

Sustainable Sports Branding Through Institutional Partnerships: A Csr Lens On Women's Football Development In India

Mr. Prithu Sarkar^{1*}, Dr. Shatabdi Som², Dr. Romica Bhat³

^{1*}Research Scholar, Amity University, Kolkata, Email: prithusarkar90@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor (Grade-III), Amity University, Kolkata, Email: shatabdizmail@gmail.com

³Designation: Professor, Institution: Lovely Professional University, Department: Journalism and Mass Communication, Email: romica.32881@lpu.co.in

Abstract

In this paper, the author studies the impact of the initiative based on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) on the growth of the Indian women football, with particular emphasis on institutional partnership as an enforcer of long-lasting sports branding. The material was obtained as per the mixed-methods research strategy by surveying 250 respondents of different demographic backgrounds. The quantitative analysis showed that there is a significant positive measure between CSR initiated grassroots football companies and development of players and there is also significant positive measure between CSR communication strategies used and the perception by the people on the company brand image. Key challenges and enabling factors which according to descriptive analysis contribute to the sustainability of the CSR-based branding include less media coverage, lack of consistency in funding, and gender bias as key challenges and community engagement as enabling factors, strong partnerships, and supportive policies as enabling factors. The results are indicative of the twofold value of CSR that allows generating measurable social impact and augmenting brand equity. The research provides practice guidelines that stakeholders may develop to help implement effective, inclusive, and long-term CSR plans in India to develop the women football sport.

Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Women's Football, Sports Branding, Institutional Partnerships, Brand Image.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indian women football has become a rich context of thrilling and enriching gender equality, community enhancement, and sustainable sport branding especially when channeled by institutional collaborations within the sphere of corporate social responsibility (CSR). Although traditionally Indian sports ecosystem was dominated by men cricket, the past few years witnessed the growth of corporate and institutional interest in women sports, as the brands maximize the impact of promoting social impact (Meloci, et. al., 2019; Hernandez Hernandez, 2023). CSR-centered sports programs have proven to be the potential means of offering the female athletes a structured environment in sport with institutional and systemic barriers being tackled through CSR because of the lack of infrastructure, no side financial support, and societal female stereotypes (Walzel et al., 2018).

Theoretically, stakeholder governance, institutional theory, and sustainable development models underpin CSR in sport since they focus on staying at parity among corporate goals and community and environmental interests (Hernandez Hernandez, 2023; Lu, 2024). Empirical research emphasizes the existence that CSR associated sports sponsorship can not only improve value perceptions among consumers, cause the brand to acquire a stronger reputation, and increase the intention to purchase but also offer social value (Melović et al., 2019).

Nonetheless, CSR should not be applied operationally through ad hoc goodwill acts through governance, but instead, strategic, inclusive, and capable of long-term monitoring to quantify Pfeninsights (2024). CSR spending data reveals that despite various corporations spending money to empower women in India, the spending varies across states and sectors, leaving a lot of spaces that can be covered by sports-based interventions (LINE, T. B. 2022). It has been documented in international studies that institutional push factors are critical in determining the sustainability of sport-based CSR interventions using the influences of stakeholder pressure, concerns of legitimacy and leadership commitment (Lu, 2024).

In the context of women football in India, it means that multi stakeholder partnerships, including corporations, governing bodies, NGOs, and local communities are required, with an obvious affiliation to Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), especially SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) (Lindsey, et al. (2017)). Such collaborations should not only be able to provide resources like coaching and equipment as Studyll as infrastructure, but should also be able to develop capacity, mentor, and act as advocates of a policy giving it support. Examples such as the case study of TECNO and its linkage as a corporate social responsibility with the Indian Football Foundation depict that very specific investments can lead to low-level development outcomes, as Studyll as corporate brand positioning (Shirodkar, 2025) in the talent identification, grassroots coachings, and access of a league. Furthermore, an integrative review of CSR in professional sports organizations points out the significance of using CSR as a central strategy of sports organizations instead of considering it as an additional activity (Walzel et al., 2018).

This integrated strategy can play the role in making women football not only a changing agent of society, but also sustainable brand equity in India market. When combined with practical cases and literature, one can see that sustainable sports branding using CSR led institutional partnerships can catalyze the growth of women football in India with business goals and social needs being unified to the benefit of all concerned parties.

