

IMPACT SERIES-5



NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (NDP)

Dedicated towards improving livelihoods of the poor people



**Raihan Kabir, Successful
beet root cultivator**

Farmers have become interested in beetroot cultivation

Farmers of Jhaoil village in Kamarkhanda upazila of Sirajganj district are now very interested in beetroot cultivation. Even a few days ago they used to cultivate traditional agriculture. Many still cultivate as before. But seeing the success of Md. Raihan Kabir's beetroot cultivation, many farmers of the village have now started beetroot cultivation. Beetroot cultivation is very profitable. Rural farmers are benefiting a lot from the various suggestions of the NDP's agricultural extension program. Md. Raihan Kabir is one of them.

Md. Raihan Kabir, son of Md. Ismail Sheikh of Baradhul village in Jhaoil union of Kamarkhanda upazila of Sirajganj district. Raihan has long been deeply involved in traditional agriculture in Bangladesh. Modern farming system is completely unfamiliar to him. He has no knowledge of various new crops invented by Bangladesh Agricultural Research Institute.

Meanwhile, Raihan has to work hard to pay for his two children's education and family expenses. Thus, his domestic life has been going on for 25 years. In this situation, Nurul Islam got acquainted with the officer of NDP's agriculture extension program. The aftermath is different.

Wife Sathi Khatun is a member of Shiuli Mahila Samiti of NDP Bagbari branch. Staff of NDP talked to her about family status and what crops he used to cultivate in agriculture. It is known in the meeting that modern agriculture does not know much. When asked by the staff of the agricultural unit to cultivate beetroot as a high yielding new crop on only 14 decimal of his land, she did not agree at first. The crop is new in Sirajganj district. Finally Raihan in consultation with his wife agreed to cultivate beetroot on 14 decimal of the land. In the financial year 2020-21, the member took demonstration as a high yielding new crop of beetroot. Beetroot is a 70 days vegetable. The total cost cultivation of 14 decimal is only BDT 5200.

The total production of beetroot is 360 Kg. It is sold at BDT 45 per kg. The total value is BDT 16200. The net profit of the farmer is BDT 11000. Raihan was inspired by cultivating new crops. Seeing the success of Raihan's beetroot cultivation, many farmers of Baradhul village have become interested in beetroot cultivation. They don't want any kind of grants. They just want technical assistance from Organization.



Taslima, hanging the finished thread for dying.

Women collectively threading their way to a brighter future

Sirajganj district, also referred to as the Gateway to the North Bengal, is known for its handloom cottage industries. More than half of its three million populations are involved with this business in some capacity, particularly women. Similar to most other regions of Bangladesh, Sirajganj is in the great delta region making it prone to floods and river erosion. This, in turn, affects the livelihood of the dwellers where productions could be halted at any time due to flood water inundating houses including handloom machines. It is in this district where CARE's SHOUHARDO-III has supported 33,200 poor and extreme-poor (PEP) households since 2015.

Taslima Begum lives with her husband, two daughters, and in-laws in Belkuchi upazila of Sirajganj district. She is a hand spinner; a profitable skill inherited from her parents, and has been producing thread for last ten years. Having been with SHOUHARDO-III since its inception where she received livelihoods and life skills trainings, learned how to communicate and negotiate for her needs as well as to successfully network with other hand spinners and potential buyers in the village. She developed a good relation with the female ward member of the local government body (Union Parishad) and occasionally attends meeting organized by UP to bring to the attention her group members' and other problems of her village. These acquired soft skills made her an exemplary candidate to become the group leader of the Adult Female Group in Aguirra village.

Taslima and the other group members meet monthly and catch up with each other on how they are achieving their group's aspirations. **"We talk about everything – the good things happening with our lives such as lesser expenditure on health emergencies, including the challenges. Together, we find solutions to however member of our group would have any concern. We know who to reach out too in case of any problem we may have"**, she shared.

Taslima and the other women in her village are part of the handloom industry as second largest part of employment in Bangladesh, next to agriculture. It can be a tedious job where, from Taslima's experience, can take up to seven days to process 250 bundles of thread for which she earns 240 BDT (3 USD). Potential buyers or traders are not regular in their village. Individually, Taslima and other spinners produce comparatively lower quantities that could not be priced fairly for selling, but collectively, their production (with other 15 women) make a good quantity to sell to buyers for which they can negotiate a fair price. In the last few years, they had to wait for at least one month before the thread could be collected.

