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Social inclusive approach by developing women entrepreneurship: A Nestlé's way of creating shared values in Pakistan

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Abstract

Nestlé Pakistan is a subsidiary of Swiss multinational company Nestlé. The company is known for its quality food products throughout the world. It commits to helping shape a better and healthier world and inspire people to live healthier lives. Nestlé Pakistan shares Nestlé Global's three overarching ambitions for 2030 to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by helping 50 million children live healthier lives, helping to improve 30 million livelihoods in communities directly connected to its business activities, and striving for zero environmental impact in its operations. Nestlé is also globally committed to 100% recyclable or reusable plastic by 2025. This exploratory case study looks into the ethical practices under which Nestlé contributes to the social cause in Pakistan. Rural women's enrolment as sales agents for the Nestle products initiative under its CSV (Community Shared Values) project starts with the Nutrition, Health, and Wellness (NHW) awareness of women in the rural setting of Punjab Province. The program was designed with two objectives: a) Better livelihood for financially disadvantaged women and their families and b) Demand generation of Nestle products in deep rural areas of Pakistan. This case has been written in the context of UNGC's ten principles of ethical businesses. This case informs the reader of innovative business development with social initiatives by extending Nestlé International's legacy of socially responsible business, focusing on enterprising rural women of Pakistan.

1 Introduction

Being part of academics, the author of this case has a special interest in finding theoretical concepts taking shapes at the grassroots (Bramsen & Hagemann, 2023). In this pursuit, while going through the website of Nestle Pakistan and other writings, the abbreviation CSV (Creating Shared Values) mentioned in one of its publications aroused

the interest of the author to find how a multinational corporate entity is creating shared values in Pakistan (Rahat, 2021). This general query in mind led to specific questions, such as: is it possible for an MNC operating in Pakistan to afford to create shared values going beyond the philanthropic approach? If it is so, what could be the motivation behind it? What could be the mechanism for converting this concept into reality? Who are the beneficiary of CSV? And above all, level of such program's impact is important to know.

The questions in mind necessitated a meeting with the right person at Nestle Pakistan for more information. Mr. Rahat, Manager of Public Affairs at Nestle, was contacted, and a meeting was convened in the author's office. In the meeting, passing through the peripheries of talking on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and ethical businesses, the much-discussed concepts and practices in academia and the corporate world alike, Mr. Rahat informed the author that the year 2017 has been a defining year for Nestle Pakistan when the company started multiple projects on community engagements through its CSV program. Under the program, the company impacts three important areas – Individuals and families, communities, and the planet – in collaboration with various public and non-profit organizations. Before 2017, Nestle had already acquired memberships of various national and international institutions which promote ethical and value-based businesses. We also decided on a date for the visit of the 'outlets' of Nestlé BISP agents and the author visited the field along with the Nestle mobilizers team in two districts of Punjab, Pakistan (Rahat 2021).

This is an exploratory-cum descriptive case to find good business ethical practices and it rolls out with Nestle's contribution to the social cause internationally, Nestle Pakistan's CSV (Creating Shared Values) approach for community development through the Public Private Partnership project. The project starts with the Nutrition, Health and Wellness (NHW) awareness of rural women and their enrolment as sales agents for Nestle products. These two simultaneous steps pass through the rural women's sales training, and micro-level entrepreneurship development, leading to the demand generation of Nestle products in deep rural areas of Pakistan and better livelihood for financially disadvantaged women and their families.

2 Nestlé Global: Origin and Growth

The company was established in 1860 in Switzerland by the founder Henri Nestlé with the first baby food formula which was economical and a healthy baby product to serve as an alternative to breastfeeding for the mothers. The baby food, 'Farine Lactée' was first marketed in Europe, and comprised cow's milk, flour and sugar.

The Nestlé Company was sold to Jules Monnerat, the owner of Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company In 1874 who developed its own condensed milk to compete in the baby formula food's emerging market. Nestle continued with its own name for about 30 years and then the two companies merged under the title Nestlé' in 1905. A year later, Nestlé added chocolate to its food product line (Linda, 2015).

Gradually, Nestlé's product line expanded in diversified FMCGs, yet in related areas, such as baby food, cereals, coffee, confectionery, dairy products, ice cream, frozen food, snacks pet foods, medical food and bottled water. Twenty-nine of Nestlé's brands' (including Kit Kat, Smarties, Nesquik, Stouffer's, Vittel, and Maggihave, Nespresso, Nescafé) annual sales of about US\$1.1 billion (Nestle 2014). Besides, It held a stock share of L'Oreal which was one the largest cosmetics companies globally (Dand, 2022).

