

CSR Talk over **Television**

FOURTH PHASE



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Foreword



This publication of the Management Resources Development Initiative (MRDI) under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) project aims at highlighting the major points that were underpinned by the distinguished participants and discussants in the latest round of TV talk-show on CSR.

It encapsulates the views, opinions, analyses and comments that were made by a panel of professionals, activists and practitioners, representing a variety of fields, in their deliberations and presentations during the TV talk-show, covered under this publication.

The last round of the TV talk-show under the project was, as before, purported to focusing attention on some key issues relating to CSR and raising awareness about their relevance and importance, in order to facilitate a meaningful participation and involvement of various stakeholders in related activities. This, as our feedback indicates, has been a useful exercise, as far as our awareness-building efforts in support of CSR are concerned.

The TV talk-show that this booklet covers had three episodes. The designated panel of discussants there for each segment made their well-articulated observations. Some major areas, in an overlapping way though, that were discussed included: CSR strategy, CSR and branding, Sustainability of Interventions, Academic intervention in CSR, Application of knowledge, Involvement of beneficiaries, Implementation approach and Empowerment through CSR.

From both conceptual and contextual aspects, these issues are of great importance to foster good practice in the domain of CSR and to promote long-term sustainability of businesses, having impact on their triple bottom line -- social, environmental and financial - - that can greatly contribute, as part of their (businesses') values, to giving back to, and growing with, the communities they operate in. If such goals and objectives -- good practice and long-term sustainability -- are effectively pursued, then the CSR can become an effective operational tool as a development continuum for the good of the community and the society, moving beyond some misconceived ideas about its doing some charity work or following merely a "do-gooding" angle, without any strategy of actions.

To move forward the CSR initiatives along the way that meets the expectations of the stakeholders in the present-day world, incorporation of a CSR element or social project of some kind into the academic curricula of the relevant departments of educational

institutions, particularly at higher tiers, can introduce students -- the future leaders and managerial personnel of businesses -- to social issues and the new-found importance of CSR in the corporate world. This is one good reason why some form of academic intervention in CSR is now considered necessary for the future entrepreneurs and managerial personnel to provide inputs, as part of their studies, to them to broaden their visions and horizon. This will then enable them to be better placed in their future workplace to realise and appreciate how the businesses can do real and sustainable good for society and the less fortunate as being fundamental to business success and not simply an add-on, discomfort or inconvenience. Reliable and accurate ways can also then be found to measure the real and lasting impact of CSR initiatives or social projects.

The CSR, in its essence, is all about achieving commercial successes of businesses and that too, in ways that demonstrate their responsibility to society and are not reflected in their proximate profit-and-loss accounts. It is about how the businesses take responsibility for their various stakeholder groups to ensure sustainability of their markets, customers and the natural environment, to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It, thus, goes beyond compliance and philanthropy and relates to initiatives, in the form of investments, for future business growth in a situation where sustainability of markets, clients, stakeholders, customers, people, community, society and the environment can be ensured.

Viewed in the context, the CSR strategy, sustainability of interventions, involvement of beneficiaries, branding, implementation, approach and empowerment etc., are issues of consequence.

During the TV talk-show that this booklet covers, all distinguished discussants shed light on different inter-related aspects of CSR-related operations and aspects. The main tenor of their views and opinions has made it amply clear as to why successful CSR programmes require clear strategies in order to achieve the vision for the future in ways that create sustainable benefit. The efficacy of such a strategy depends largely on clarity and, thus, on a systemic approach to designing and delivering programmes and to ensuring optimal results.

In this backdrop, this booklet, we believe, will serve a useful purpose to its readers and all other relevant stakeholders having a better understanding of the issues which the panelists in the related TV talk-show discussed elaborately.



Episodes & Discussants



Episode 1

Corporate culture in CSR and branding

Aired on 23 September 2012 at 5:30 pm

PANEL DISCUSSANTS

Wali Bhuiyan
Former Chairman, FICCI



Niaz Rahim
Group Director
Rahimafrooz (Bangladesh) Ltd.

OPEN DISCUSSANTS

Mohammad Zahirul Islam, PMP

Head of CSR & Project Management Office
The City Bank Ltd.



Shakib Lohani

Director, Head of Learning & Communication, D.Net

Tareq Hamid

Manager, Human Resources
Bank Alfalah Ltd.



