

SMC partners with icddr,b and USAID to fight tuberculosis in Bangladesh

SMC signed an agreement with icddr,b on September 22, 2020 for combating tuberculosis (TB) in Bangladesh under the financial assistance of USAID TB Local Organizations Network (LON) Project. The project will disburse an amount of US\$ 3.2 million and it will be implemented over the period of next three years.

Evidently, Bangladesh has one of the highest number of people infected by TB world-wide. Despite the country's tremendous progress to combat the disease over the past few years, significant efforts are necessary yet to support Bangladesh to reach the national strategic plan aligned with the EndTB 2025 and 2035 goals. The icddr,b-led consortium of five Bangladesh-based organizations – "The Alliance for Combating TB in Bangladesh (ACTB)" is developing strategies to fight against TB in response to

USAID's local organizations network (LON) project. As an alliance member, SMC will contribute to achieve the following two major objectives:

- Engage informal private providers to increase screening of presumptive cases and develop a mechanism to follow-up referral cases for treatment compliance.
- Involve community-level women entrepreneurs for screening and finding of presumptive cases at the community level.

SMC believes that collective efforts will help to achieve the overall goal of the consortium to eradicate TB from the country.

SMC Niltara Clinic – a beacon of hope during adversity



Laboratory Officer Mr. Masud Kaysar is providing Lab Service to a patient



Sonologist Dr. Raihana Ruman is providing USG Service to a pregnant mother

Since its inception in April 2018, SMC Niltara Clinic is committed to provide quality health care and diagnostic services at a subsidized rate to all segments of population. As a part of its social commitment in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak, it is rendering medical services continuously to serve humanity and more importantly, to the underprivileged segment of the community.

Evidently, non-Covid patients suffered a lot being deprived of the medical services when a number of private hospitals, clinics and chambers partially or in some cases fully suspended their services. Considering this situation, the clinic not only confined to diagnostic, consultation and medical treatment but also covered X-Ray, USG and lab services. The clinic in particular rendered services to the pregnant mothers after taking extra precaution at every level by addressing the risk of COVID-19 infection.

While carrying out its activities, the clinic strictly followed all health and hygiene related guidelines recommended by DGHS, GOB & WHO regarding COVID-19. SMC management took all possible preventive measures and provided Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for physicians and staff to protect them from the pandemic.

Despite facing a host of challenges, a total of 2,218 general health services, 817 specialized services (Medicine), 465 maternal health, 761 Ultrasonogram, 549 X-Ray, 268 ECG and 1,132 lab services were provided by SMC Niltara Clinic as of September 30, 2020 since the outbreak of pandemic. Moreover, the healthy environment and the quality of clinical service along with the dedicated physicians and staff, SMC Niltara Clinic earned immense trust and became the symbol of hope and confidence among the people of the locality.



Capacity Building of Blue Star Providers continues

The current pandemic sweeping throughout the country has done little to dampen the spirits of SMC's training team in their regular activities. The team has conducted 22 refresher training sessions following the WHO and IEDCR guidelines for COVID-19 in Narayanganj, Munshiganj, Sirajganj, Chandpur, Lakshmipur, Noakhali and Cumilla districts where 287 Blue Star providers (BSPs) were successfully trained during July-Sep 2020. Our training team imparted training on personal hygiene and physical distancing in addition to the regular training package. Their relentless efforts were driven by an aim to meet our social commitment through improving the knowledge and capacity of the BSPs for rendering quality services in the public health priority areas during the pandemic. The trainers also promoted SMC's newly launched 'Vermicid' (anthelmintics) and explained its efficacy to treat soil transmitted helminth infections. They also enlightened the providers with SMC's mission of launching the anthelmintic which can serve all the members of a family including the children above the age of two years. The training sessions also highlighted the COVID-19 essentials to enhance the awareness level of the providers and the community. The innumerable challenges faced by the BSPs while rendering services in the pandemic were also discussed along with possible models of solution.

