

Corporate Social Responsibility by Kagera Sugar Limited: Missenyi Sugarcane Growers Reflection

Catherine Frank Kemikimba, Kamfipo Gidion Mwakitalu



Abstract: *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been touted as instrumental in addressing misunderstandings within organisations and as a key tool for building relationships. Various businesses invest more resources in CSR programmes for economic gain, including Kagera Sugar Limited (KSL). Precisely, this paper explored sugarcane growers' perceptions of KSL's CSR activities, with a specific focus on Missenyi district. The study was grounded in Stakeholder and Social Capital Theories, and its findings aligned with the theories, especially in clarifying the company's responsibility to return something to the community it serves. The study adopted a mixed-methods approach to data collection, using surveys, focus group discussions, and in-depth interviews. This resulted in a combination of qualitative and quantitative data from sugarcane growers across four Missenyi wards: Kassambya, Kyaka, Nsunga, and Mutukula. Also, the study used the same approach to collect data from 21 AMCOS members and 5 top management members. The findings revealed that although the company (KSL) has helped improve the economic and social lives of people in surrounding communities, it has failed to address environmental issues in the area fairly. Again, the other findings indicated that the inconsistency in ecological matters in Nsunga ward differed from what has been done in different places, where feedback was positive. This gap undermines the efforts CSR's goodwill and trust are meant to foster in the community. However, many communities are pointing fingers at companies, urging them to rethink their business growth while truly addressing social, economic, and environmental sustainability strategies for the benefit of stakeholders. Therefore, the study concludes that the needs and interests of all stakeholders were not well considered. Thus, if KSL wants to gain stakeholders' goodwill and trust, it needs to make its CSR activities clear.*

Keywords: *Corporate Social Responsibility, Kagera Sugar Limited, Stakeholder Theory, Sugarcane Growers, Trust.*

Nomenclature:

AMCOS: Agricultural Marketing Co-operative Societies
CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility
CSV: Creating Shared Value
ILO: International Labour Organization
KSL: Kagera Sugar Limited
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization
SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals
ST: Stakeholders Theory
UN: United Nations

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WHO: Health Organization

I. INTRODUCTION

In East Africa, sugarcane farming is attributed to the entrepreneurial skills of Indian-Asians in Tanzania and Uganda. Currently, 130 countries worldwide produce sugar, and by 2019, 170 million tons were produced from sugarcane and sugar beets. Globally, India and Brazil are the leading sugar producers [22]. The mode of sugarcane farming varies worldwide; most sugar mills rely on sugarcane from their own land or from sugarcane growers known as sugarcane outgrowers. In East Africa and Tanzania in particular, sugar factories, including Kagera Sugar Limited (KSL), sign contracts with sugarcane growers through Agricultural Marketing Co-operative Societies (AMCOS). The primary responsibility of business units is the protection of their stakeholders' interests over making a sensible profit on their investments [10]. In this technological era, businesses are obliged to engage in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities for economic and practical reasons, aiming to raise the value they create for shareholders to ever higher levels [14]. Has been revealed that CSR advantages are not only for society but also support stakeholder-firm relationships, advocacy behaviour, and the building of corporate image.

Although KSL production processes are human-based, they pose risks such as machine hazards, physical, chemical, and biological hazards, and fire and explosion hazards. These can have serious consequences, including environmental disasters for nearby community members, and can harm their best interests if not well managed. Business and society depend on each other, as society is affected by business and vice versa [11], [20]. This mutual interdependence and relationship have resulted in economic, environmental, legal, and ethical responsibilities, referred to as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The growth of the CSR concept has been documented in numerous studies worldwide [14], [26]. However, the KSL's existence offers rich insights into the formation of the social, economic, environmental, and political lifecycle for farmers, merchants, and labourers in the Missenyi area. Thus, the study assesses the sugarcane growers' perceptions of the business-society relationship with KSL in the area of CSR initiatives executed for goodwill and relationship building. In many societies, trust is in crisis, and it has generally declined across vital institutions such as government, business, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and the media [15]. Building trust has always been more challenging for organisations than ever before, thereby endangering societal success. Corporate Social Responsibility



(CSR) has been touted as instrumental in addressing misunderstandings within organisations and in building relationships. KSL, like any other firm, spends money constantly on CSR programmes in support of local communities, devoting its expertise to environmental charities, and employees' hearts. However, it is not known whether these programmes are fruitful and can effectively communicate and/or inform the community about meaningful CSR in the polity, thereby underscoring the purpose of the study at hand.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Stakeholders Theory (ST) by [1] due to its extended power in clarifying how CSR enlightens itself within companies, and its relevance in articulating the elements of morals and values to all stakeholders involved in the business [3]. Define stakeholders as individuals, groups, or organisations who are interested in or affected by an organisation's activities. These may include suppliers, employees, investors, customers, regulators, community members, and advocacy groups. Stakeholder theory is considered a necessary part of CSR activities. It is a set of plans and practices associated with stakeholders, values, and agreement with legal requirements, environmental and community respect, and the company's promise to offer sustainable community growth [1].

