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ENTREPRENEURS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF BRAC WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE PROGRAM AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO ACHIEVE NATIONAL SANITATION TARGET IN BANGLADESH

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Abstract : This paper is trying to describe how WASH programme developed the local entrepreneur to ensure sanitary service delivery in intervention areas of Bangladesh. The local entrepreneurs of WASH areas are native individuals, whose role is a potentially fruitful way forward for interventions to stimulate demand for improved sustainable sanitation. In addition to that, ensure regular production and supply of sanitary hardware encourages using latrine and hygiene practices. On the other hands, its generating business opportunity for local entrepreneurs and also achieving national sanitation target as a whole.

Keywords: Climate Hazards, Environmental Sustainability, *Marketing Strategy*, Hygiene Behaviour, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Value Chain.

Background and Introduction

Since 1972, BRAC has been working with the objectives of poverty alleviation and empowering the poor with a holistic approach. It has made notable contributions in the field of micro-finance, health, education, agriculture, environment, enterprise development and multi-dimensional development activities. In order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of reducing child mortality and halving the number of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015 (goals 4 and 7; target 10), BRAC has been implementing the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) programme since 2006 in 150 (phase I) Upazilas (*sub-districts*) to meet national sanitation target of Bangladesh.

Recently, this programme is extended to 248 upazilas which covers one third of total Bangladesh and 51 million population of the area. The programme aimed to improve the health situation of the rural poor and enhance equitable development through provision of sustainable and integrated WASH services in the rural areas of Bangladesh; inducing hygienic behaviours to break the contamination cycle of unsanitary latrines, contaminated water, and unsafe hygiene practices; and ensuring sustainability and scaling-up of WASH services (Kabir et.al 2008). However, in the very beginning to intervention of this programme, there were not appropriate entrepreneurial sources for receiving sanitary service delivery materials and maintenance facility in proper location of respective areas.

The programme has required an innovative idea of thinking what and how to ensure the sanitation services delivery with easy access for receiving operation and maintenance of hardware facilities.

Objective

The objective of this paper is to describe how BRAC WASH Programme developed the local entrepreneurs and its contribution to ensure sanitary service delivery materials of BRAC WASH programme area to meet national sanitation target in Bangladesh.

Discussion and Results

1. Local Entrepreneurs Development Strategies

In the very beginning of the programme (May 2006), the accessibility of sanitary service delivery materials were insufficient and it was an enormous challenges to easy access sanitary construction materials in WASH programme working area. The programme therefore established local entrepreneurs through different strategies to ensure accessibility of service delivery and sustainability. The programme established 1546 entrepreneurs or Rural Sanitation Centre (RSC); in each 1457 *Unions* (4th administrative structure of government) and 89 municipalities (*Peri-urban*) of 150 Upazilas (*sub-districts*) out of 482 *sub-district* of Bangladesh. This initiative was an outstanding achievement to meet the stimulated demand.

The major local entrepreneur's development strategies were as follows;

Demand Assessment

Identifying the demand was very important for programme implementation that's why BRAC WASH Programme conducted 'willingness to pay for improved sanitation' study through Research and Evaluation Division (RED) in 2007, and aimed to provide some insights into sanitation-related demand. The study results indicated that about 80% of the households were willing to pay for improved sanitation services. This study also found that about 92% households were preferred payment in monthly instalments. The mean

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willingness to pay was found to be BTd Tk. 69, if paid monthly instalments and Tk. 825 if paid in single payment (Seraj, 2008). The findings of this study helped tremendously to figure out the actual demand of community. So, programme has acknowledged who could supply the required demand than generated sanitation business through local sanitation entrepreneurs.

Identifying Potential Entrepreneur and Setting

Identifying the potential individual / entrepreneur and suitable location to access sanitary supply materials had other crucial issues. Most of the working areas were no potential entrepreneurs or individuals who could supply sanitary materials. At that time, there were a very few entrepreneurs existed in programme area while struggling with their business. The local people complained that some entrepreneurs were too far away from there territory. So, programme staffs were identified those vulnerable entrepreneurs and some individuals who can lead sanitation business at community level. The programme also selected convenient location to set up entrepreneur's production centre through the consultation of Village WASH committee (VWC) members with community perception.

