

# Microfinance for Livelihood Development



**DAM Foundation for Economic Development**



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***Note for the Readers***

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With a view to alleviating poverty through improvement of standard of living of poverty-stricken people across the country and women's empowerment, DAM started implementation of Microfinance Programme since 1993. With the passage of time, DAM's Microfinance Programme has enabled to stand on a sustainable foundation. To give microfinance programme an institutional shape, DAM established 'DAM Foundation for Economic Development (DFED)' as a separate institute which was commenced on June 2014 as a Social Enterprise of DAM. Therefore, all of the case studies published in 'Microfinance for Livelihood Development' by DFED will be treated as overall reflections of DAM activities.

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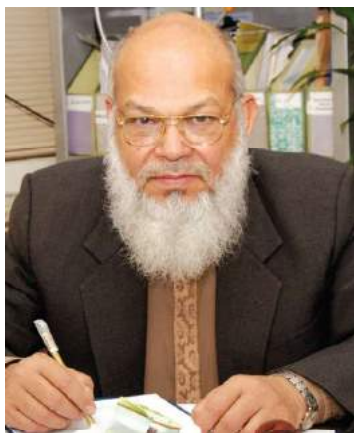
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## Welcome Note

I am delighted to know that DAM Foundation for Economic Development (DFED) is going to publish the 3rd issue of 'Microfinance for Livelihood Development', a publication highlighting the success stories of micro entrepreneurs of their innovative economic activities.

Small and Medium Entrepreneurship plays an indispensable role for a country's economic development. Over the years, micro entrepreneurs have made a remarkable contribution on creating self-employment and wage based employment. Through sustainable employment, DFED aims to pull out marginalised people from the vicious cycle of poverty. Thus, the DFED emphasises on poverty reduction, increasing food security, capacity building of vulnerable communities and fostering the non-formal economy. In order to ensure consumer rights, fair price of products and economic development of the poor and marginalised farmers, it focuses on the development of farming and non farming sectors of small and micro entrepreneurs.

The success of DFED's micro-entrepreneurs has been nicely reflected in this publication. Moreover, it has been able to uphold the diverse microfinance activities of DFED to the readers. I hope the publication titled 'Microfinance for Livelihood Development' would be considered as a documentary proof of poverty elimination and improvement of quality of lifestyle of poor populace in our country. It will also encourage people in conducting their development activities.

I would like to convey my warm regards to the officials of DFED for making this publication informative and complete. I genuinely congratulate the team of microfinance programme at all levels for their hard work and best efforts.

**Kazi Rafiqul Alam**  
President



## Foreword

With an objective of alleviating poverty of underprivileged population through improvement of their standard of living and empowerment of women, Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) has been implementing its Microfinance Programme since 1993. As part of an institutional development process, Mission transformed its microfinance programme as a separate institute naming “DAM Foundation for Economic Development (DFED)” which has commenced from June 2014 as a Social Enterprise of DAM. DAM provides micro-credit to

the targeted population for livelihood development through involvement in various income-generating activities. It emphasises on agricultural diversification, development of production-oriented small entrepreneurship, market linkage, imparting vocational training for creating loan receivers’ access to working arena as per market demand.

Mass media often do not reflect properly the tales of poor families who became self-reliant through utilization of micro-credits. In 2016, DFED directed a media campaign with cooperation of Public Relations Division of DAM and in coordination with the esteemed media houses of the country to perceive on how micro-credit activities improving the quality of lifestyle of a target population in large scale. The campaign brought together journalists of different media houses who visited the project sites of DFED’s micro-credit borrowers. Based on their observation, they produced feature reports and various national daily newspapers consecutively published those reports. These feature reports reflect the successes of micro-entrepreneurs by involving in DFED’s productive agri-based creative activities and micro-enterprise initiatives. These reports also highlight the creation of self-employment after the inclusion of unemployed youths in micro-credit activities. Undoubtedly, these feature reports will be regarded as a documentary proof of poverty alleviation and improving the quality of lifestyle of poor population in the country and it will further inspire the relevant stakeholders to take such initiatives.

This issue is compiled with the feature reports published in the media. My heartiest appreciation goes to the journalists who documented the original stories of the grassroots entrepreneurs and published it accordingly in the national media. I would like to thank the DFED officials who made efforts to publish this issue in due time.

**Dr. M. Ehsanur Rahman**  
Secretary General



### *Note for the Readers*

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DAM Foundation for Economic Development (DFED) is a Financial Institute (FI) established by the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM). With a view to alleviating poverty through improvement of standard of living of poverty-stricken people across the country and women's empowerment, DAM has been implementing Microfinance Programme since 1993. With the passage of time, the Programme has been able to stand on a sustainable foundation. To give microfinance programme an institutional shape, DAM established 'DAM Foundation for Economic Development (DFED)' as a separate institute which was commenced in October 2013 as a Social Enterprise of DAM. DFED provides microfinance to the marginal farmers and the ultra-poor so that their quality of livelihood improves significantly. Besides, they offer a range of services including but not limited to agent banking, remittance transfer services in remote areas, and various automated services for their clients.

With the objectives of creating self-employment and women empowerment DFED has been operating its microfinance programme at rural and urban areas through 82 branches under 17 area offices at 58 sub districts in 16 districts of Bangladesh covering 1204 villages of 247 Union Parisads. DFED is now serving 109,581 members in 5679 groups.