Green Star Network takes on 247 new members



As a part of program expansion under the 'Green Star network', 247 new members were on board during the last fiscal (FY 2019-20) where a good number of basic training sessions (two days long) were organized with a limited number of participants (10-12) due to the outbreak of the pandemic COVID-19. The members (pharmacists, drug sellers, and non-graduate health care service providers) were selected on the basis of certain criteria and completed the basic training to become a certified Green Star Provider (GSP).

Our training sessions strictly adhered to all required health and safety measures such as thermal scanning, hand washing/sanitizing, wearing masks and physical distancing. The comprehensive training curriculum for GSPs enriched the participants' knowledge on specific public health issues covering injectable contraceptives, micronutrient powder, TB, safe delivery, use of Zinc in diarrhea and rational use of drugs, etc. After successful completion of the training, participants became experienced in providing over-the-counter health and family planning counseling, and services at the community level.

SMC observed World Population Day - 2020 in MISHD Intervention Areas

The World Population Day (WPD) was observed on July 11, 2020 across the globe in the midst of the outbreak of pandemic COVID-19. The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) observed the day in a befitting manner led by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW). The Ministry observed this year's WPD on virtual platforms across the country following the national theme "মহামারী কোভিড-১৯ কে প্রতিরোধ করি, নারী ও কিশোরীদের সুস্বাস্থ্যের অধিকার নিশ্চিত করি" in accordance with the global theme "Putting the brakes on COVID-19: how to safeguard the health and rights of women and girls now."

Stressing the need and importance of the theme, SMC's community mobilization program 'Notun Din' commemorated the day in its intervention areas, adhering to World Health Organization and GoB recommended health related guidelines. Major objectives in this regard were to raise awareness about reproductive health, vulnerabilities of women and girls during the pandemic, their health rights and

healthy well-being. On this occasion, implementing partners of SMC's Marketing Innovations for Sustainable Health Development (MISHD) program organized special courtyard meetings and discussion sessions with the adolescent girls, married women of reproductive age and newlywed couples.

The meetings were attended by the prominent members of the community and the elected local government representatives.

This year, SMC's MISHD implementing partner PSTC received the best NGO award from district health & family planning and local government departments in recognition to their outstanding

contribution in raising awareness among the intended audience groups on issues relating to family planning, maternal and child health, adolescents' sexual and reproductive health, nutrition, child marriage, etc. in ten Upazilas of Kishoreganj, Noakhali and Lakshmipur districts.





E-commerce platform: A new marketing approach of SMC EL

Sudden grip of COVID-19 took us all by surprise which is still causing the global havoc. Many businesses suffered during the on and off lockdown periods and many more still continue to suffer. While the risks are high during this period of isolation and uncertainty there are also some new opportunities that are growing exponentially with a radical behavioral change in the shopping pattern of consumers. We have seen a dramatic shift of consumers towards e-commerce. In view of the current consumer behavior and market trend, SMC EL has recently partnered with popular e-commerce platforms, namely: Chaladal, Daraz, Priyoshop, Ghorebazar, Othoba, Eorange, Shohoz, Amader Bazar BD, Shajgoj, Delivery Hobey, etc. to stay closer to its customers. As a part of its strategic move, a flagship online store has been secured on the e-commerce platform 'Daraz' to showcase SMC's products more conveniently. On the occasion of 6th anniversary of Daraz, a week-long consumer promotion campaign was also launched on the platform from August 30 to September 5, 2020. With such a major stride taken in terms of increasing its products reach to online shoppers, SMC's overall competitiveness eventually is more secured in the market keeping its brand value at the top of mind of the consumers.

Joya "Nari Nokkhotro" special episode aired on RTV

A special episode of the Joya "Nari Nokkhotro" was aired on popular satellite TV channel RTV on August 15, 2020 focusing the role of SMC's Joya Sanitary Napkin in Menstrual Hygiene Management and thereby promoting female hygiene. Eminent Gynaecologist Prof. Rashida Begum and Joya Sanitary Napkin's Brand Ambassador Ms. Nusraat Faria graced the episode and discussed the importance of menstrual hygiene management. Mr. Khandaker Shamim Rahman, General Manager, Marketing Division of SMC Enterprise Limited also spoke on the occasion highlighting Joya's commendable initiative to educate and aware also issues related to women empowerment and advancement.



