

SAMS Role Deconstruct

Fellow – Business-Society Relations, CSEP | New Delhi

(What the role truly involves and how to assess your fit)

Why This Role Deconstruct

A SAMS Role Deconstruct helps candidates understand the real expectations of a role beyond the formal vacancy announcement. It clarifies the research mandate, intellectual expectations, stakeholder context, and performance markers so you can assess your fit with greater accuracy.

This is particularly important for senior research roles in think tanks where success depends not only on academic credentials, but also on the ability to frame policy-relevant questions, conduct rigorous research, write for multiple audiences, engage senior stakeholders, mentor junior researchers, and contribute to the public policy discourse with credibility.

What This Role Is Really About

This is not simply an academic research position. Nor is it only a corporate governance, CSR, or public policy role.

This is a research leadership role within CSEP's newly launched Programme on Business-Society Relations. The role is intended to help anchor the intellectual agenda of the programme, contribute to programme design, lead and partner with research streams, co-author studies, guide research analyst(s), produce agreed research outputs, and represent CSEP credibly in scholarly and policy forums.

The successful candidate will need to operate at the intersection of:

- Business-society relations and the evolving responsibilities of Indian businesses
- Corporate governance, corporate legitimacy, stakeholder governance, and CSR policy
- Rigorous mixed-methods research, including theory, case studies, interviews, surveys, disclosure analysis, and literature synthesis
- Policy-relevant writing, peer-reviewed publication, public discourse, and convening
- Senior stakeholder engagement with corporate leaders, investors, regulators, civil society organisations, policymakers, and academic experts
- Mentoring junior researchers and supporting programme planning, funding proposals, monitoring, and evaluation

The central challenge is to combine scholarly depth with policy usefulness. The Fellow will need to generate credible research on how Indian corporates are responding to emerging societal expectations, while keeping the work grounded in practical realities and positioned for policy uptake.

The Role's Strategic Priorities

Over the next 12-24 months, the role will likely focus on:

1. Building the Intellectual Architecture of a New Programme

Working with the Senior Fellow to shape the research agenda of the newly launched Programme on Business-Society Relations, and translating a broad theme into clear research streams, studies, outputs, partnerships, and public-facing contributions.

2. Leading Cutting-Edge Research on Business-Society Relations

Conceptualising, designing, and delivering research on themes such as business-society relations, corporate legitimacy, stakeholder governance, CSR policy, public accountability of corporates, and the responsibilities of Indian businesses towards society.

3. Using Mixed-Methods Research with Credibility and Discipline

Co-developing research designs that combine theoretical analysis, case studies, expert interviews, stakeholder surveys, regulatory disclosure analysis, survey instruments, interview protocols, and literature reviews that synthesise Indian and international scholarship.

4. Producing High-Quality Research Outputs

Generating working papers, journal articles, policy briefs, edited chapters and other research outputs, and taking them through peer review and publication processes with rigour, clarity, and timeliness.

5. Convening and Representing CSEP Externally

Presenting findings at conferences, roundtables, stakeholder consultations, executive forums, and other scholarly and policy platforms, while also contributing to public discourse through media and opinion articles.

6. Supporting Programme-Building and Junior Research Capacity

Supervising, mentoring, and providing intellectual guidance to junior researchers and project staff, while contributing to proposal writing, programme planning, monitoring, evaluation, and the annual flagship event.

Your Scope of Responsibility

Working with the Senior Fellow and operating with a high degree of independence, the role includes:

Research Agenda and Programme Design

Helping anchor the intellectual agenda of the programme; contributing to programme design; leading and partnering with research streams; and ensuring that agreed research outputs are produced with quality and relevance.

Research Design and Evidence Generation

Designing and executing research from conceptualisation through publication, using robust qualitative and quantitative methods, and grounding research in literature, disclosure analysis, stakeholder interviews, case studies, and surveys.

Scholarly and Policy Writing

Producing rigorous scholarly papers as well as accessible policy briefs for non-specialist audiences, and helping move research outputs through review, publication, and dissemination.

Stakeholder Engagement and Policy Uptake

Interacting with corporate leaders, investors, regulators, civil society organisations, policymakers, academics, and other stakeholders to ensure that research remains practically grounded and useful for policy discourse.

Team Guidance and Programme Support

Mentoring junior researchers and project staff, contributing to proposal writing for external funding, supporting programme planning, monitoring, and evaluation, and helping deliver the Annual Lecture and Symposium and preparatory events.