## Success in Coloured fish Farming

*Published: 10 May, 2016, Kaler Kantho*

**Arifur Rahman**, Staff Reporter, Back from Satkhira

This is the story of a struggling couple hailed from the coastal district, Satkhira. Safiullah Gazi and Jesmin Sultana are originally from Bozrobox village of Kalaroa Upazilla. A decade ago, they were struggling to meet their ends meet. Saifullah Gazi used to work at a garments manufacturing factory in capital's Mirpur area. Bangladesh has the lowest amount of minimum wage in garments industry. Little did what Gazi earned- a significant portion of it was spent on paying fixed expenditures like flat rent, utility bills etc. The



*Saifullah Gazi in association with his employees seen busy in color fish grading*

rest of the salary was not enough to meet their family needs properly. The couple was literally fighting with everyday poverty. When things got intolerable in the city, both of them ubiquitously decided to move to their root with a hope to start something fresh. Something they have dreamt but never tried before. Their inspiring entrepreneurial journey began when they collected six pairs of brombod fish (a type of colorful aquarium fish) from one of their acquaintances. In 2004, they run their first experimental farming in Bozrobox village. Their efforts saw the light of success in an unprecedented way. Those six pairs are now yielded over several lakhs of fishes. Currently, they have a capital of Tk. 20 lakhs with which they have managed to lease 20 ponds. These ponds facilitate the production of 20-25 species of colorful fish fingerlings. Their initiative has employed 20 people from neighborhoods.

Gazi remarked, "Since 2004 we've been involved in this profession. At that moment we didn't have the fund to expand our business. We had approached to DAM Foundation for Economic Development for financial support through their microcredit scheme. The foundation had agreed to lend us a total sum of Tk. 50000 for the expansion of fish farming. With that money we increased the capacity of our fish production. Now, we're selling our fish to various district headquarters including Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi and other small pockets of the country. As a small entrepreneur, I am passing pleasant time with my two children."



But, their path to start a business of their own was not solid. The cultivation of colorful fish differs from other home grown fish. It requires experience as well as adequate financial support for a potential entrepreneur. The couple had overcome these hurdles by rigorous will power. Sultana motivated her husband in the best way possible. She pushed her husband to receive training in India. After successfully completing the training from Kolkata and Mumbai, Gazi was ready to start the trial in Bangladesh. He worked so hard that he oftentimes forgot to eat routine meals. They started off with three simple hatcheries. Initially, fingerlings used to die in the hatcheries which severely frustrated Gazi. With mental support from his wife, Gazi waded through the tumultuous early days of their shared entrepreneurial journey.

As time passed slowly, they began to see the light of success. Their stumbling block in the path of success was a descent monetary investment. In order to grow the business they needed to increase the production. Thus, mass production of fish demands something beyond hatchery. In this case, they needed to lease ponds to give the fingerlings a much needed space. But, how do they arrange financing to lease ponds. Funding in the rural area is scarce and most of the corporate Banks don't usually lend to small business initiators. DAM Foundation saw this opportunity to make a difference in the lives of a potential entrepreneur. The Sonabaria branch of DAM Foundation sanctioned a loan of Tk. 50000 to them. The loan enabled Gazi to lease a pond for fish farming. He now leases 20 ponds in the village of Bozrobbox. He yearly spends Tk. 4 lakhs as lease payment.

There are some unique specialties of colorful fish. These fish are attractive than other fresh water fish species. The colors on fish skin steal people's attention on them. Moreover, it is also rare in that region. The couple is the only colorful fish farmer in whole Satkhira region. Their business is not free from vulnerability. The potential risks include poisoning the pond water by local perpetrators. In order to avoid it, twelve employees guard the ponds by following a roaster. As a result, the farm hasn't experienced any unexpected event until today.

Colorful fish species like Gold Gourami, Kissing Gourami, Blue Gourami, Milky Koi Carp, Black Moor and Comet including fish from approximately 25 species can be found in their farm. The price of a single fish can range from Tk. 10 to 120. The couple had even spent 10000 taka to buy a Milky Koi Carp from Singapore.

Installation of fish aquarium in home facilities, shopping malls, restaurants, shops have become increasingly popular in Bangladesh. Industrious people are highly interested to setup fish aquarium to amplify their facilities' internal décor. A few years ago, only people of high income class tend to buy aquarium fish for recreational purposes. Credit goes to the rise in Bangladesh's per capita income which is now enabling lower income class to buy such fish. In previous times, these colorful fishes used to import from Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia. Thanks to the entrepreneurial endeavor of Gazi and Sultana, as these fishes are now homegrown locally and are helping to meet the local demands. According to Gazi, his family's future lies in cultivating colorful fishes.

Gazi said "We need to regularly check every particular pond's internal and external environment. We also keep in mind the standard farming procedure. In order to maintain it we use lime pest and sterilization method in fresh water. These colorful fish require costly food and medicine for their growth. We want proper patronization from the government to flourish our business. We're still struggling to get constant supply of electricity from the national grid. If this can be ensured we're hoping to market our products in all 65 districts of Bangladesh. It will also help us to export fish beyond the national boundary.

For his unprecedented effort to turn an idea into a successful venture Saifullah Gazi was awarded first prize under the category of "Best Small Agri Entrepreneur" in the 13th City Small Entrepreneurs Award. In Gazi's words "I've to go a long way. I've to disseminate this technology countrywide". The couple wished to stay in this line of business till they breathe their last breath.



## Mumtaz: A successful loom businesswoman

*Published: 10 May, 2016, Daily Ittefaq*

**Yeasmin Pew**, Staff Reporter, Back from Narsingdi

Mumtaz Begum is now 50 years old. Both she and her husband Abu Sayeed (55) are residents of Nuralapur village of Narsingdi. They are a family of seven members. They have married off their two daughters, Sahida and Sharmin, in descent families. Sahida finished her higher secondary level of education from a college. After finishing 10th standard, their son Sahid is now helping in the family business. Soon, he will be getting married too. Construction work is being run in full swing in the 2nd



*Mumtaz Begum is supervising the Napkin weaving at her own handloom factory*

floor of a 3-storied foundation in their property. At one point of their life, poverty was their daily companion. The husband and wife started to work hard with handloom to change their fate. Gradually this business has brought solvency in their family.

