

Editorial Board

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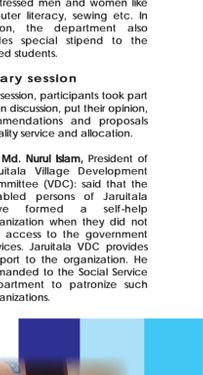
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DREAM project has been working for the Most Marginalized Citizens - MIMC in Kishoreganj district since 1998. Ten thousand families are partners in this development process. To bring about expected changes in the lives of these families and to establish an effective development model for the MMCs are the objectives of this project. Generally, the Most Marginalized Citizens (MIMC) are positioned at the bottom level of the standard of living. According to the project's definition, this level is identified as the "Survival stage". In order to get these families to a standard level, the MIMC follows four stages, final of which is the "Sustainable stage". The MMC family that achieves this level, is awarded graduation and gets phase out from the project support.

This intensive four steps plan is known as "Roadmap to mainstreaming development of extreme poor". Sustainability of a targeted household is measured through assessing the progress in 14 indicators including social awareness, food security, health, education, shelter and economic empowerment. Through this measurement, those households found improved from 1st stage to second and 2nd to third stage, are provided necessary support according to the Roadmap, to reach to the expected level.



In accordance with the followed assessment method, 1002 families have been awarded graduation in the year 2012. The cumulative number of graduation is now 2631. Majority of the graduates are women, which is a positive sign. A key player of change. In addition, contribution of the local people of different professions, village development committee, respective Union Parishad and Upazela Parishad and various government officials have boosted up the process.

POPI congratulates the Graduate member families and their guardians, public representatives, school teachers, personalities and institutions. We do hope that the process for the improvement in lives of the MMCs will go on and will bring good results in different areas of the country as well.



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Project News

Roundtable held at Kishoreganj district

A roundtable was held at POPI-PART conference hall on 21st November 2012 organized by DREAM project as part of its continuous efforts to increase Extreme Poor's access to the Government service providing institutions. Every year the project organizes such roundtable with different government departments and this year it was the Department of Social Service. The major objective of the roundtable was to improve the service quality and to make it accessible to the poor, especially the persons with disability. The meeting also focused on the intensification of artificial limb replacement programmes implemented by the department.

Deputy Director Mr. Azhar Al Mia and other officers of the social service department from district and Upazela level took part in the meeting. Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Mr. Nura Alam Siddique was present as the Chief Guest. Upazela Nirbahi Officer, Nikil Mr. Mohammad Habibur Rahman, District Women Affairs Officer Mrs. Kamta Yeasmin, UP Chairman of Chabai char Mrs. Hanif Islam and Assistant Director & DJ of POPI Mr. Mizanur Rahman attended as special guests. The roundtable was also participated by the MMC representatives, Village Development Committee and leaders from Women's Federation and Forum for Rights Campaign.

Bangladesh where only orphan children aged between 6 and 11 get enrolled to stay till 18 years of age. On a reply, Town Social Service Officer Mrs. Talma Khanam said that Town Social Service works only for municipal areas. They provide some package programmes on skill development for distressed men and women like Computer literacy, sewing etc. In an open discussion, in their opinion, recommendations and proposals on quality service and allocation.

The meeting started on recitation from the holy Quran. Then Project Coordinator Mohammad Zahurul Islam welcomed the guests and presented a PowerPoint on project activities. He also presented a follow up report on last year's roundtable with the Health department.

The presentation followed by the question and answer session. A number of questions and opinion on the service and quality were raised to give up the representatives. Government officials replied and addressed the opinions on the session. Mr. Shamol Datta, Assistant superintendent of Government Child Home (GCH) took part in the discussion and said that there are 85 Child Home in

This session participants took part in open discussion, in their opinion, recommendations and proposals on quality service and allocation.