What Success Looks Like

Within 12-18 months, success would typically be visible through:

- A sharper and operationalised research agenda for the Programme on Business-Society Relations
- Well-conceptualised research streams on business-society relations, corporate legitimacy, stakeholder governance, CSR policy, and public accountability of corporates
- Research designs that combine theoretical rigour with appropriate field, stakeholder, survey, case study, and disclosure-based evidence

- High-quality outputs such as working papers, policy briefs, journal articles, edited chapters, and conference presentations
- Credible representation of CSEP in scholarly, policy, corporate, regulatory, civil society, and executive forums
- Effective mentoring and intellectual guidance for research analyst(s), junior researchers, and project staff
- Visible contribution to the Annual Lecture, Symposium, workshops, and other convenings linked to the programme
- Contribution to external funding proposals, programme planning, monitoring, and evaluation
- Evidence that CSEP is beginning to shape or enrich India's corporate governance and business-society discourse

Who Will Thrive in This Role

This role is suited to a research professional who brings:

- A PhD in Management, Economics, Sociology, or a closely related discipline
- Formal training or advanced coursework in research methods, both qualitative and quantitative
- 5-7 years to 15 years of high-quality research experience, with a demonstrable track record on business-related themes
- A strong publication record, including journal articles, book chapters, or equivalent scholarly outputs
- Strong theoretical grounding in industrial organisation, corporate governance, or business-society relations
- Demonstrated mixed-methods research experience, including stakeholder surveys, interviews, document analysis, and case study methodology
- Ability to design and execute independent research from conceptualisation through publication with minimal supervision
- Excellent research writing and communication skills for both scholarly and policy audiences
- Credibility and maturity to represent CSEP before senior stakeholders
- Ability to mentor and develop junior team members

Profiles combining strong academic research credentials, policy orientation, familiarity with business-related themes, stakeholder engagement experience, and the ability to write for both peer-reviewed and public policy audiences are particularly well aligned.

This Role May Not Be Ideal If

This role may not suit you if:

- Your experience is primarily corporate communications, CSR implementation, consulting delivery, or advocacy, with limited independent research and publication experience
- You have not designed and executed research independently from conceptualisation to publication
- You are uncomfortable with mixed-methods research or with combining theoretical analysis, qualitative inquiry, surveys, case studies, and document or disclosure analysis
- You prefer tightly defined research assistance roles rather than intellectually demanding roles requiring initiative, ambiguity management, and agenda-setting
- You have limited interest in engaging with corporate leaders, investors, regulators, civil society organisations, policymakers, and academic experts
- You are not comfortable writing for both scholarly and non-specialist policy audiences
- You have limited interest in mentoring junior researchers or helping build a new research programme
- You are uncomfortable representing an institution in high-quality public, scholarly, or policy forums

Operating Context

- Organisation: Centre for Social and Economic Progress (CSEP)
- Location: Chanakyapuri, New Delhi

- Programme: Business-Society Relations
- Role level: Fellow
- Reporting/ working relationship: The programme is directed by a Senior Fellow; the Fellow will work with the Senior Fellow
- Core agenda: Evidence-based, policy-relevant research at the intersection of business strategy, corporate governance, and public accountability of corporates
- Primary research themes: Business-society relations, corporate legitimacy, stakeholder governance, CSR policy in India, regulatory disclosures, and corporate responsibility
- Compensation: Competitive package, commensurate with qualifications and experience, with a comprehensive benefits package

The role operates in a high-expectation research and policy environment where credibility will be built through intellectual depth, research discipline, publication quality, stakeholder maturity, and the ability to translate scholarship into policy-relevant contribution.

Before You Apply - A SAMS Reality Check

You are likely a strong fit if you can confidently say:

- I have the research training and publication record expected of a Fellow-level think tank role.
- I can frame research questions that are both academically rigorous and relevant to Indian policy debates.
- I understand at least one of the core fields: industrial organisation, corporate governance, or business-society relations.
- I can design and execute mixed-methods research using appropriate conceptual, qualitative, quantitative, and document-based methods.
- I can write serious scholarly outputs and also translate research into accessible policy briefs and public discourse.
- I can engage senior stakeholders with maturity and represent an institution credibly in public and expert forums.
- I can mentor junior researchers and help build a research stream rather than only contribute as an individual researcher.
- I am motivated by the opportunity to contribute to India's corporate governance and business-society discourse through evidence-based research.

Closing Note

This is a distinctive opportunity for a research professional who wants to help build a new, intellectually ambitious programme on Business-Society Relations at one of India's leading public policy think tanks.

The role offers the opportunity to work with senior researchers, policymakers, industry leaders, investors, regulators, civil society organisations, and global thought leaders, while producing evidence-based research on a theme that is becoming increasingly important to India's corporate governance and public accountability discourse.

It demands scholarly rigour, independence, writing ability, stakeholder maturity, and intellectual leadership - and offers the chance to shape an emerging policy-research agenda with national relevance.

Prepared by Strategic Alliance Management Services Pvt. Ltd. (SAMS) as a role-clarity and candidate self-assessment tool.