Stakeholder theory states that a company is not an entity that only operates for its own interests, but it must provide benefits for its stakeholders [16]. The theory calls for those impacted by the firm's operation and business goals. ST advocates that the needs of shareholders cannot be met without sustaining, to a reasonable level, the needs of other stakeholders like clients, governing authorities, local communities, environmentalists, etc. [21], [15]. The theory shows that CSR is a social obligation for any business in a given community; thus, it is worth recognising its relevance in the context of Kagera Sugar Limited and sugarcane growers, as the latter supply the raw material (sugarcane).

On the other hand, ST was supported by social capital theory, which highlights the importance and influence of social networks and relations across both KSL stakeholders and professional domains. It stresses the worth of trust, support, and norms for mutual benefits. Social capital posits that through structures of social institutions, such as trust, norms, and networks, society can secure its effectiveness by simplifying harmonised actions [5]. Suitably admits the relevance of social relations as a vital resource in studying trust, as a tool for building a positive relationship to create social resources, particularly when both parties, KSL and the community, are held accountable to each other to achieve economic and social goals.

The stated description is evidently extended by many other scholars who view social capital as a potential resource for building social relationships. Such relationships facilitate actions and thereby create value. The main ground behind this position is that fair treatment of stakeholders develops better firm routine, and social capital is there for bonding and connecting ties and establishing the firm's social material [9]. Hence, on this basis, relationships are regarded

as the most serious scope of social capital [21]. Moreover, the two theories are relevant to the study, as they specify who matters, and the other explains why and how the relationships matter. The advocates of 'relationships' as the crucial factor in defining social capital praise Ha and Nguyen's view of social capital as a resource base that firms accumulate by effectively managing stakeholders. Besides, firms rich in social capital are well placed to gain stakeholders' care during crises, entice reliable customers, and foster advanced businesses [9].

B. The Interdependence of Corporate Social Responsibility, Trust, and Stakeholders

Academics provide several descriptions of CSR [24]. For instance, views CSR as a shared attitude and response to social and environmental issues that go beyond economic and legal actions. At the same time, [2] includes the financial and legal requirements as part of CSR. [26], On their side, put management at the base of CSR. All these scholars agree that a business organisation's duty extends beyond financial gains and compliance with the law [25]. Said that CSR arises where the law ends. [1] justify that CSR events lead to the best working relationships among organisations, stakeholders, and community networks. They further add that, through CSR, the community can find significant information and solutions in times of difficulty. Thus, goodwill between organisations and communities through CSR programmes is an effective and accurate way to nurture relationships.

Trust on its side is a state of optimistic expectations of the behaviours of another [15]. It reduces complexity, and it is a social mechanism capable of acting in dependence and uncertainty conditions [13]. Trust is also vital in resourceful areas by setting rational and ethical expectation plans, as it allows direction and support, which would not happen in its absence. However, trust is significant in supporting businesses by enabling stakeholders to share voluntarily [5]. Culture is a key aspect in trust-based relations. Hence, trust manipulation is a concept that is socially constructed. The emphasis here is on the importance of accepting cultural contexts in CSR and relationship experiences.

Trust is widely recognised as critically important to the organisation's viability and success [15]. Stress that there is nothing to the newspaper business except ink, paper, and trust. However, the value of trust varies based on the type of relationship organisations have with their stakeholders [5]. in the lens of the trust barometer, it is argued that Organisations with higher trust have longer-lasting relationships with their stakeholders. Various scholars, such as [26] and [18], validate this argument by using different experiences and expectations regarding CSR and trust in their contexts. CSR, however, expresses community values, empowers host communities, and builds long-term capacity.

