



for a Caring Society

SECOND PHASE

Preface

Identifying the real needs of the community at its grassroots for possible intervention by the organized businesses, as part of their corporate social responsibility (CSR), is no easy task. This is more so in a country like Bangladesh where the needs are diverse and the means for addressing such needs are otherwise limited.

Prioritising the needs in a complex social context is, of course, critically important for sustainability of CSR activities. CSR can become relevant to efforts for building a caring society only when sustainable aspects of related activities are befittingly taken into consideration. For this, the areas of CSR activities, as distinct from charities or individual donations, need to be properly identified and focused, for community development or well-being. There lies the key to participation of various stakeholder groups that is needed for operationalising CSR to benefit the society at large.

Against this backdrop, Management and Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) under its on-going CSR-promotional project,

took up the second phase of works for identifying some more possible areas for undertaking CSR activities. In the first phase of such works, MRDI did earlier identify three specific areas—skill development training centre in the Teesta-eroded rural areas, livelihood programme for poor women in Jessore and Support for Higher Studies to Poor Meritorious Students—for CSR activities by the country's corporate sector. The findings of related investigations, alongwith video documentaries, were presented formally to the leaders of the business community and representatives of the corporate houses at an event held in Dhaka. There was a positive appreciation of the MRDI's initiatives by all those who participated in that event. The MRDI has, later on, initiated moves to catalyse actions by the business houses, within the ambit of their CSR activities, in those identified areas. The effort is still on, for the purpose.

The works in the second phase for identification of some more areas for possible CSR activities, followed exactly the same

Preface

methodology that was practiced in the first phase. Three separate media teams carried out the field-level investigations. The work of each team was supervised by a leader. Experts on the selected themes provided the guidance to the members of the media team for the purpose. The themes/areas/issues that were chosen for the second phase of investigations by the media team were identified through a process of inter-active discussions with various stakeholders and also through interviews with the officials and functionaries of corporate houses, having involvement in CSR activities, and on the basis of reports/feature stories that were published/broadcast/telecast in national dailies and electronic media from time to time. The areas of possible intervention through CSR, alongwith the suggested locations or sites for their implementation, have, thus, been the outcome of an objective assessment of wider felt-needs.

The members of the media team who were involved in field-level investigations, prior to finalizing their reports/presentations, did their work in a professional way. Target beneficiaries and community leaders were interviewed. Some in-depth investigations into the issues were carried out. The views that were expressed by the community people on each of the issues, under this second phase MRDI's works, provided the most valuable inputs for related investigations. Such people themselves identified their needs, prioritised the same and made their own assessment about possible favourable impact of supportive

interventions, illustrating their real-life experience about deprivations. Each media team produced a video documentary on the respective issues.

MRDI does strongly believe that involvement of the media personnel in efforts for identifying the possible areas of CSR activities by businesses houses is a worthwhile exercise. This can benefit the society at large, in a variety of ways. Having wider outreach, the media is certainly in a relatively more advantageous position to highlight the real needs of the communities. That is also an important functional role of the media as part of its responsibility to the community. Professional skill of the media personnel for investigation can be effective for making in-depth analyses of issues and problems at the grassroots. This can help all concerned to devise strategies and action programmes for CSR intervention. Furthermore, the media can play the role of a catalyst for wider participation of various stakeholders and beneficiaries, in CSR-related activities, feedback, monitoring and performance assessment as much as for building stronger corporate commitment to CSR operations. The latter—commitment of the corporate entities—is particularly of consequence for promoting the goals of a caring society for sustainable, inclusive development and shared well-being.

It will, perhaps, be not fair to state that the organised businesses in this country, are

largely unaware of the importance of CSR, as a voluntary process, for building their goodwill and also for having solid roots in the community, going beyond their sheer profit-making operations. Far from it, the corporate entities in Bangladesh are now found in larger numbers to embrace CSR than before, to ensure their 'good corporate citizenship role.' This is a positive development; it augurs well for setting into motion a strong process that can pave the way for the corporate entities to serve community needs better.

It must, however, be noted that the CSR activities by businesses can serve purposeful societal needs if its conceptual and contextual frameworks are properly appreciated by all concerned. For CSR to deliver real benefits to the community, it is important to facilitate and encourage the flow of its funds into more sustainable development works. For this, identification of the real needs of the community can have a major bearing on efforts to forge a strong link between the corporate sector and the people or beneficiaries at the grassroots. And that is precisely the reason why MRDI, in support of its project for promoting CSR, has been focusing on specified areas or fields of action for possible CSR intervention.