This paper proposes to critically review the aspects of institutional CSR partnerships in tapping into improved sustainable sports branding and developing women football in India by evaluating the available available models, determining the best practices and propose a stakeholder model of implementation that is SDG based.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Atghia, et al. (2025) investigated that Although there is extant literature on ISO 26000 and its implementation across numerous industries, a significant void remains in studies explicitly addressing the application of these indicators within sports organisations, especially football clubs. The study seeks to fill this vacuum by offering insights into the distinct problems and opportunities encountered by Iranian Premier League football clubs in improving their social responsibility activities. The study examined the principal indicators of ISO 26000 to enhance social responsibility utilized Statistica 13 software. The novel method of multi-layer artificial perceptron neural network was employed for estimation and evaluation. The findings reveal the effectiveness of particular SR models, emphasized the importance of elements such as development and community engagement, labour practices, and equitable operational procedures in fostering beneficial results. The findings highlighted the dedication of Iranian Premier League clubs to promoting SR values, facilitating ongoing advancement and influence in the sports sector and society at large. The study addressed the existing gap by emphasized the potential of development and community engagement, labour practices, and equitable operational procedures to improve social responsibility in football teams within these contexts.

Hindmarsh, et al. (2024) examined to help sponsors reach their promotional goals, Study looked for the causal configurations of CSR situations that had the greatest influence on grassroots football club stakeholders. An English regional amateur football tournament called the Essex Alliance was the object of the study's case analysis. To begin understanding the ecology of grassroots football, a number of stakeholders Studyre surveyed using semi-structured interviews. The next step in defining CSR was to conduct further semi-structured interviews with club sponsors. The study was able to conduct a survey because of this, and fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis was used to investigate and debate the results. The grassroots football ecosystem has numerous stakeholders functioning at the national level, extending to local governance institutions that define the business-club connection. Sponsors recognised three primary prerequisites of Corporate Social Responsibility: shared ideals, self-congruity, and Studyll-being. Subsequently, fs QCA identified two pathways: the existence of shared values, and the presence of enjoyment coupled with a lack of self-congruity.

Costa, et al. (2024) determined that the Despite the fact that women's football saw exponential growth following the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup, the factors that are responsible for the development of players' personal brands continue to be a mystery to our comprehension of the sport's popularity. The goal of the study was to deliver this information in a way that allows for a cross-national multidimensional comparison and a multi-method exploration of this process based on gender roles and self-presentation.. "As a result, a mixed-method approach was chosen, which included the following: an examination of the content of Instagram posts made by elite players from Brazil and Germany (n = 278); (2) in-depth interviews with players from both national teams (n = 9); and (3) a poll with football fans from both nations (n = 430). From a multi-dimensional and comparative

point of view, the topic addresses the communal and embedded building of a player's personal best (PB) as Studyll as the worldwide branding of WF". This contributes to the ongoing debate that is taking place around the construction of athletes' brands in social media.

Prasad, et al. (2022) examined the comprehensive area of CSR or concentrated on particular CSR activities, such as cause-related marketing. As far as the authors are aware, there has not been a comprehensive evaluation of CSR classifications. A thorough schema for categorising brand CSR mechanisms is presented in the paper, which also synthesises the literature on CSR classification. Most CSR categories, according to the 5W1H research, stem from an all-encompassing business perspective, not a product brand one. The importance of the CSR delivery system, or the process of putting CSR into action, was also highlighted. According to the research, the current classifications of brand CSR mechanisms are conceptually Studyak. In response to these issues, Study offer a ten-category theoretically-informed classification scheme for brand CSR systems, which Study believe adequately and concisely covers all the possible solutions. Study outline the suggested classes and sub-classes, provide instances from the real world, and assess how Studyll the proposed classification holds up. There was an analysis of the study's implications for consumers, practitioners, and theory. Find out Using the proposed classification, researchers have identified other avenues for future investigation.

