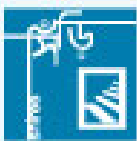




## Skill Development Project : Reducing Extreme Poor by Skills Development on Garments

*An Innovative Approach to Take Away People Out of Monga*

Supported by



Shiree/EEP

Supported by



In partnership with the Government of Bangladesh and DFID



Implemented by:

**Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK)**

Gaibandha, Bangladesh



## PREFACE

Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) has been conducting people welfare oriented different development programs very skillfully and successfully aims at developing the livelihoods of the extreme poor, poor and helpless disaster affected people for 28 years. We believe that an effective planning can play an important role in reducing poverty by creating an atmosphere of employment opportunity and skill development for the poor people. As a part of this, organization not only working for skill development under different projects it is also performing the programs of asset transfer, cash for work, small scale financial support and implementing different income generating activities. Organization undertook extreme poverty reduction project in a limited scale with the aim of relieving the poor people from Monga as a new initiative by enhancing the skill of apparel industry of Gaibandha district. We have clearly appreciated in the course of working for the first time in this sector where there prevailing ample opportunities and probabilities in reducing poverty for the poor people especially adequate opportunities for the poor women. If the participants are being trained and skilled well for perspective employment opportunity in this sector, they can contribute towards their family, society and above all to the sustainable development of the nation.

The organization by this time has been able to provide with the skill development training for employment opportunities to 1160 unemployed young boys and girls by which they are moving forward with their journey of livelihoods development through earning. It is appeared from our experiences at the last stage in implementing the project that there are immense opportunities in different trades apart from garment in private sector. In this respect, effective coordination and cooperation in-between GO, NGOs and Private Sector is utmost essential that can contribute much in alleviating poverty throughout country. Besides, if garments industries and other factories are established in the northern part locally, there are immense scopes of working for developing the livelihoods of poverty and Monga afflicted helpless poor people. The main objective of this publication is to inspire the progressive entrepreneurs about the acquired experiences, knowledge, best examples and significant achievements of the project.

We hope that this publication of development trend will inspire all the readers including development workers, partners, private sector representatives, entrepreneurs, donors and civil society representatives in the development orbit of new perspective.

Above all, we are extending our cordial gratitude and thanks to our all donors, sharing partners, partners for their continued cooperation and also our thanks to those who are relentlessly working and exerting their active efforts for successful implementation of the project.

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## Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK)

Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) has been working in the Gaibandha district of Bangladesh since 1985. It started its endeavors through organizing for the disadvantaged poor women and men of the remote village of Radhakrishnapur of Boali Union of Sadar Upazila in Gaibandha District.

GUK has been working for livelihood development, ensuring health and sanitation, mainstreaming of small indigenous, disabled and extreme poor people, combat with the effects of climate change, environment development, sustainable and disaster friendly agriculture, lifeskill education, education, gender equality, women empowerment, proper utilization of information and technology, human rights, governance and democratic environment creation. It has gained considerable experience and has earned a good reputation in it's work with vulnerable people, particularly poor and extremely poor women, so that they can build a better life for themselves. Considering the demand of people, GUK has expanded its working areas in 2007 including 4 neighbouring districts, Rangpur, Kurigram, Nilphamari and Lalmonirhat by the side of Gaibandha district. Presently It is working with about 140,000 families covering 102 unions of 28 Upazilas of those districts.

## Vision

GUK envisions a poverty free equitable society where justice, equality, human rights and the dignity of all people are ensured.

## Strategic Objectives

In order to achieve the mission and to contribute towards the vision of the organization, GUK concentrates on the following 7 strategic objectives:

1. Human resource development and the building of sustainable institutions
2. Promote quality education for all children
3. Create a sustainable livelihood of poor and extremely poor men and women
4. Gender equality and the empowerment of women
5. Increase community resilience to disasters focusing on climate change
6. Strengthen health services for the poor
7. Strengthen good governance and the democratic environment.





## Introduction

Gaibandha district, in the northern part of Bangladesh, is surrounded by the 3 big rivers, Teesta, Brahmaputra and Jamuna. Because of this the people living there are the victims of Flood, Monga, River Erosion, Cold Wave, and Cyclones. Due to the seriousness of these natural disasters, they bring about great poverty amongst the population of 23 unions in 4 Upazilas and people there have to continually battle against both poverty and disaster. About 30% of the population who live in the river basin and in the island chars fall victim to the devastating misfortune of nature.

The economy of this district is totally dependent upon agriculture and cannot support the population all the year round. Unfortunately no industry or factory is being set up for lack of government or local initiative so employment in other industries is not possible. As a result, these impoverished people are becoming poorer, they are without shelter and move from place to place looking for work. Moreover an abrupt food crisis at specific times of the year makes people of this area even more helpless and anxious. Especially women, children and old people face big problems.