This publication is a compilation of an abridged account of the findings of three investigations completed in the second phase of MRDI's works for identifying some more areas for possible CSR activities by the

corporate sector/business houses. Full reports of such investigations, are available on the website of MRDI at www.mrdibd.org. This publication also includes related video documentaries in the VCD.

The areas that have been identified in the current phase include:

1. Health facilities for the Bawali and fisherman community of the Sunderbans
2. Cleaning up of Saint Martins coral island
3. School infrastructure development programme

MRDI does thankfully acknowledge the hard work done by the members of the media teams for carrying out their investigations and generating reports with some of their specific recommendations. It would also like to put on record its sincere appreciation of the unstinted support of the people among the target communities, for facilitating some meaningful completion of investigation process.

MRDI looks forward to continued valuable cooperation of the leaders of the business community and the civil society to its initiative and follow-up actions.



Health facilities in the Sunderbans

People need support to survive

Bon Laudob

*Where scarcity of drinking water
is a threat to life...*

Rina Raftan (25) of Bon Laudob village under Dakope upazilla of Khulna district has to leave her bed very early in the morning. Like most of the village females she has to carry aluminium pitchers to fetch drinking and cooking water for the family. Everyday along with other women she has to walk down to the Mohuri Babur Pukur, a P.S.F water source two kilometers away from her house. But as hundreds of women gather there to fetch water, it takes around three to five hours in the process. After returning she has to fish harina shrimp and edible leaves for cooking.

Her husband, a day labourer, leaves home very

early in the morning for some earning in the Aila flood affected area. Rina Raftan and her family usually take one meal a day. If any family guests appear they kill their chicken to entertain the guests. That is the only occasion when they have the fortune of eating meat.

Same is the story of Nomita Mondol (23), Reena Mondol (26), Kadam Sarder (51), Anita Mondol (35) and many other women of the village. They spend a major portion of their day's time to fetch water from a far away places. People of the two-kilometer long village are suffering from an acute scarcity of drinking and cooking water.

Some shallow small and large ponds can be found close to the houses of the village. The inhabitants claim that salinity of the pond water was at a tolerable level before the Aila flood. But now the water of the ponds is undrinkable. The team found that the water of the filthy ponds were highly infested with blue green algae and zooplanktons which subsequently harbours germs for cholera, aecomibic dysentery and skin diseases. But the villagers are forced to bathe, wash clothes and clean utensils with this water as no alternative sources of water is available. In each household three or four big earthen pots can be seen to preserve drinking and cooking water. Women collect water from distant sources. There are no designed sanitary systems. Cement made commodes are used by comparatively well-off people.

Hardly there are any health care services near Laudob. Although health camps are organized around, this locality is by and large deprived of such services. If anybody needs immediate medical attention it takes around 3 to 4 hours for a patient to reach the clinic.

Most of the time they seek treatment from traditional healers. If they fail then they have to see a doctor at Mongla. Common heath problems are drowsiness, headache, and physical weakness. Besides, acute chronic bronchitis, aclamptia, irregular menstruation and pregnancy related complications are also common. Inadequate supply of safe drinking water causes many water borne diseases like diarrhea, fungal infections, skin diseases and scabies.

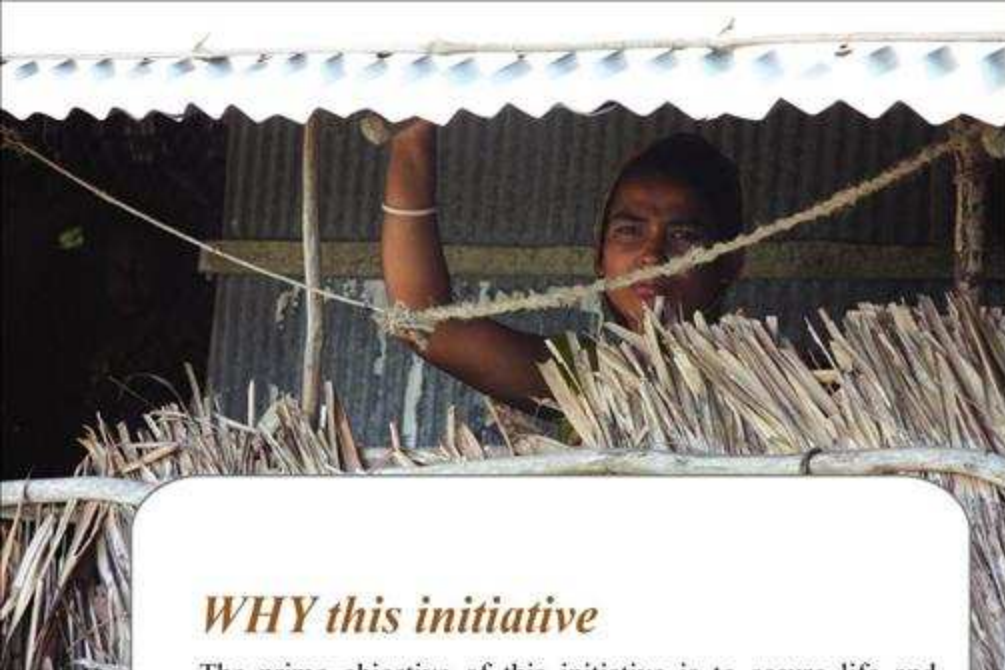
The people of this locality mainly collect their fuel from the forest. While doing this they are sometimes attacked by tigers, leading to deaths and injuries. Moreover, indiscriminate felling of trees for fuel collection causes natural damage to the mangrove forest.