In the words of [15], trust and relationships are clear routes to strategic requirements and the key measures of values that enable relationships between firms (KSL in this case) and their business stakeholders. Highlighting the point, [17] points out that organisations need to strive for quality and integrity, a belief in fairness and justice, and a



commitment to doing the right thing as dimensions that encompass trust and move at the best speed. With technological expansion, [7] maintain that businesses and their executives are increasingly attracted to relationship- and trust-building with their stakeholders to grow and compete more effectively. Trust is a significant factor in economic exchanges in networks and relationship creation with firms, both at the domestic and international levels [9]. Found that trust is at the centre of all effective shared relationships for organisational excellence [20]. Cements that CSR reduces complexity and is considered a social mechanism for cooperation that would not occur in the absence of trust. Yet, the quest for social capital and the type of trust built through CSR practices by Kagera Sugar Limited in Missenyi are largely unknown in the literature, a gap this study aimed to address.

C. Stakeholders' Relationship

Many people can be stakeholders in organisations, but the most significant stakeholders are those groups or individuals who can affect the organisation's success in achieving its goals. The most common groups are managers, employees, customers, investors, suppliers, government, and the local community. Others include the environment, which can also be affected by organisational operations. The primary duty of business enterprises is to protect their shareholders' welfare by providing normal returns on their investments. Yet, all mentioned groups need to work well together for the betterment of the business; hence, stakeholder relationships.

This relationship is evident in [17] clarifications of CSR, arguing that a socially responsible firm is one whose managerial staff balances and diversifies interests. Instead of only striving for higher incomes for its owners, an accountable enterprise also reflects the interests of employees, suppliers, dealers, local communities, and the nation. Yet [20] emphasized that maximizing investors' wealth is the sole obligation of a business organisation, and [12] stressed taking a complete process in managing relationships. However, CSR is believed by many to be a way of balancing stakeholders' interests; hence, it is noted and observed in the literature as a means of maintaining good relationships.

III. METHODOLOGY

To achieve the study's objective, a case study design was used. According to [4], a case study design involves an in-depth study of a small set of cases, regarding a wide-range investigation of a single unit of study, like a person, family, group, community, institution, or a small number of subjects studied intensively. The study's population included community members from Kassambya, Nsunga, Kyaka, and Mutukula wards engaging in sugarcane growing, AMCOS leaders, and KSL management. The authors go on to describe the population as a set of individuals, cases, or objects with common observable characteristics. This selection was based on the researcher's desire to engage a population with rich information needed to strengthen the study. Hence, the selected one had the merits. In the qualitative approach, the sample size was primarily determined by fieldwork. A proper sample for a qualitative study is one that effectively answers the research questions

[9]. Thus, the sample size for this study was 77 respondents, determined by data saturation in response to the posed questions. The researcher managed to engage 15 sugarcane growers from Kassambya ward, 12 from Nsunga ward, 14 from Kyaka ward, and 10 from Mutukula ward. Further, 21 came from three Agricultural Marketing Cooperative Societies (AMCOS), and five respondents were from KSL management. In this case, convenient and purposive sampling were employed to select the key informants for the study. Convenience sampling involved selecting respondents based on their availability.

In data collection, focus group discussions were conducted as small-group interviews, with the researcher facilitating the discussion alongside AMCOS representatives. This method was relevant because it allowed the researcher to get the views and experiences of the respondents on CSR [4]. Three groups were formed, consisting of six to eight respondents from the three AMCOS. Additionally, a survey was conducted with key sugarcane growers to complement the qualitative analysis of interviews and capture a range of views. The validity and reliability of the findings were enhanced through triangulation of multiple data sources. That is, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys to allow a complete understanding of the sugarcane growers' perceptions on the business-society relationship with KSL on CSR initiatives executed for goodwill and relationship building. Besides, every methodology has its limits [9]. This being the case, to mitigate potential limitations, the use of evidence from different categories and the observation of the dry and rainy seasons to control the data obtained improved the trustworthiness of this study's findings.