To counter this adverse situation, especially MONGA, GUK has introduced a technical initiative to help these disaster and poverty affected people to develop their livelihood. This garments industry project aims to reduce poverty and create employment opportunities by enhancing the skills of the young people of poor and ultra poor families in making garments.





### Implementing Organisation

Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK)

### Goal of the Project

Government of Bangladesh MDG target 1 and 2 on income poverty reduction and hunger achieved by 2015

### Specific Goal

1160 extreme poor beneficiaries household (Minimum 50% women) lifted out of poverty by 2013

### Objectives

- Develop skills of interested young women (minimum 50%) and men of extreme poor families on sewing machine operation of woven garments factories.
- Facilitate regular job opportunities for targeted beneficiaries in established garments factories with particular emphasis on maintaining intensive communication/supervision at preliminary stage being involved in factories.
- Raising awareness on basic rights and socio-economic issues among the targeted beneficiaries along with their family members.







### Major Activities

- Identify the beneficiaries from extreme poor households through intensive survey and develop household profile;
- Organize month long residential training course on sewing machine operation of woven garments;
- Arrange two months long internship in different garment factories and ensure residential arrangements surrounded working place;
- Facilitate job placement in different garment factories;
- To support them by making the Family Development Programme (FDP) for beneficiaries;
- Facilitate small income generation activities (IGAs) at the household level of the beneficiaries;
- Continue follow-up support among the beneficiaries and their family members;
- Adopt mobile technology for monitoring the changes of the household level by the technical assistance from shiree;
- With local and national level media campaign.



## Working Areas

10 Unions of Sadar upazila of the Gaibandha district. Unions are Boali, Malibari, Ghagooa, Kamarjani, Gidari, Badiakhali, Kholahati, Ballamjhar, Ramchandrapur and Mollarchar Union. Besides, the activities of this project, internship of the trainees, support to find employment, media publicity, regular connection with the private sectors and extension of projects to Dhaka, Gajipur and Narayanganj, GUK maintains follow-up of trainees.



## Duration of Project

The project begins in December 2010 and continues until November 2013.

## Project Beneficiaries and Stakeholders

1,160 beneficiaries are directly involved with the project of whom at least 50% are women. This affects a total of 6,000 people if all family members are included, all of whom are receiving benefits from this project. Apart from this Garments Manufacturing Factory, Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Apex Adelchi Footwear Limited, the Youth Development Department and the media are closely connected with this project.



## Criterion of Beneficiaries

Based on the following criterion, the project selected the families as beneficiaries

- Not owner of cultivable land;
- No more than 2 meals/day for 4 months a year;
- No access to or member of financial network or MFI;
- Live in remote, river eroded or hazard-prone areas;
- Household income/consumption/expenditure less than Tk. 2,000/- per month;
- Income generating productive asset value up to Tk. 8,000/-.

Besides, those families where no income earning members, poor housing, little space/person, female headed households with no adult male earner, poor disabled families, families depend on child labouring, living on some else's premises, recipient of safety nets but not fully covered by the government safety nets.

## Expected Results

Result-1	1,160 people from extreme poor families (at least 50% women) will build their career as skilled machine operators making Oven Garments.
Result-2	1,160 people from extreme poor families (at least 50% women) will obtain employment as machine operators making Oven Garments.
Result-3	1,160 people will benefit from regular meals and this number will be increased through small scale income-generating initiatives with government support.

## Funding Supports

The project is supported financially and technically by Stimulating Household Improvements Resulting Empowerment (Shiree). This is one of the initiatives of the Economic Empowerment of the Poorest (EEP) Challenge Fund with the partnership between UKaid of DFID and GoB.

## At a Glance Project Achievements

(From December 2010 to September 2013)

At the beginning of the project, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) for selecting beneficiaries in 10 unions of the working areas accomplished. Project Sharing with BGMEA and Project Briefing Session fruitfully held in 10 unions. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed with Apax Adelchi Footwear Limited and 4 other Garments Factories and project activities have been implemented accordingly. Respective Press Briefing on the project theme has been shared with the journalists and reporters of electronic and print media. In addition, progress achieved so far is as follows:





- Conducted 416 PRA sessions at different village for beneficiaries selection; 1,160 beneficiaries selected (646 male, 514 female);
  - Guardians meetings held with the members of 416 families;
  - Organized month-long skill development training course to 1,160 participants (646 male, 514 female);
  - Conducted awareness session on different social and development issues for 1,160 trainees;
  - Conducted awareness session on different social and development issues for the 1190 members of 1,160 families;
  - Attained two month long internship programme for 1,155 participants(646 males and 509 females);
  - 1,084 participants (622 male and 462 females) are continuing their jobs after successful completion of the internship;
  - CMS-1 (Household Baseline Profile) completed for 1,160 participants;
  - CMS-4 (Quarterly Group Reflection) continuing for observing the changes of 10 selected groups of the households;
  - CMS-5 (Quarterly Group Reflection) running for 5 selected participants observing the changes of improvement;
  - 1,160 families developed and practicing their Family Development Plan (FDP)
  - Income generating assets (goats/sheep, poultry and plants) transferred to 1,160 families;
  - 2 press briefing session organized and 21 news of different project activities covered in 5 local and 7 national news papers and 13 news with short video footage broadcasted in 9 TV channels;
- Comments of inspiration and admiration made by high government officials, elected representatives, journalists, donors, and private sectors representatives during visiting training centres and working areas of the project.

