terms of their sphere of influence. However, as voiced by one of the NGO respondents, *"Now, more and more, they are actually defining their strategy, they are defining their CSR priorities and they are reaching out to the NGOs which are the best fit"* (N#1, 2015). Partnership literature stresses the importance of partners finding shared value and goals of partnerships should be aligned with the interests of both partners (Cohen, 2003). This was highlighted by several of the informants, and defining goals suitable for both parties was viewed as important. One informant stated that when a corporation seeks out a partnership outside of their sphere of expertise, they guide them to a more suitable partner. *"Those who partner with us must have the same aim and the same objective. We can't help them if we don't have the expertise"* (N#3, 2015).

5.2.1.4 Management structures

Within the field of organizational theory, structure and governance are highly developed concepts, often including elements like goals, task specialization and labor division (Bryson et al, 2005:48). Most organizations take formal steps towards creating structure within a partnership. Drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), a formal agreement often used to establish official partnerships, is often a used as a tool to express the partnership objectives and the intended common line of action (Seitanidi and Crane, 2009). This is common practice in cross-sector partnerships in India, and according to the informants interviewed most organizations will draft an MoU early in the process of partnership establishment. Businesses in

particular have a structured approach to their partnerships, and business informants for this study had well-established steps to follow for partnerships. NGOs appear to often operate on a more of an ad hoc basis, as they are often expected to follow the structure set by the business partner.

5.2.2 Implementation

5.2.2.1 Communication

The informants acknowledged the importance of communication in partnerships, and the necessity of having communication processes in place. As mentioned, MoUs are frequently used in Indian partnerships as a means of communicating expectation. In terms of personal communication, and engagement during the implementation phase of a partnership, NGO informants had differing experiences. One informant stated that companies were increasingly engaged in daily communication throughout the partnership process: *"What they are doing is, they are engaging with us. They are engaging on day-to-day conversation with us, they are actually visiting field, they are engaging their senior management in terms of informing them [of what is happening]"*(N#1, 2015). Another informant said that the degree of communication was varying, stating that while some partners were eager to engage on the grounds, some would have little to no contact during the implementation stage (N#3, 2015).

5.2.2.2 Employee engagement

There were several mentions of the importance of employee engagement in CSR. Companies often encourage their employees to engage in the partnership projects in their free time, and in some cases they give paid days off work for that objective. There was also mention that CSR funds are in some cases deducted from employee's salaries, therefor not taken directly from the profit of the company. This is in fact embedded in the Companies Act, 2013 which states *"Salaries paid by the Companies to regular CSR staff as to volunteers of the companies can be factored in to CSR project cost as part of the CSR expenditure"*. This clause is encouraging for businesses that fall under the Act to engage their employees in their CSR activities.

Employee engagement is a demonstrative factor for the overall engagement of the organization (Gray and Stites, 2013). The importance of engaging the employees in CSR initiatives was stressed by an expert informant who said: *"There should be*

more of that [employee engagement], and if you're involved from the company's point of view, the employees should be involved as well. Because you can't say that you want to change something out there, when the company is not involved" (E#2, 2015).

5.2.2.3 Accountability

Informants of the study underlined the importance of accountability on both sides. It seems to be commonplace in Indian partnerships to have accountability systems, and most appear to have a well-structured approach to tracking accountability. Business informants in all cases had standardized accountability structures, which are used in all their partnerships.

However, according to business informants, project proposals designed by NGOs are often lacking in terms of having the right type of steps to reach the overarching goal of a project, and this leads the business partner to having to take the responsibility of setting a tracking system in place, to make sure that the right steps were being taken. As illustrated by an informant: *"We have solved this by creating the structures and deploying our person to coordinate these things, so it is that persons responsibility to ensure that the right kind of data is being kept, that it gets reported in the right kind of format."* (B#1, 2015). Another informant revealed that the structures of the NGOs were often lacking in terms of their capacity in terms of structure, stating that *"[]....often we have to build the capacities of our partner organization, so a lot of input is coming from our side"* (B#2, 2015).

Having ownership in a project is closely related to having a sense of accountability, and informants highlighted this, stating that *"shared value equals shared accountability"* (N#3, 2015). In that sense, it is important that NGOs are not treated as mere implementing agents, but that they have ownership in the project from start to finish.

5.2.2.4 Longevity of projects

Many NGOs mentioned the unrealistic timeframes set by business as a challenge. This is perceived to be a big issue, as it can hinder a lasting effect of partnerships, as

well as their sustainability. The SOS Children Villages report (2011) on partnerships highlighted this, encouraging business to invest in long-term projects, rather than focusing on a shortsighted outcome.

NGO informants told that corporate partners often wish to start with small-scale interventions, with the option to scale up. However, scaling up can be problematic, and as an expert informant pointed out, "NGOs carry with them a lot of good elements, but their ability to scale up is very poor" (E#1, 2015). This is often due to a lack of a scalable model of intervention.

There seems to be a changing atmosphere in the field of CSR, and during participant observation it was noted that many business practitioners are now aiming to engage with NGOs on a more long-term basis, as this as seen as the *"only way to advance sustainable developmen*t" (E#1, 2015).

This changing focus was reflected by several informants: *"I think one change that has been happening in the recent past is that most of the companies which are engaging with nonprofits, are looking at the longer term and more strategic kind of partnerships rather than short term or brand building type of partnerships"*. (N#1, 2015). This was reiterated by a business informant, who stated that most of their projects have a time horizon between five to seven years, with a few exeptions. *"Generally, if we find an NGO that is a good fit, we will want to engage with them on the long-term"* (B#1, 2015).