The study applied thematic and descriptive analysis to provide general feelings among stakeholders regarding CSR, trust, and stakeholder relationships [8]. Define thematic analysis as a process for encoding qualitative information. The data obtained through interviews with sugarcane growers, surveys, and focus group discussions with AMCOS representatives were descriptively and manually analysed, with firm reliance on quotes. Since qualitative research is interpretative in nature, the researcher assessed the data from audio recordings, which were later transcribed, typed, and coded by hand, and came up with more relevant main and sub-themes reflecting the study objective, thus bringing their own perspectives into understanding to ensure that the data were adequately focused and detailed [4]. In line with [17], transcriptions were prudently read over sensibly for a clear establishment of meaningful ideas, and the findings were mainly presented in narrative form. It was at this stage that the similarities, contradictions, variations, and new concepts in this work were coded into categories. However, the researcher also learned that analysing data using the thematic method can be very messy and complex. In addition, codes A, B, C, D, and E were assigned to sugarcane growers, corresponding to grower numbers 1-5, except for the titles of KSL officials and AMCOS leaders.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Demographic Information of the Respondents

This part presented the study's results from sugarcane growers in Missenyi district, assessing the company's responsibility for issues affecting local communities. The study examined sugarcane growers' perceptions of CSR, trust, and stakeholders' engagement. The findings from interviews indicated that sugarcane growers from Kassambya, Kyaka, Nsunga, and Mutukula wards were predominantly male, aged 36 to 70 years. This age group was involved based on their experience in sugarcane growing, with most having engaged in the activity for 1-20 years. This demographic information about the participants was vital to include, underscoring the importance of including these individuals in the study to understand their perceptions of CSR. The presence of middle-aged respondents suggests that the maturity level of this age group, their stability in sugarcane production, and their insights into CSR activities were considered valid criteria for their inclusion in this study. Further, the study showed a gender imbalance, with only eight female respondents, suggesting dominance of traditional factors in the region's agricultural and land ownership. In this part of Tanzania, studies indicate that men are more likely than women to participate in sugarcane cultivation, as women rarely own land. In Kagera, land ownership is traditionally passed from man to man, limiting women's access to land and their involvement in high-capital activities such as sugarcane farming.

Moreover, the need for excessive human labour and long working hours in sugarcane growing demands intensive supervision of land preparation, planting, weeding, and harvesting, each of which discourages women's participation. Also, the high financial costs further restrict women's engagement, limiting balanced gender representation. The dominance of male respondents in the study's sample suggests that the company's business may skew its CSR activities toward men's perceptions, thereby distorting the general understanding of community needs and benefits. The viewpoints of women participants on CSR activities were critical because they are part of the community and can contribute to community unity and family welfare. The attributes of sugarcane growers affect their trust in corporate companies and the extent to which they relate to one another. Mostly, experienced and older sugarcane growers appreciate the relationships they have with them. Older, experienced growers often contribute to CSR initiatives, safeguarding the long-term viability of their livelihoods, whereas younger growers focus on issues related to education and new technological advancements.

Studying the relationships among stakeholders, CSR, and trust, it was found that respondents' demographic information was necessary to inform the design of the CSR strategy. It is valuable to build on the initiatives of sugarcane growers and their expectations to mutually build trust and enhance beneficial relationships among them, thereby improving long-term, sustainable business practices. Thus, given the demographic information of participants in Missenyi district, recognising the demographic features of sugarcane growers underscores the need for a more serious

and focused CSR programme. It is also helpful in understanding the specific development policies that address immediate community needs, while aligning with long-term sustainable sugarcane farming and the nearby communities. In this study, therefore, the perception of sugarcane growers on CSR is vital in driving the progress of corporate growers' perception of CSR, which is thus pivotal in demanding the success of corporate creativity while sustaining trust between corporate entities and other stakeholders.

B. Sugarcane Growers' Knowledge Towards Corporate Social Responsibility Practice

The concept of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has changed over time. It remains essentially a self-regulatory model that enables companies to operate while paying attention to accountability and working responsibly towards themselves and other stakeholders. CSR encourages companies to consider the social, economic, and environmental impacts of their daily operations. For sugarcane growers, having a clear picture of what CSR means is essential to the long-term development of the sugarcane sector and to reflecting multiple stakeholder perspectives.

CSR awareness among sugarcane growers in Nsunga ward varied among respondents. Some study participants demonstrated limited understanding of CSR practices. There are those whose interpretation of CSR involves returning what you have extracted to the society, reflecting a shared approach, expressed by notions like 'Being worried for the community around' (Sugarcane grower A, Kassambya) and "It is being generous to the society members on the business side" (Sugarcane grower B, Kassambya). Such views are in line with the broader definition of CSR as mixing social issues and environmental concerns willingly into business practices [23], such that business activities incorporate societal concerns into companies' routine. CSR understanding takes a direction of promoting positive community inclusion while emphasising the social dimensions of CSR, conforming to the value of social inclusion hand in hand with economic growth and environmental protection [21]. Some respondents further noted that "The presence of KSL in the area has been the reason for their friendly social and economic welfare" (Sugarcane growers A, B, C, Kyaka, Kassambya, and Mutukula), underlining their perceived community impact of CSR.