The immediate need

The people of Laudob live in abject poverty. It is not possible to solve all of their problems overnight. But some of their needs have to be addressed immediately for their very survival. The MRDI investigation team after detailed discussions and in-depth observation identified the following three areas that need immediate attention.

1. Provision of safe drinking water
2. Health care services
3. Indigenous improved oven for household cooking



WHY this initiative

The prime objective of this initiative is to secure life and health of people of Laudob village in terms of preventive and curative aspects. Provision of safe water for drinking and cooking will prevent water borne diseases very common in the village. Mobile health clinics will provide treatment for common ailments and refer serious patients to higher health outlets. Improved oven will reduce the need to go to the forest for fuel and decrease the risk of being attacked by tigers.

Availability of safe water from nearby sources will save time and energy of women. This will improve their livelihood by earning during the saved time. While using improved oven they will use neighbourhood bushes for fuel collection instead of destroying forest trees, thus contributing to protection of the environment.

The initiative aims

- To improve health condition of 2000 people of 225 families of Laudob village with special focus on women and children,
- To improve overall poverty situation of the village.

The way out

- The four existing ponds of the village need to be re-excavated to be used as source of fresh water. Arrangement for their maintenance has also to be done.
- There are no health care facilities nearby. A small mobile medical team needs to be formed with one doctor and one paramedic who will visit the village twice a week. One field coordinator will organize the health camp.
- There are 225 families living in Laudob village. One indigenous improved oven has to be supplied to each family. This will contribute to environment protection and risk reduction of physical injury and death at the forest.



Implementation approach

Three activities under this initiative can be implemented in two different approaches. Re-excavation of ponds and distribution of oven can be done by a local committee comprising community leaders and influential people of the village. Institutional support will be required for the mobile health care service. One organization will be identified to manage the health care programme. The organization will seek support of the local committee and the community people in organizing health camps. Some common medicines will also be supplied.

MRDI will establish necessary linkages and facilitate the entire process. It will not operate funds directly, but monitor the implementation of the project.

● Investigation Team

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Full report of the investigation is available at www.mrdibd.org/csr/investigation2/sunderbans

The project at a glance

The Intervention : Health facilities for the Bawali and fisherman community of the Sunderbans

Priorities : Safe water, health service and improved oven

Location : Bon Laudob village under Dakope upazilla of Khulna district

Beneficiaries : 2000 people of 225 families of Laudob village

Activities :

- Re-excavate four ponds and maintain them
- Arrange mobile health camps twice a week
- Distribute low cost improved oven among 225 families

Cost estimation

Activities	Cost for one year	Cost for three years
Re-excavation of ponds	Taka 400,000	Taka 520,000
Health camp	Taka 768,000	Taka 2,304,000
Improved oven	Taka 270,000 (One time expense)	

Management of health camp: One relevant organization will be identified to manage the health care programme. Local people will extend support.

Management of other two activities: A local committee will be formed to manage re-excavation of ponds and distribution of ovens.



School infrastructure development

Support essential to build an enlightened generation

Abul Quasem had his graduation in social science from Chittagong College. Failing to manage a job he came to his village home at Char Fashion. His relatives advised him to look after his pieces of cultivable land at his village Charpatila under Char Kukri Mukri union of Char Fashion upazilla of Bhola district. This is a remote island separated from the mainland. Most of the island's people live on fishing. In 2003, a non-governmental organization started Sharifpara Primary School with four teachers including Abul Quasem and his wife. After withdrawal by the organization at the end of their project, two teachers left the school and Abul Quasem took the challenge of running the school with lone effort. He also got approval of the divisional education office in 2007. Community people try to provide financial assistance to the teachers, but they have very

*Abul Quasem
strives to keep the
dream alive*





limited ability to do so. The school management committee is trying to enlist the school in the Monthly Payment Order (MPO) of the government. Local people believe that one day the school will emerge as an ideal educational institute for the children of the village. Abul Quasem and his wife are trying to keep the dream alive. But they need support of the well off people.