5.2.3 Outcome and evaluation

5.2.3.1 Learning and sharing knowledge

Several informants stressed the importance of knowledge sharing, both within a partnership but also sharing experiences and best practices, to create formats and templates for partnerships. In the words of an expert informant, *"templates are an important tool, and they can be corrected according to the context. [...] There is no need to experiment every time"*. (E#1, 2015). Business and NGO informants accentuated knowledge sharing as an integral part of partnerships. When describing the partnering processes of his organization, one business informant stated that they encouraged interactions among their NGO partners, as they are often working on issues that are inter-connected. *"If you have partners working on malnutrition among children, you have given that as a target to your partner which is implementing the*

health project but the project itself has to be driven to these schools. [...] So when we integrate the education system, the partner implementing the education project has to work very closely with the health partner, otherwise malnutrition cannot be properly addressed" (B#1). The informant went on to describe how conflicts tend to arise in the meetings between NGOs, but through these conflicts they often came to an even better solution. This is aligned with collaboration literature reviewed, where it was stated that conflict can in some cases be beneficial to a partnership (Gray and Stites, 2013:43). Seitanidi (2010) states that *"when collaborative nonprofit organizations partner with businesses there is less conflict than would be ideally expected – given the assumption that conflict over fundamental perspectives is a prerequisite for change, and the desire for change is the foundation on which social partnerships are formed"*.

NGOs often share knowledge between themselves, and the NGO informants revealed learning practices among NGOs. One NGO informant described how they sought out a larger, more experienced NGO to gain knowledge on possibilities to scale up their interventions. Learning from the experience of other NGOs can be valuable and ease the transition from small-scale interventions to interventions on a broader scale. *"We already had our system and our development model in place, but we were in a place where our scale of intervention was stuck and needed advice. There is no harm in learning from people who have done a better job and are more experienced in the field.* (NGO#2, 2015).

According to the data collected in this study, knowledge sharing processes in business to NGO partnerships are done through codification as well as personalization. The codification processes include extensive reporting on partnership processes and outcomes, strong infrastructure supporting the partnerships and models of interventions. The personalized knowledge sharing is in the form of the interactions of the CSR practitioners. It was observed that networking is viewed as very important among NGO practitioners, and that personal connections made during networking events often translate into partnerships.

5.2.3.1 Monitoring and measuring impact

Measurability of partnerships was a subject that often came up during participant observations as well as interviews with informants. While both NGOs and business

informants seem to view measurability as an important element of partnership projects, there are different motives for measuring effect, and different emphasis between the sectors. Business tends to focus on the numbers to demonstrate the impact of their interventions. This is less focus among NGOs, who tend to focus on the long-term, developmental impact which is harder to measure. The focus on numbers can be problematic, as was stated by an NGO informant who said, *"Corporations now just have to do it [engage in CSR], and they are actually only interested in numbers. They don't care about impact in terms of development, they care about impact in terms of numbers"* (NGO#2, 2015). This is especially true for companies starting with CSR initiatives due to the new regulation (Section 135), as they are forced to show their contribution in numerical terms, as a percentage of their profit.

There is an increased demand that the outcomes of partnership projects are measurable and this has put pressure on NGOs in particular in their ability to document their results. In the opinion of a business informant, NGOs often come short in that aspect. *"We have hardly found a NGO coming up with the right kind of proposal to us because, either it is too broad [or it] lacks measurability. There needs to be a logical connection of the project, what the project says and what activities you undertake [...] For a good project there needs to be an overarching goal, followed with a set of activities that will lead to solving the goal. At times they [NGOs] will give you a set of two or three activities broadly, and propose a goal which may not be achieved the set of activities"* (B#1, 2015).

Additionally, informants touched upon the concern that developmental impact is not necessarily measurable. As told by an expert informant:

"Not everything in the development sector can be measured, development is not all about numbers. There are issues, which you can't measure, but you can indicate progress in many ways" (E#1, 2015). Another informant talked about how focus on measurability discouraged business from projects with intangible, immeasurable outcomes *"...[] they want to go for tangible things, like 'we have built five schools, 500 more children are now in school'. But how can you allow yourself to have the guts to work with something that is not tangible?"* (E#2, 2015). The question of measurability was also raised by the informant, saying *"You might not see things. Take equality. How can you measure [equality] in the course of three years? You can say women have become more economically free, that they have access to*

microfinance and so forth. But how do you measure the impact [on society]? And how do you continue to work on changing certain values in the community? You can't really measure that, so you can't get money for it either. And that's the problem." (E#2, 2015).

5.3 Partnership typology

This subsection will analyze Indian partnerships according to an adapted version of the Collaboration Continuum, presented as part of the theoretical framework, set forth by Austin (2000) and further developed by Seitanidi and Crane (2012). The aim of the section is to reflect upon the research question: *What types of partnerships are prevalent in the Indian context?*

Based on the perspectives of Indian CSR practitioners and other data sources of this study, Indian partnerships will be discussed in terms of the partnership typologies offered by the table. Note that the aim of the study is not to analyze specific partnerships, but to capture the attitudes and perspectives of the practitioners engaged in partnerships in India, thus unraveling where they fall on the spectrum of philanthropic, transactional and integrative partnerships. Hence, the components of the model will be discussed in general terms, with regard to that on a case-to-case basis, there are partnerships of many different types and levels in India.

| Philanthropic | Transactional | Integrative |

Level of engagement	Low	→	High
Importance to mission	Peripheral	→	Strategic
Magnitude of resources	Small	→	Big
Scope of activities	Narrow	→	Broad
Strategic value	Modest	→	Major

Figure 14. Adapted from Austin (2000) and Seitanidi and Crane (2012).