Nestlé ranked No. 64 amongst the five hundred Fortune Companies in 2017 and No. 33 as the largest public company on the 2016 edition of the Forbes Global 2000 list (Fortune Global 500 List, 2017). As per a 2018 report, by measure of revenues and other metrics, it has been the largest multinational food company in the world since 2014 and it operates in 189 countries with 447 factories employing 339,000 people globally (Benea-Popușoi & Casapu, 2021).

2.1 Caring at the Core of Nestle

Human caring and lifesaving have been at the core of Nestlé as its first product 'Farine Lactée', was launched with compassion for the premature babies doctors had given up on treating. Caring and compassion for lives on the planet are very much evident in Nestle's mission and vision. Nestle expresses its mission through its tagline "**Good Food, Good Life**" to provide customers with good taste, and nutritious choices in its offered food & beverage categories and eating occasions, from morning to night. Through this mission, Nestle is set to be a leading nutrition, health and wellness company with improved shareholder value, a preferred corporate citizen, a good employer, and a good selling brand.

The leadership's commitment to the vision and mission reflected in their message appeared in the "Tackling Child Labor Report" in "Cocoa Plan" published as:

"This is the right thing to do for everyone - from the farmers who grow the cocoa to the consumers who enjoy our chocolate around the world"

(Cocoa Plan, 2019, p-4).

At the ground level, Nestlé is improving quality of life and helping to achieve a healthier future through its non-business approaches too by touching the lives of millions all across the world. Following are the social programs/projects operational internationally in the West African region where such initiatives are changing people's lives. Some of the initiatives are mentioned below in the proceeding sections.

2.2 Child Labor Monitoring and Remediation System (CLMRS)

Nestlé, through its CLMRS, reached out to 40,728 children in Côte d'Ivoire, Southern West Africa, in five years, from 2012 to 2017 amongst them about 7000 were engaged in harmful and hazardous work. Under this project by awareness raising, suggesting remedial measures, providing technical support and continuous monitoring, the majority (51%) of those children are out of the dangerous engagements. In the last five years till 2021, this project has reached and covered 78,580 children in Côte d'Ivoire. Further, the project is being scaled up by adding access to quality education for the children (Cocoa Plan, 2019).

2.3 Literacy is Priceless

Bridge Schools under its 'Literacy is Priceless' program is a project in Côte d'Ivoire's cocoa belt which helps kids in cocoa communities back into education. Nestlé Cocoa Plan organizes activities at a community level to stop child labor. This virtual classroom benefits the children of women workers preparing them to improve their results at school and to remain in the education system for a longer period. This, ultimately, tackles the challenges of child labor and helps improve farmers and their families' lives by promoting education in the improvised environment of the Cocoa fields.

2.4 Community Liaison People (CPL)

CLP system nominated 1,640 cocoa community members to record cases of child labor and monitor children's progress. The members visit homes and visits farms to observe activities in their community. Since the year 2012, a good number (87,925) of community children within and outside the Nestlé Cocoa Plan have received child labor prevention support.

3 Nestlé Pakistan

Nestlé Pakistan was founded in 1988 in a joint venture with Milkpak as a subsidiary of Swiss multinational company (Withisuphakorn et al., 2019). Based in Lahore, it is leading in the Pakistani market with dairy, confectionery, coffee, nutrition products and drinking water. After acquiring Milkpak Nestle Pakistan further expanded with production capacity by having factories located in Sheikhpura and Kabirwala (Nestle Pakistan, 2011). As per the Nestlé Management Report (2018), the company has a turnover of Rs. 140 billion and it contributes Rs 20 billion to the government under the heads of taxes. Being one of the biggest producers the indigenous materials and local employer, Nestlé Pakistan pays Rs. 20 billion to farmers for purchases of fresh milk and disbursed Rs. 12 billion to the employees.

Nestlé Pakistan's mission is to enhance the quality of life and contribute to people's health. It inspires people to live healthy and shape a better world. Nestlé Pakistan shares Nestlé Global's three overarching ambitions for 2030 to achieve the SDGs by promoting children's healthier lives and to help the communities improve 30 million livelihoods by connecting to its business activities and have control of the environmental negative impact of the company's operations. Nestlé has a commitment to 100% reusable plastic globally by 2025 (Nestlé Management Report, 2018, CSV Report, 2018). Nestlé Pakistan is pursuing its ambitions through the Creating Shared Values (CSV) program. CSV is a Nestlé Pakistan's corporate social responsibility initiative which is unique in the sense that it goes beyond the concept of corporate philanthropy and is based on sustainable human development in the rural areas which is women entrepreneurship developments. A brief explanation of CSV is as under in section 3.1

3.1 CSV

Nestlé Pakistan carries the legacy of Nestle Global of social work and strongly believes in creating shared value for the communities (Withisuphakorn et al., 2019). CEO of Nestlé Pakistan Freda Yahan Duplan expresses her commitment in the following words.