Capacity Building

It was found that most of the local entrepreneurs have not enough knowledge to manufacture sanitary hardware materials and did not maintain the accurate procedure for building. So, Engineer of WASH Programme along with Sub Assistant Engineer of Department of Public Health Engineering (DPHE) conducted two days training programme to enhance their skills. The numbers of total 3,608 entrepreneurs have provided capacity building training and orientations.

Quality Assurance

Sanitary service delivery materials like toilet ring, pan, slab and etc did not maintain the good quality in earlier stage of this programme. Some individuals alleged that due to low quality of toilet construction materials are being broken down on the way and even after installed the toilet. It's prosecuted without coverage of sanitation. After that, programme staff with Engineer following upped continuously to ensure quality.

Technological Options and Prices

In programme area, the toilets construction of technology has gradually increased and several designs have been implemented around the country in order to suit geographical context and acceptability of individual's choice. There are therefore, different types of latrine technological options with related prices have been provided to the sanitation entrepreneurs for the community to ensure accountability.

Financial Support

Most of the entrepreneurs were financially vulnerable and considering their needs the programme also supported twice 10,000 (ten thousand taka or about US \$120.00 only) interest free loan to 1546 local entrepreneurs towards building and supply of sanitary service delivery materials. The financial support helped a lot to establish the local entrepreneurs in WASH area.

Strengthening Supply Chain

The entrepreneurs are being linked with different stakeholders like INGOs/NGOs, government agencies and individual buyers. The programme also supported entrepreneurs to find out appropriate wholesaler to buy internal or external raw materials like iron ring, cement, bricks sends aggregate, mansion and so on. There are several supply chains belongs into production to end consumers that's why programme always identifying as well as strengthening supply chain. The supply chain gap has been reduced by the programme that's why benefited both entrepreneurs as and consumers.

Value Chain Development

BRAC WASH programme has developed value chain to easy access service materials delivery among the entrepreneurs and consumers. The programme had controlled the sanitary raw material inputting movement chain upstream to downstream in rural sanitation centre. At each level of the chain, always reinforced and facilitated the local entrepreneur to deal convenient price to customer at community level. Programme also has been given market prices according to their expenses. The stranded amounts of material's value are being fixed so that both consumers and entrepreneurs could require expected costs. All entrepreneurs have been maintaining their register to calculate how many latrine set are retailed within one week/month, which is followed-up by WASH program staffs.

Advocacy

It is considered that sustainable water, sanitation and hygiene intervention cannot be sustainable without a perfect integration between entrepreneurs and consumers. Therefore, different marketing techniques, creative message development, and awareness-raising campaigns have delivered to the community. So, programme exponentially has been disseminating different advocacy programmes like behaviour change communication, hand washing demonstration, toilet using instruction, hygiene practice message, to aware the community.

Contribution of Entrepreneurs to Achieve National Sanitation Target in Bangladesh

The entrepreneur has made a significant contribution to access sanitary service delivery products and operation maintenances from beginning to end

of WASH programme phase one (150 Upazilas). In the beginning of this programme (2006), the national sanitation coverage was 39 % (JMP 2006, UNICEF Bangladesh 2006, UNDP 2006 and Kabir et al 2008) whereas in WASH programme working areas sanitation coverage was 31.5 % (BRAC WASH programme survey 2007). The present national sanitation coverage is 52 % (JMP/WHO/ UNICEF 2010 published 2011). On the other hand, now WASH working areas sanitation coverage is 80% (MIS data of WASH Programme 2011). Please note that due to climate hazard this these figures sometime fluctuates a bit. All latrines construction materials have been supplied through local entrepreneurs and it to be considering as an incredible contribution to sustain WASH programme. There is therefore, BRAC WASH programme contributed enamors to national achievement on sanitation. However, it was tremendous achievement of this programme. This achievement is not only for programme success but also outstanding business opportunity that creates a new horizon for local sanitation entrepreneurs in WASH area in Bangladesh.

Conclusion

The sustainable development on WASH sector cannot be effective if it is imposed or adopted from outside and inside until the community is convinced with accessibility of required service delivery materials. The establishments of local entrepreneurs were more significant to meet up the service delivery materials in WASH intervention areas. The local people can easily access reliable sources of sanitary construction materials through local entrepreneurs nowadays. Local entrepreneur establishment through different supports were more significant. BRAC as a world top and big organization and its sanitary entrepreneur development strategies can apply other stakeholders to achieve their respective costumers.

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