Mumtaz Begum started her career as a handloom worker in 1983. Initially, she and her husband worked as laborers. 1988 marks the year when they started their own business by renting a single loom machine from their savings. In 1998, Mumtaz Begum got involve with DFED's (DAM Foundation for Economic Development) microcredit initiatives. She obtained a loan of Tk. 3000 from the foundation. With this money she bought a machine. Years after years she broadened the spectrum of her works. Now, there are 20 handloom machines in her factory. Each of these costs Tk. 10000. Most of the machines are old. In her opinion, old machines are more durable than the new ones. These second hand machines are over hundred year old. These machines produce towel from cotton. She makes a yearly profit of Tk. 3 lakh by selling towel. Her factory supplies towel in





Rangpur, Kurigram and Dinajpur district including other remote areas of the country. She is now a successful women entrepreneur who has overcome many hurdles of life.

Very recently, Mumtaz Begum took a loan of Tk. 120000 from DAM foundation. But last year, she had secured a loan of Tk. 160000 from the foundation. Her factory is established on a land of 25 decimals. Instead of producing Sharee or Lungi, Mumtaz Begum has been producing towel since the inception of her factory. The towel comes in three sizes- Small, Medium and Large. Wholesalers collect products from her factory. Intricacy and variation in design has made her product demand higher than other competitors. Towels can be of twenty different colors. She markets the towels in a product lot. Each lot consists of 4 towels and costs around 150 taka in the wholesale market. Apart from selling to wholesalers, oftentimes, her husband sells towel lot in the local markets. The retail price of a lot is 170 taka. One pound of thread is required to manufacture a lot. The thread costs 110 taka. To produce four towels each laborer receives 50 taka. Mumtaz Begum has to pay a sum of Tk. 25000 weekly to workers. A typical worker usually makes 6 lots a day. The factory converts 200 pounds of thread into towel every day. Most of the laborers in her factory are elderly people and come from Narsingdi. The production of towel requires deeper attention. Thus, elderly people are preferred in this line of business.

Mumtaz thinks that political instability is one of the major risk factors in handloom business. Drawing from her past experiences, she remarked that workers less likely to come to the factory during politically turbulent situation. One such incident had cost her Tk. 6 lakh in loss. Besides getting loans she has also received skill development training from DAM foundation. Inspired from Mumtaz's success, many people from her community have started handloom business. Mumtaz is giving advice to the potential future entrepreneurs on how to kickstart a successful business. People from her community are flocking in her house to get to know how to increase efficiency in their businesses.

Mumtaz Begum said, we're receiving financial assistance since the inception of our business. If we could manage more loans then our business might be more profitable. How would your business be more profitable if you've received more funds? In reply, she said, in certain periods of the year, the market price of towel drops significantly. More money will enable us to store the products instead of selling it. Thus, it will lead to higher profitability.

DAM Foundation's Narsingdi area manager Md. Tofazzal Hossain said, within a span of decade Mumtaz Begum has transformed her from a micro-credit receiver to a small entrepreneur. Not only this, she has maintained a very good savings ratio against her loans in the foundation. "We're hoping to disburse more loans to her in order to spread her small business", Hossain remarked.



## Banana farmer who made a difference

*Published: 19 April, 2016, The Daily Ittefaq*

**Yeasmin Pew**, Staff Reporter, Back from Narsingdi

“Once we had to starve due to not having enough money. We used to grow paddy and vegetables in our lands. Profit was an illusion if crops didn’t grow well. It was about 25 years ago. Then we started cultivating banana. As profit from banana production was comparatively higher we had put our full attention into it. We’re blessed since then.” This is how Peyara Begum (50) of Narsingdi’s Silmandi village was sharing her experience.



*Peyara Begum weaving her future dream at her Banana field*

She remarked that, if there is no damage from storm or other natural causes, the profit margin is expected to be more than fifty percent. She is doing the business for twenty five years. At present, her banana farm occupies 50 decimals of land. Both she and her husband is well recognized banana businessman in their village. Banana farming has not only benefited Peyara Begum but also turned the fates of many in the same village. As a result, more and more people are getting interested in this. Local people said that banana farming has generated employment for approximately a hundred people.

Peyara Begum has five children, two of them are sons and the rests are daughters. Profit from business enabled her to send her eldest son to a foreign country to earn remittance. Her younger son



is enrolled at grade 7. Her eldest daughter is already married and the youngest child is studying at grade 4. Her tin shed home is now transformed into a three storey building.

‘In addition to applying numerous medicines, she has to use insecticides in the field to prevent invasion of harmful insects’, Peyara said. Four laborers have to employ in the field for 10/15 days in a month. Each of them gets paid Tk. 400, she added.

Peyara Begum was asked whether she had received any support from the government. In reply, she said, I did not receive any consultancy or plant medicinal grant from the government. But, I’ve benefited from the DAM Foundation’s microfinance activities. It would be financially profitable though if I could get expert advice on efficient farming and insecticides from concerned government agency. It will certainly lead to produce better quality bananas. The farmers would get fairer price in this way. When a banana field is affected by any insect we tend to consult with other farmers to buy the right pesticide. She also complained that sometimes the government officials from agricultural department do not come if any outbreak of insect infects a banana field.

Apart from selling banana fruit she also sells banana sapling. These saplings are planted to create banana farm. Besides, people even are eager to plant those in their courtyard. A single sapling can be priced at Tk. 6-10. Recently, she sold 200 saplings at a price of 1200 taka. Price varies according to a sapling’s size. When she ploughed her first banana field she bought saplings from a familiar farmer. One of the major conveniences of banana tree is that farmers don’t have to buy seeds after a harvest.

Sagor is the most popular dessert banana in Bangladesh. Considering the demand, Silmandi farmers’ are biased to cultivate this variety in high capacity. The ripe banana is sweet develops a bright yellow color.

