

Executive Summary

Ceylon Biscuits Limited (CBL) is a popular Sri Lankan food brand with the presence even in overseas markets. CBL began its journey in 1939 as a small scale biscuits manufacturer. From the inception up to present, the company has grown tremendously expanding their business activities in to multiple food categories. CBL has a high orientation towards social responsible business activities and have won several accolades due to their commitment towards the society. The unique philosophy of CBL on social responsibility stems from the premise that all such activities should be implemented with the engagement of the beneficiaries, and the underlying idea is that “nothing is free”. Under corporate social responsibility, they have implemented several flagship initiatives which are aimed at empowering different segments of the society that deserve support. Due to the uniqueness of CBL’s Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy, some of their projects can be identified as “Social Businesses”. Social businesses are a sort of business which have hybrid forms of aims namely serving a societal need while self-sustaining the business activity.

The present study is focused on one such social business implemented by CBL to empower intellectually disabled individuals. Under that project, Intellectually Disabled Individuals (IDIs) have been given the opportunity to be employed in the formal manufacturing sector. “HOPE” Cookies comes in to the market as a product which is manufactured by these IDIs. The purpose of the present case study was to understand the role of social businesses in enhancing the quality of life (QoL) of IDIs. HOPE Cookies by CBL fulfills the need of empowering IDIs and operates as a self-sustaining business.

The present case study was conducted as a qualitative study where majority of the primary data were collected through in depth interviews and focus group discussions. Through the case study it was identified that the managerial support, CSR philosophy of the company and the supported employment have been instrumental in driving this social business, which has managed to achieve both its purposes; being a self-sufficient business and enhancing the QoL of IDIs. Based on the finding of the study it was recommended that Sahan Sevana should incorporate the QoL framework as a planning tool to further enhance QoL outcomes of business. It was also recommended to strengthen the marketing activities at Sahan Sevana to get increased attention from the market.