5.3.1 Philanthropic

India has a strong, long-lasting tradition of philanthropy, which is still ingrained in its social and cultural context. There is an expectation from society, as well as the government, that business should give back to the community. This fact is widely accepted by Indian corporations, and as India's economy has been experiencing rapid growth in the last years, as well as the expectations of companies bridging the development gap have increased.

Parallel to this pressure of giving, the government has been focused on reforming the business structures in India, making it easier for business to thrive, as well as placing emphasis on industrial growth as a perquisite to social development. In this study, it has been observed that many companies, while very involved in CSR, seem to display detachment in terms of integrating CSR in the core of their operations. In regards to the *importance to mission* component of the CC framework, there appears to be a paradox of sorts, as corporations often have a very clear mandate in terms of issues and geographical areas they wish to confront through their CSR partnership projects, but it has little effect on their core business strategy. Additionally, with the implementation of the Company's Act there are many examples of companies with previously low to little CSR experience donating money only to comply with the Act, hence taking a philanthropic approach to their partnerships. In that case, one can state that mandatory CSR leads to forced philanthropy.

5.3.2 Transactional

Based on the perspectives and views of the informants of this study, there is a strong inclination towards transactionality amongst Indian cross-sector partnerships. This is particularly evident in regards to the value flow of partnerships, as many of them display *"two way benefit flows that are consciously identified and sought"* (Austin, 2000:74). Businesses seeking out partnerships with NGOs appear to value the resources that NGOs bring to the collaboration, their local knowledge and capacities to implement projects. NGOs, in turn, are increasingly looking to gain access to non-monetary resources that companies have to offer, particularly resources in terms of infrastructure and managerial knowledge.

5.3.3 Integrative

Indian partnerships show great promise in terms of creating value through collaboration. Throughout this study, many partners of both sectors displayed a high level of engagement and there are several Indian partnership projects that are enormous in scale and show great potential. Both sectors seem critical in selecting partners, due diligence reporting is common practice and partners are selected on basis of their capabilities. However, there is discrepancy in terms of NGOs and corporations *"becoming one organization"* when engaging in partnerships. Based on the views of the informants, there is a clear distinction between the two sectors, where corporations play the role of agenda-setters and funders of the project while NGOs are responsible for implementing the projects.

5.3.4 Summary

The purpose of this part of the analysis is to demonstrate whether Indian partnerships, on a general basis, can be categorized as strategic. The conclusion is that while Indian partnerships show a lot of strategic elements in their approach, there are still prevalent philanthropic factors present. The following section will go further in to the analysis and discuss challenges of Indian partnerships, following with a section on emerging trends in Indian NGO-business partnership.

5.4 Challenges for partnerships

Though partnerships are clearly on the rise (SOS Children Villages, 2011) there are several challenges that can prevent the prospering of partnerships in the Indian context. The following subsection will explore the current challenges NGOs and business are facing in terms of cross-sector partnerships, according to the data collected for this study.

5.4.1 Lack of trust

Trust, or lack thereof, is a commonly referenced outcome factor for partnerships (Gray and Stites, 2013; Iyer, 2003; Selsky and Parker, 2005; Seitanidi and Crane,

2012) and extensively discussed in partnership literature. Trust is an expression of commitment (Iyer, 2003) as well as an outcome of actions taken by the partners (Gray and Stites, 2013). When it comes to partnerships between NGOs and business, traditionally perceived to be on "opposing teams", trust is a major factor for a successful partnership.

In the Indian context, trust between NGOs and business remains a major challenge, and was the most referenced barrier to a partnership success by the informants of this study. In the interviews, several informants stated that the negativity around NGOs was not true for the majority of the sector. However, there are over 3 million registered NGOs in India alone, and there have been incidents of fraudulent NGOs, but that is not the case for all NGOs. As an informant stated: "*I am not denying from the fact that there has been mis-utilization in the sector but if you look at it, there are very few and same applies for any other sector in that base.*". Another informant mentioned that NGOs are struggling in the current, business oriented climate: "*When it comes to the NGO scene, I feel like the climate has kind of changed. [...] The rhetoric is now against NGOs and social work. They say many of the NGOs are fraud, the government is tightening up the reigns and cancelling registrations [of NGOs].*" (E#2. 2015). Another informant talked of bridging this gap due to lack of trust, saying: "*They (NGOs) also need to work more closely with the private sector. There's a deficit, a trust deficit between NGOs and the private sector. There is also a need for companies to be able to build their capacity, bring them up to the speed, see to it that NGO's do their work in a free and fair way.*" (E#1, 2015).

5.4.1 Accreditation issues

The lack of transparency and negative stereotypes of unprofessional, ineffective NGOs contribute to the lack of trust toward NGOs. Due to the magnitude of registered NGOs in India, there is a challenge in defining which NGOs are credible and which ones are corrupt. Recently, the government cancelled the registrations of several NGOs. Among others, the registration of Greenpeace India as a society was cancelled. According to Greenpeace, the cancellation of their registration "was an extension of the deep intolerance for differing viewpoints which the government was harboring" (The Economic Times, 2015).

This viewpoint of the government having ulterior motives when cancelling registrations was reiterated by an expert informant: *"They [the government] are kind of putting a control and shutting down organizations that are actually saying that there are problems that we need to deal with. They are trying to restrict conversation, the critical conversation of what needs to change on a society level. There is so much focus on industrial development now, and they want to present it like social development will follow. But it doesn't work together."* (E#2, 2015).