“Nestlé Pakistan believes in Creating Shared Value (CSV) for the communities in which it works and lives. The health of our company is intrinsically linked to the health and resilience of the society we operate in; this is why Nestlé’s purpose is to enhance quality of life and contribute to a healthier futures; this is why Nestlé’s purpose is to enhance quality of life and contribute to healthier future” (CSV Report, 2018, p-1)

At Nestle, under the CSV, family focus is embedded in its purpose. Families, communities and the planet are supported through 41 specific commitments of Nestlé. Through these commitments, Nestlé Pakistan is on the way to meet the ambition for 2030 set in the SDGs. The three focused areas ‘Individuals and Families’, ‘Communities’ and ‘Planet’ are presented in Figure 1 and are explained below briefly for understanding CSV activities as practical interventions. Besides, under the CSV program, there are other regular projects, such as: ‘Chaunsa Project’, ‘Drivers Safety Project’, ‘Employee Volunteer Project’ and ‘Community Engagement Projects.

3.2 For Individuals & Families

Nestlé Pakistan, for a healthier future, is promoting and applying nutritional knowledge in its operations and also sharing the same with the communities through its various programs and projects. It believes hydration and nutrition contribute to the management and treatment of diseases. Nestlé takes pride as the leading NHW (Nutrition, Health and Wellness) Company; the company is dedicating its field force to creating awareness of health and nutrition among the communities and consumers. Nestlé products are the flag bearers of quality and NHW and it builds its credentials further with continuous R&D

Under the CSV, the ‘Nestle Healthy Kids’ project is reaching 140,000 plus children in the urban semi-urban and villages of Pakistan. Besides, 4000 young women, nationwide, through universities are benefitting from the Healthy Women Project. Under this project,

they are being informed about nutritional knowledge and smart nutrition choices for a healthy life.

3.3 For Communities

At the community level, Nestlé Pakistan is contributing to the improvements in livelihoods and it is developing farmer communities with a focus on girl children and women. Nestlé Pakistan's Healthy Women Program is benefitting rural women through group learning sessions. The sessions cover the healthy life of adolescent girls and old women aiming at improving their nutrition knowledge and practices.

- Balanced and healthier diet
- Sources of nutrients and healthier diet requirement
- Hygiene, hydration and food safety

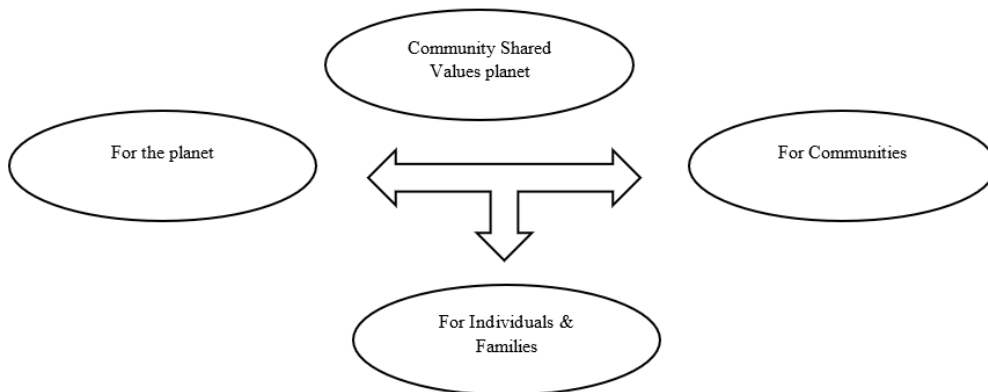
Further Nestlé's Rural Deep Reach Project has collaborated with the Benazir Income Support Program¹ (BISP) to provide livelihood to its members by developing them entrepreneurs. This collaboration is Nestlé Pakistan's consideration that the low-income women segment of the population may become entrepreneurs if they are provided popularity-positioned products (PPPs) of Nestlé to sell in their own environment. Till the end of 2019, 1000 plus beneficiaries of these products have become Sales agents of Nestlé Pakistan in Sindh and Punjab. Nestlé Pakistan launched the 'Healthy Women Project' focusing on BISP beneficiaries to impart relevant nutrition knowledge to them. Besides, in collaboration with the 'Prime Minister Youth Business Plan' (PMYBL), Nestlé Pakistan's engagement with banks facilitates farmers in farm extension, cow purchase and farm mechanization with the help of competitive financing solutions. In 2017 alone, through this facility, loans amounting to Rs. 447 million have been disbursed. Further, Rs. 14.5 million collateral-free loans were disbursed by Telenor to 80 farmers via digital means.