Barbu, et al. (2022) presented a conceptual framework that facilitates integrated research on corporate social responsibility and the sustainability of sports organisations, highlighting their impacts on overall performance. Study developed a scale to measure the sustainability and social responsibility of sports organisations using the conceptual framework. Study then used this scale to Romanian sports organisations. A total of 280 athletes from the best two leagues in four different sports (basketball, football, handball, and volleyball) Studyre a part of the empirical study. Using quantitative research approaches such as structural equation modelling and artificial neural network analysis, Study conducted a cross-sectional analysis to support the conceptual framework. According to the results of the Romanian study, social responsibility and sustainability are very important for the efficient management of sports groups and greatly affect their overall success. Because they interact with such large audiences, sports organisations should pay special attention to the social and human impact performance criterion of sustainability. Moreover, legal and philanthropic obligations profoundly impact CSR and organisational performance within the realm of CSR responsibilities.

Schvyinck, et al. (2021) stated that the vast majority of professional sports clubs continue to handle their social engagement in an opportunistic manner, despite the fact that there has been a broad expansion of corporate social responsibility activities in the sporting world. It is possible for tactical initiatives to manage corporate social responsibility to deliver discrete and short-term benefits; nevertheless, these attempts are unable to produce long-lasting social and economic repercussions. This study examines the idea of managing corporate social responsibility in sports from an entrepreneurial perspective. More specifically, it explores the shifts towards more strategic approaches to CSR and is predicated on the concept of corporate social entrepreneurship. An in-depth analysis of one Belgian professional football club served as the basis for this research into CSR drivers and their connection to the creation and execution of strategic CSR. The results shoStudyd that having an intrapreneur, a supportive organisation, and, to a lesser degree, stakeholder coalitions Studyre crucial. Yet, difficulties arise in the pursuit of shared value creation and at the level of organisational culture.

Moyo, et al. (2020) examined the influence of environmental factors and stakeholders on sustainable CSR engagement within the South African professional sport industry, acknowledging the distinctive characteristics of professional sport organisations and the scarcity of research in developing market contexts. Primary data for the study was gathered using a qualitative research methodology that is based on interpretivist philosophy. Ten in-depth interviews Studyre conducted with carefully selected key stakeholders from six professional sports organisations in South Africa. The research shoStudyd that professional sports organisations' capacity to engage in long-term CSR initiatives is influenced by a number of internal and external environmental factors. These include the organisations' own goals, finances, employees, and resources, as Studyll as uncontrollable external factors like the state of the economy and public awareness. Primary stakeholder types engaging in CSR programs Studyre identified by the study as targeted communities, non-corporate partnerships, and corporate partnerships.

Through its advocacy for the adoption of more sustainable CSR activities, the study contributes to CSR practices and policies in the South African professional sports business and enhances comprehension of CSR involvement in this sector.

Spencer, R. (2018) noted that “Corporate social responsibility as seen through the anthropology of development lens aims to dissect the assumptions that CSR propels sustainable development and poverty alleviation, as Studyll as the unintended consequences of CSR programs. What could the consequences of the private sector acting as a development agent be? This is the key question that underpins CSR evaluations from this angle. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (are a poStudyrful example of how the public's view of businesses has evolved from seeing them merely as a means to an end—a tool for development—to seeing them as an agent of change. The SDGs stress that private sector capital, resources, and poStudyr may play a pivotal role in reducing poverty, and that governments and multilateral development organisations cannot accomplish the 2030 development agenda on their own. How the CSR apparatus supports the development encounter betStudyen Northern firms working in Southern communities through the use of a sustainable development rhetoric is the focus of this chapter's anthropology of development analysis. Several issues are brought to light in CSR debates from an anthropology of development viewpoint”. These include the contentious relationship betStudyen CSR and sustainable development, the assumed compatibility of the private sector with poverty reduction, and the potential negative outcomes of CSR initiatives, even when implemented with good intentions.

Dutot, et al. (2016) examined the role of CSR as a corporate communication strategy and evaluates public perception of CSR efforts, focussing on the primary research question: How does CSR communication affect stakeholder trust, involvement, and corporate reputation? Although previous study has investigated CSR communication, few studies have methodically analysed the convergence of CSR strategy, digital transformation, and public perception in a swiftly changing corporate landscape. The study enhanced the literature by assessing CSR communication via stakeholder-oriented frameworks, digital engagement tactics, and participatory communication models, providing a thorough and contemporary view on CSR efficacy in corporate communication. The study utilised a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) technique to consolidate existing research on CSR communication, stakeholder perception, and brand reputation. Data Studyre gathered from peer-revieStudyd journal publications, conference proceedings, and industry reports utilising academic databases including Scopus, Studyb of Science, and Google Scholar.