Shamima Akhter

Manager, PR, CSR, QUBEE

Salahuddin Ahmed Murad

Assistant Officer
Public Relations Department, Bank Asia



Khaled M. Mustafa

Manager, Strategic Development
JAAGO Foundation

Episode 2

CSR in curriculum

Aired on 30 September 2012 at 5:30 pm

PANEL DISCUSSANTS

Dr. Ahmad Neaz

Professor, American International
University-Bangladesh



Dr. Ananya Raihan

Executive Director, D.Net

OPEN DISCUSSANTS

Mohammad Tanveer Rahman
Senior Manager, External Affairs
BRAC Bank Limited



Farha Hasin Moushumi
Student, IBA, University of Dhaka



Priota Iftekhar
Student, North South University



Tofael Ahmed
Student, American International
University-Bangladesh



Muhammad Fabian Khan
Student, IBA, University of Dhaka



Baseratul Jannat Lira
Student, BRAC University



Episode 3

Stakeholder engagement in CSR

Aired on 7 October 2012 at 5:30 pm

PANEL DISCUSSANTS

Shafique-ul-Azam MBA
Managing Director
MIDAS Financing Ltd.



Hasibur Rahman
Executive Director, MRDI

OPEN DISCUSSANTS

Hedaitul Islam Helal
Team leader
Green World Communication Ltd.



Abul Kashem

Head Master, Sharifpara Temporary
Registered Primary School
Char Fasson, Bhola



Tanvir Mosharraf
Project Coordinator, Speedtrust



Shahadat Foyag Woisee

Advertisement Executive
Daily Prothom Alo



Halima Begum
President, Eakota Mohila Somity
Koilasgonj, Sundarban



Ranu Begum
Info lady
D.Net, Netrokona



Shormila Sarker
Member, Sundarban Mohila
Somity, Bonlaudob



Issues & Discussions



M. Emamul Haque

MRDI in its fourth phase of the TV Talk show on CSR produced and televised three episodes of the programme. This booklet includes the views and observations of the discussants. This is not a direct transcription of the episodes.

The views of the discussants have been placed in this publication under the following issue heads:

1. CSR strategy
2. CSR and branding
3. Sustainability of interventions
4. Academic intervention in CSR
5. Application of knowledge
6. Involvement of beneficiaries
7. Implementation approach
8. Empowerment through CSR



Issue 1

CSR strategy

- Strategy is vital for planning and implementation of any programme or activity.
- Strategy provides formal structure and set up to a programme. Strategy can be developed in the form of a policy and implemented by assigned personnel through a separate department.
- CSR strategy is essential for addressing the specific development needs and bringing about sustainable change in the society.
- Each company should have a CSR strategy as it has a marketing strategy. Need for a strategy increases with the expansion of a company.

*Salahuddin Ahmed Murad**Shamima Akhter*

- CSR strategy contains the priority areas of the company. This helps operate CSR programmes in a focused manner which is more likely to demonstrate sustainable and visible changes.
- CSR strategy helps prevent unwanted requests for donation to irrelevant areas, with little or no visible impact.
- Strategy has to be linked to the objective of CSR activity. Strategy will define how the desired result will be achieved and sustained.



Niaz Rahim

Issue 2

CSR and branding

- CSR is not a promotional activity. It is done for the welfare of the society. Still it indirectly contributes to business promotion, because people know who is doing what for the benefit of the society.
- CSR does not do branding directly, but branding is a spontaneous outcome of CSR. This branding comes through enhancement of goodwill.
- Branding of an organization or its product is not linked to CSR. It often happens that product or service of a company is totally different from the service it offers to the society as a part of CSR. So it does not promote marketing, rather it is very likely to promote goodwill of the company.

*Tareq Hamid**Khaled M. Mustafa*

- A company's visual appearance through logo and signs while performing CSR is acceptable to a limited extent. But it must not take the form of publicity and deviate from the purpose of CSR.
- If applied rationally, branding has no conflict with CSR. While working in a community on a specific development issue, logo and name of the company can be used. Purpose of the programme is serving the community, but people also need to know who is providing the service.
- The concept of marketing and branding has changed. Marketing has shifted from the shelf of a showroom to the mind space of the customer. People hardly visit showrooms for choosing the brand; rather they preserve it in their mind. Getting into people's mind through good work is more effective form of branding than publicity or campaigning.

*Shafique-ul-Azam MBA*

Issue 3

Sustainability of interventions

- Businesses are much serious about the value for money they spend. When they invest in business they want to maximize profit. When the spend money for social development they want to see sustainable impact of the initiative.
- Close monitoring of interventions and strategic planning are essentially needed for ensuring sustainability of the activities.
- Before phasing out from an intervention area the fund providing company and the implementing organization should leave behind a strong operating and monitoring mechanism and a reliable group to ensure continuation of the activities. This group may be an existing development organization of the locality or a committed and well organized community group.