### Changes at Beneficiary and Household Level

(From December 2010 to September 2013)

There is ultra modern monitoring system of Shree for different development projects implemented by Shree / EEP. This monitoring system of Shree is called Change Monitoring System (CMS) through which the changes of the beneficiaries and their families can be observed closely at the beginning of the project. All out information collection and analysis of these families can be made in on line each month by using mobile technology through this monitoring system. Apart from this, the following changes of beneficiaries and their families have been found by using "family income and expenditure" card.

- The amount of BDT 16,135,625 (1 crore, 61 lac, 35 thousand and 625) sent to the families of 1,090 beneficiaries from their income so far;
- The net amount of BHH level savings so far of 1110 families is BDT 5192380 (51 lac, 92 thousand and 380) and this is continuing;
- The net amount of beneficiary level savings so far of 276 participants is BDT 472010 (4 lac, 72 thousand and 10) and this is continuing;
- 438 children from 438 families have been admitted to schools and are continuing their studies;



- 716 beneficiaries have so far bought a mobile phone which have been used for communication;
- DPS (fixed amounts) are being saved in different banks and insurance companies by 337 beneficiaries/HH;
- 186 cows purchased with the income of 186 beneficiaries;
- 112 goats purchased with the income of 94 beneficiaries;
- Small businesses started by 56 families with the money sent by their children
- Rickshaws/bicycles purchased by 32 families;
- Televisions bought and enjoyed by the children and members of 47 families with the money sent by beneficiaries;
- Mortgaged land cultivated by 190 families;
- Land that can be cultivated purchased by 33 families;
- Shared cultivation by 437 families;
- New houses built by 91 families and old houses repaired by 375 families;
- New tin (CI Sheet) purchased for their houses by 222 families;
- New latrines installed in their houses by 198 families;
- Tube-wells installed in their houses by 135 families;
- Jewellery (earrings and nose-rings) purchased by 74 female beneficiaries;
- New furniture (sideboards, beds and dressing tables) bought by 241 families;
- 87422 kg rice bought for their own consumption by 223 families;
- 242 families are now under government the safety net service through UP (grass-root level elected representatives);
- 5 sewing machines purchased in the families from the income of 3 beneficiaries;
- 14 fans purchased in the families from the income of 4 beneficiaries;
- 15 acquaintances of 10 beneficiaries have been provided with employment in different garments factories/Apex.

## Project Analysis

Based on regular opinion sharing, discussion, community consultation with respective stakeholders at different stages of the project implementation both of strength and limitations have been observed and some obstacles have been faced and mitigated. In this respect, we hope that our learning and potentialities will inspire much to undertake such type of innovative initiatives.

## Strengths

- GUK's good reputation and long term experiences in development endeavours;
- Good relationship and trusteeship with local government representatives and civil society leaders;
- Intensive communication with poor and extreme poor families;
- Own training center and residential facilities;
- Efficient Management, Trainers and Workers.



### Limitations

- Limited resources and modules for running this type of training;
- Beneficiaries selected only from extreme poor families for skill development;
- Limited institute and entities for required human resources and trainers especially for garment sectors;
- Limitation in utilizing others machine instead of plain machine for skill development of garments sectors.

### Barriers and Challenges

- Proper selection of garments for internships;
- It is difficult for rural young boys and girls to cope with the environment and scheduled time of Dhaka city;
- It is also difficult to search out suitable residential arrangements for internship participants;
- After joining due to changing areas health hazards occurs (jaundice, skin diseases, stomach disorder etc).
- There is a tendency for the girls taking part as their families decide to settle marry of their daughter after getting jobs.

### What We Learnt

- Optimum results derived if local administration, government, civil society and mass media involved together effectively with project implementation;
- It would be more helpful to capacitate the participants acquiring skills if the duration of the training courses extended instead of reducing the internship duration;
- The demand as well as skill of the participants increased if the training on others machine would be organized by the side of the training on plain machine.





## Comment of Deputy Commissioner



Family based skilled and trained human resource is indispensable for the development of life and livelihoods of the disaster and Monga afflicted poor and extreme poor families. These skilled human resources are being assisted by the non government development organization Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK). The new initiative is being undertaken by GUK is really praiseworthy to provide trainings on garment industry and supporting the jobless youths in getting employment to different areas besides Dhaka. This project is not only contributing to achieve MDG of People's Republic of Bangladesh but also playing an important role to reduce the ratio of unemployment scenario throughout the country.