Another factor mentioned by informants, is the lack of administrative strength to handle the bureaucracy of NGO registrations. Small-scale NGOs often do not have the resources to comply with the rules of the government. As stated by an NGO informant: *I don't think they [organizations that got their registrations cancelled] are all fraudulent, bad organizations. A lot of organizations don't have the administrative strength to handle the registration process properly. (N#3, 2015).* The complexity of Indian bureaucracy was reiterated by another NGO informant, who stated that *"We've got very complex laws and very complex legislations which actually can be interpreted differently in different ways. So I think a lot of confusion erupted from there as well."* (N#1, 2015).

5.4.3 Over-adaptability of NGOs

In an increasingly competitive economic environment, NGOs are experiencing growing pressure to adopt efficient and effective business-like approaches (Baus and Schmitz, 2011). Though NGOs do not have a specific mandate to make profits, balancing their finances according to the economic needs of their collaborating partners, which makes them subject to the same forces as for-profit organizations when designing their business model (Dahan et al, 2010). This can help create a common ground for collaboration, but can also be problematic in terms of NGOs becoming removed from their original cause and values. As stated by one informant *"NGOs are created with certain principles, certain philosophy, certain objectives, so they should also select their partners based on their expertise. [...] If they don't, it's not very good for the long-term. People may feel that you're just going after their money, getting the funds, which may not be appropriate. So NGOs should also be on an equal platform and say no to*

partnerships. Say 'We don't want to partner with you because this is not my expertise'"(N#3, 2015).

Skagerlind et al (2015:250) argue that NGOs, often collaborating on the premises of business, face a larger risk than private sector organizations in terms of compromising their own agenda, legitimacy and reputation. While business can provide NGOs with necessary recourses, there is a risk of NGOs "*becoming increasingly accountable to the private sector and profit driven interest and, thereby, less so to the communities they operate in and for*" (ibid:249). NGOs risking their reputation and integrity for the sake of funding are unlikely to survive in the long-term, given that they need the support of the community to operate. As voiced by one of the expert informants *"when [NGOs] go after the funds rather than the cause, that is a serious issue"* (E#2, 2015)

5.4.4 Power imbalances

The apparent adaptability of NGOs is closely related to another factor which was frequently mentioned during the collection of data; *power imbalances* in the working relationships between NGOs and businesses. According to Selsky and Parker (2005:858) *"large power imbalances are viewed as problematic because they may lead partners into political or opportunistic behavior that can serve one or both partners' interest at the expense of partnership performance."* Huxham and Vangen (2005) identify power imbalance between partnering organizations as a barrier and a threat to effective collaboration, as it creates mistrust among the partners.

With business having the financial power in most partnerships, there is often a tendency toward power imbalance, or asymmetric dependence (Lister, 1997). As companies often initiate and fund collaboration projects, they are often the primary-agenda setters, which can result in partnerships projects mainly driven by business motives and agendas (Skagerlind et al, 2015:24). The fact that CSR reporting is mostly one-way, with NGOs reporting to businesses is a reflection on the dominance of business in partnerships (Seitanidi and Crane, 2009:419). Of the informants interviewed, there were no examples of business

reporting on their performance in the partnership, reporting was only done from NGOs to business.

In this study, it appears that both sectors initiate partnerships, but the agenda is usually set by business. As one informant explained *"we develop the proposal, and reach out to NGOs that fit the profile"* (B#2, 2015)*. Of course, there are cases where NGOs are asked to develop a proposal, which is particularly common when the company funding the project is inexperienced in implementing CSR projects. However, as said by an NGO informant *"we often feel like business demands that we do things 'their way'. And sometimes you have no choice, we need funding, we need projects* (N#3, 2015).

5.4.5 Lack of infrastructure funding

Business often has unrealistic expectations in terms of project costs. NGOs, who often have scarce resources, are sometimes unable to fulfill the partnership objectives when their partners will not fund administrative costs.

There is a paradox in the fact that companies demand top performance from their NGO partners, but refuse to pay the price of administrative costs. This was reflected in the SOS Children Villages (2011) report, which identified this paradox of expectation as a challenge for NGO-business partnerships. Due to this, small scale NGOs that have little financial backing, often struggle to engage in partnerships, as they are often required to contribute in terms of funds as well. An NGO informant spoke of the viability of NGOs, saying: *"The NGOs that have stronger inner funding, like foundations and such, seem to be more viable because they can match the donations of the companies"* (E#2, 2015)". It is common that corporations are unwilling to pay for costs related to capacity building, and prefer funding tangible structures. In some cases, NGOs fund the soft skills in the aftermath of a project. *[…] So in some cases, after construction, the corporation will walk off. We have to kind of make sure that people actually understand how to use whatever it is that we constructed and you know if anything goes wrong, we actually teach people how to do maintenance. We ensure the sustainability of the project. […] That is our funding and contribution to the project (E#2, 2015)*

The lack of infrastructural funding can also manifests in a lacking of managerial expertise. A business informant stated, *"The main barrier for partnerships is the lack of managerial expertise of the NGOs and reporting documentation processes. […] Many of these NGOs are individual driven so they don't have stable processes and procedures."* (B#1, 2015)