DAM Foundation’s Narsingdi area manager, Md. Tofazzal said, “Peyara Begum is a member with us since 1995. She started cultivating banana with a small loan of Tk. 3000. Now she is an established SME entrepreneur and banana farmer in her locality”. Recently, Peyara Begum has obtained a loan of Tk. 80000, Tofazzal Hossain stressed.





## Halima Khatun- an empowered tomato grower

*Published: 27 June, 2016, Alokito Bangladesh*

**Staff Reporter**, Back from Narsingdi

Halima Khatun is now 22 years old. She is from Agaodari union of Satkhira. She was married off to Abdus Samad of Ramervanga village at the age of 18. Ramervanga is situated 12 kilometers north of Satkhira city. Samad tried heart and soul to get a job. But, it didn't work out. At one point, he got frustrated. Newlywed and well educated but jobless Samad fell into deep trouble. Slowly he immersed into oblivion by thinking what society will perceive about him. Halima Khatun was



*Halima Khatun Striking a pose while Nourishing Tomato at her Shed*

worried to witness her husband's mental condition. She persuaded her husband by saying that getting a job is not the only option for making livelihood. Scores of people are meeting their daily needs through doing business.

Both the husband and the wife then decided that they will be the driver of their own fate. Halima's motivation provided a source of inspiration for Samad. They started to plan something new. They decided to concentrate their focus on tomato farming. Sourcing money for this initiative has been primary challenge to start their business. They lacked that capital. DAM Foundation for Economic Development came forward to assist Halima financially. The couple obtained a loan of Tk. 20000 from DFED for tomato farming. With the money, Halima leased one Bigha land from her elder brother. She dedicated her one bigha of land to cultivate tomato. Since then, they haven't looked



back. At present, they are self reliant. They don't have to look for funds from their parents or relatives anymore. Their earnings are enough to meet their daily expenses. In 2013, they had started their struggle. Within a span of three years they were able to pull them out of poverty. All of these have made possible with Halima's sincere motivation and labor.

The farmers said that they spend Tk 100000 per bigha of land. They can sell that tomato for Tk. 3 lakh. That's how the couple can generate a profit of Tk. 2 lakh. But all of these have made possible due to their hard work. Both of them have to constantly oversee the tomato field. From creating nursery to processing the tomato for selling in the market all of these have to done by themselves without the help of any outside laborer. They cultivate tomato in summer and winter season. But price is generally higher in summer times. In summer, the usual market price of 1 Kg tomato is Tk. 70. But, in winter the price fall down to 14-20 taka. Net income from summer tomatoes is 4-5 times higher than winter tomato varieties. Earlier, Halima recommended her husband to plough tomato in both seasons. This has brought financial solvency in their family. Financial stability has elevated the level of peace and prosperity of their family.

When they started, they had very poor knowledge on how to grow tomato. Later, they were trained in new agriculture techniques (pruning, staking, sanitation, disease and insect pest management) to help them increase their crop yields. They were surprised to learn that the chemical fertilizers and pesticides that many of the farmers were using could damage the land and make it even more difficult to produce healthy crops. "We never use chemicals to bring forced maturities in green tomatoes", Samad remarked.

DAM Foundation initially disbursed a loan of Tk. 20000 to the couple. But that was not sufficient to expand their business. They have increased the amount of loan step by step. Now they owe Tk. 50000 to DAM Foundation as credit. Halima Khatun said, DAM Foundation has helped us a lot to get rid of extreme poverty. We're leading a comfortable lifestyle only due to their remarkable contribution." "We want to expand our business through securing more loans", she added.

Abdus Samad said, "Tomatoes have high demand in the market. People look for tomatoes in almost every season. We're pondering to dedicate rest of our life on growing tomato." He praised Halima a lot. "She handpicks tomato from the field, separates the bad one and processes it further before it finally goes to market. Our combined effort has paid off. Now we don't feel any financial worries for our future", Samad added.

There is some hindrance though in going forward. For expanding their business they need cultivable land and large scale loan. If they can ensure funding and add more places to grow more tomatoes, next year they can be able to increase their overall production capacity. They want to achieve their dream against all odds.



## Parvati becomes a millionaire through betel nut cutting business

*Published: March 6, 2016, Noya Diganta*

**Shafiqul Islam**, Staff Reporter, Back from Keshabpur (Jessore)

Khatirkhali, a serene village situated just three kilometers away from Keshabpur Thana of Jessore. Parvati Das is a housewife from this village. Few years ago, finding a job was as scarce as earning money. Her family was struggling to manage their daily affairs. She even had difficulties to send her



*Parvati and her team seen in processing betel nut*

children to school let aside the sufferings of the rainy season. She didn't get any help from the locals. But, her days of hardship are over. Her family is now financially stable. Most of her success is attributed to the work she has done. Let's hear about a story of converting an investment of Tk. 1000 to Tk. 12 lakhs. Parvati has proved again that hard work brings prosperity. She buys betel nuts from various markets and individual wholesalers. After removing the peel she breaks betel nuts into small pieces. This is her final product which then sold into the markets. Parvati brought the scope for employment for the impoverished people of her village most of who were involved in begging or working as domestic help. Now, people from neighboring villages have started to call Khatirkhali village as "betel nut cutting" village.

Khatirkhali village has long been known as an impoverished region. In rainy season, people are trapped in boundless water. Where, in summer they have to lend money from others to survive. However, situation has improved significantly. Betel nuts processing have contributed in changing lives of many in the village.





Severe poverty had put the Das family at the verge of collapse. When her husband Rupan Das failed to fill up the family needs, Parvati wholeheartedly stepped in. She managed a job as a betel nut cutter in a neighbor's household. Initially it was not a paid job. Through her voluntary work as a cutter she acquired the necessary skills of betel nut cutting. What's stopping her to start her own business was the lack of capital. Confidence and a strong resolute to thrive had pushed her to get into the field with a mere savings of just one Tk. 1050.