SMC Germ Kill Hand Sanitizer TVC aired in local media



In the backdrop of high demand in the society for health and hygiene practice during the COVID-19 pandemic and sensing its urgency, SMC EL released a television commercial (TVC) to promote its newly launched Hand Sanitizer 'Germ Kill'. The TVC aims to sensitize people about the importance of hand washing and maintaining hygiene for personal safety and protection in the wake of the outbreak of the pandemic. It also aims to emphasize on how Germ Kill instant hand sanitizer can help reducing the spread of germs causing Coronavirus and other contagious diseases. Considering higher reach and viewership during the festivals, the TVC was launched on the day of Holy Eid-ul-Fitr and aired on a number of leading local television channels. Along with the TVC, the brand was also promoted through News Section branding as "Coronavirus News Update" in two popular news channels. The TVC reached out to its target audience and achieved better brand positioning shortly after its introduction. Many retailers from various points of purchase requested for the item owing to its high demand. This was possible due to higher media exposure which popularized the new brand and created top of mind brand awareness amongst consumers.

SMC Pharma network expanded

As a part of its efforts to expand its business horizons, SMC's Pharma Division recently made its footprint in the port city Chattogram by launching its sixth business zone.

Identifying Chattogram having a huge market potential, SMC expects to ensure increased customer demand by adding 750 doctors and generating 3,000 prescriptions (Rx) monthly and thereby maintaining a

consistent revenue growth of Pharma Division. Stepping into the fourth year of its operation with a slogan "prescribe humanity" with the objective "No one should suffer, especially the less privileged due to lack of affordable quality medicine" the said expansion has also created job opportunities for 50 new Medical Information Officers (MIOs) and thus adding value to the society and the economy as well.

A star stopped twinkling forever



SMC family deeply mourns the sad demise of Mr. Mohammed Mainuddin, Field Executive of SMC Pharma Division who breathed his last on August 5, 2020 while undergoing treatment at Cumilla Medical College Hospital being infected with COVID-19. "Inna Lillahi Wa Innailaihi Raji'oun". Mr. Mainuddin was an enthusiastic and efficient member of our sales team. He was awarded the Best Achievement Award in the last Pharma Sales Conference (2018-2019) for his extraordinary performance. We pray to Almighty Allah for the eternal peace of his departed soul in heaven. May Allah give forbearance to the members of the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss.

Counterfeit ORSaline-N factory seized

The Rajshahi Area Office of SMC has recently identified certain irregularities in the market demand of ORSaline-N in Pabna district. After observing the market behavior intensely, the perpetrator was finally identified and nabbed who was trying to sabotage the goodwill of the brand and tarnish the reputation of the company.

It was unearthed when Mr. Md. Rafiqul Islam, Sr. Territory Sales Officer (TSO), Pabna caught a supplier red-handed while supplying fake ORSaline-N in a drug store at a remarkably reduced price. He immediately lodged a complain to the law enforcing agency which led to the arrest of an individual namely Alamgir, the owner of the counterfeit ORSaline-N factory on June 26, 2020. Police conducted a

subsequent drive on July 16, 2020 and a huge amount of counterfeit ORSaline-N along with its manufacturing equipments were confiscated from Nagorpur Upazila under Tangail district. Till now, three accused members were arrested for driving such illicit trading in Pabna.



Meanwhile, a press conference was held in this regard where Mr. Sheikh Rafiqul Islam, BPM, PPM, Superintendent of Police (SP), Pabna; other senior officials of Pabna Police Department along with the officials of SMC Rajshahi Area Office were present. On this occasion, Mr. Md. Shafiqul Islam, SMC's Head of North-South Region extended thanks and appreciation to the Police Department for their

support and also lauded the role played by Mr. Md. Rafiqul Islam, Sr. Territory Sales Officer for his sincerity and loyalty towards the Company.

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