Char Fashion upazilla is situated in the extreme south of Bhola. It is comprised of a number of small islands with poor physical communications. There are 175 government and registered primary schools in the upazilla. More than fifty out of them need immediate repair works. Many of them are also in need of teachers. There are no infrastructural facilities, furniture, toilet or playground.

The immediate need

Primary schools of Char Fashion upazilla are in a deplorable condition in terms of infrastructural and teaching facilities. Local people recommended a good number of measures to resolve the problems. Out of them, following issues need to be addressed with priority.

1. Physical infrastructure of school
2. Educational material and furniture
3. Sufficient number of teachers



This pilot project proposes to take up first two issues. The third issue, provision of teachers needs different kind of intervention which cannot be covered by a pilot scheme of one time investment. Moreover, a school with a good infrastructure and classroom facilities is expected to get priority in consideration for MPO enlistment by the government.

WHY this initiative



The objective of this initiative is to facilitate primary education of the deprived children of remote areas of the country. Insufficient number of schools and miserably poor facilities keep a vast majority of children out of school education. MRDI investigation team identified some factors responsible for this situation, of which physical facilities topped the list of priorities. This pilot project aims:-

- To develop infrastructure and classroom facilities of some selected primary schools of Char Fashion upazilla of Bhola district.
- To complement and supplement government's efforts to ensure universal primary education.

The plan

This one year project will develop infrastructure of 14 primary schools of Char Fashion upazilla. Tin shed buildings will be constructed for four schools and necessary furniture will also be procured. An estimated amount of Taka 15 lac will be required for each school. For the other 10 schools, minor repair works will be done and furniture will be procured. Approximately, Taka 120,000 will be needed for each school. MRDI investigation team got a list of affected schools of Char Fashion from the education office. These 14 schools will be selected in further consultation with the Upazilla Education Officer.





Implementation approach

People of this far flung area deeply realize the need for their children's education. They are eager to improve infrastructural facilities of the schools. For this, they need financial support. This enthusiasm of community people can be utilized in implementing the proposed intervention. School management committee, with the support of community people will implement the infrastructure development works. MRDI will not directly operate the funds, but will monitor the progress of activities.

● Investigation Team

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Full report of the investigation is available at www.mrdibd.org/csr/investigation2/school

The project at a glance

The Intervention : School infrastructure development programme

Location : Char Fashion upazilla of Bhola district

Beneficiary : Children of project areas and the community as a whole.

Activities :

- Selection of schools
- Construction and furniture procurement for 4 schools
- Repair and furniture procurement for 10 schools

Cost estimation

Activity	Unit cost	Total cost
Construction and furniture for 4 schools	Taka 1,500,000	Taka 6,000,000
Repair and furniture for 10 schools	Taka 120,000	Taka 1,200,000

Project management : Management committees of the concerned schools, with the support of community people will manage and supervise the infrastructure development works. Cooperation of the upazilla education office will be sought.



Cleaning up of Saint Martins

The island needs care and attention

Saint Martin's

A Call for Life

Saint Martins, a small coral island in the southernmost corner of Bangladesh, is a big-time tourist attraction for its unique natural beauty.

But how is Saint Martin's these days? It is actually a dying island today because of over tourism and lack of care.

Every year, the island is attracting more and more visitors from home and abroad. More than five thousand tourists now visit everyday this tiny island of 12 square kilometers inhabited by 7,000 people.

For six months of the year, for three hours a day,

more than four or five steamers laden with tourists descend on the island. Tourism is the major earning source of the people who live there. Almost a quarter of the earning people are engaged in small businesses who earn mostly during the tourist season. A big portion is dependent on fishing.

There are almost 50 hotels and residential cottages for tourists most of which are operated and owned by people from Dhaka or rich non-residents. Still there are unemployed youths in almost 40% of households who can contribute a lot for the betterment of this island.