5.4.6 Short-term projects in the backyard of business

During the interviews with NGOs, there was frequent mention of corporations wanting partnership projects to be set in the "backyard" of their operations. One informant stated that corporates often approach them for a partnership that is close to their operations. *"They say, come work where we work, they don't want to fund [projects] in other regions"* (N#3, 2015). Additionally, many NGO informants mentioned the negative effects of short-term projects. As told by an NGO informant: *So you [have] reached out to community and started working on something, you built something up but you know when it actually comes to a level where you actually can start delivering on demonstrating change, you pull out because you don't have long term commitment. It affects everybody negatively. It affects the reputation of company, it does not move well with the NGO because you raise expectations of the community [is affected negatively]. So I think that at least needs into five years of commitment to begin with. Below that, you know there is nothing that you can demonstrate on ground.* (N#1, 2015). It is considered to be a challenge for the sustainability of partnership projects when business demands that the projects are set in geographical proximity to their operations, and are unwilling to partner over an extended period of time. Business can experience negative effects on their reputation and "buy in" from their immediate environment when their interventions don't have the intended effect. While it is important to an extent that business addresses issues in their nearest community, it is important that they "look to development on a broader level"(E#3, 2015).

5.4.7 Lack of sustainability at the core of business

During the course of this study, it was apparent that very few companies take their CSR initiatives to the core of their business model. While many companies now are

"forced" to engage in CSR, and are doing so, there is a detachment between CSR and business as usual. The sustainability factor that should be intrinsic in the business approach to CSR has not been achieved at this moment. As stated by an informant *"Where is the scalability, the measurability, accountability and reliability? Where is that cycle? In terms of sustainability, they put sustainability and CSR in two different categories. The CSR is your social projects, your community development, health and all. Sustainability is not there."* (E#3, 2015).

CSR seems to be embraced and accepted as an obligation towards the community, but in terms of environmental impact and other negative effects of their business operations, very few companies appear to be aligning the social and environmental responsibilities with their purpose and value as a business. CSR activities are mostly done on the sidelines, and mostly consist of social interventions.

5.4.8 Challenges related to the Company's Act

The Companies Act has been a source of new opportunities, but it has not come without challenges. One challenge is connected with defining what can be counted as CSR. The Act specifies certain activities companies can undertake to comply with the requirements, which indicates that only the activities specified are permissible under the act. Confining CSR activity in this manner can inhibit innovation, thus leading to a narrow means of implementation. It is important to note that it is stated in the Act that CSR is not confined to these types of projects and intervention, but rather provides an indicative list. However, due to the confusion experienced by companies, in particular those new to CSR, many choose to conform to the CSR activities listed (Sah, 2015). This will be explored further in the subsection, *"Lack of innovation"*.

Another concern is that the Companies Act is focused on monetary spending rather than an integrating CSR in their operation, which can lead to forced philanthropy and "tick box" behavior rather than a strategic approach to CSR.

Additionally, the issue of the Act potentially contributing to corruption has been raised. According to Shankar (2015) *"mandatory spending would definitely open new doors of unfair practices by corporate to hide profits."*. Though these are potential challenges that should be taking seriously, the general perspective of CSR

practitioners on the Act was that it would put CSR on the agenda of companies who have not been engaging in it previously. As the Act is fairly recent, *"time will show what the impacts are, if it [Company's Act] will result in a better India"* (N#3, 2015).

5.5 Emerging trends in Indian cross-sector collaborations

In this section of the analysis emerging trends in the current CSR discourse will be identified and discussed. There are several trends that appear to be specific to, or at the least more prevalent in the Indian context compared to global CSR trends. However, it is important to note that this study does not aim to compare Indian CSR trends to other geographical or cultural context, but to present the emerging perspectives according to the perspectives of CSR practitioners and other relevant data.

5.5.1 Development aid drying up

In recent years, India has been emerging as a major contributor to development aid, and as India has reached the status of a middle-income country, many aid donors are in the process of phasing out their bilateral aid to India. The net foreign aid is anticipated to drop by 11 percent from 2013-2016 (Piccio, 2014). This relatively sudden shift increases the pressure of local government and business to contribute to the ongoing development in India.

NGOs that previously received a large portion of their funding through development aid are now in need of finding new ways of raising funds. This factor encourages partnerships with the private sector, as they have the funds to support projects, as well as the need to engage in development. A positive side of this trend, in the words of an NGO informant, is that *"it puts pressure on us to think about the sustainability of a project"* (N#3, 2015). Now that funding through development aid is apparently drying out, sustainability of partnership projects is increasingly important, as business partners are unlikely to fund a project over an extended period of time without it demonstrating a level of sustainability.

5.5.2 Corporate foundations

In recent years, an increasing number of corporations have established separate corporate foundations, disintegrated from the business section of their operations. The foundations have the role to implement the CSR strategy of the company, and are structurally isolated from the company itself (Skagerlund et al, 2015:250). While this can be viewed at positive in the sense that the companies are addressing their CSR to an extent, it does indicate an approach more aligned with philanthropy as it is separated from core of business.

In SOS Children Villages report (2011) the trend of corporate foundations in India is addressed. It is stated that corporate foundations are leading the shift from traditional, philanthropic giving to a more strategic approach to development. The report claims that while corporate foundations in other parts of the world often remove the responsibility of the corporation itself, Indian foundations *"have a greater legitimacy given the scale of social inequity and the amount of work to be done to bring about inclusive growth"* (ibid, 6). There are several examples of corporations in India who clearly separate their means of creating profits from how they give back. This type of CRS is distinctly philanthropic, as there is little to no effect on the business activities. It may seem that the notion that CSR can be profitable for a business has not yet set in India. This was reflected in an interview with an informant, who stated that Indian CSR is often seen as separate from business operations and that there was a general view that CSR should not benefit the company or be profitable in any way.