Lauritsen, et al. (2015) investigated the communication preferences of young adult customers about CSR policies, and the implications for managers to successfully convey CSR initiatives to enhance business brand image and reputation. The paper intends to address these difficulties. The study, situated inside the UK supermarket sector, employs a qualitative research methodology and a purposive sample technique, gathering data from 30 young adult consumers in the south-east region of the UK. Focus groups held in person, online questionnaires, online bulletin boards, and in-person interviews Studyre all used to gather data. An evaluation is conducted on research proposals before they are incorporated into a theoretical framework. Consumers' emotional brand value, knowledge, and recall of supermarket CSR programs can be enhanced by interactive CSR communication, according to the research. Some young individuals may develop a more positive view of supermarkets' corporate social responsibility brand image and reputation as a result of the findings.

3. OBJECTIVE

1. To assess the influence of CSR-led grassroots football programs on player development and performance outcomes among women athletes.
2. To analyze the relationship betStudyen CSR communication strategies and public perception of corporate brand image in the context of women's football sponsorship.
3. To identify and categorise the key challenges and enabling factors influencing the sustainability of CSR-based sports branding initiatives for women's football in India.

4. HYPOTHESIS

H01: There is no statistically significant difference in player development and performance outcomes of women athletes before and after participation in CSR-led grassroots football programs.

H1: There is a statistically significant difference in player development and performance outcomes of women athletes before and after participation in CSR-led grassroots football programs.

H02: There is no statistically significant difference in public perception of corporate brand image across different CSR communication strategies in the context of women's football sponsorship.

H2: There is a statistically significant difference in public perception of corporate brand image across different CSR communication strategies in the context of women's football sponsorship”.

5. METHODOLOGY

The character of the research study was quantitative with backing on the qualitative data and being focused on CSR - headed initiatives in women football development in India. The research is not only descriptive but rather comparative, considering the effects of grassroots CSR programs on players development, the connection between the communication strategies used in CSR and the brand perception an individual may have, and the determination of the hindrances and facilitators of a long-term CSR-based sports branding program.

The target audience was female football players, coaches, CSR project leaders and sports marketing professionals directly concerned with CSR-led football projects or sponsorships within at least in the previous two years. The adoption of purposive sampling makes it relevant because there Studyre only respondents with active participation in such initiatives. Structured questionnaire was conducted to interview the sampled respondents and draw data. A total of 250 valid responses was achieved; they Studyre coded (Microsoft Excel). The data Studyre processed and analysed with the SPSS (version 26) statistical tools. The study is likely to provide evidence-based suggestions that can assist the policymakers, corporate sponsors, and sports federations seek to enhance CSR collaboration and establish of sustainable sports branding strategies/plans to support the growth of women football in India.

6. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

S.No	Characteristics	Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage
1	Gender	Female	118	47.2
		Male	132	52.8
2	Age Group	18-24 years	52	20.8
		25-31 years	77	30.8
		32-38 years	48	19.2
		39-45 years	49	19.6
		Above 45	24	9.6
3	Education	Graduate	116	46.4
		Higher Secondary	60	24
		Postgraduate	63	25.2
		Secondary	11	4.4
4	Occupation	Private Sector	56	22.4
		Public Sector	54	21.6
		Self-employed	11	4.4
		Self-employed or Business	40	16
		Student	51	20.4
		Unemployed	38	15.2
5	Income	20,001 - 40,000	34	13.6
		40,001 - 60,000	45	18
		60,001 - 80,000	31	12.4
		Above 80,000	52	20.8
		Less than 20,000	88	35.2

6	Engagement	Actively participate in matches or programs	33	13.2
		No regular engagement	49	19.6
		Occasional via Studyr	50	20
		Regular spectator in stadium	66	26.4
		Regular spectator on TV or online	52	20.8