At their own initiative and in the successful collaboration with other groups in their village, the women came up with the action plan to collectively hire a rickshaw driver to transport the threads they produce to neighboring villages weekly. By dividing the cost of the transportation of about 400 BDT (5 USD) per trip, Taslima and 10 other women contribute regularly to have their threads collected on an agreed schedule. By this approach, their weekly earnings doubled to approximately 480 BDT (6 USD) and they no longer have their thread production sitting idle for a month. Taslima happily shared, **"I can contribute more for my children's education and buy nutritious food. We own our group very much and feel strong since we approach life challenges collectively by forming network among all women in the village through this group."**



Mimi Khatun, student of Rajshahi University

Students are influenced by education programme

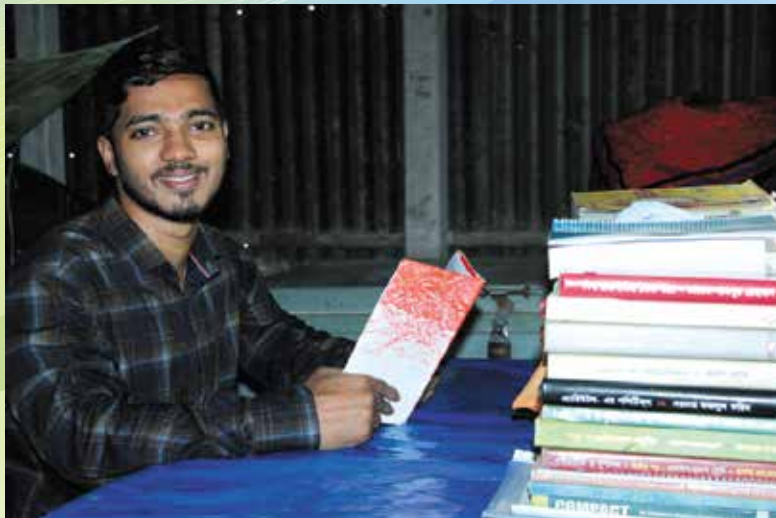
NDP has been working on education program for almost 10 years. NDP is implementing various educational activities so that the education of poor and meritorious students is not hampered. Education scholarship is one of them. Scholarships are being provided to students studying from fifth grade to university. The amount of education scholarship varies from BDT 500 to BDT 3,000 per month. Many are studying at university with scholarships from NDP. Among them young boy Hafez Shaodagor comes from a very poor family in Kaliya at Sadar Upazila of Sirajganj district. His father Md. Hormuz Ali is a rickshaw puller and mother work at home. Md Hormuz ali has 4 children and all are married now except Hafez. Due to financial crisis, their family decided to give their marriage earlier. Elder son of Hormuz Ali become separated from their family after married and leaves the care of his family. On the other hand Hafez was brilliant student from childhood but his family was not able to continue his education.

He continues his study and took part in the SSC examination with great difficulty. He passed SSC with GPA-5 and admitted to college. Again he got a good result and stood 12th position in Rajshahi Board. He wants to continue his study and getting a chance in a Public University. He could not admitted and help from the rich people.

At that time, when his story was published in a local newspaper in Sirajganj district through a neighbor brother, it came to the notice of Executive Director of NDP Md. Alauddin Khan. Later he made all the arrangements for admission. And to continue his studies, he was included in the education programme implemented by the organization.

Not only Hafeez but also Mimi Khatun is now studying at Rajshahi University with the help of NDP scholarship. But at one point his studies were about to stop.

About 105 others, such as Hafez and Mimi, are currently on scholarships. Scholarships are being given on monthly and quarterly basis as per the rules and regulations of the organization. The assistance is being provided from the organization's own funds. At the same time, there is a one-time scholarship scheme in collaboration with Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF).