In this pivotal moment, DAM Foundation for Economic Development (DFED) became her partner. In 2013, Parvati was admitted as a member into the cooperative team supervised by the foundation. Sheuly Dasi- the team leader of the cooperative society called "Meghla" gave her advice to start saving deposit. One month later, she and her daughter obtained a loan of Tk. 15000 to start the initiative of betel nut cutting. This initial investment was used in buying a large nut cutter and some green nuts. It was a humble start. Gradually, their work load increased. The following year, the foundation had disbursed a loan of Tk. 30000 to them. By adding previous year's profit, they bought ten more nut cutter and more betel nuts. This is how their betel nut cutting work progressed. Parvati's betel nut cutting business has been cruising in the path of success since then. The business employed 105 men and women.

The family business is administered by Rupan Das. He said, "For delivering quality product we need the best quality betel nuts. We collect and sort green, dried and ripe nuts on a regular basis. Then we distribute 5 or 10 Kg nuts to each worker to cut according to a specific size. On an average we sell 200 kg nuts a day. Each Kilogram cost Tk. 220-240. The workers generally get Tk. 10 to cut 1Kg betel nut. After meeting all expenses we earn a daily net profit of Tk. 1000. The final product is sold at different marketplaces across Bangladesh. The peel can be used as fuel in households. We sell it too."

Parvati takes time to describe her story. From the profit of the business she bought a motor cycle for her husband, acquired 4 Kathas of land, bought 4 cows and paid a debt of Tk. 5 lakh. Her children are fully concentrated on their studies. Her accumulated capital is now stood at Tk. 12 lakh. All of it is invested in business. If the investment can be multiplied it will create more employment for the local people. She hopes to get assistance of concerned authorities.

Rina Roy, a housewife from Khatiakhali village work for Parvati Das. She is saving money by cutting nuts. "If this job was not available we don't know how we will buy foods for our family. Before working here we used to pass our leisure time in doing nothing. Now we're spending our time on productive activities." Rina remarked. She has been involved with this profession for two years. She manages to cut 10 to 15 kg nuts every day. She receives 150 taka for cutting 15 kg. She started a monthly DPS of Tk. 500 at a local branch of Islami Bank. Her total deposit has now piled up to Tk. 5000. Her daughter joins hand with her when she gets back from her school.

Md. Mofijul Islam, the Manager of DFED's Keshobpur branch said, Parvati's betel nut cutting business is a blessing for many people in the region. Her effort is laudable as it has created employment opportunities for many people. We need more entrepreneurs like Parvati. DFED believes in the economic empowerment of the marginalized people in the society. That's why we sanctioned a loan to parvati to develop her business to the next level. She is very sincere in paying her loan installments.

A local journalist remarked that, DFED's idea with microfinance is powerful and simple in equal parts. It has contributed in economic empowerment and development of many socio-economic indicators for the locals. For this, the people are grateful to the Foundation.



## Khadija finds fortune in Bakery

*Published: April 02, 2016, The Daily Inqilab*

**Hasan Sohel**, Staff Reporter, Back from Barguna

“What is the capital of a business? For me, it was having a dream and the courage to follow it. When I kicked off my business I only had honesty, integrity and desire to work hard as my capital.” This is how Khadija Begum was recounting her early days of entrepreneurship. Khadija comes from a place called Gilatoli of Barguna proper. Her husband, Sumon Mridha used to work for a nearby bakery. The family was burdened with debt. While they were passing their days in such a distressing



*Khadija at her Self-Founded and well-decorated Bakery*

condition, a natural calamity took all their hopes away. A mother of two children Khadija was smitten by woes, worries, cares and anxiety for food, clothing and the bleak future of her kids. She had to face a boundless uncertainty and was frantically trying to find a permanent way out of the conundrum.

As her husband has expertise in producing bakery items, she chalked out a plan to sell baked products. A loan from DAM Foundation for Economic Development helped her to establish a bakery. Gradually their economic conditions improved and savings accumulated, she then thought of buying 7 decimals of land. She has founded “Ms. Moon bakery”, a factory on that land. Her bakery supplies biscuits, cakes and other baked items in local institutions like Arla and other markets



in Barguna district. She and her husband overlook the business. The bakery employs 11 laborers. For transporting products they use 4 motored three wheelers called “Tomtom”. These vehicles are owned by them.

Khadija had a small bakery in her house. In 2007, cyclone Sydr hit the coastal areas of Bangladesh. It left everything devastated in districts like Barguna. Khadija lost her house and a stove in that cyclone. In 2008, Under DFED’s micro-credit initiative she secured a loan of Tk. 8000 from the foundation’s Gourichandra branch. Without getting frustrated, she started a small bakery business. Her factory now produces 35 bakery items. The products have net sales of Tk. 25000. The main customers of her products are street tea vendors. She has employed some salesman on commission basis. The more they can sell the more commission they will earn based on their performance. Four van drivers transport their products from factory to consumer. Another four van drivers provide their service on the basis of freelancing. Her business provides earnings for 25 families. She recently set up a grocery store in front of her bakery. The additional income from the store has boosted to her monthly revenue. Khadija said, she recently installed a stove in the factory. Now, production can be increased according to demand.

Khadija Begum said, the most relaxing factor is that I am now working for myself. I personally look after the management of my business. I enjoy the flexibility and comfort of running my own venture. There are many problems in this business. Oftentimes, mobile court headed by executive magistrate visits her factory. The court usually penalizes the factory for not conforming many regulatory standards. She said, “We’re a local venture from a village area. Our infrastructure setup has not properly finished yet. We give great emphasis on cleanliness. Despite this, they fined us only due to spider nets found inside the factory. Sometimes we get troubled by the VAT office. We’ve to pay 15 taka as VAT on a biscuit packet of Tk. 100. If we add more VAT on our products we will have to face the risk of losing customer. We already obtained license from trade department, fire service, health department and sanitary department as well. We’re now following the procedures to get a license from BSTI”, said Khadija. One customer remarked that “Khadija’s “Moon Bakery” produces excellent quality biscuit and cake. That’s why we prefer their products over other bakeries in the market.”