Registration Officer Mr. Robul Islam presented ongoing programmes of district Social service department for the extreme poor. He also focused on the yearly budget of Government and the need to help people, widow, disabled, freedom

fighters, education and rehabilitation programme for the orphans and different types of skill development training and financial services. Then district disability related officer Mr. Muhammad Al-Amin informed that government has introduced a disability service and rehabilitation centers at the district head quarters under social welfare department. In Kishoreganj, the centre has been established in the form of the office of this centre are physiotherapy, hearing aid, vision test and physical exercise, about 27 types of aided devices for the disabled persons including wheel chairs. Participants also made known that the centre is also capacitated for artificial limb replacement.

1. Mr. Md. Nurul Islam, President of Jarulata Village Development Committee (VDC) said that the disabled persons of Jarulata have formed a self-help organization to get equal access to the government services. Jarulata VDC provides support to the organization. He demanded to the Social Service Department to patronize such organizations.



02

Address by the Special Guests

Mr. Mohammad Mizanur Rahman, Assistant Director, POPI, he put across the experience of DREAM project in changing quality of lives and livelihoods of the extreme poor. He told that the Extreme Poor are self-motivated in their development; they need support and appropriate environment. However, some people need social safety as well. He thanked Social Service for execution of such safety net programmes. He also supplemented that the number of such needy people decreased remarkably in last 10 years due to collaborative initiatives of Government and non-Government agencies.

Finally, Mr. Rahman urged to the Social Service Department to take special and need based social safety net programmes for the Kishoreganj.

Ms. Kamla Yeasmin, District Women Affairs Officer, Kishoreganj, she discussed the view that every woman in the district should be side by side the men to materialize the sustainable development of the extreme poor. With the point of view, the department of women affairs is implementing various skill development programmes for the women. The department manages VCD programme and training on parlor, bank and sewing. Supporting voluntary women associations, maternity allowance, day care and legal aid to the distressed women are also the major initiatives of this department.

his solidarity with the claim for establishing a disability centre in Kishoreganj and urged the Department to take necessary initiatives. He also made request to consider the proposals sent from the Upazela and to ensure required budget considering their importance of public interest.

Mr. Md. Hedayet Ullah, President of Swalpo Maria VDC, he thanked Social Service department for their diverse programmes and put recommendation to increase budgetary allocation. He also proposed to establish a disability service and rehabilitation centre at Kishoreganj head quarter.

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Chief Guest's Speech

Mr. Nura Alam Siddique, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Rev), in his speech shared live experience from his service life and said that in some cases people become deprived of the good result of Government's initiatives due to corruption and lack of transparency. He addressed Government officials as people's servant and told that if we fail to utilize our sense of duty then we are letting ourselves down. Mr. Siddique put stress on relationship and sharing between service recipients and service bearers. He thanked DREAM project to arrange such a meeting for both the parties sitting on one table and advised to organize same meeting again. To end with the meeting, he urged that the people of Kishoreganj district will enjoy the fruits of different development initiatives taken by the departments of Social Service and Women Affairs.

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At the concluding address, Deputy Director of Social Service Department Mr. Azhar Al Mia highly appreciated the project management for organizing the Roundtable. Then he presented some achievements of his department for the enhancement of distressed people of Kishoreganj district. He also put in the future actions of the department. Mr. Azhar Al Mia recalled that we all are from the village and all are of village; therefore, it is important to work jointly to convert the picture of villages for poverty eradication. He thanked the roundtable was fruitful, he added. At the end, he gave thanks to the participants for their valuable contribution to arrange such a meeting and improve the quality of service of the Department of Social Service.

03

International day of persons with disability : observation and movement aid distribution

DREAM project has been endorsing its initiatives for the wellbeing and rights of the persons with disability since last one and half decades. Public awareness and radio to conduct advocacy and to protect their access to the government services are parts of these efforts. Observing international day of persons with disability is very significant in this regard. DREAM project celebrated the day this year on 3rd December in collaboration with the Social Service department. The day, awareness rally and discussion meeting were arranged. Movement aid devices were also distributed among the persons with disability. The day's theme was "Removing barriers to create an inclusive and accessible society for all".

