

## **Inspire of cleft lip and cleft palate *Anik Sheikh* is dreaming for a normal life**

*Anik Sheikh*, the son of *Abul Bashar* and *Feroza Begum* of *Shimulia* village in *Dohar* district, was born with lip and palate problems along with eyes problems. He and his family had no idea that *Anik* could have a normal life. PROSHIKA helped them turn that idea into reality.

*Anik* is now ten years old. He was born with cleft lip and palate as well as eye problems. For his parents, *Anik*, with their poverty, was a separate burden and cause for concern. They knew that



*Anik* before operation



*Anik* after operation

this disease could be cured through treatment but it was not possible for them to provide the huge amount of money required for the treatment of this disease. They also did not know how and in what way they could get treatment for this disease from a charity clinic.

PROSHIKA came forward to give him a normal life. *Anik*'s house is located in PROSHIKA's *Muktangan* Development area office. The Area Manager of PROSHIKA selected *Anik* to provide treatment assistance for cleft lip and palate disease under PROSHIKA Disability Development Program. He arranged for *Anik*'s treatment according to the direction and advice of Mr. *Sirajul Islam*, the Chief Executive Officer of PROSHIKA. *Anik* was taken to a specialist doctor for treatment through the concerned department. The doctor said that this disease can be cured through surgery. But since the shape of her lips and palate is very large, she will need more than one operation which will be performed by the doctor in phases and hence there will be no medical expenses. At present, one of his operations has been successfully performed. A further operation will also be done and the doctor is hopeful that after this operation he will fully recover and *Anik* and his parents' dreams will come true. *Anik* will live in society as a normal person free from the curse of disability.

*Anik*'s family is very grateful to PROSHIKA and its collaborative work has a very positive impact on people from all walks of life.

## Husband abandoned *Rozina* got justice with the help of PROSHIKA Legal Aid Program

*Rozina*, who was unjustly evicted from a happy family by her husband and husband's parents with no endowment and without any responsibility for her maintenance, finally got a solution to the injustice done to her through PROSHIKA's Legal Aid Program.

A teenager *Rozina* lived in a village of *Dhamrai* Thana's *Sutipara* union named *Balitha*. *Rozina*'s life was full of lively and excitement but came to an abrupt halt in 2005. In January of that year, she got married to *Md. Selim* of the same village. *Md. Selim* used to work at Garments. A few years passed happily after their marriage. A daughter was born in their family like a ray of light in the world of happiness. Their family was doing well. But suddenly *Rozina*'s physical condition worsened. As a result, her husband and in-laws left *Rozina* with her daughter at her father's house. Even after three months, no one was looking for her from her husband or in-laws and did not take any notice of her and refrain from providing any kind of maintenance. As *Rozina* is a member of PROSHIKA *Samiti*, her case came to the attention of Mr. *Delwar Hossain*, a member of PROSHIKA Legal Aid Program. With the help of *Delwar Hossain*, *Rozina* was sent to her in-laws house through arbitration with the village elders. But after three months, her in-laws again sent her to her father's house with her daughter.



Even after a long time passed, as there was no inquiry from her husband or in-laws, it was found out from *Rozina*'s family that *Selim* is married to a girl who works at his Garments where he works. Later *Rozina*'s family and *Rozina* contact them in various ways but cannot come to any solution. Her husband or husband's family never agrees to take her into their house and does not provide any kind of maintenance. *Rozina* was unemployed; her father's house was also not in good condition. In this situation, it becomes difficult for her to survive with her daughter. At this stage, she again took the help of PROSHIKA's Legal Aid Committee. PROSHIKA's Legal Aid Committee contacted *Rozina*'s husband and the people of her husband's house but could not find any solution and filed a case in court. After the case, a warrant was issued in the name of *Rozina*'s husband *Selim* and he was arrested by the police and sent to jail for seven days. At one stage, they were legally divorced and subjected to taka 200,000 as her compensation.

Although the father was responsible for maintenance of the child but *Selim* did not fulfill that responsibility. *Rozina* now take cares her daughter herself. She kept the money that she got as compensation in fixed-deposit at the post office for future financial security. She is very much grateful to PROSHIKA's Legal Aid Program for providing her with a secure future.

## **Ankhi Chakraborty, a Successful Woman to Achieve Financial Solvency**

*Ankhi Chakraborty* once was a broken, tired and disregarded woman in her locality. She was a girl of a Brahmin family. *Barhmins* are usually poor. They make their living by worshiping at the house of Hindu communities and temples. So, she has to fight against poverty from her childhood.

*Ankhi Chakraborty*, the daughter of a Brahmin, married to *Pranab Chakraborty*, a son of a poor Brahmin family. She afflicted with the scourge of poverty, joined PROSHIKA *Samiti* with the hope of getting rid of poverty. The name of her *samiti* is '*Golap Mahila Samiti*'. *Ankhi Chakraborty's* house is in *Mahajan Para* in *Banshkhali upazila* of *Chattagram* district. She joined PROSHIKA organized group to overcome her poor condition. After joining *samiti*, *Ankhi Chakraborty* realized the need to achieve economic self-reliance and social awareness. She discussed the need for social awareness and skills acquisition through PROSHIKA staff and could learn from members of her group. According to the rules and in time she was brought under development related training. She participated in trainings on development and organization building, health, education, development and empowerment of women, non-formal and adult literacy, respectively.