I believe that trained and skilled persons never be remaining poor and here the project participants are unique examples. These young boys and girls especially girls from Gaibandha become empowered working in different garment factories in different cities of the country and helping their families, societies and nations financially and socially. I am really grateful to the implementing as well as funding organization for this initiative.

**Dr. Kazi Anwarul Haque**  
Deputy Commissioner, Gaibandha.

### Comment of Upazila Chairman



About 20 percent people of the total population of Sadar Upazila of Gaibandha district live in river basin and river island char areas. Besides, they have to maintain their livelihoods fighting with poverty without any opportunity of employment in this area. It is really an exceptional initiative taken by Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) in providing trainings as well as in ensuring jobs in different garment industries to the young boys and girls from the extreme poor and poor families. I cordially thank to this initiative of GUK and I wish its continuation for the days to come.

**Alhaj Abdur Rashid Sarker**  
Chairman  
Sadar Upazila Parisad, Gaibandha.

### Comment of Upazila Nirbahi Officer



Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) provides with skill development training to work in garment industries for the unemployed young girls and boys of poor and extreme poor families through skill development project that has created employment opportunities for them. Most worthy fact is to facilitate residential arrangements for the participants adjoining their working places.

I wish all out success of the organization.

**Md. Mamunur Rashid**  
Upazila Nirbahi Officer  
Gaibandha Sadar, Gaibandha.



## Comments of UP Representatives



"Many unemployed male and female youths of this union are working in different established garment factories having received respective trainings through this skill development project implemented by Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK). The role of this project is unique in solving the unemployment problem in the country."

### **TIM Najmul Huda Badal**

Chairman, 2 Malibari Union Parishad  
Gaibandha Sader, Gaibandha.



"Employment opportunities are created through skill development projects implemented by GUK Gaibandha. If the projects continue, more poor unemployed male and female youths in my Union would be able to get jobs."

### **Imarul Islam Sabin**

Chairman, 5 Ballamghar Union Parishad  
Gaibandha Sader, Gaibandha.



"Undoubtedly this project deserves praise and compliments and I like would to welcome and congratulate GUK on this kind of initiative."

### **Rafiqul Islam**

Chairman, 6 Ramchandrapur Union Parishad  
Gaibandha Sader, Gaibandha.



"I am expecting the project to be continued steadier and like to convey my thanks from my Union Parishad to GUK for the creation of employment opportunities especially for the poor and extreme poor women."

### **Rafikul Islam Muzkuri Firoz**

Chairman, 7 Badiakhali Union Parishad  
Gaibandha Sader, Gaibandha.



"The project obviously deserves admiration. It is my firm belief that the unemployment problem of this Union will be solved if more unemployed male and female youths are provided with jobs in different garment factories by this project."

### **Sahidul Islam (Sabu)**

Chairman, Boali Union Parishad  
Gaibandha Sader, Gaibandha.



## Comments of UP Representatives



"Large scale extension needed for such type of programmes of capacity development".

### **Kazi Ibrahim Khalil Ulfat**

Chairman, 9 Kholahati Union Parishad  
Gaibandha Sadar, Gaibandha.



"Presently remarkable number of poor and extreme poor unemployed male and female youths are engaged with jobs at different garment factories and they have been able to bring positive changes in their families."

### **Aminur Zaman Rinku**

Chairman, 10 Ghagosa Union Parishad  
Gaibandha Sadar, Gaibandha.



"The skill development project is contributing a lot in ensuring economic security of many rural unemployed male and female youths by creating employment opportunities in the different garment industries in the country."

### **Golam Sadek Lebu**

Chairman, 11 Gidari Union Parishad  
Gaibandha Sadar, Gaibandha.



"The skill development project deserves praise and to open the opportunities for the rural unemployed male and female youths of Kamarjani Union. I wish the project's success and its expansion."

### **Md. Nurunnabi Sarker Sokmal**

Chairman, 12 Kamarjani Union Parishad  
Gaibandha Sadar, Gaibandha.





## Irin's Dream of Golden Hope

Irin is the eldest daughter of Anwarul Islam and lives in Taluk-Rifaitpur village, Badiakhali Union of Gaibandha Sadar district. Her family consists of 7 members including her parents, 3 sisters and a brother. Her father maintains his family by weaving and selling fish nets in the market. They are poor but had interest in education. Her father got 3 of his daughters admitted to a school. Some time ago there was a meeting of the garments project at Talukrifaitpur village. At that time she was appearing her exams of class 10 at 18 years old. One day Irin went to a meeting where people from different professions in the village attended. She quickly understood the objective of the meeting and this gave her the dream of earning money. She convinced her family soon after returning from the meeting that they needed to stand on their own foot. Eventually Irin was included as a member of the skill development project of GUK.