Khadija Begum has become an icon in her locality for contribution to the family getting rid of poverty. Her success story is known to all and people get inspired from her exemplary activities. She has a plan to expand her business as a large enterprise so that poor and unemployed people can work there. She credited DAM Foundation for her success.

DFED’s Barguna area senior manager Md. Nasir Uddin said, Khadija was granted membership in the agency in 2008. Over the years she has built a good reputation of repaying her loans in due time. She has deposited a significant amount of savings in the foundation. “We saw the self determination of running a successful venture in Khadija. It is the prime factor that convinced us to grant loan to Khadija”, told Md. Nasir.





## Sahana Begum: A Craftswoman of wooden show piece

*Published: March 22, 2016, Kaler Kantha*

**Shafiqul Islam**, Staff Reporter, Back from Keshabpur (Jessore)

“Where there is a will there is a way”, Shahana Begum of Jessore has proved this proverb through her creativity, hard work and commitment. She comes from Altapur village of Keshabpur upazila under Jessore district. Shahana has struggled against extreme poverty and established herself as a successful person in the society.



*Sahana Begum seen to make eye catching wooden show pieces*

Instead of sitting idle in her home, housewife Sahana Begum started to learn a new trade. For 15 years she has been creating eye catching showpieces from tree trunks. She has self taught herself to become an expert wood craftsman. This profession has brought prosperity in her family of four members. Besides, she cultivates sugarcane and fish in the pond, raise cattle and can operate sewing machine. Her husband Abdul Malek used to work as a color technician who burnished furniture.

Sahana developed new types of machine to craft her signature products- wooden showpiece. She has taught many people how to make show piece by herself. Those people had taken this as their profession to earn their livelihood. Many in the Altapur village have turned their fate through making varieties of showpieces.



Sahana Begum said, despite having two Bighas of land their cultivation was not good enough. As a result, poverty was evident. Almost half a decade ago, she visited a relative in India. She was inspired to see a factory specialize in making show piece. She learned that it only takes 20 -25 thousand taka to establish a factory. But, lack of money halted her dream. She was determined to set up a factory anyway. Her strong determination led her to approach to DAM Foundation. In 2008, she was admitted into DAM Foundation's 'Doyel' Women Development Team. She started to deposit her savings from that time. A month later, she took a loan of Tk. 10000 from the foundation and obtained another Tk. 10000 through mortgaging one Bigha land. She and her son installed necessary equipment to setup the factory. Machineries installed in the factory were brought from Jessore.

Next year, she bought two machines by taking another loan of Tk. 15000 and Tk. 50000 earned from profit. Now, there are three machines in her factory. DAM Foundation owes her Tk. 30000. Her factory manufactures about 200 to 300 home appliance items. Signature products among all manufactured items are mug, jug, glass, ash tray, powder case, spoon, egg basket, coconut set, apple set, mobile bank for keeping money, utensils, hurricane, balloon, tiffin box etc.

She uses mango, jackfruit, mahogany and tectona grandis wood to make those showpieces. The price of these woods is cheap. They put these woods out in the sun to dry up. Then they craft different shapes of showpieces from it. Products are sold from 20 to 500 taka. These wooden items have high demand in Jessore, Satkhira, Khulna, Magura, Narail, Faridpur and Dhaka. Now Sahana Begum has Tk. 100000 cash as capital. She bought 15 Kathas of land to build house and a bull for farming activities.

Sahana's factory employs Latifa, a woman from her neighborhood. Latifa said, "We work here in leisure times. Now, I can be able to add more income to my family." There are many women labors who work in the factory. They are a pack of 20 women. It takes 10-15 minutes to make a show piece. Each worker gets 2-10 taka as remuneration for making one of it. On an average a woman earns Tk. 1000 -2000 from working here.

Sahana Begum remarked that, "I am proud of what I do. Initially I had small capital. Now, I want to expand my business. Thus, I require more fund. After meeting all expenditure she can easily save at least Tk 15,000 to Tk 16,000 per month. I have a dream of erecting a building on the land I bought recently. I want to add a vehicle in my business to facilitate our transportation. Load shedding and minimal capital is creating a major obstacle in our overall progress."

DAM Foundation's Area Manager of Keshabpur branch, Md. Mofijul Islam said, "Sahana Begum is our veteran member. She regularly deposits money and pays her due payment of loan on a regular basis. She is very hard working woman. Many people from her locality praise her as they get inspiration from her business endeavor. DAM Foundation will always be with entrepreneurial minds and is happy to empower Sahana through its microfinance activities."



## Poultry brings prosperity in Saleha's family

Published: May 05, 2016, The Bangladesh Today

Staff Reporter, Back from Gazipur (Kaliakair)

Saleha Khatun comes from Rakhalia Chala village of Mouchak union under Gazipur district. She is an example of how a helpless woman can be successful by dint of hard work and devotion. She and her husband Pannu Chowdhury have brought significant change in her socio-economic condition by poultry farming.



*Saleha and her husband providing foods at there Chicken Farm*

They are now an inspiration to many helpless women in the district as she has now become self-reliant through poultry farming. People of other parts of the city also come to her to know about their success story. A native of Manikganj district, the family migrated to Gazipur about 9 years ago. They sold all of their properties at that time. They don't have anything other than cash. They rented a house in Rakhalia Char for living purposes.