However, there are also cases where corporations display strong ethical values, connected to the core of their business, while their foundation *"maximizes the developmental impact of the company and pools resources and expertise."* (SOS Children Villages, 2011).

5.5.3 Conformity over innovation

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (English: Clean India Mission) is a national campaign by the government of India, initiated by Prime Minister Modi in 2014. The goal of the campaign is a "clean India" by 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Among other things, the program plans to build 120 million toilets, in an attempt to end open defecation, a major developmental challenge in India.

The governments call for action under the Swachh Bharat mission has resulted in a notably increased interest by businesses in addressing the issues, and there is clear evidence of "trends" within the field of CSR in terms of what kind of type of interventions business invests in. Several informants mentioned the trending of certain types of partnership projects. As stated by an NGO informant: "*Lot of corporations now suddenly started focusing on building toilet blocks. Why? Because they want to show [Prime Minister] Modi that they are following his mandate. [...] Since he came up with Swachh Bharat, we have built 1000 toilets*". (N#2, 2015) Another informant reiterated the homogenous approach often taken by business, stating: *Everybody's doing skill, everybody's doing health, everybody's doing education and now the Swachh Bharat.*" (E#3, 2015).

While the apparent engagement of corporations in the national campaign can be viewed as positive, NGOs interviewed saw it as problematic that very few businesses were willing to fund capacity building, to raise awareness about the dangers of open defecation. During participant observation, an informant told that in some rural villages the toilets were never used, as there was no educational component to the project the villagers' behavior did not change.

Another issue is that if only certain issues are in focus, issues that are not on the agenda might be forgotten. In a country with a broad spectrum of developmental issues, that is highly problematic. As stated by an informant: "*Even if a certain issue is not 'trending' in the social market, that doesn't mean that the problem isn't there anymore*" (E#2, 2015)

However, many NGOs are pushing the agenda for innovative projects, and there are corporations that are willing to experiment on new projects. A business informant accentuated the role of NGOs in spurring innovation, stating "*So, many of the NGOs have also understood what they need out there. So there's a lot of innovation, a lot of thinking, lot of churning going on within the NGOs. If they have the right kind of people, they'll do a lot of research and come up with innovative solutions to help the communities.*" (B#1, 2015)

5.5.4 Partnership "brokers" in demand

The SOS Children Villages report (2011:7) on Indian partnerships identified a *"growth in demand for partnering expertise and intermediaries/brokers"*. Organizations are increasingly looking for third parties to navigate them in the search for a suitable partner.

The informants of this study confirmed the trend identified in the report, and NGOs and corporations appear to be increasingly utilizing these types of services. One such "partnership broker" mentioned by several informants, is the Charities Aid foundation, an organization that offers consulting on partnerships and helps connect NGOs and corporations. As explained by an NGO informant: *"The corporation will find a middle person, like another foundation that is known to identify good NGOs and channel money correctly. [...] When they don't know what NGO to approach as a partner, they go to the Charity Foundation and they will identify NGOs in the desired field. With these NGOs they will do a series of verifications."* (NGO#2). NGOs that wish to get verified by the Charity Aid Foundation need to submit documentation to prove their transparency as an organization, bank account statements, yearly audits and proof of earlier project expenditure, among other things. The broker then sends staff to thee NGOs office and project sites to ensure that the NGO is credible. When verified, the approval stays for three years.

The demand for partnership brokers might be reactions to the trust issues businesses have towards the credibility of NGOs, or a result of their lack of knowledge on NGOs fit for implementing their projects. Regardless, partnerships initiated through a middleman can prove very productive, as the resources of the partners chosen are more likely to be complimentary and finding a strategic fit is more probable due to the expertise of the third party.

5.5.5 CSR firmly on the business agenda

During the course of this study, it was noticeable that there is a level of engagement and excitement in both sectors for the way forward, in light of the new law and the changing policy climate. Through interviews and informal conversations during the course of the study, many CSR practitioners demonstrated a great level of commitment to contributing to development. A positive aspect noted during fieldwork is that many CSR practitioners are moving between the two sectors – former NGO workers are moving into the corporate side of CSR and vice versa. This trend can create a deeper

understanding between the two sectors, and provide opportunity for more strategic, synergistic partnerships.

"Being responsible does not mean doing it all ourselves. Responsibility is a form of sharing, a way of recognizing that we're all in this together. 'Sole responsibility is an oxymoron" (Visser, 2011:5). Cross-sector partnerships, particularly NGO-business partnerships, are becoming powerful tools for CSR implementation, and will continue to gain importance moving forward.

6 Summary and discussion

In light of the increasing value of partnerships as a means to implement CSR projects, this study has aimed to reveal cross-sector partnerships in India from the perspectives of the practitioners engaged in them. This section will summarize the findings of the study in a coherent manner, using tables to demonstrate the main features presented in the analysis. The aim of this section is to display the findings according to the research questions, as well as categorizing the knowledge gathered in an accessible, comprehensive format.

