Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a concept whereby companies decide voluntarily to contribute to a better society and a cleaner environment, by integrating social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interaction with their stakeholders. CSR, known to enhance a company's reputation and business opportunities, is the avenue companies use to address environmental concerns. Despite this recognition of its importance and potential benefits, the contribution of CSR to environmental care appears to be minimal.

The purpose of the study was to investigate the role of CSR in enhancing environmental education and stewardship in the manufacturing and service sectors in Kenya. The main objective was to gather views and opinions of employees, management and directors on CSR in their companies and what they perceived the role of CSR in environmental education and stewardship to be. The study was a descriptive survey and its population was drawn from participants in the Kenya Institute of Management's Company Of the Year Awards (COYA). Purposive and simple random samplings were used to select the 16 companies studied, while stratified sampling was used to identify questionnaire respondents. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedules.

A pilot study and triangulation were used to ensure validity while the measurement used for reliability was Cronbach's alpha. The coefficient considered reliable for this study was 0.70 or higher and final results on the instrument used yielded coefficients of between 0.76 and 0.99. Data analysis was done based on research objectives and the gaps identified in the study. Descriptive analysis was done for nominal data while Likert-scale statistical analysis was used for interval data. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to produce relevant tables and charts for analysis. Interviews were coded and analyzed thematically using themes emerging from the responses.

Key findings indicated that although high knowledge of the need for environmental care was indicated, corporates were not prioritizing the environment. Main CSR initiatives were on humanitarian and development aid to communities, not the environment. This resulted in the persistent observable discrepancy between stated concern for the environment and actual application of CSR funds to the environment. Environmental initiatives seen as important were tree planting, conserving forests and clearing garbage. Preferred environmental initiatives were those in line with the corporates' core business. CSR, however, was the avenue corporates used to address environmental concerns. Lack of a unified approach and prioritization resulted in scattering of effort and minimal impact.

Environmental education and partnering for greater impact emerged as the way forward to ensure CSR enhances environmental education and stewardship. The study concluded that CSR was the environmental lifeline from corporates. The study recommends development of age-appropriate curricula to engage all Kenyans at all levels in environmental education. Other recommendations include partnering for greater impact; prioritizing of environmental initiatives to focus efforts; Public Private Partnership (PPP), and training of CSR officers in corporates for effectiveness. Kenyans need to individually embrace and act on the environmental message for impact and sustainability.