Irin started work in April 2012. After successfully completing 22 days training on skills development in the garments industry and an internship she started working for Apax Adelki Footwear Ltd. By this time she had passed the SSC examination. While she was working at Apax Adelki she found out there were ample opportunities to rise to a high position if she had a good education and it was with this hope that she joined Apax Lingerie Garments nearby. After working there for a month she heard about the post



of quality auditor of New Garments, Nishchitpur, Savar from one of her relatives and applied for the job. The authority was pleased with her work and she was appointed. Now she is earning BDT 10 thousands in a month with other allowances and is sending BDT 4-5 thousands home in a month. She was admitted to the humanities group of the intermediate class and has opened an insurance policy depositing BDT 350 per month. Her 2 younger sisters are going to school regularly and she pays the educational

expenses herself. She has also bought her father 2 decimals of shared land and a cow costing BDT 10 thousand for her mother. In addition she has bought some furniture that was needed for the house. They are now taking a good meal every day and their social dignity increased. A goat was provided by the project by which she got 4 kids. Now Irin's dream is to continue her studies by retaining her job and take steps towards getting a better job.

"The fact that the present state of my business better now has only been possible by the money sent by Irin and the profit of my business.  
— Anwarul Islam, Father of Irin



## Aminul's Dream of Going Far Away

Aminul Haque was a day labourer and lives in a small family consisting of just his parents and 1 sister. His father, Abdul Jabbar is also a day labourer. They live in Kachuakhmar village, Malibari Union in Gainbandha Sadar district. Almost all the year round they lived in poverty. Aminul only read up to class 3 at school and as they did not have own land of their own. They stayed on government land temporarily in a poorly made house. At night rainwater penetrated their bed so they could not sleep peacefully at night, especially in the rainy season. It was difficult for Aminul's father to maintain his family and although Aminul helped his father during harvesting. He had no way of earning money and looked for a job from different sources.

Aminul heard about the garments project of GUK from his neighbours where he lived. He contacted the workers of this project and was given the opportunity of being a beneficiary of the project. This was the turning point of his life for the first time. After 22 days residential training he started a 2 month internship at Apex Adelki Footwear Ltd. After successfully completing his training and internship he was able to get a job as a skilled machine operator at Adelki Footwear Ltd. The job gave him more skill and experience as a result he got the same post at Diggambar Sweater Limited at Malibag in Dhaka. As he was

hard-working and very reliable he was promoted to the post of supervisor within one and a half years.



When he started working he sent BDT 2 thousands to BDT 3 thousands home. Now he earns between BDT 9 to-10 thousands a month with overtime. With this money he is able to save some as well as send BDT 3 thousands a month home. His father has bought some lands on a mortgage with the money his son sent him and he has built 2 houses with his savings too. Aminul bought a cow costing BDT 7thousands

and is thinking about the marriage of his sister in the future. He has also bought a metal trunk for clothes and a drum for keeping rice for the family. Now all the members of his family eat food every day. Aminul's dream is expanding. He wants his father to start a small business with his money. Everybody in the village now admires the way in which Aminul has changed his family and praises him. The inhabitants of the area inspire the unemployed youths to follow Aminul's example.

"I want to go far away, to make my younger sister educated, to start a small business and stop father's day labouring."  
**– Aminul Haque**



## Silpi on the Way to Solvency

There are 6 members in Silpi's family. She has 1 younger sister, Dili Khatun and 2 younger brothers, Mukul and Murad. Silpi's father, named Madhu Mia is a rickshaw driver and her mother, Manzu Rani, sometimes works in other peoples' houses. They live in Radhakrishnapur village in the Boali Union of Gaibandha Sadar district. Her father wanted to cultivate land on a shared basis but nobody would give him land because he was unable to pay for it. If he didn't earn any money one day his family had to go without food and Silpi couldn't complete her education due to poverty, only reading up to class 5. She didn't like her father having to work so hard and tried to think of how to help her father by earning money. At this time the Shiree Garments Project started in her area. She was permitted by

her parents to be included in the project because of her strong interest and determination for earning money and was eventually included as a beneficiary.



This was the beginning of her struggle to translate her dreams into reality. She received 22 days garments training and joined 2 month-long internship at Apex Adelki Footwear Ltd., Gazipur through GUK. Silpi presently works in Apex Lingerie, Gazipur as an operator. She earns BDT 6,000 a month, gets additional money for working overtime and sends BDT 3

thousands home every month. This money means that her 2 younger brothers can go to school regularly and her house can afford to be repaired and furnished nicely with wooden furniture. Silpi has bought a new rickshaw for her father and has paid BDT 8 thousands for a cow. Recently her parents bought one and a half decimals of land on a mortgage with the money she had saved which they are cultivating themselves. Now they are no longer poor and are heading towards solvency.

"At present we are well. People of the village respect and invite us on different occasions, and for all of this we are ever grateful to GUK."