¹ The Government of Pakistan launched the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) – the National Cash Transfer Programme (NCTP) – in July 2008, as the premier safety net institution in Pakistan. It provides Rs. 5000 tri-monthly to the selected women.

3.4 For the Planet

Nestlé Pakistan has introduced the concept of showing respect to the future generation in its manufacturing units and operational areas. Nestlé Pakistan's water plan was launched in 2017 through a collective action to face water shortages by having a grassroots-level partnership. Nestle takes pride in being the first winner of Alliance for Water Stewardship (AWS) certification for its Sheikhpura factory. In partnership with WWF-Pakistan and the Punjab government AWS Standard was implemented on 68 acres of land near its factory to promote drip irrigation for saving water. AWS is saving millions of liters of water in this way in Punjab. As part of Nestlé's collaborative approach; partnered with LUMS, SDPI and PARC 60,000 people benefit from the clean water facilities established near its factories.

Figure 1



3.5 Shared Values and Women Entrepreneurship

Rural community has already been on priority for Nestlé Pakistan. Be the supplies of fresh milk, fresh fruits or other food ingredients, it has a strong relationship with the community as they are the backbone of its supply chain. Through its experience, Nestlé Pakistan found women in leading roles in farming and improvising daily life with a meager amount of household income in the rural areas. Hence building upon its experience with the community, Nestlé Pakistan, under the CSV program, decided to bring the financially disadvantaged women into the mainstream of society by making them small-scale

entrepreneurs under the title 'Nestlé BISP Rural Women Sales Program'. Nestlé Pakistan's project is an innovative concept of empowering disadvantaged people going beyond the philanthropic approach. The uniqueness of this project is that helping people without compromising the principles of business is in the line of Confucius's golden thought "Give a Man a Fish, and You Feed Him for a Day. Teach a Man To Fish, and You Feed Him for a Lifetime". To take the project on the ground, Nestle had to formulate a mechanism for the project on business lines. There were the following challenges to convert the idea into a practical women empowerment activities:

- Women entrepreneurship; a non-traditional role
- Social awareness raising
- Identification of the interested and capable women
- Capacity building (Entrepreneurship & Health)
- Developing supply chain
- Arrangement of finances for seed money

Promotion of Women's Enterprises is seen as an important way for women empowerment throughout the developing world as the advantages of women's entrepreneurship are varied and many, and Pakistan is no exception. Increased women entrepreneurship has a positive effect on poverty alleviation and overall enhanced employment levels leading to economic prosperity. Nestle reached out to the BISP² to get the right candidate from the list of the BISP beneficiaries for recruiting them as Nestlé BISP Rural Women Sales Agents. The right candidate's criteria are to have passed primary school, know elementary math, can write and have a willingness with a belief to make a difference and change their economic conditions by working themselves. In Pakistan, it has been observed that women are willing to undertake entrepreneurial activities driven by

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their desire for self-fulfillment and pride. Pakistani women entrepreneurs are hard workers too. However, the traditional gender role defines men as breadwinners and the position of women at home in Pakistan, consequently, the women entrepreneurs' numbers are insignificant in comparison to men. Thus, Pakistani women suffer lifelong poverty (Hussain, Mahmood & Scott, 2018). Drucker (2014) endorses that there is a direct link between women's economic development and improvement in the overall well-being of a community/country. Despite this reality, the women entrepreneur abilities remain untapped in Pakistan.

For women entrepreneurship, microfinancing has proved its worth in Bangladesh and other developing countries. However, the qualitative discriminatory practices in lending, in Pakistan, lead Pakistani women to find other sources of capital to start and sustain their businesses. Microfinance loans for businesses are largely unavailable to women entrepreneurs, particularly to unmarried women who are considered high-risk borrowers. Microfinance providers generally set strict criteria that make it tough for women entrepreneurs to get loans without the help of men. Research data showed, 68 percent of women required a male relative's guarantee and permission to qualify for the entrepreneurial loan.