Mr. Mohammad Habibur Rahman, Upazela Nirbahi Officer, Nikil told that the NGOs are implementing many projects side by side the Government. Sometimes their coordination with government team, from where people can learn, POPI is such an organization. He urges to the department of women affairs to take innovative projects for the Haor area. Mr. Rahman expressed

his solidarity with the claim for establishing a disability centre in Kishoreganj and urged the Department to take necessary initiatives. He also made request to consider the proposals sent from the Upazela and to ensure required budget considering their importance of public interest.

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04

Food support inspired the distressed families at the month of melancholy

The month Kartik is known as the month of starvation in rural Bangladesh because of food scarcity. Poorly water bodies are captured by the rich section where poor people do not have access to catch fish. Moreover, the price hike strikes like the last straw, getting no income earning opportunity, poor people move here and there. Families with no earning member certainly face hard times. Children and elderly are more pass days with a little amount of food. In the state of emergency, DREAM project comes forward to help the distressed families and boost up their courage for survival through providing essential food supplies. As a regular event, this year total 60 families from Kishoreganj sadhy mal Nikil has been provided with second time food support in October. Each of the packages contains one month's necessary food commodities including rice, lentil, oil, potato and salt. According to the "Roadmap to mainstreaming development of extreme poor", DREAM project supports families of "survival stage" with food and welfare services that make them prepared to achieve required capabilities. This is the first step for those people who are now free from the vicious cycle of begging and other supports in the next steps. For the reason, food support is an important step.

More than one hundred students, local elites, parents & guardians, public representatives, school teachers, lawyers and Village Development Committee members attended the meeting. Vice Chairman of Kishoreganj Upazela, Mrs. Kamrun Nahar Luna was present in the meeting. Prominent members of the village and members of district human rights association, general secretary for Kishoreganj public library, Advocate Nasir Uddin Farooki, precursor of women's advancement and first woman lawyer in Kishoreganj, Advocate Anamul Karim, lawyer and Prominent Researcher and writer for Bangla Academy Mr. Prince Rafiq Khan took part as special discussions. They put emphasis on collective efforts to eradicate Extreme Poor and to ensure required budget considering their importance of public interest.

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05

Statement on MMC members' status

Stage Achieved	No. of Families
◆ Sustainability	2631
◆ Development	2621
◆ Subsistence	3731
◆ Survival	1017
Total	1017

The Chairman will verify the dispute and will receive a case

- He will issue summons to the disputant parties to be present on the fixed date and time
- Each complainant and defender will select two members
- The court will be composed by the disputant and the trial will be held on the set day and time
- The court will take decision and declare verdict according to the law
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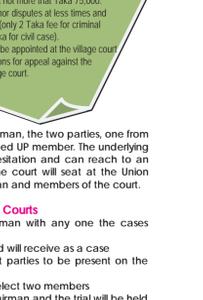
06

Case Study

Amena got confidence from financial freedom

In this traditional social system, generally women are not responsibility holder; they are dependant. However, they have immense power for taking the responsibility of this human society and they are able to demonstrate same skillfulness in family management as the men are. Self-confidence is the main strength of the women to do this. Amena Begum of Setra dakhinhati village of Kishoreganj district was such a confident woman who was compelled to shoulder the responsibility of a four member's family including her husband and children because of husband's physical impairment. After everything been lost, she turned around and was able to regain financial comfort of the family.

Amena's husband Shamsuddin was a farmer. Their family was running well by the income earned from agriculture farming. Once, Shamsuddin got paralyzed and slowly his hands and legs became numb. Thus, the main income-earning person became physically inactive. Amena began to look for her best to provide treatment for her husband. But it did not bring any result and Shamsuddin's physical condition went downwards day by day. Amena fell into the vicious cycle of scarcity and debt. She observed deep shadow around her when she thought about daily expenses and children's education. In those circumstances, she was completely perplexed.