The sugarcane growers emphasise the society's well-being, noting that the community values the services provided and seeks to build relationships through corporate services. This reflects a view of stakeholders' CSR approach, with a central focus on building trust and creating relationships. Furthermore, collective obligation for the community good is clear in statements such as the guarantee of market access for sugarcane sales and support for the stabilisation of the local economy (all but one respondent); "Conducive social and economic services of the community" (Sugarcane grower B, D, Kyaka). This approach is in line with the combined CSR models, which propose that willing corporate performance can modernly



enhance governance shortcomings [16].

In Nsunga, sugarcane growers offered a range of interpretations of CSR, reflecting the past limited awareness of CSR compared to its current potential to enhance community relations. Assertions such as “Creating, building, and upholding the relationship and better job conditions and environment of business with people” emphasise the link between CSR and building trust. The sector’s slow transformation towards sustainable practices, such as environmental and social engagement, demonstrates an increasing recognition of CSR’s role in facilitating stakeholder relationships.

Sugarcane growers’ responses provided a range of CSR understanding. Some openly noted a limited experience, such as “I do not know much about it” (Sugarcane grower A, Mutukula), indicating a shallow awareness gap which is common in developing countries [26]. Others demonstrate understanding, such as seeing CSR as “giving back approach to the community it serves” (Sugarcane grower B Kyaka) and “constructive inclusion intending to create a friendly environment with the people around” (Sugarcane grower C, Kyaka), consistent with views that CSR involves charitable donations outside lawful responsibilities [11]. Importance of community wellbeing and creation of relationship (Sugarcane grower numbers C, D, and F, Nsunga) matches with the stakeholder theory, which suggests that businesses should create value for all stakeholders in the community [5]. Respondents from Kassambya likewise explained CSR as being “concerned about the community around” and “being generous to the community on the business side” (Sugarcane growers A and B, Kassambya). Such visions suggest that sugarcane growers perceive CSR as promoting goodwill and fostering the local community’s trust in the business. While understanding of CSR varies among respondents, some sugarcane growers appreciated the CSR activities that have built ties with their communities. This underlines the need for planned educational approaches to address knowledge gaps and ensure that CSR activities are applicable and operational.

Growers also indicate specific CSR innovations by KSL. These include water provision, health services, schools, and infrastructure maintenance. Sayings such as “KSL has to ensure availability of water to the nearby community” (Sugarcane grower A, Kassambya). This means that community expectations for corporate support of basic needs align with philanthropic dimensions of CSR [6]. Historical experience, like community engagement, health, education services, and infrastructure facilities since the 1990s (Sugarcane growers A, B, C, D, Nsunga), demonstrates long-standing obligations, stressing that CSR is an ongoing process of building relationships [2].

Interpretations of KSL’s CSR activities, such as free health services, building schools and road maintenance, help for the orphans (Sugarcane grower A, Kassambya), and unstoppable support during harvesting activities, support in hazards like fire and many other unexpected occurrences (Sugarcane grower C, Kassambya), disclose full CSR efforts. These initiatives polish economic connections, creating the realm of social capital through trust and mutual benefit, revealing opinions on the role of social networks in

societal operations [13]. Generally, sugarcane growers’ appreciation of CSR underscores its value not just as a business plan but also as an instrument for promoting corporate responsibility, mutual respect, and community well-being.

C. Kagera Sugar Limited: Appropriate Timing of Corporate Social Responsibility Practice

Mastering CSR activities at the right time is an important aspect, especially in agriculture, where seasonal changes affect operations and community needs. Sugarcane growers find that CSR activities can fill such gaps when agricultural activities are affected by seasonal variations. Challenges like flooding and poor roads are most severe in most of these farming areas. For example, growers noted, “KSL created favourable drainage systems to allow easy passage of water in plantations during heavy rains, thus making it a credit to the company for providing such service (Sugarcane grower A, Kyaka). This supports the idea that CSR is highly effective when it aligns with local context and meets the community’s immediate needs.