– **Manzu Rani, Mother of Silpi**



## Ashikur on the Way to Overcome Poverty

Ashikur Mia, son of Alamgir Mia, his father and Bali Begum, his mother grew up in the midst of untold sufferings from the very beginning of his life. He is the eldest child with younger 2 sisters. His father wanted to educate his son at school but unfortunately he was unable to because of poverty. His son's education ended in class 8. Ashikur's father kept his family by working on a tea stall. At one time the burden of his family was so great that he could not carry on because of his sudden illness.

Around this difficult time Ashikur heard about the Shiree Garments Project of GUK and people finding a job after doing the training. He contacted the project representatives and was included in the project as one of the beneficiaries. He completed 22 days training and went to receive 2 month long internship at Hatubhanga Cornfit Composite Nit Ltd in Tangail district. Unfortunately he had to return home



because of illness and his inability to adapt to the urban environment. After recovering he moved to Shafigur, Gazipur, Dhaka and joined as an assistant machine operator of Bashnu Ocean Ltd. Within a very short time he became a machine operator and is working there still. At present he is earning more than 8 thousands Tk in a month with overtime from where he used to sent BDT 2-3 thousands his home. He has also built a house made of tin with his savings and bought a sideboard, a bed and 4 chairs for the family. His father was working in another shop

but now he is running a grocery business he built up himself with BDT 15 thousands sent to him by his son. Ashikur is bearing the educational expenses of his 2 sisters. At present Ashikur's father is earning BDT 150 to 200 from his business every day.

"We are now very happy with all of our family members only for our son Ashikur. Once we were unable to give education to him due to poverty but I seek blessings from all for my school going daughter's education. I and my family members are really grateful to Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK) which gave us the path of light.

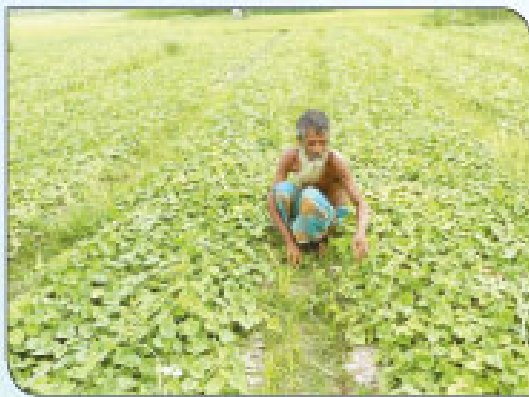
**– Bali Begum, Mother of Ashikur**



## Mukta is Knocking the Door of Light

Mukta's family consists of just her parents and herself. Her father, Yunus Ali is a day labourer and they live in North Kholahati Union of Gaibandha Sadar district, where they live in a dilapidated hut on a 2 decimal plot of land. Her father is the only one in the family earning money and now cannot earn money every day as before because he is getting old and sick. They are in utter hardship. If her father cannot work one day there is no food for the family. Her education came to an end at class 4 due to poverty. Her father wanted her to get married but could not afford it. Her family's desperate situation made Mukta restless and upset.

At that time there was a big meeting of the Shiree Garments Project in the house of UP member Mridul Shaheb in their village organised by GUK. Mukta went there with her parents and the whole thing seemed to them a dream - they had found the way of getting out of poverty. Mukta's father gave his consent to her joining the project, hoping she would get a job and give hope for the future.



Mukta was included in the project and got a job as a machine operator at Apex Adelki Footwear Ltd. After successfully completing 22 day training course and a 2 monthlong internship she is now working for the company. Mukta has bought a goat for the family costing BDT 2 thousands and so far sent BDT 23 thousands to her family. Her father is now cultivating paddy on a 2 decimal plot of land and vegetables are being cultivated on 1 decimal plot of land, both on a shared based. Now her parents want to repair their house with the profit and use the

capital for cultivation again.

Now Mukta is sending BDT 2 to 3 thousands in a month her home. This is her family's only source of income and so far her mother has saved BDT 5 thousands. Mukta's sick father no longer needs to worry about providing for his family and has already bought 12 concrete poles and some tin to repair the house.

"I took over all the responsibilities of my family like a son despite of being daughter. My father is getting older, so I don't want to allow my father to work any longer."

– **Mukta**





## Heavenly Touch in Lokman's Family

Lokman is the son of Abdul Kalam and lives in the village of Harinsingh, Ramchandrapur Union of Gaibandha Sadar district. He has 2 sisters who got married when they were young due to poverty and literacy and he now lives alone at home with his parents. His is a small family. They are poor and he only read up to class 5. His parents were very anxious about his uncertain future. He could not work anywhere and moved frequently from place to place. One day he came to hear about the garments project of GUK from one of his neighbours, Alamin. He wanted to join the project and got himself involved. After 22 days training and 2 monthlong internship in Apax Adelki Footwear Ltd, Gazipur, Dhaka he worked there as a junior operator for 2 months. Then he got a job as an operator with more salary in Elegance Sweaters Ltd, Gazipur, Dhaka. At present he earns BDT 9 thousands 3



hundreds in a month and sends BDT 3 to 4 thousands to his family. Originally Lokman's father used to keep his family by day labouring but after getting money from his son he started his own fried rice business. Gradually his business expanded and he no longer needed to work as a day labourer. Jointly with Lokman's mother, his parents sell 15kg fried rice a day to different shops in Gaibandha town. They now have BDT 20 thousands that has come from the profits of the business and from the money sent by Lokman. They are also thinking of investing the money somewhere. A gentle breeze of joy has started blowing around their family. They are eating nutritious food every day and have bought a chair, table and a wooden bed. Lokman was given a goat from the family project that has given birth to 2 kids.