Md Hafez Shaodagor, student of Rajshahi University



Shaheb Ali in front of his shop

Shaheb Ali is the inspiration of differently abled people of the society

Md. Saheb Ali Sekh (56) is a resident of Bhadraghat union under Kamarkhanda upazila of Sirajganj district. His parents were Md. Aziz Bhuiyan and Mst. Simon Begum. Md. Shaheb Ali was born in a poor family. He grew up like other normal children. He contracted rheumatic fever when he was 6 years old and suffered about a year. The solution to this problem is treated by various Kabirajs. His fever has little improved by Ayurvedic treatment. Then he admitted to Rajshahi Medical College by his parents. He was admitted there for 4 months but unfortunately there was no improvement in treatment.

Since then his hip joint has been contracted from below. He can't stand, the flexor muscle contraction of both legs. Due to this problem he crawls.

In 2005, after receiving the news from Mr. Ali, the program associate of Disability and development programme came to the notice.

Then NDP programme officer went to his home to discuss with his family about his treatment. NDP also provided awareness counselling to CHDRP including providing various therapies to Mr. Ali.

When Mr. Ali was 25 years old, special training was arranged from NDP to involve him in income-generating activities. At the end of the training, he was given a service charge-free loan. In addition to this, a tricycle is provided to bring the goods for his Shop from the market easily. He gives a shop at home with debt money. He buys goods with the money for shop and after he pays monthly instalment from his income. To enlarge his shop, he takes a service charge-free loan from NDP's Disability and Development Program every year and repays the loan properly.

Seeing his success, his parents and relatives got him married. He currently has one son and one daughter. His daughter and son both are married. He has purchased 33 decimals of land with his own income.

After seeing this success of Mr. Ali, many more disabled people have started to get involved in various income-generating activities including providing various types of shops. Shaheb Ali received the first award from the District Social Service Office, Sirajganj on the occasion of National Disability Day in 2019.



Saiful Islam, Dragon Fruit cultivator

Saiful is a pioneer successful entrepreneur in dragon fruits cultivation

Md. Saiful Islam is a man of Gauripur village in Halsa Union of Natore. It is about 5 km away from Natore Sadar. His father Md. Mozaffar has only 50 decimals of land including resident. By cultivating this land, it became difficult for his father to run a family of 8/9 people alone. Then he started working as a day laborer for others.

On the one hand it is not possible to provide food and on the other hand it is not possible for him to educate the children. So his eldest son Md. Saiful Islam started selling labor on other people's land like his father as a day laborer. In the meantime, Saiful got married in 1998 on the advice of his parents when he was old enough to get married. Within two years of marriage a son is born and within 4/5 year a daughter come to his family.

As his father got older, he stopped selling labor. As the eldest son, the responsibility of the whole family fell on Md. Saiful Islam. By working as an agricultural laborer on someone else's land, it became almost impossible for Saiful to run the affairs of the whole family. In this situation, in the hope of changing his fortune, he went abroad (Dubai) in 1998, after consulting his parents, leaving his father's small agricultural land and borrowing BDT 250,000. But he did not get the opportunity to earn a good living by going abroad lack of higher education and technical knowledge. In this situation, due to the reduction in the scope of work in the company working in that country, the way of earning was ended by falling in the list of worker cancellation and he was forced to move to the country in 2014. Returning to the country in 2014, he invested BDT 4,00,000 to build a small farm with 07 cows. But even in this, the cow farm has to be closed without showing any profit.

He planned to farming fish by increasing his capital. It is in this context that the activities of the NDP's implemented Credit Support Programme come to his notice. Later, his wife Mst Shamima Khatun became a member of the Jonaki Samiti. In the first phase, he took a loan of Tk 1 lakh from the association in 2018. But he did not get the expected results. Later he started a nursery on 5 decimal of the land at own house. He started making and selling saplings with 2/1 workers in short range.

One day after watching a report of a dragon fruit by Mr. Shaeikh Siraj in an episode of soil and people on Channel I, he got excited and decided that it is possible and good income can be made from it. But it also requires more money to lease more land and other materials, including seeds. Due to lack of sufficient capital, he took a loan of BDT 250,000 from NDP in the second phase in 2020. In the second phase, the wheel of fortune of Saiful turned from this loan of NDP. With that loan, Saiful leased 56 decimal of the land, bought dragon seeds and other inputs, and started a dragon orchard.

At present, in Saiful's 56 decimal dragon orchards and five bigha land nursery, he has produced Kashmiri saplings, different types of fruit and forest saplings, different types of mango, jackfruit, Guava, lemon, betel nut, malt, orange etc.