As presented by [19], the lawfulness of a company’s CSR contributions depends on how well they are in line with the stakeholders’ expectations and needs. One grower proposed that “KSL has to carry out CSR activities in rainy seasons by providing graders and cars with eight tyres to facilitate cane raiders with harvesting duties” (Sugarcane grower B, Kyaka), underscoring the need for interventions that directly address the crucial challenges farmers face. This matches with planned CSR, where social and environmental issues are put together into business processes to support longstanding operations [7]. Equally, the statement that “both sunny and wet seasons are suitable for KSL to conduct CSR” (Sugarcane grower D, Mutukula) indicates year-round engagement, emphasising the need for repeated, rather than periodic CSR efforts.

This thinking is supported by [12], who emphasise that companies must control their properties and capabilities to respond to the environmental variations. The sugarcane growers’ responses showed clear interest in activities sensitive to seasonal challenges. Infrastructure-related difficulties, especially during rainy seasons, require timely interventions. This implies that by aligning its CSR projects with these seasonal needs, KSL can enhance the role of its initiatives, promote trust with stakeholders, and contribute to both operational and community welfare.

The company’s response to natural disasters and crises is a serious CSR decision. Sugarcane growers assume that KSL is capable of conducting CSR upon request from nearby community members (Sugarcane grower B, Nsunga). Another assertion by the sugarcane growers is that KSL should conduct CSR as soon as it is demanded by the public members, who, in a real sense, are stakeholders (Sugarcane grower C, Mutukula). This proposes that the community expects KSL to be a corporate entity that is always alert to societal distress, not just to business.

In summary, CSR activities should be carried out promptly before things get worse. Sugarcane growers respect and value the company’s involvement during hard times



to rescue the community, especially during seasonal disasters and emergencies. This can be in the form of timely delivery of support. In fact, KSL demonstrates its obligation to the community, builds trust, and reinforces stakeholder relationships, thereby enhancing its reputation and ensuring its long-term operations.

D. Sugarcane Growers' Perceptions of Kagera Sugar Limited's Involvement in Corporate Social Responsibility

Sugarcane growers view KSL's participation in CSR within the educational sector as a cooperative effort that benefits both the company and the community. Growers identify their role in supporting school leadership to ensure that CSR involvement achieves its intended outcomes. For example, one grower stated, "KSL constructed a school for our children; therefore, as a community member, I have a responsibility of working together with the school leadership to protect the school buildings so that the built facilities help in reducing school truancy" (Sugarcane grower A, Nsunga). These joint efforts of the community and the company align with stakeholder theory, which asserts that CSR success depends on the active participation of stakeholders, not only the company. Further, the stakeholder theory relates to this cooperative attitude when it emphasises that the success of CSR initiatives depends on the active involvement of all stakeholders, not just the company [11].

The growers' thinking also aligns with the social capital theory, which proposes that companies and communities work together to address the needs of society while providing opportunities for economic gains [5]. In line with this assertion, [21] insists that the created networks increase the community's readiness to assist the company to reach its goals, which is a direct underpinning of stakeholder theory's interactive judgement. A strong bond can be created when there is a company that engages local communities through various participatory initiatives for social capital and bridging connections among groups [13]. CSR is regarded not only as providing physical facilities but also as promoting environments which are appropriate to learning and development. According to [25], public value emerges when there are strategic partnerships, including collaborations between business and community members. The sugarcane growers' opinions suggest recognition of the shared benefits and responsibilities inherent in such CSR engagements, demonstrating a commitment to sustainable development for the wider community.

The need for more participatory CSR planning and implementation reflects a shift from a passive recipient role to a more active stakeholder role. Growers showed levels of involvement ranging from providing KSL with reasonable cooperation, ensuring the safety of its CSR operations (Sugarcane grower B, Kassambya), to "safeguarding CSR programmes allocated in my area" (Sugarcane grower C, Kyaka). This establishes a sense of ownership, while aligning with direct involvement CSR approaches promoted by [17], which encourages stakeholders to contribute to decisions regarding CSR activities actively.

The idea of a "begging syndrome" (Sugarcane grower D, Mutukula) highlights a potential power imbalance and a dependency dynamic that may arise when CSR is not a

collective effort. This is contrary to the empowerment approach suggested by [3], arguing for a more reasonable stakeholder relationship where the beneficiaries of CSR activities have a say in their plan and execution. The growers' emphasis on personal benefit from CSR activities, as stated by Sugarcane grower D, Nsunga, underscores the importance of CSR initiatives being relevant and beneficial to the stakeholders' immediate context. This is supported by the resource-based view of the firm, which posits that CSR should leverage a company's unique resources to create value for both the company and its stakeholders [11].