"As my son has got the opportunity this time, none can stop him, he will move forward by dint of his own skill and capacity."

– **Father of Lokman**



## Esmotara Wants to Move Ahead

Esmotara returns to her father's house, where she lives with her 2 year old daughter Munni being divorced after 6 years of her marriage. Her father, Wesuddin, is a day labourer and lives at Jhakuapara, Gidari Union in the Gaibandha Sadar District. She also has 5 younger brothers and sisters. Some days they eat and sometimes they are half-starved because their income is low.

One day Esmotara came to know about the Skill Development Project implemented by GUK from a UP member of Ward-2 and project workers. She was included in the project and this opened a new chapter in her life's struggle. The project provided her with 22 days residential training and after the training she completed a two month long internship with Apax Adelki Footwear Ltd. She is now working as a



machine operator in the company. Her present monthly salary is about BDT 6 thousands from which sends BDT 7-8 thousands to her family every after each 3 months. From her savings money she took leased 16 decimals of cultivable lands for agricultural cultivation. Besides this, she purchased 4 decimals of lands and also bought a goat for her mother for rearing.

She also opens a savings account where she deposits BDT 300 per month and is now looking after her whole family. She hopes to build a tin house soon. Esmotara is now becoming more

aware. She knows how to make her life prosperous and secure. She only wants to move ahead never looking the back. She is now very confident and self-sufficient to build a bright future for her daughter.

"Once we had no ability to take meal two times in a day but the situation has been changed by dint of my daughter's struggle and efforts. I never forget this kind supports of Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK)."

— **Waes Uddin, Father of Esmotara**



## Ending Sluggish Life of Taslim

The house where Taslim lives on the bank of the Brahmaputra river at Goghat village in Kamarjani Union of Gaibandha Sadar district. Most of the people of the village are affected by the effects of floods and river erosion. His family consists of 4 members, father Amir Hossin, mother Tolapi Begum and sister Amina. Taslim's father is a day labourer and his mother works at other people's houses. In this way they maintain their family. As Taslim's father has no money he had not been allowed to have shared land for cultivation and sometimes their suffering was so bad that some days they only had very little to eat and sometimes went without food altogether. Taslim only went to school up to class 4.

A meeting of the Skill Development Project of GUK was held at Goghat village where different activities took place. Taslim was inspired by the speeches at the meeting and got the opportunity of becoming a beneficiary of the project.

He finished her 22 days training at the project satisfactorily and joined 2 monthlong internship with Ratax Fashion Wear Ltd, Mirpur, Dhaka. She proved herself to be an expert operator after working there for 2 months and started as a machine operator. After doing the job for some time she found her income not increasing to keep pace with high living costs so he came back his home. Again his jobless



life begun. The project workers always tried to convince him to go back to the job and he also got pressure from his family to return. He spent 3-4 months without a job and missed having a regular income. Then he joined as an assistant operator in Apolo Garments, Duaripara, Dhaka and in a short time became an operator, a job he has continued until the present day. Now he is earning BDT 8 thousands in a month and sending BDT 3 thousands per month to home. He has also started 2 insurance policies where she is depositing BDT 2-3 thousands in a month and has paid for a large house made of tin to be built costing BDT 27 thousands. He has also bought a cow for his mother costing BDT 4 thousands and bought his father 2 decimals of shared land which he is cultivating. To think that at one time people would not let him have shared land because he had no money! The family is now eating good food every day and his younger sister is studying in class 4. His social dignity has been raised and positive changes have been observed in everything the family does.

"Let my Taslim continue to grow. I pray for GUK to continue the supports for the poor and helpless people in the rural areas."

– **Tolapi Begum, mother of Taslim**



## On the Way to Fulfill the Dream Arjina

The second of three sisters, Arjina Khatun lived at her father's house in Jhineswar village of Ballamjhar Union, Gaibandha district. She is the daughter of the late Aziz Mia and mother Mukta Beowa. Her father was a day labourer fully unable to manage his family. Due to poverty he could not provide supports his daughter to continue her studies so she could only learn up to class 5. Her father died suddenly one day. Arjina's mother was in utter despair about what to do for the family as they could

no longer stay at her father's house after his death. Finding no other alternatives Arjina's mother came back to her father's house at Dhanghara village in the same Union leaving her husband's house and started living there with her two daughters.