A huge amount of crude oil, plastic and other non-biodegradable wastes are discharged from engine boats carrying tourists in the sea. In addition, a huge amount of untreated market and domestic wastes, which include sewage matters (only 5% of the local people have sanitary latrine facilities) from the local people and tourists, are discharged into the sea. Thus the quality of coastal water is degrading gradually. But at the same time, the freshwater supply to the island is being polluted by the urine and excreta left behind by the visitors. There is no way that such a vast quantity of sewage can be absorbed by the little soil surface of the island.

St. Martin's Island, the only coral-bearing island in Bangladesh, has been facing an ecological disaster. The collection of corals and shells as souvenirs by the tourists is posing a threat to coral colonies of the island. The disposal of plastic materials like poly-bags, plastic bottles etc by tourists on the island is harmful for corals. Also the sand dusted off by anchoring tourist ships are covering up the corals and killing them.



What needs to be done



St. Martin's has lost roughly 25% of its coral reef in the past 7 years. The island exists only because of its coral base, so removal of that coral risks erosion of the beach. One section of the fisherman community gets involved in illegal procurement and trading of coral knowingly or unknowingly. To save the corals from destruction, two things need to be done immediately.

- Stop coral procurement and trading
- Keep the beach clean

It has to be realized that Saint Martin's island cannot be saved without saving its corals.



To tackle solid waste, the easiest but a costly way is to have solid waste processing plants in the island. All hotels, rest houses, shops and restaurants must process their solid waste. The byproduct can be used as manure and freshwater for irrigation.

But for this all these establishments should have proper gutter system, proper procedure to collect waste from all places and supply the same to processing plant/composting plant.

A desalination plant can be set up and all tourists can be forced spot to buy water from this plant. This will restrict use of plastic water bottles.

There should be a system to collect plastic bottles and chips packets and recycle them.

At least 10 ponds can be dug to retain rainwater all year round as is done in front of forest offices in the Sunderbans.

WHY this initiative

The ultimate objective of this initiative is to save the endangered Saint Martin's island which is made of corals through evolution of thousands of years. If illegal procurement and trading of corals can be stopped, process of their natural growth will continue which is essential for the existence of the island. Keeping the beach and seabed clean particularly from the non-biodegradable wastes will also protect the corals. About 100 families of the island are involved in coral extraction particularly during the dull fishing season. If alternative work options can be created for them, they will refrain from this illegal act. Members of these families can be involved in the beach and seabed cleaning. Moreover, solid waste processing will solve the problem of contaminating the underground water table. Desalination will provide pure water and eliminate the use of bottled water. The other steps will also lead to solution of drinking water.

Thus the project aims—

- To stop coral extraction and keep the beach clean by involving local people.
- To create mass awareness among local people and the tourists about hazards of beach pollution.
- To stop contamination of water table.
- To clean up the beach and seabed.



Implementation approach

For its very survival Saint Martin's needs cleaning. A similar clean-up approach is being implemented in Cox's Bazar which can be replicated easily. A project like this can cost 4 million taka more or less, which is less than yearly CSR budget of most companies.

Cost effective solid waste management system is available and can be built cheaply. Moreover, it can spawn off earning for the system users in the way of fertilizer.

For geographic reasons reality of Saint Martin's island is different from those of Cox's Bazar. The cleaning activities are worthwhile during October to March tourist season. The rest 6 months persons involved in such project can be trained in income generating activities like making handicrafts and items that can attract and be sold to tourists during season, as suggested by the local community.

There is a need for awareness at all levels of Saint Martin's population about protecting this island. Cleaning workers can educate and train school kids and women in the lean season which can ultimately lead to a people driven environment protection and management system in that society.



The project at a glance

The Intervention : Cleaning up of Saint Martins coral island

Location : Saint Martins island

Beneficiary : People of Saint Martins in terms of population and the island itself in terms of ecology and environment.

Activities :

- Base set up
- Awareness programme
- Beach cleaning programme
- Rain water preservation
- Waste treatment

Cost estimation :

Beach cleaning for one year	Taka 2,431,400
Pond re-excavation for rain water preservation	Taka 1,500,000
Solid waste treatment plan	Taka 600,000
Total	Taka 4,531,400

Note : Cost of desalination plant is not included.

Project management : One organization, preferably Green World will be given the responsibility of implementing the project in collaboration with local community leaders. MRDI will not operate funds for the activities directly, but monitor the implementation of the project.

● Investigation Team

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Full report of the investigation is available at www.mrdibd.org/csr/investigation2/saintmartins



Waiting for Change



for a Caring Society

SECOND PHASE



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Printed in Bangladesh, Published_2010, Design_G M Kiron, Printing_TRANSPARENT

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protecting human rights and good governance