In conclusion, sugarcane growers expect KSL to implement CSR in a more participatory and facilitative manner. KSL can facilitate a strong partnership by actively involving growers from planning and execution through to enhance the effectiveness of CSR interventions, strengthen trust and relationships with stakeholders, and ensure long-term sustainability and community benefit.

E. Views on Kagera Sugar Limited's Fulfilment of Assignments through Corporate Social Responsibility and the Community's Expectations

The outlook of sugarcane growers toward Kagera Sugar Limited (KSL) reveals a clear understanding of the company's contributions to local infrastructure, employment, and community welfare. Sugarcane growers reported issues with water provision and sewage management, requesting that KSL provide water services to nearby community members and assist with sewage management. Growers' outlooks correspond to CSR values, emphasising that companies should not only be limited to economic gain but also help in handling societal challenges, supporting sustainable community growth [16].

Access to clean water is a fundamental human right and essential to the community's well-being. Sugarcane growers in Missenyi district had also raised their interest in this issue. They further argued that throughout the rainy season, KSL's irrigation practices led to environmental risks, highlighting the importance of handling environmental effects [10]. KSL's commitment to addressing infrastructure challenges strengthens its relationship with surrounding communities, ensuring the smooth operation of its projects.

Providing several employment opportunities is a potential role for KSL's CSR for nearby community members. The interviewed sugarcane growers in Missenyi lamented the overall employment process at KSL. They argued that although there were many youths at Mutukula, Kabwoba, Bunazi, Bubaale, and Gabulanga, outsiders from Rwanda and Burundi were given priority for jobs at KSL. This favouritism disconnects CSR objectives from community prospects, thereby weakening the trust and relationship between KSL and community members. Various researchers contend that active CSR should align with core business plans and policies, as well as with local human resource development [24]. Including resident participants in planning and implementing CSR significantly enhances its benefits and is considered community-based CSR [13]. Providing jobs to nearby residents promotes social trust and enhances human capital development through training



and development programmes [23]. The demand for training programmes within the KSL is strengthened by the Social Capital Theory, which emphasises the importance of education as a potential aspect of the community's social-economic development, enhancing local people's employability and possibly reducing dependence on outside labour [24].

The improvement of infrastructure and the provision of varied services play a critical role in the communities where CSR is actually implemented. Sugarcane growers requested that roads be repaired, highlighting the intimidating effects of loamy soils and the poor condition of the roads available from Kagera 'A' to Ngando. The presence of maintained infrastructures replicates CSR values and sustainable development goals [24]. Similarly, the provided KSLs aid the health and education sectors, i.e., free health services and school funding, which are highly cherished. Equally, KSL's CSR has donated to both the physical and social aspects of community members' lives. However, this twofold concentration of community dependence on KSL services highlights the company's continuing concern to sustain and develop them, consolidating trust and rightfulness resonated in the literature, where the CSR's role of enhancing community development is understood as an essential element to building trust and long-term stakeholders' relationships [10].

Additionally, guaranteeing the market for selling sugarcane, as exposed by grower C from Kassambya, has unquestionably indicated the economic advantages expected by sugarcane growers from KSL's CSR. This prospect is based on the fact that the availability of an unchanging and fair market is central for the growers' economic growth, corresponding to the stakeholder's theory, which insists on the benefits of all parties involved in the business [3]. Despite all this, the growers' views have undoubtedly highlighted the challenges of realising these benefits. A gap between growers' expectations and outcomes has arisen from the difficulty of implementing CSR without considering stakeholders' needs. Similarly, basing on a single company for economic and social support weakens the community, emphasising the necessity for a multi-layered approach to CSR that includes several actors and sectors [26].

The provision of agricultural inputs was also reported. Sugarcane growers reported that KSL provided free manure, a significant input for soil fertility, thereby increasing crop production. They further stressed that these agricultural inputs were not provided in a timely or affordable manner, thereby remaining expensive. They emphasised that timely delivery and affordability of resources are essential to maximising crop production and safeguarding agricultural practices [25]. To maximise profit in the agricultural sector, sugarcane growers demanded well-trained agricultural officers who would guide and lead them in implementing their daily farming activities. This approach corresponds with the notion of agronomic intelligence, encouraging independence and resilience in the community [7, 23].