6.1 Importance of partnerships

Literature reviewed for the purpose of this study indicated the growing importance of cross-sector partnerships in the field of CSR. Indeed, this was supported by the primary data of this thesis, which suggested a clear shift in recent years in terms of business focus on CSR, as well as NGOs increasingly looking to partner across sectors to scale up their interventions. The table below sums up the findings of this study related to the research question: *What's the importance of partnerships in connection to implementing CSR?*

CSR legislation	Bridging the gap	Benefits of partnering
➢ Company's Act has increased the importance of partnerships. ➢ General positivity towards the Act. ➢ Expected increase of partnerships due to the emphasis on projects in the Act. ➢ Need for more clarity of permissible CSR initiatives under the Act.	➢ Government incapable of solving social issues alone. ➢ Need for other sectors to engage in social issues. ➢ Call for action by government has stipulated partnership engagement. ➢ Potential high impact of CSR initiatives under the Act. ➢ Combined strengths of all sectors can accelerate development.	➢ Cross-sector collaboration viewed as beneficial for both sectors. ➢ Companies need grass-root knowledge of NGOs as implementing agents. ➢ NGOs in need of funding or scaling-up their interventions. ➢ Enhanced reputation a major factor for engaging in partnerships.

Figure 14

As demonstrated in the findings, changes in policy have made a major impact on the increased importance of partnerships within CSR. The development gap, along with the immense economic growth in India, has also put pressure on business to contribute and engage with the civil sector, and there is a growing dependency between the two sectors as a result of them often possessing complementary resources.

6.2 Critical factors

According to partnership literature, partnerships can be analyzed through a stage model. The model used in this study consisted of three stages: Planning and initiation, implementation and outcome and evaluation. The data collected revealed important elements within each stage, which are relevant to answering the second research question: *What are critical factors for partnerships?*

Planning and initiation →	Implementation →	Outcome
Motivations for partnering ➢ Different motivations for different sectors. ➢ Business motivated by grass-root capacities of NGOs and enhancing legitimacy. ➢ NGOs motivated by access to funds and ability to scale up interventions.	**Communication** ➢ Communication processes necessary in partnerships. ➢ Differing views of level of engagement by business ➢ Some are engaged on regular basis, others have little contact during implementation stage.	**Learning and sharing knowledge** ➢ Knowledge sharing viewed as an "integral part" of partnerships by both sectors. ➢ Templates an important tool for knowledge sharing. ➢ Knowledge sharing within sectors to exceed learning relevant for NGOs working on inter-connected issues. ➢ Learning from experiences of others. ➢ Knowledge is shared through codification as well as personalization.
The "marketplace" for partnerships ➢ Networking platforms important facilitators for partnerships. ➢ Both sectors initiate partnerships. ➢ Visibility and credibility of NGOs a major factor for business to approach them for partnerships.	**Employee engagement** ➢ Many companies encourage employees to engage in their CSR projects. ➢ Employee engagement encouraged by the Company's Act. ➢ Demonstrates the overall engagement of the organization.	
Goal alignment ➢ Partners who have clearly aligned goals more likely to succeed. ➢ Business increasingly defining their CSR and reaching out to NGOs with capabilities related to their goals. ➢ Partnerships should be aligned with the interests of both partners. ➢ Importance of staying within area of expertise for NGOs.	**Accountability** ➢ Well-structured accountability-tracking systems in place (business). ➢ NGO project proposals often lacking in terms of concrete actions towards the overarching goal. ➢ Having "ownership" of a project closely related to a sense of accountability.	**Monitoring and measuring impact** ➢ Measurability viewed as important by both sectors. ➢ Different motives for measuring. Business focus on numbers, NGOs on long-term impact. ➢ Not everything in the development sector is subject to measurement in terms of numbers.
Management structures ➢ Indian partnerships display a structural approach to partnerships. ➢ Use of MoUs commonplace. ➢ Business has well-established governance structures for partnerships. ➢ NGOs more adaptable.	**Longevity of projects** ➢ Unrealistic expectations of business in terms of impact timeframe problematic. ➢ Often wish to start with small-scale interventions, with potential to scale up. ➢ Changing focus in business community, wishing to start engaging on a long-term basis.	

Figure 15

As the table indicates, there are several critical factors present within the partnering process. The findings of this chapter uncover the general approach of CSR practitioners in the partnering process, and the factors that impact and influence the partnership outcome.

6.3 Partnership typology

As partnerships are gaining importance, a significant question is whether they remain philanthropic in nature or if they are becoming more strategic in nature. The third research question, *What types of partnerships are prevalent?* explores how Indian partnerships can be categorized according to the Collaboration Continuum.

Philanthropic	Transactional	Integrative
➢ Strong tradition for philanthropy in India. ➢ Industrial growth still viewed as a key to development. ➢ Mandatory CSR leading to forced philanthropy for companies new to CSR. ➢ CSR activity generally detached from the core of business.	➢ Partnerships demonstrated a mutual flow of resources. ➢ Level of engagement relatively high according to the informants. ➢ Corporate volunteering is a common characteristic.	➢ Indian partnerships show promise in terms of becoming integrative. ➢ Many partnership projects that are broad in scope of activities. ➢ Magnitude of resources shared often high.

Figure 16

As the findings reveal, strong elements of philanthropy still remain in Indian partnerships. However, with partnerships growing in importance due to the Company's Act focus on CSR implementation in project form, there are indicators of partnerships becoming more strategic.

6.4 Challenges

The Indian socioeconomic environment for partnerships is strenuous, and there appear to be several challenges that are specific to, or more prevalent in the Indian context. The fourth research question *What are the major challenges that*

business and NGOs face when engaging in partnerships? reveals the current challenges as experienced by the CSR practitioners interviewed.