Saiful, who is not known to anyone in the area, is now well-known and reputed in the area for his various nurseries and dragon orchards, and people are positively discussing him. He is even calling Saiful the model and pride of the nursery and dragon farmers in the area. People come from far and wide to see Saiful Islam's dragon orchard and get advice from him on how to make a dragon orchard. With his advice, many people have done Dragon's Garden and are getting success. His future plan for the Dragon Fruit Garden is to grow the Dragon Garden more and more, modernize it and produce it commercially all year round.



Dragon Fruits garden



Rabeya with her child Rubi

Rabeya is happy now with her baby

The baby's name is Ruby. Mother Rabeya is a domestic worker and father Rafiqul is a loom worker. When Ruby was 1 year old, she looked much younger than her peers. Even she was so dry that all the bones in his body could be counted. Then Ruby came to the notice of the officer working on the emergency project implemented by NDP. After that, the child was provided medical services through Belkuchi Upazila Hospital due to severe malnutrition from NDP's nutrition project. The Emergency Wash project is implemented with the funding of UNICEF. One of the components of this project is nutrition.

SAMs Medical Services were provided at the hospital, mainly by screening children aged 6 to 59 months and finding severely malnourished children. Such children may look weak on the outside, but their immune system is weak and they do not grow.

At the hospital, SAM provides malnutrition services by UNICEF trained nurses, doctors and counsels the mother of the baby about baby food nutrition so that the baby does not have this problem again in the future. Note that according to the screening report of this project, it can be seen that as Sirajganj is a flood prone district, the level of child malnutrition is much higher here, of which Shahzadpur is one of them.

The project screened 6,000 children over a four months period and received 357 SAMs, of which 100 children received medical assistance and the remaining 256 children were referred to civil surgeons and social services as the project expired. A SAM Corner is set up at each Upazila Hospital, where free medical services are provided to SAM children through physical test. UNICEF provides F-65 and F-100 therapeutic milk for infants for this treatment. It is through this Sam service that Ruby returns to her healthy state. As a mother, Rabeya smiled and expressed her gratitude to Allah. She also tells these stories to her neighbors. Slowly the news spread around. The families of all the sick children became confident and started receiving services from the medical center. Rabeya is happy now with her baby Ruby.



CGBV has empowered the local Community

We went to Sarkarpara village in Sirajganj Sadar on the bank of river Jamuna to know the life story of a struggling woman named Roksana Begum. We heard that Roksana Begum is playing an active role in preventing violence against women and discrimination against women in the village. Roksana, who is less educated than many educated women, has set a bright example in society by performing these things. She said "Now many people come to me for their help, those didn't not listen to me before, even did not evaluate me."

Roksana was the youngest in her family of four sisters and two brothers. At the age of 12, while studying in class eighth, she was forced by her family to get married and she went to a poor family where she could not continue her studies. But Roksana is a shining example of the fact that no obstacle can keep people down if there is a strong hope.

In 2016, she joined Combating Gender Based Violence project that is implemented by National Development Programme (NDP). Then Roksana can learn about strategies to prevent violence and discrimination against women in society from this project. After joining this project she started to work as a leader of 'Sufiakamal Women team' in 2017 and started to attend in various training, meeting, orientation programme etc. She has established herself as a health professional after overcoming numerous problems and join with Ansar VDP.

During the Covid period, she and her team members distributed food to lower middle class families on a priority basis with financial support from the local government and





aristocracy. Also provides health advice. They also work in different ways by coordinating with Union Parishad, Upazila Parishad, and District Legal Aid. She enjoyed doing such things and feels proud of herself.

She added that the Ideal village area was given to them by the government for 99 years. But 01 year ago, District Administration office gave instructions for excavation of Katakhalī River. Since the place where they live in a government place, that's why it falls into their 75 houses. As a result they face to loss of their home. In this situation concentration of CGBV staffs they submit a memorandum to District Administration office and call a human chain. Knowing all the facts, District Commissioner took action and sent their memorandum to the Water Development Board. The Water Development Board stops their works as per District Administration direction.

