

The Daily Star

Monday November 20, 2006

Businesses should not make money at cost of social safety

Speakers say at BEI roundtable

[Star Business Report](#)

Businesses should make money, but that should not be done at the cost of social safety and sustainability, speakers observed at a roundtable in Dhaka yesterday.

The 14th version of the roundtable on Corporate Social Responsibility and Practices in Bangladesh organised by Bangladesh Enterprise Institute (BEI) is part of a dialogue series on CSR in Action held every month with a view to promoting CSR in the country.

Various issues of CSR practices and challenges in Bangladesh were pointed out at the discussion with BEI President Farooq Sobhan in the chair.

Syed Nasim Manzur, managing director, Apex Footware Limited, Mohiuddin Babar, head of Communications of Lafarge Surma Cement Limited, Tanya Selskaya, vice president of AIESEC Bangladesh, and Iftekar Ahmed, senior research fellow of BEI, among others, spoke on the occasion.

The participants said once CSR was just a term to many a people but by now it has turned into a business reality towards social responsibility and sustainable development.

Describing how Lafarge Surma Cement Limited practices CSR, Mohiuddin Babar said his company was very active in this regard and mentioned how it had undertaken various steps after acquiring 192 acres of land for establishing the industrial site that affected 467 persons.

To compensate these affected people, the cement company has come up with a resettlement action plan and taken community development programme in this line.

Under the basic health care service, the cement company has undertaken a programme, which led to a significant reduction in child and maternal mortality in that area.

He further said in 2001, child mortality rate in the project-area was 15 per cent while it came down to 8 percent due to the initiative.

In his keynote paper titled 'CSR Practices in Apex', Mominul Ahsan of Apex Footware Limited said under the CSR practice initiative from the community prospective, the footwear company has taken part in a beautification programme in Farmgate area in Dhaka. And it also funds an NGO for providing education for street children, he added.

In his remarks, Sobhan said the BEI serves as a platform to uphold and promote international CSR practices and mould them in the local context.