Challenges for partnerships in the Indian Context	
Lack of trust	➢ Trust a major barrier for partnership success. ➢ Predominance of business-oriented rhetoric. ➢ Negative stereotype of NGOs being inefficient and fraudulent harmful for credible NGOs.
Accreditation issues	➢ Government cancelling NGO registrations on a large scale. ➢ Government establishing control by shutting down organizations that are against industrialization. ➢ Lack of administrative strength for some NGOs results in them not being able to comply with rules of registration.
Over-adaptability of NGOs	➢ Risk of NGOs becoming removed from their cause due to the pressure to adapt to obtain funding ➢ NGOs going after funds rather than the cause can serve as a challenge for the success of a partnership.
Power imbalances	➢ Prevalent power imbalances in partnerships a threat to effective collaboration. ➢ Business as the financial power often sets the agenda. ➢ One way reporting a manifestation of the power imbalances. ➢ NGOs experience pressure to abide to business as they are in need of funding to survive.
Lack of infrastructure funding	➢ Unrealistic expectations of project expenditures from corporate partners. ➢ Paradox of business demanding top performance of NGO partners, but refuse to pay for administrative costs. ➢ NGOs with strong inner funding more viable. ➢ Smaller NGOs struggle due to not having enough funding to support their infrastructure. ➢ Lack of administrative funding of NGOs manifests in poor managerial expertise.
Short-term projects in the backyard of business	➢ Business demands partnership projects to be set close to their area of operations. ➢ Short-term projects fail to impact and can lead to negative effects for all parties involved.
Lack of sustainability at the core of business.	➢ Very few companies take their CSR initiatives to the core of their business model. ➢ Detachment between CSR and business as usual. ➢ Business mostly addresses social issues in their interventions, not addressing environmental dilemmas to the same extent.

Challenges related to the Company's Act	➢ Defining CSR within the Act remains a challenge. ➢ Focus on monetary spending encourages "tick box" behavior. ➢ Mandatory spending can potentially lead to deception and fraud.

Figure 17

The findings demonstrate how despite the fact that NGOs and business are increasingly intersecting and working together, there are widespread trust issues and partners to not appear to be collaborating on equal terms.

6.5 Trends

The last section of the findings reveals emerging trends within cross-sector partnerships, according to observations made during participant observations and interview data, as well as secondary data. This is in line with the fifth research question: *Which emerging trends are evident in the current partnership architecture?*

Emerging trends in Indian cross-sector partnerships	
Development aid drying up	➢ As India reaches middle-income status, development aid is fast disappearing. ➢ NGOs having to seek funding from other sources. ➢ Sustainability of projects becoming more important as a result.
Corporate foundations	➢ Corporate foundations growing in number. ➢ The trend is positive in terms of foundations demonstrating a clear structural mandate. ➢ Negative in terms of being structurally separated from business activity. ➢ Foundations show potential to lead the shift from philanthropic giving to strategic partnerships.
Conformity over innovation	➢ Mandates developed by the government are spearheading CSR initiatives taken by companies. ➢ Positive in terms of critical issues being addressed on a holistic level. ➢ Negative in terms of inhibiting innovative approaches and diverting attention from other pressing issues. ➢ NGOs play a major role in leading the way in innovation.
Partnership "brokers" in demand	➢ Growing demand of third party facilitators for partnerships. ➢ Can potentially lead to a more strategic partnerships, as going through a "broker" will help in finding a well-fitting partner with complementary resources. ➢ May be a manifestation of trust issues

	toward NGO credibility.
CSR and collaboration firmly on the business agenda	➢ High level of engagement and commitment in the CSR community. ➢ CSR practitioners shifting sectors, which can lead to better communication and understanding across the sectors. ➢ Business-NGO partnerships are powerful tools for CSR implementation.

Figure 18

Based on the findings presented in the above table, it is clear that there are significant changes in the current Indian collaboration context. Recent government initiatives have to a large extent shaped the emerging trends, and it will be interesting to follow the developments in Indian cross-sector partnerships in the next few years, as there are definite signs of a shifting agenda in the current context.

7 Concluding remarks

With the change and transition that India is currently experiencing, becoming a developed country in one aspect while having to deal with major social issues, NGO-business partnerships can provide a means to bridge the developmental gap.

As this study has demonstrated, cross-sector collaborations are increasingly becoming a central part of CSR implementation, and with the Company´s Act encouraging partnerships they will prospectively gain momentum in the years to come. While corporations are engaging in CSR and partnerships, the activity is still largely happening on the periphery of their operations, rather than at the core. There is anticipation that with time, the focus will shift towards a sustainability approach to CSR, with business looking to incorporate sustainable values in their value chain.

Business and NGOs appear to be engaging in cross-sector partnerships with good intentions of making a positive developmental outcome. During the course of this study, there were several examples of great partnership projects, which change the lives of individuals and communities. However, greater impact could be achieved if the two sectors fully explore utilizing the capabilities of each other.

While there are several challenges for partnerships to thrive in the Indian context, as has been revealed through the findings of this study, there are also a lot of opportunities for both sectors to create shared value and create better lives for the 700 million living under 1$ per day in todays India.

It is still early days for the Company´s Act, and the long-term effects of it on the field of CSR remains to be seen. There is hope that in time it will stimulate a strategic engagement with social issues, rather than encouraging forced philanthropy.

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Appendix

Interview guide

Interview questions:

How important are partnerships as a tool for CSR Implementation?

What are critical factors for partnerships?
- process
- characteristics

What is the role of your organization (NGO or business) within a partnership?

What are the major challenges for partnerships to thrive in the Indian context?

What are common errors that can result in an unsuccessful outcome?

What are the implications of the Company´s Act for partnerships?

How can a partnership be successful?
- Recommendations
- What can be done better?