Everyone in the community is very happy now. They are self-confident. They have learned how to assert their rights. They know how to easily achieve a difficult task by uniting the people of the community. Many in the community like Roksana are now working to make people aware of their rights. They now confidently know how to communicate with the concerned department of the government.



BRAZH improved the livelihoods of poor people of Chilmari

Kurigram is one of the poorest districts in Bangladesh. There are 16 rivers flowing through it. These rivers cause a lot of damage every year during flood. The houses along the rivers are eroded every year and the river disappears. There are many canals in the vicinity of Ranigonj Union of Chilmari Upazila. In addition, during the monsoon season, floods from the Brahmaputra River in India cause a lot of damage to agriculture and the union dwellers have no income at this time. Seasonal floods and droughts also damage their lives.

Mst. Shamsun Nahar Begum is one of them. Shamsun Nahar Begum (47) and her family lives in Noayabosh village. She got married in 1990 with Md. Abdur Rouf Mia. Md. Abdur Rouf Mia is a day laborer. They have one son name Md. Shamsul Islam and two daughters. Md. Shamsul Islam is a garments worker.

In July, 2020 National Development Programme (NDP) implemented Building Resilience to Achieve Zero Hunger (BRAZH) Project started to select project beneficiaries. This project is supported by World Food Programme (WFP) and funded by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). Mst Shamsun Nahar Begum selected as a project beneficiary. After finalizing the project beneficiaries, the project organized a 5 days long Enterprise Development Training (EDT) for the 670 beneficiaries. Mst. Shamsun Nahar received the training for bull fattening. They are trained by doctors from the Department of Livestock, the concerned department of the government of Chilmari Upazila. Through training: Shamsun Nahar gained a clear knowledge of how to protect herself, her property, and other livestock from Covid 19. Also, discussed with the beneficiaries importance of social distancing, using of mask, hand washing etc. As project support after confirmation, National Development Programme (NDP) provided 230 beneficiaries IGA grants support and each participant received BDT 15,000 (Fifteen thousand) and she has taken loan from RDRS Bangladesh BDT25,000. After receiving the above mentioned and she has purchased the bull by BDT36,000 dated on 15/04/2021. When she purchased the bull it's weight was 94 kg and at present its weight has been increased to 132 kg. Many women, such as Shamsunnahar, received financial support from the BRAZH project as well as training in improving their quality of livelihood. Most of their members started different types of IGA with their own savings and money received from the project. Each of those who have started IGA is given a living allowance of tk 500 for a period of 6 months. Most of the poor families in the area have now relied on IGAs themselves for training from the BRAZH project. Many like Shamsun Nahar are very happy now.





Adolescent girl handover assistance from their own tund



Adolescent Programme has played an important role in society in the cultural arena.

Adolescent Programme is being implemented by National Development Programme (NDP) in 4 upazilas of Sirajganj district (Sirajganj Sadar, Kamarkhand, Belkuchi and Raiganj). Four types of activities are implemented at the club and school level with the theme “**Medha o Monone Sundor Agami.**”

The activities are- (a) Value development and social awareness activities (b) Adolescent health activities (c) Skills and leadership development activities and (d) Cultural and sports activities. One of the activities is to develop values and create social awareness. As a result of the successful implementation of the activities, the members of the club were inspired to provide food aid to the unemployed and helpless people at Covid-19 on their own initiative. Food aid includes rice, pulses, soybean oil, salt, potatoes, onions, peppers, etc. Also for Eid-ul-Fitr, semai, sugar, molasses milk, soap has been distributed. Welcoming the initiative of the teenagers, rich people of the community also joined with them and extended a helping hand. So far, this assistance has been provided to 59 helpless families. Through this project throughout the year, tree planting and sports are organized in different schools. The students participated in it with enthusiasm. Various sports and cultural events are also organized. Students also participate extensively in debate competitions. Science fairs have been organized to make the students mindful of science. The enthusiasm with which girls in particular have participated in sports has received a wide response in the educational institutions of the area. Encouraged by this project, a few schools have started sports for the students in their schools. The programme is being implemented from July 2019 with the joint funding of Palli Karma-Shahayak Foundation (PKSF) and NDP.