In that hopeless situation, members of Palli Mohila Shamity at her village, came forward to help distressed Amena. They contact with the Palli Shamity and assimilated Amena to their association in 2005. Miseries of Amena and her husband's condition hearted all the fellow members. Amena got food support and a Wheel chair for convenient movement of her husband. Such assistance rebuilt her self-confidence; she started dreaming for a new life. Then she got VCD card from Union Parishad and it relieved her burden a bit. Monthly food ration through VCD card inspired Amena for a standard living. Such stimulation prepared Amena for doing something herself. She received training from the project 'Income and Project Management'. After successful completion of the training, she decided to take on the business of chicken shop. It is about bring chickens from the Nikil market, five to six kilometers away from her house and then selling at her village. Amena shared her business plan with the project staff and

In 2007 Amena got Tk.5,000 as loan at only 2% interest from the DREAM project through Palli Mohila Shamity. By that first term loan-money, she started her business. As a woman entrepreneur, initially she faced lots of trouble, but she could manage it within some days. Her business ran well because she supplied chickens to the villagers' doorstep at a reasonable price and her business expanded within a short time. Her husband Shamsuddin helped her by seating at the shop though he could not move. Amena was able to repay loan installments after bearing family expenses from the profit. When the first loan was repaid, she borrowed 10 thousand Taka as second loan and started a grocer's shop beside the chicken shop. Grocer's items were locally demandable and the second business was profitable too. She had daily 2500 - 3000 Taka net profit, which was enough to meet daily expenses with husband's treatment and children's education costs. She is still on business and it is growing day by day. Finally, Amena could achieve financial freedom that gave her confidence in leading a standard life.

Behind talking, Amena became overwhelmed with emotion and said, "I never thought that I had option to beg while living along with my paralyzed husband around the villages. However, DREAM project inspired me to breath once more. Now I'm doing business, managing children's education and husband's treatment and off course, taking three meals with quality foods." Amena could save a good amount of money as well. She has to work hard to maintain a four member's family, but she is happy for living on self-effort. According to Amena's word, "To stand on our own feet is a matter of honour".

07

Feature

Beggar's hand has been transformed into worker's tool

Every citizen has the right to a secured and dignified life and livelihoods as well. However, rights of the citizens in a poor country like Bangladesh are not always protected. As a result, they live under various social and economic problems in lives. They are also deprived of basic rights that include food, cloth, shelter, treatment and education. Therefore, they become compelled to choose begging as an alternative means to live on. Some people involve themselves with this occupation for starvation and some others get involved from generation to generation. DREAM project supports beggar families into the project from Kishoreganj Sadar and Nikil Upazela in 1998 during its inception. Most of those families are now free from the vicious cycle of begging through long-term development plan and support. Above all, the cordial efforts of member families have brought this success.

Alternative income earning opportunities increased their confidence in the process of re-naming to get involved in the society. Then the episode of transformation started. They also began saving money from their respective groups to gain financial sufficiency. At the end of borrowed bigger size loans upon repayment of the first one to expand business. Amount of savings also increased along with rising of their income. Ms. Rina Begum of Birdampara village says, "I have been able to save even two taka at a time, sometimes we managed only one taka in a week for savings. However, now we save 20 taka weekly. In addition, we give loans to the poor, we are pleased of that." Ms. Rina Begum who is the President of a group says, "Now our children go to school. Nobody call them as beggar's child".

The members take decisions and make plans collectively to implement their dreams. Since they left begging and started earning by hard work, community's attitude began turning about them. Gradually their self-reputation became diminished and they got people's respect; they were getting involved in social activities along with other citizens. Since they were united in groups, they got importance to other people in the society. Group members then pursued communication with Union Parishad for VGD / VGF cards, tube well installation, sanitary latrine and to prevent injustice upon the poor. Co-orientation, the dignity of those overlooked citizens had been established once they were independent on their sympathy. Thus, an excluded community became mainstreamed. Many of them reached to a sustainable stage through project's support and self-effort. In contrary, some of them could not reach to the expected level due to less participation in project initiative, death and migration. According to the status report of 2012, total 210 families achieved the expected development out of 266 selected families.