A study was conducted in the four cities of Pakistan (Multan, Faisalabad, Sargodha and Sialkot) over a period of 6 to 8 months by The British Journal of Education, Society & Behavioral Science to explore the barriers for women in becoming an entrepreneur in Pakistan. The result revealed that factors like limited access to finance, control of women's mobility, lack of role models, men-dominated markets and gender discrimination were the main barriers in the way of women entrepreneurship in Pakistan.

Hence there was a big challenge to prepare men in the Nestle's catchment area to allow their women to become Nestlé BISP Rural Women Sales Agent. For this purpose, the Sales team had meetings regularly with the men, women and prominent persons in the catchment areas and shared information related to the linkages between prosperity and women empowerment. The team was successful in convincing most of the selected people and could enroll women as Nestlé BISP Sales Agents.

Responsibility for capacity building and supply chain design was assumed by Nestlé's CSV program and for finances, Akhuwat³ was approached. With a joint initiative of the three organizations for women's empowerment, a good public-private partnership (PPP) model emerged. Project details are given in the proceeding sections. Having the importance and barriers in the way of women entrepreneurship discussed above, Nestle Pakistan designed the project of women entrepreneurship for women empowerment in the rural areas of Pakistan.

4 The Project

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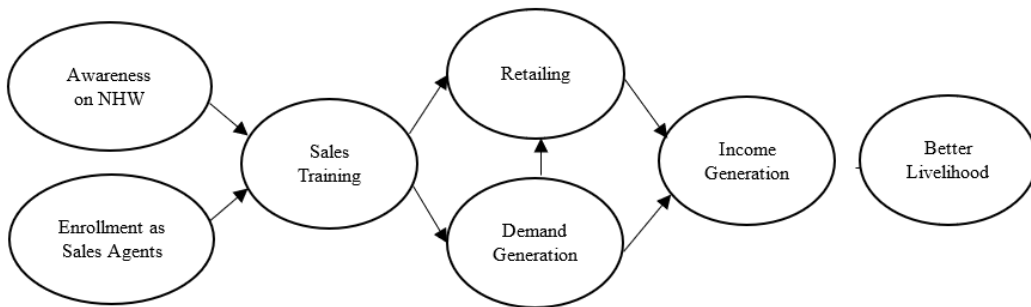
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Figure 2 Project Frame Work

4.1 Milestones and Growth

- Nestle Pakistan signed an MOU with BISP in 2017
- 30 women sales agents were prepared for a pilot project with an investment of Rs. One million in Renala district.
- The project was expanded to 10 districts with 387 sales agents and 19 million's investment in 2018.
- In 2019, sales agents' numbers increased to 800 and beyond and improvised sales out let established in 24 districts in Punjab and Sindh with an investment of Rs.50 million.
- In 2020 the project will have its presence in the semi-urban areas of Punjab and the number of sales agents has reached 1000.

4.2 CSV Programs Impact

The Nestlé BISP Rural Women Sales Agent project is successful in the sense that first time in the history of the Pakistani corporate world, a multinational company has sensitized the men and women for empowerment through entrepreneurship (Nestle, 2021). A significant number of women have received health-related awareness and training, and a

good number of the women are adding to their household incomes for better living. More particularly:

- About 200,000 men and women in the project catchment areas are sensitized about the concept and importance of women empowerment.
- 50,000 women have been given awareness of health and hygiene in their daily life
- 1000 women have been developed as entrepreneur
- 1000 families in rural areas are having increased household incomes
- In deep rural areas, people are having accesses to the quality water, juices and other products by Nestlé Pakistan.
- Developed market, up to some extent, for quality FMCGs in rural areas

5 Future outlook of the Programs

The way, Nestlé Pakistan is penetrating the deep rural areas with its social activities under the CSV program, will educate millions of (this is not very clear), thousands of women will be given nutrition awareness and develop women entrepreneurs in significant numbers in rural, sub-urban areas of Pakistan where it is much needed. Besides, by building the capacity of drivers, farmers and employees for the social cause in rural, Nestlé Pakistan is strengthening the governments' rural development programs. Under the program, the company's present contributions will further increase in protecting the ecological system of the country by saving energy, and water and reduction in greenhouse gas emissions.

Presently, the CSV program is operating in Punjab and Sindh's few districts. By 2022, the program will be extended to half of the total districts available in these two provinces and by 2025, the CSV will reach the KPK province and a couple of districts of Baluchistan. Pakistan, Nestlé's social vision at the global level as well as in Pakistan worth following

by other for-profit organizations for creating a prosperous and sustainable indigenous society.

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