Consideration of time is essential in implementing varied agricultural activities. Thus, planting and harvesting in Tanzania are usually done according to the season and weather conditions. Harvesting payment adjournments were

raised as a challenge, as workers would wait up to 3 months without being paid. This situation affects the quality, market value of sugarcane, growers' income stability, and trust in KSL's operations. Well-organised harvesting processes and quick payments are essential to CSR, motivation, trust, and economic growth. Dealing with these concerns can strengthen KSL's relationship with the community and significantly present its role as a responsible business actor.

Economic constraints on farm extension were reported as a significant challenge in the agricultural sector. Sugarcane cultivation requires substantial capital for preparing the land, planting, irrigating, and harvesting. Smallholder growers lack enough capital and other financial services, limiting their ability to access new technology that may ultimately expand production and growth [10]. The presence of CSR initiatives offers financial support, allowing access to low-interest loans or integrating growers into supply chains to alleviate these restraints while creating shared value for both the company and the community. Generally, sugarcane growers' opinions depict CSR as a multi-layered activity encompassing infrastructure, employment, health, education, agricultural support, and financial empowerment. While recognising the profits of KSL's initiatives, the community underscores inclusivity, timeliness, and responsiveness. By addressing these prospects, KSL can improve its social license to function, foster trust, and encourage sustainable community development.

V. CONCLUSION

The results presented here validate sugarcane growers' insights into KSL's CSR. The growers, typically middle-aged men with varied experiences and skills, had opposing interpretations on CSR. Some saw it as a way to benefit instantly from fair pricing and infrastructure, while others valued long-term sustainability and community development. The absence of female outlooks skews the understanding of CSRs' requirements, as women play a critical role in community cohesion. The growers' knowledge of CSR varied too: some lacked understanding, while others viewed it as a way to give back to society and foster community relationships. The result corresponds to the meaning of CSR, which comprises the intentional incorporation of social and environmental issues into business operations. The sugarcane industry offers opportunities to enhance CSR through environmental stewardship and sustainable practices.

Generally, the study finds that sugarcane growers' perceptions of CSR were influenced by their demographics and experiences. A nuanced approach to CSR, tailored to the specific needs and opportunities of farmers, could foster a robust relationship between KSL and its stakeholders, leading to a more sustainable and responsible business model. The success of CSR initiatives and the trust between corporate entities and their stakeholders depended on



the growers' perception of CSR.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed to address the identified issues and enhance the efficiency of KSL's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. These recommendations aim to promote sustainable development by strengthening trust and refining the relationship between KSL and the community.

To bridge the knowledge gap on CSR, KSL must implement training programmes to improve sugarcane growers' understanding of various issues. Workshops, seminars, and interactive sessions should be planned to enlighten the idea of CSR, its benefits, and the role growers can play in CSR initiatives. Similarly, in light of the results, sugarcane growers should be exposed to CSR activities being conducted in society. This will serve as a way to provide feedback to the factory and society. Provision of CSRs' knowledge will not only boost participation but also foster a deeper appreciation of its value in improving people's lives.

The KSL should prioritise the participation of sugarcane growers in the planning and implementation of CSR activities. Creating participatory platforms or committees for discussion with growers will help to align CSR initiatives with community priorities. This inclusive approach will foster a sense of ownership, cooperation, and shared interests among KSL and its stakeholders, ensuring that CSR activities are both relevant and impactful. However, significant focus should be placed on improving infrastructure to boost productivity and community resilience. Maintenance of roads, especially during the rainy season, will simplify transportation, reduce trouble with sugarcane delivery, and aid in community emergencies.

KSL should also concentrate on generating more resident employment opportunities and ensuring fair payment for labour-intensive jobs to support economic growth. This goes hand in hand with designing training programmes to equip inhabitants with the skills for higher-value roles, thereby enabling career development while prioritising local hiring to foster economic inclusivity. Sugarcane cutting methods should be revised and improved to reduce waste and maximise productivity. Moreover, payment procedures should be modernised to ensure they are timely and address stakeholders' concerns.

KSL should also ensure clarity in pricing mechanisms, especially the price per sugarcane ton, and provide unbiased treatment of all growers, regardless of their scale of operation. Transparency will strengthen equality and improve stakeholders' confidence in the company. In addition, KSL should enhance its capacity to provide timely support during emergencies, such as natural disasters or infrastructure failures. Resources such as transport, emergency supplies, and infrastructural support should be readily accessible. KSL should recognise and build upon its longstanding contributions to community welfare. This requires ensuring that support evolves in response to changing community needs and remains consistent over time. CSR efforts should be designed to contribute to

sustainable development, fostering long-term trust and goodwill among stakeholders.

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