After struggling for a long time with their 2 children, eventually they had found the way to get rid of extreme poverty. With the aim to salvage their impoverished family they began poultry farming by taking loan from DFED "I took loan of Tk 20000 as the first installment from DAM Foundation and the loan money invested for setting up a poultry farm with just 250 chicks", said Saleha. The total number of chicks after all these years is stood at 2500.





They usually buy 1000 brown cock chicks at a time and raise these chicks from day one. After a period of 2 months, when each of it weighs 700g they just sell it. Besides, "I take care of my poultry farm properly. I give feed to the broiler chickens everyday", she said. "Poultry farming has made me optimistic of a better future for my children", Saleha added.

Pannu Chowdhury said, we have to feed 35 sacks of food to 1000 chicks. Each sack costs 2100 taka. On the other hand, we've to spend Tk. 10000 behind medicine.

Saleha said, as poultry farmer we've to remain very cautious about infectious diseases. One such incident caused the death of all chicks in our poultry. Besides, regularly feeding the poultry, we are always prepared to combat diseases at any given moment. If applying medicine doesn't work afterwards we take consultation from veterinary doctor.

Saleha said the number of poultry farms is on the rise in recent years across the region as many people are showing their interest in this sector. She also made an appeal to the government to take necessary steps to flourish poultry industry in the region. This industry can be a better way for thousands of poor women of the region in changing their financial condition, she added.

Saleha said, she is very grateful for the assistance she got from DAM Fondation. In 2010, we joined as a member in DFED's Rakhalia Chala Women Empowerment Samiti. Initially she took a loan of Tk. 20000 in the first installment. Her next installment was Tk. 30000 and 60000 respectively. They were successful in paying their loan amount.

Badhan Kumar Biswas, an area manager of DAM Foundation said, "We want Saleha to transform her small poultry into a larger one. If they need more assistance we would like to provide the same."



## Nupur's success with fish and poultry touches milestone

*Published: March 31, 2016, The Daily Inqilab*

**Hasan Sohel**, Staff Reporter, Back from Barguna

Nargis Akter Nupur is from Heulibunia village of Barguna Zilla Sadr. She is married to Haris Mridha. Her parents give her hand to Haris in marriage when she passed her secondary level education. They were passing hard days some times after their marriage. The couple was blessed with a son a year later. Things got worse when their neighborhood was hit by super cyclone Sydr in 2007. "Everything was destroyed including our fish pond", Nupur said. Price of the fishes in the market also fell drastically. But, ambitious Nupur fought back. She received a loan from DAM Foundation for Economic Development (DFED), under its Small Entrepreneurs Development Project.



*Nupur looks after ducks at her Gher*

Initially, she started cultivating fish in two ponds and the surrounding areas were utilized for poultry farming. She extended her farming initiatives to another five ponds. Her poultry has 200 ducks. A few days ago there were 700 ducks. Recently she sold most of the stock. Apart from ducks, her poultry also consists of 400 broiler cock. She is digging the ponds to become deeper. Besides, cultivating fish and poultry she has also planted seasonal trees like banana, coconut and growing pumpkin, eggplant on the aisle of the ponds. These vegetables meet the requirements of her family's daily nutrients and the surplus goes to the market to earn some extra bucks.



She said, “Credits are available from local landlords with higher monthly interest rate. They charge 10% on overall loan amount. On the other hand, DAM Foundation provides credits in a comparatively lower interest rate. The foundation also offers comfortable payback facilities. Once, I even paid my installment from my one week’s revenue.” She received a loan of Tk. 100000 from the foundation in this year’s January. On various occasion, DAM Foundation has disbursed Tk. 50000 and Tk. 30000 respectively. Nupur also said, at present, her fish farm and poultry consist of 120 decimals of land. She used the profit from first year in increasing the capacity of farmland and the ponds. Of the ponds, 4 of it used in cultivating following fishes-Vietnamese Koi, Tilapia, Rohu and Pangasius. The rest one is used at raising catfish. She is on her way to add another pond in her farm portfolio.

Nargis Akter Nupur said, “Our situation has improved a lot. Over the years we’ve become more solvent. Our efforts have been lauded by the community members. They hold us in high regards. People have persuaded me to run for the reserve post for women in the Union Parisad election.” She withdrew from the election because one of her closest relatives had run for the post. Nupur also said, “People are fond of me because I care about the community. I share the strategies of being successful through business. I emphasize the importance of self sufficiency.” Her words of mouth encouraged other community members to setup 100 more fish ponds throughout the village. After severe damage caused by the cyclone Sydr, she received fish fingerling and feed from Upazilla Fisheries Office. It was given to her three times. She remarked that she would be better off if she would receive assistance on tackling various diseases of fish and poultry from the Fisheries and Livestock Department.

Three are certain limitations though. Nupur said, “We would make more profit if the feeding cost of poultry and fish were little bit lower.” Fish farming was more profitable in previous times. This is not possible in today’s reality. Our profit has shrunk significantly. Prices of raw materials have soared in an unprecedented way. Thus, it leads to the higher production cost. Though feeding cost is higher we’re not getting the price according to our expectation. Transportation cost has also risen to higher standard. Sometimes, natural calamities cause major losses in our business.

As an accomplished businesswoman and fish farmer, Nupur is well respected by her community. She continues to share her knowledge with many in the community, stating, “Many neighboring farmers come to me for advice because of my technical knowledge and success.”

Nupur attributes the growth of her business, which continues to attract new customers, to her friendly approach, quality service and communication with other stakeholders in the business. She referred DAM Foundation as her ladder towards success. According to her, “Our driving forces behind realizing our goals are our hard work and facilitation from DAM Foundation. Without their assistance we would not have come this far.”

DAM Foundation’s Barguna Area Senior Manager Md. Nasir Uddin said, “Nupur was very confident about her business. Keeping this in mind, we’ve sanctioned loan to her on various occasion. She maintained her determination to seek a better future for her and her community. Her success means our success too.”