Entrepreneur Shapla Khatun

Many women are following Shapla Khatun

Shapla Khatun married Shahin in 2005. Her home is in Bagha upazila of Rajshahi district. As the father-in-law's house was poor, his father-in-law separated them after the marriage. Shahin's father does not give any property to Shahin. Shahin started working as a day laborer on someone else's land. Shapla Khatun also received training on sewing machines to earn for living. Shaheen went to Bahrain in 2013 and returned unsuccessfully after 8 years. When Shaheen is frustrated, Shapla reassures her husband. Shapla then took a loan of Tk 30,000 from the Chachkhair Islami Bank branch. He bought a sewing machine and some clothes with the loan money. On the one hand, Shapla worked as a sewing machine, on the other hand, Shaheen was working as a day laborer and was running his family. After three years of marriage, two more members were added to the family. They struggle to provide for the family.

In this context, Shapla and Shaheen discussed the IGA with the NDP's Enterprise Development Officer and the Prosperity Programme Coordinator. On behalf of the project, IGA advised to take loan from any branch near NDP. Shapla Khatun took a loan of BDT 1 lakh from NDP's Bamankola Prabhati Mahila Samiti. This time she bought clothes with two more sewing machines and the rest of the money and hired 2 employees. Her income continues to grow.

Shapla Khatun became proficient in tailoring and besides doing house-work; she set up three tailoring training centers at Shikarpur, Ranigram and Bamankola in three places and imparted tailoring training to 27 unemployed women in three batches for three months. The 27 women said that all of them have become self-sufficient by doing tailoring work with training and by providing training to these 27 women, she took a total fee of BDT 54,000 from them (BDT 2000 per person). That she use for purchasing store equipment. The shop is now much bigger. As a result, sales are increasing and profits are increasing.

At present 2 employees are working regularly in her shop, paying them BDT 5600 per month. She said that it has given them employment opportunities. Thus, apart from paying regular salaries and other expenses of her two employees, she is earning BDT 15,000 per month. In just 1 year and 3 months, She now has a total of tk 2,20,000 office equipment's and 70,000 hand cash.

Everyone in the area thinks of Shapla as a successful woman entrepreneur. Her future plan is to become an entrepreneur and to set up her own and small enterprises like a chicken farm, cattle farm, pigeon farm, also want to earn 50,000 taka per month together, educate their son and daughter and make them big and ideal people.



M4C has greatly improved the income of the char farmers

Shefali Begum is living with her 5 member's family in the isolated char land of Jamuna char. It is situated at Nondonarpara village of Islampur upazila under Jamalpur district. She has been living here for around 30 years. During living in the char she shifted her house yard 7 times due to river erosion. Several times her life survives were vulnerable due to insufficient yield of agriculture and additional cost for making house. Sometimes she consumed low amount meal of her family member in order to insufficient income.

Shefali's family was depending on her husband. Her husband involved doing the crop cultivation like; maize, chili, paddy and other. He followed the indigenous method of cultivation resulting he did not get enough yield. So, they did not change their livelihood and facing lot of suffering like; food, cloth education etc.

In September 2020 (making markets work for the chars) M4C project was started working at char area. Shefali showed interest to involve M4C project activities same as other villagers. She is a member of traders out grower's scheme (crops). She participated in different project intervention like farmer training for crop cultivation and improves post-harvest practices. She tries to learn modern farming method and post-harvest information and apply to use quality agro input (seed, pesticide, and micronutrient) which helps her to get the higher production. On the other hand she harvested her chili and maize by following the modern harvest and drying practices. She got high quality crops and expected market price.

This year Shefali cultivated 5 bigha's land of chili to have followed modern cultivation technique and used the quality inputs like (pesticide, Micronutrient, insecticide) from the renowned Agro inputs companies of Auto crop care limited which is she was knew from the cultivation training. Her chili grew up rightly and she got high production. She got 50 mound of dry chili from her five bigha lands. She expected she sold the chili BDT 200,000.

Shefali thinks that M4C Project given knowledge and created link with quality inputs resulting she got a lot of quality crops. It will be changes her family and contribute the additional money to help her build house, child education, purchase cattle for rearing and support to invest for cultivating the chili and maize for upcoming season. Seeing Shefali, many women in the area have started farming in a modern way. Now they are no longer willing to cultivate the previous method. Almost everyone in the area is using drawing materials for cultivation as well as drying in an improved manner.



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