The initiative, transformed the lives of that beggar community in Kishoreganj district, could be an exemplary for other areas of the country. Beggars are the indispensable part of our society; they are the victims of the situation to choose the means of asking alms for their survival. However, they have demonstrated that they could be transformed into human resources if they are helped. The beggars of Kishoreganj district has converted their hands into useful instrument through the initiative of DREAM project, they are no more burden of the society.

08

Information Corner

THE VILLAGE COURT

Ensuring a access to justice is the key to ensure good governance and eventually poverty reduction. However, Bangladesh is lagging behind in the field of systemic justice. In this context, the formal justice system in Bangladesh is under tremendous pressure with huge caseload and experiencing inadequacy of human resources and necessary logistics to dispose off the pending cases. In this backdrop, the Local Government Division (LGD), Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Cooperatives (MoGRD) has initiated a 5 years long (2009-2013) project 'Activating Village Courts Project in Bangladesh' with the partnership of European Commission (EC) and UNDP Bangladesh.

Following the Village Courts Act 2006, practice of constituting village courts has increased and the local elected representatives i.e. local government is much supportive and interested to activate village courts. Village Courts offer the justice services locally with minimal cost and time. If the local disputes are resolved through village courts, it can lead establishing peace and unity at the locality. Similarly, the effective village courts can enhance restoring the justice services locally to fight against local issues including poverty reduction.

Composition of the Village Court
The court is composed of seven judges headed by the UP Chairman. Apart from the Chairman, the two parties, one from the local community, nominate other four members and the other must be a local elected UP member. The underlying argument lies, the disputant parties are able to discuss their problems without any hesitation and can reach to an amicable and sustainable decision and restore the broken relationships. Generally the court will meet at the Union Parishad with options for seating at anywhere of the Union by the agreement of Chairman and members of the court.

Disputes that are resolved by the Village courts

- Criminal cases
 - Stealing related cases
 - Clash and local conflicts
 - Destruction of crops, houses or other assets
 - Killing or committing injury to the domestic animals
 - Deceiving related cases
 - Physical assault, wound etc.
 - Misappropriation of entrusted valuables or land properties.
- Civil cases
 - Grabbing of real estates/immovable properties, recovery, movable
 - Compensation for demollition of movable properties
 - Unpaid wages of agriculture labourers, recovery and compensation
 - Recovering due money against any agreement or deed.

The Appellate Court where the petition can be submitted

- Appeal petition should be produced before subordinate Judge's court in case of civil case and
- before the authorized First Class Magistrate's court in case of criminal case.

How you should get justice at the Village Courts

- You should appear before the Chairman with any one the cases described above
- The Chairman will verify the dispute and will receive a case
- He will issue summons to the disputant parties to be present on the fixed date and time
- Each complainant and defender will select two members
- The court will be composed by the disputant and the trial will be held on the set day and time
- The court will take decision and declare verdict according to the law
- The process will ensure the justice to the victims.

Rules for preferring Appeal

- Appeal would not be granted if the decision has been taken by 5:0 (unanimous), or 4:1 or 3:1 within 4.
- Appeal will be granted if the decision is taken by 3:2 vote
- may be lodged by aggrieved party should appeal of petition within 30 days of the verdict of the Village Court.

Courts against any injustice by the Chairman
If any one of the disputant parties thinks that Chairman is not impartial, he can appeal to the Upazela Nirbahi Officer (UNO) for replacement of the court. Then UNO will appoint a new Chairman from the members of the Court other than selected members.

The Village Court has

- been formed by the Village Court Act
- cases that cost not more than Tk.75,000.
- It resolves minor disputes at less times and the maximum cost of any case is 75,000 taka.
- No lawyer can be appointed at the village court
- There are options for appeal against the verdict of village court.

DREAMLIGHT