*Shakib Lohani**Mohammad Zahirul Islam, PMP*

- A feeling of ownership to the intervention has to be developed among the beneficiaries and other members of the community to ensure sustaining impact. This is essential in time bound interventions.
- CSR should not be taken as a sporadic event. Providing funds does not end the responsibility of the corporate house. Proper use of the fund, benefits generated from the intervention and its impact on the target community have to be taken into account.
- Sustainability plan should be developed at the planning stage of an intervention. Expected results have to be visualized and monitoring needs to be done accordingly.



Dr. Ananya Raihan

Issue 4

Academic intervention in CSR

- Expansion of CSR concept and practice in Bangladesh has created the scope of incorporating the issue in the university curriculum.
- In some courses CSR is now taught as an insignificant issue and discussions are confined within theoretical views ignoring its application and practical aspects. These theories again are taken from the books of foreign writers which may not have sufficient relevance with Bangladesh context of CSR. A course on CSR needs to be designed catering to the needs of our students and context of our country. Accordingly text books have to be written and published.



Tofael Ahmed

Priota Iftekhhar

- CSR is discussed in the classroom as a part of business ethics. But these discussions are too theoretical. Success stories of CSR should be placed before the students to provide them with practical knowledge on the issue. Symposiums, workshops and field visits could also be helpful.
- Application of CSR should be kept in mind while designing the academic curriculum. Participatory learning process has to be followed as the teaching method and scopes should be there for demonstration and practice.

*Farha Hasin Moushumi**Mohammad Tanveer Rahman*

- To maximize social benefits, individual and theoretical knowledge has to be translated into social knowledge while teaching CSR. If the knowledge remains confined within research papers it will be of no use to the society. So the practical aspect of acquiring knowledge is very important.



Dr. Ahmad Neaz

Issue 5

Application of knowledge

- Students graduating with clear concept and practical knowledge on CSR and working in the corporate sector will hopefully be able to demonstrate better application of CSR in their professional life.
- Knowledge is not necessarily to be acquired focusing discipline of studies. Rather problem and issue based knowledge is more applicable in contributing to social development.
- Scope and field have to be created to apply the acquired knowledge. The issue of application is often ignored.



Issue 6

Involvement of beneficiaries

- Beneficiaries are least involved in the planning process of an intervention. Normally it happens that the development organization chalks out a plan, starts implementing it and visits the area frequently to monitor the activities. During the process they develop a relation with the beneficiaries and seek for their opinion while modifying the plan. But involvement of the target beneficiaries at the planning phase is very important to develop in them a sense of ownership.
- Beneficiaries should be involved in the monitoring process to ensure sustainability of the intervention after formal phasing out of the project.
- Community people feel inspired to associate themselves with a programme which provides direct benefit to them.

*Hedaitul Islam Helal**Tanvir Mosharraf*

Issue 7

Implementation approach

- Corporate organizations operate CSR in an approach of partnership with development organizations. Experiences and expertise of these organizations are used to implement the interventions in the community.
- In case of livelihood programmes, a rotational approach is followed. When livelihood options are created for a group of beneficiaries through skills development and capital mobilization, the programme is phased out and replicated in another location.

*Hasibur Rahman*

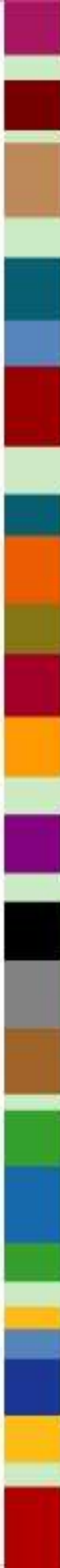
Issue 8

Empowerment through CSR

- Marginalized women want to come out of the poverty cycle. They want to contribute to the family income instead of solely depending on their husbands. They also want a safe livelihood that will protect them from the risk of facing wild animals in the river and the forest.
- Women desire for a decent life for themselves and their children. They want their children to grow up as educated and skilled human resources who will not depend on the Sundarbans for their livelihood.

*Rani Begum**Shahadat Foyag Woisee*

- Women who acquired skills through training have developed confidence in them. Their mindset has changed and now they want to earn using their skills. Other women are now willing to receive similar training.
- Even the women of remote villages are now operating IT devices and earning money by providing necessary information and services to village people. This has been possible due to an initiative of a development organization which again was funded by a corporate house.
- A beneficiary empowered through CSR develops a sense of responsibility to the society.



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