The demographic nature of the population followed by the 250 respondents yield rich information concerning the population breakdown of participants interested in CSR based sports branding of women football in India. Regarding gender, this sample was fairly balanced as the male respondents study the slight majority (52.8%) in contrast to the female respondents (47.2%). The distribution of age closely showed that the highest figure was the 25-31 years (30.8%), 18-24 years (20.8%) followed by 32-38 years (19.2%), 39-45 years (19.6%), and another small group older than 45 years (9.6%). There study reasonable rates of education with graduates included as the leading group (46.4%), postgraduates (25.2%), higher secondary (24%) and a low percentage of secondary school level respondents (4.4%). In occupation, the different groups had significant representation: employees working in the private sector (22.4 percent), those in the public (21.6 percent), students (20.4 percent) and self-employed/business owners (20.4 percent) and self business combined each made up considerable proportions. Respondents who study unemployed represented 15.2pp. The distribution of the income showed that a portion of more than a third received income less than 20,000 per month (35.2 percent), while the rest of the groups broke out 20,001-40,000 (13.6 percent), 40,001-60,000 (18 percent), 60,001-80,000 (12.4 percent), and above 80,000 (20.8 percent). As to the involvement in the area of women football, being an ordinary fan in the indoor sports arenas was most frequent (26.4%), with regular watching of the games at the TV/internet (20.8%) and being an occasional fan (20%). It is worth noting that 19.6 percent did not have regular activities whereas 13.2 percent study active in matches or programs. This age profile will bring out the diversity and the magnitude of participation among the audience which can provide a great background of CSR communication and brand strategies. The disparity in age group, type of occupation and the income bracket indicates possibilities of variation in terms of targeting at advancing interest and improving brand perception in female football.

On the basis of objective and Hypothesis of the Paper

Objective 1: To assess the influence of CSR-led grassroots football programs on player development and performance outcomes among women athletes.

H01: There is no statistically significant difference in player development and performance outcomes of women athletes before and after participation in CSR-led grassroots football programs.

H1: There is a statistically significant difference in player development and performance outcomes of women athletes before and after participation in CSR-led grassroots football programs.

"Table 2: Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.992 ^a	.984	.984	.56792

a. Predictors: (Constant), CSR-led Grassroots Football Programs (IV)"

A very strong linear correlation between study CSR-based grassroots football initiatives and the outcomes of women athlete's development and performance is depicted in the model summary. R value of .992 implies that there is an immensely large positive relationship between study independent variable (CSR-led grassroots football programs) and dependent variable (outcome of development and performance outcomes of players). The R Square statistics of .984 indicates that 98.4 percent of the change in the development and performance of the players can be described by the programs implemented by CSR and this indicates a high predictive model. Adjusted R Square, which takes into consideration the number of predictors and the size of the sample, is also the same, .984 hence indicating that the model is accurate and reliability. There is also the standard error of estimate (SE) of 0.56792, which is slight, and thus, model predictions are represented closely with the actual values. In general, such

findings are highly indicative of the fact that CSR-driven grassroots football initiatives are instrumental in helping female athletes excel in their performance and growth.

"Table 3: ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4958.428	1	4958.428	15373.416	.000 ^b
	Residual	79.988	248	.323		
	Total	5038.416	249			
a. Dependent Variable: Skill Development and Competitive Performance (DV)						
b. Predictors: (Constant), CSR-led Grassroots Football Programs (IV)						

The ANOVA table indicates that the regression model focusing on the consequences of CSR-led grassroots football programs additional to skill development and a competitive performance is equal to the amount which is statistically significant". This F-value of 15,373.416 is quite large and this suggests that the model explains a large variation in the dependent variable as opposed to the unexplained variation. In addition, the p-value (Sig.) is .000 which is significantly less than the usual level of significance pegged at 0.05. This proves that the regression model is very significant. The regression sum of squares (4958.428) explains nearly the entire variation (5038.416), whereas the residual sum of squares is the minimal one (79.988), which further supports the effectiveness of the established model in predetermining the level of skill enhancement and sporting performance among the female athletes.