In such situation, Arjina heard about the skill development project of GUK in a village meeting where UP members and other important people of the community were present. In the meeting the project rules were discussed and the beneficiary selection was done. Fortunately Arjina's name and that of her mother were included in the 8th batch of the list of beneficiaries of the project. This opportunity changed things significantly in her life struggle. She had the chance to participate in 22 days training which she completed successfully. After that she did a 2 month internship at Malibag in Dhaka. This confident lady with a firm mind made herself competent after successfully completing her training and internship and started work at Ranger Fashion in Malibag as a machine operator. Arjina and her family started seeing



a faint light of hope in the midst of great suffering. She became busy in her working life and one after another her dreams started to be realised. She looked after her younger sister's education and secured the maintenance of her family. Now she hopes to buy some assets for her family. She bought a cow costing BDT 12 thousands and gave her mother a cowshed. Last July that cow gave birth to a calf. So far she has sent BDT 21thousands home to her family. Arjina's mother has saved BDT 2 thousands even after buying a few necessities for her family. Presently they have

saved about BDT 70 thousands incorporating the money came from Arjina, milk selling and cash for work through which they planned to buy cultivable land.

Arjina's mother's mind is now full of joy to see her daughter's improvement. Arjina now considers herself to be self-reliant and dreams of gaining experience in the garments sector and becoming a supervisor soon.

"I become spell bound to see the progress of my daughter, and we are now very happy."

— **Mukta Bewa, Mother of Arjina**

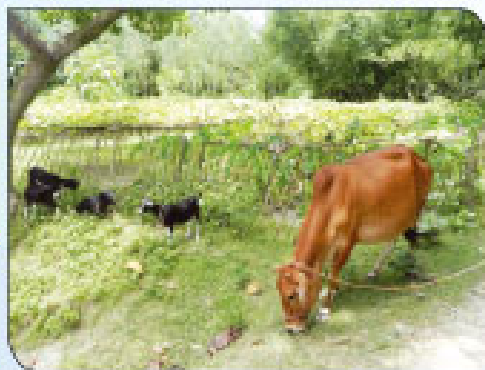


## Moslema Around Happy Life

Moslema lives with her family at Collegepara, Ghagoo Union of Gaibandha Sadar district. Her father's name is Matiar Rahaman, her mother is Mariam Begum and Moslema is the eldest of 2 sisters and read up to class 5. Her father did not own any land and they lived in a dilapidated house. Moslema got married at the young age of 15 to Saiful, the 4th son of Late Abed Ali, who has since died, near Mallbari Union. Saiful had no land of his own either and not having a house lived at the house of his elder brother, although he did not enjoy living there with his wife. The source of his income was delivering goods and driving a rickshaw.

When there was no work, he had to go without food and staying at his elder brother's house almost drove him mad. Five or six months passed in this way and finally Moslema went to live at her father's house with her husband. Her husband had to do the same job as his father-in-law at his house. Her father sometimes helped her maintain family and that was how their days passed. Now Moslema is the mother of 2 sons, at present the eldest is a student of class 8 and the youngest is just 6 and a half years old.

Suddenly Moslema's husband came to hear about the garments project of GUK. Due to the needs of her family she felt compelled to contact those in charge of the project and became involved in it. At last her life of hardship was starting to change. At first she did 22 days of training to learn how to make garments and did an internship for 2 months.



After that she joined Narmal Garments, Mouchak, Gazipur. She also talked with her husband and he managed to get a job in the same garments factory as her after discussions with the garments authority. Their 2 sons were looked after by her grandparents. Their family runs well on the joint income. She got her elder son admitted to Brack school and her younger son to class 1 in Madrasha. Moslema now really wants to give her sons quality education to avoid future troubles in life. She has already bought a cow for her mother costing BDT 19 thousands and saves BDT 1 hundred a month through a DPS scheme. Her dreams are being fulfilled one by one. Moslema has

paid for 2 decimals of shared land and given it to her father for cultivation and has also paid for repairs to his house. In addition she is sending BDT 3-4 thousands each month to her father for the education of her children. Moslema's father has saved BDT 20 thousands from the money that Moslema has sent him and from the profits of his land. Now Moslema has cash that she never had before. Members of her family and of that of her father can all eat every day and are now leading a happy life. Moslema and her husband are both very confident of a bright future and hope to build a house for their children in the future. They are very grateful to GUK for giving the opportunity to change their life.

"Once our family was scattered due to extreme poverty. With the support of Gana Unnayan Kendra (GUK), I have succeeded in bringing the change in our family. Now my dream is to make my sons well educated human beings in society."

— Moslema

অতিরিদ্ধদের ইশতেহার  
**MANIFESTO**  
FOR THE EXTREME POOR



## EXTREME POVERTY DAY 2012

Venue: Bashundhara Convention Centre-2

Date : Friday, November 30, 2012

Time : 9:00 am - 5:00 pm



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