## Mazida's endeavor with dried fish

*Published: May 08, 2016, Alokito Bangladesh*

**Staff Reporter**, Back from Gazipur

“I am an optimist. Now, I don't have to deal with poverty. I have a home to live. If god willing, I want to spend rest of my life in peace and prosperity”, these are the words of Mazida Khatun who comes from Durlodhpur Bepari Para of Boromi Union under Sreepur Upazila of Gazipur.

About 30 years ago her husband Idris Ali learned a particular business. His new business is related to the processing of dried fish and selling it to the customer. He managed to run her family from the income from business. As their family started to grow Idris felt the pressure of satisfying the needs



*Mazida and her son checking the quality of processed 'Punti Fish'*

of his four children. He started thinking of raising his income level by doing an extra job beside this business. He took the job as a night guard in his village. But, the combined earnings were not enough to fulfill the demand of the family of four. When his health deteriorated he was compelled to leave the business at a time.

In such a pivotal time, Mazida stepped in with their youngest son to run the dried fish business. To facilitate their effort DAM Foundation for Economic Development (DFED) came forward. For this, she is grateful to the foundation.

Mazida said, “We import Barb (Puti) fish once a year in the Bengali months of Agrahain, Poush and Magh. After following the standard method of processing we sell the dried Barb fish all over the



year. Thus, this is a capital intensive business. One of the reason behind this is the fish is not available throughout the year.”

When the fishers catch fish then lots of dirt, clay and things are mixed with the fishes which are cleaned by water. Then fishes are amassed into a place for 12 hours before it goes into the processing stage. Usually chemical does not required in the making of dried Puti fish. A natural process is followed during the processing period. Oil extracted from fish used in the process. Then the fish is stick inside a large mud pot. The pots are put under the earth. Only the openings of the pots are kept above the earth. The whole processing stage involves some day laborers. Generally the work is done between 12 am to 8 am in the morning. The pots are kept under the earth for over one month. The fishes inside the pots turn into dried fish in this way. The more the time passes the better the quality of dried fish.

Besides processing dried Puti fish Mazida Khatun also turn Hilsha fish into its dried version. Processing method of Hilsha fish is comparatively easier. First the fiber has to be peeled and later, salt is applied on fish meat.

Mazida’s son Sabuz Mia said, Last year they bought 49 sacks of fish. Each sack contained 40-42 Kg of fishes. They had to utilize 73 large mud pots in the processing stage. They had to invest Tk. 10 lakh in that year.

In a nutshell, they bought 51 mounds of Puti fish in 49 sacks. During the processing stage some natural substances caused an increase of 5kg in each mound. Thus, the total amount of dried fish totaled at 57 mounds. If each mound can be sold at Tk. 28000 they get Tk. 1596000 from an investment of Tk. 10 lakh. They can count a profit of Tk. 6 lakh on that year.

Mazida Khatun is pretty much content with her success. She said, DAM Foundation has helped not only her but also many other people who were struggling in similar situation like her. The Foundation’s microfinance activities have given new rays of hope to many. Some of them have become valiant entrepreneurs; some even turned into transformative businessman or gained success in agricultural activities.



## Image of Livelihood







ঢাকা আহুহানিয়া মিশনের একটি প্রতিষ্ঠান

# ডিএফইডি

## ডাম ফাউন্ডেশন ফর ইকোনমিক ডেভেলপমেন্ট

### আমাদের কার্যক্রম সমূহ

#### ঋণ কার্যক্রম



- গ্রামীণ ও নগর ক্ষুদ্রঋণ
- উদ্যোক্তা উন্নয়ন ঋণ
- বিশেষায়িত কৃষি ঋণ
- অতিদরিদ্রদের জন্য ঋণ
- ইসলামিক মাইক্রোফিন্যান্স
- WASH

#### সঞ্চয় কার্যক্রম



- সাধারণ সঞ্চয়
- মেয়াদী সঞ্চয়
- বিশেষ সঞ্চয়

#### প্রকল্প ভিত্তিক কার্যক্রম



- সমৃদ্ধি
- রোজগার
- ডিঙ্ক পুনর্বাসন
- WEA
- সমষ্টি
- Value Chain project
- SIEP
- WIA

#### এজেন্ট ব্যাংকিং



- বায়োমেট্রিক পদ্ধতিতে হিসাব খোলা
- নগদ জমা গ্রহণ ও প্রদান
- বৈদেশিক রেমিটেন্সের অর্থ প্রদান
- ফান্ড ট্রান্সফার
- ব্যালেন্স অনুসন্ধান
- মিনি স্টেটমেন্ট ইস্যু
- ডিপিএস সেবা প্রদান

### ডিএফইডি ট্রেনিং সেন্টার (ডিটিসি)



#### সুবিধাসমূহ

- মনোরম পরিবেশ ও শীতাতপ নিয়ন্ত্রিত প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র
- মাল্টিমিডিয়া, ওয়াই-ফাইসহ সবধরনের আধুনিক প্রশিক্ষণ সুবিধা
- এসি ও নন-এসি আবাসিক সুবিধা
- মানসম্মত ডাইনিং সুবিধা
- বিনোদনের সুব্যবস্থা
- বিভিন্ন ট্রেডে অভিজ্ঞ রিসোর্স পার্সন
- সকল ধরনের IT Facility and Support
- পরিবহন সুবিধা
- এছাড়াও রয়েছে Group 4-এর তত্ত্বাবধানে সার্বিক নিরাপত্তা ব্যবস্থা

প্রধান কার্যালয়

ডাম ফাউন্ডেশন ফর ইকোনমিক ডেভেলপমেন্ট (ডিএফইডি)

বাড়ি # ৮৫২, রোড # ১৩, আদাবর

বায়তুল আমান হাউজিং সোসাইটি, ঢাকা-১২০৭।

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