"Table 4: Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.141	.193		.732	.465
	CSR-led Grassroots Football Programs (IV)	1.593	.013	.992	123.990	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Skill Development and Competitive Performance (DV)						

The table of coefficients offers precise information regarding the role of the CSR-driven grassroots football schemes in developing the skills and enhancing the competition among female athletes. The unstandardized coefficient (B) of CSR-led programs is 1.593, which indicates that there is an increase in 1 unit in performance and skill development and about 1.593-unit increase is observed in the implementation or engagement in the CSR-led grassroots programs". The standardized coefficient (Beta) is .992 which means that the independent variable has a very strong positive influence on the dependent variable where both variables are considered to be in standardized measures. With the t-value of 123.990 the p-value (.000) is so low that this effect turned out to be significant. Conversely, the value of the intercept (constant) equals .141 and it is not statistically significant (p = .465), which means that the anticipated level of player development and performance in case the CSR-led programs are nonexistent is very low and not significant. To conclude, the coefficients analysis overwhelmingly proved the alternate hypothesis (H1), stating that CSR-Centered grassroots football program has a significant and substantial effect on increasing the skill development and competitive performance of women in sports.

“Objective 2: To analyze the relationship betStudyen CSR communication strategies and public perception of corporate brand image in the context of women’s football sponsorship.

H02: There is no statistically significant difference in public perception of corporate brand image across different CSR communication strategies in the context of women’s football sponsorship.

H2: There is a statistically significant difference in public perception of corporate brand image across different CSR communication strategies in the context of women’s football sponsorship.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.986 ^a	.971	.971	.48653

a. Predictors: (Constant), IV: CSR communication strategies

The summary of the model gives substantial proof that there is a substantial correlation between CSR communication tactics and the way the public perceives corporate brand image within the mold of women football sponsorship. The coefficient of determination or the R value of 0.986 reveals a very strong positive relationship, which means that variation in CSR communication strategies is highly correlated with variation in the public perception. The indication of the R Square value (.971) implies that the CSR communication strategies that the organization employed explain 97.1 percent of variance in the corporation brand-image perception held by the people. This proves a very efficient model that has a strong explanatory power. The Adjusted R Square also does not change and is equal to .971, which shows the stability of the model despite its number of predictors. Also, the standard error of the estimate (0.48653) is rather small, so it could be said that the model is quite accurate and the results correspond with the real figures. Overall, these findings indicate that CSR communications plans are an important factor defining public image of a brand of the company within the context of women football sponsorship, in favor of refuting the null hypothesis (H02) and supporting alternative hypothesis (H2) should it be proven significant during other testing.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1994.111	1	1994.111	8424.152	.000 ^b
	Residual	58.705	248	.237		
	Total	2052.816	249			

a. Dependent Variable: DV: Public perception of corporate brand image
 b. Predictors: (Constant), IV: CSR communication strategies

As the ANOVA table shows, the regression model that measures the connection between CSR communications strategies and the perception of the corporate brand image in relation to the sponsorship of women football is extremely statistically significant. The F-value obtained is 8424.152, which is very large implying that the model explains a high level of variance in the dependent variable (public perception) than the unexplained variance. Along with this, the p-value (Sig.) is .000, and this is significantly lower than the normal alpha value of 0.05, which means the effect achieved is statistically important. The regression sum of squares is 1994.111 out of the total sum of squares (2052.816), which indicates that the model explains the enormous percentage of variation in perception by the population. The residual sum of squares is merely 58.705, this also is evidence to the robust predictability of the model. To sum up, ANOVA analysis lends much support to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H02) and proves that CSR communication strategies significantly affect the way the public perceives the brand image of a company when it comes to the issue of women football sponsorship.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.276	.165		1.673	.096
	IV: CSR communication strategies	.782	.009	.986	91.783	.000

a. Dependent Variable: DV: Public perception of corporate brand image

The coefficients table shows definite evidence of the overwhelming influence that CSR communication strategies can have on the corporate brand image perception by the population of women football sponsorship case. The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.782 means that when the effective CSR communication strategies will increase

by a unit, the public perception of the corporate brand image will increase by 0.782. This denotes a huge positive correlation. The standardised coefficient (Beta) indicates extreme strong effect of CSR communication strategies on the perception of the general population in event both variables are computed in standardised units, here, it shows value of 0.986. The value of t equals 91.783 is extremely positive, and the related p -value is equal to 0.000, which supports the fact that this effect is extremely significant. This implies that the relationship cannot be attributed to chance, and the CSR communication practices are a dominant contributor to the opinion of the populations. On the contrary, a coefficient of the intercept (constant) is 0.276, hoStudyver, it is not statistically significant ($p = .096$), which indicates that the initial stage of receiving the information by citizens taken without considering the role of the CSR communication strategies does not have any role to play. Overall, the analysis of coefficients demonstrates that there are great statistical grounds to accept the alternative hypothesis (H_2) and reject the null hypothesis (H_0), and it can be concluded that CSR communication strategies have a strong and significant impact on the formation of perception of brand image of a company in regard to women football sponsorship.

Objective 3: To identify and categorise the key challenges and enabling factors influencing the sustainability of CSR-based sports branding initiatives for women's football in India

The third objective of the study focuses on identifying and categorising the key challenges and enabling factors influencing the sustainability of CSR-based sports branding initiatives for women's football in India. This objective adopts a descriptive research design, relying on summarising and interpreting participants' responses without the application of inferential statistical tests. Data will be gathered through structured questions that invite respondents to indicate the presence or absence of specific challenges and enabling factors, alongside ranking or rating their relative importance. The challenges under consideration may include issues such as limited media coverage, inadequate long-term funding, lack of grassroots infrastructure, low public awareness, and gender bias within sports ecosystems. Enabling factors may involve strong institutional partnerships, consistent CSR funding, community engagement, targeted marketing campaigns, and supportive government policies. Responses will be analysed using frequencies and percentages to indicate the prevalence of each factor among participants, while thematic grouping will allow for a structured categorisation of related issues. By mapping out both barriers and facilitators, the study aims to produce a clear visual and narrative representation of the CSR landscape surrounding women's football branding in India. This will offer stakeholders—such as corporate sponsors, sports federations, and policymakers—a concise overview of where interventions are most urgently needed and where existing strengths can be leveraged. Ultimately, the descriptive findings from this objective will complement the relational analyses from earlier objectives, providing a holistic understanding of the environment in which CSR-driven sports branding operates.

7. DISCUSSION

The results of the present study demonstrate the criticality of the CSR-initiated grassroots football initiative in player growth and competitive practice among female athletes in India. The very high correlations and predictive capabilities observed in the regression models are evidence that the CSR interventions being applied in the context of targeted interventions are directly linked to the corresponding development of measurable skills and game scores. In an analogous manner, the source of vast impact on the perception of corporate brand image by the population became CSR communication strategies, which testifies to the need to be consistent, strategic, and stakeholder-centered in the message in sport sponsorship. The demographic study also demonstrates a mixed profile of the number of participants regarding age, occupation, and income meaning that there exist a variety of ways to engage them in specific approaches. These findings are consistent with the previous literature claiming that CSR in sport and the effects of its adoption, in case it is carried out based on the strategy of institutional partnership, can potentially lead to both social impact and enhanced brand equity. The results indicate the importance of not only funding but also support via policies and the community to guarantee long-term sustainability of the CSR-based sports branding applicable to women football.

8. CONCLUSION

The conclusion that the study comes to is that initiatives with the focus on CSR, strategically planned and offered by institutional partnership, produce the marked and favorable effect on the development of women football in

India as Studyl as the corporate brand image. The findings undoubtedly prove that grassroots initiatives develop skills and evolve performance of players, whereas the thoughtfully formulated CSR communication plans reinforce the perception of the sponsoring brands in communities. Because the demographics of the respondents are diverse, suggesting the possibility of such engagement will be broad-based, the value of inclusive and targeted CSR interventions may be observed. Moreover, the findings concerning the main obstacles and facilitating factors are practical information that policymakers, federations, and even corporate sponsors can consider in the process of making policies, establishing relations, and reaching agreements. These barriers include the lack of media coverage, inconsistent funding which the stakeholders will need to tackle and strengths including the involvement of the community and good partnerships which they will need to leverage upon to make the development of women football sustainable. Finally, CSR in sports stands out as an effective vehicle that could be used to realize both the social and business goals so long as it is supported by sustained dedication and strategic synergy.

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