Through this trainings she could understand the importance of social harmony, organization, the need for good health and financial development. She received loan assistance under PROSHIKA's microcredit scheme, professional and entrepreneurial development activities. With half of loan she set up a tailoring shop for her husband. Her husband is a skilled tailor. With another half of loan she started raising poultry and cattle in her household premises. She had her a desire to be an educated woman. PROSHIKA has encouraged group members to send their children to non-formal primary schools. She has encouraged the group members, including members of community to take the corona vaccine on behalf of PROSHIKA.

*Ankhi's* family is now somehow solvent on the income earned from her own projects and the tailoring shop of her husband. She has also saved some money and deposited one lakh taka in savings scheme and double profit scheme of PROSHIKA from the income of tailoring shop. She thanks to PROSHIKA's staff and managements for their support to overcome of her all obstacles that caused her miserable.

## A Saga of Masuma Akter's Success

This is the story of *Masuma Akter*, once a deserted woman is now an indispensable resource of the society as well as her family. Before joining PROSHIKA's *samiti*, she had lived in extreme poverty. She is now living a prosperous life.

It would not have been possible for her husband who owns small agricultural land to maintain a family of five members including three daughters. *Masuma Akter's* house is in *Paschim Para* of *Beliswar* village in *Dhamrai* upazila of *Dhaka* district. PROSHIKA's activities are going on in this village. There are many *samiti* organized by PROSHIKA. Seeing the changes of the lives of the *Samiti's* members, *Masuma* also thought



to improve of herself. *Masuma* saw PROSHIKA's worker Mr. *Abdul Haq* visiting her neighborhood group regularly. Observing the worker's activities, she discussed with him about the benefits of joining the PROSHIKA's group. Then she joined to PROSHIKA's group on the advice of the worker and for her own development. The name of her *samiti* is *Paschim Para Beliswar Mahila Samiti*.

She joined the *samiti* and regularly attended the meetings of the *samiti* and accumulated weekly savings. After going for a while like this, *Masuma* bought a sewing machine with a loan of three thousand Tk. from PROSHIKA. She then started making clothes and selling readymade garments for the women and children of the area by acquiring skills with training in sewing and operating sewing machines. At the same time, she cooperated with her husband in growing vegetables on her own small land. It continues to



be their income to livelihood. Like every parents, *Masuma* and her husband wanted to educate their three daughters. But it becomes difficult to educate the three girls with the small income. But poverty could not stop *Masuma Akter's* indomitable will. So she gradually got higher yields by investing in vegetable cultivation with more loans and continued to try to improve the situation by selling vegetables. She also started a grocery shop with a loan as she could not afford it. *Masuma* has received another loan from PROSHIKA and invested it in several small business. She was earning more money from this

business. Her efforts was to educate her daughters and her wish was fulfilled. Her eldest daughter is now a graduate in BSc Honors in Agriculture and another passed degree with Honors in English Language and Literature. The third daughter is currently studying at *Savar* University College. The first two daughters are happily married into a good family.

PROSHIKA's support of loan and counseling has given her a firm and secure life. She has now invested Tk. two *lakh* in a productive project which she received it from PROSHIKA. A good amount of profit is earned every month from this project. She is regularly paying her loan installments. *Masuma* is currently so much satisfied for her present situation.

She is regularly supervising the work of the project and maintaining good relations with relatives, Every one of her village is talking about her success. She is gratefully acknowledging the role of PROSHIKA which she now achieving.



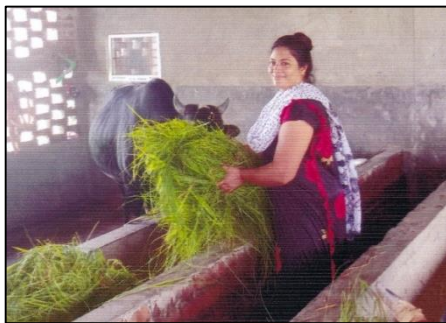
## Sharmin Is Now a Source of Inspiration to Neighbors

Ms. *Sharmin Akter* has proved herself how to eliminate a vulnerable position of women in the society. At the same time, she has also proved how to get rid of a family from poverty.

Ms. *Sharmin*, a group member from *Bhararia* village in PROSHIKA *Dhamrai* development area, is an example of how a woman can improve life and livelihood if she is involved in PROSHIKA's development process. In a very short time, *Sharmin* has been able to bring about a radical change the situation of her family. Her husband's name is *Taimur Alam*. The name of her *samiti* is '*Bhararia Pragati Mahila Samiti*'. *Sharmin* could learn about the organization from a PROSHIKA's staff. It is naturally desirable for a woman trapped out a family which is not to be aware of society, development, organization, empowerment, self-reliance, self-empowerment, rights and politics, etc.



So, it is equally true and applicable for *Sharmin*. She had been thinking about self-reliance for a long time. But she had no idea or strategy about this dire issue. One day she had a talk with a PROSHIKA worker, working in *Bhararia* village. Listening to him, *Sharmin* got a little idea of the importance of development. The worker gave her the idea, if she stays at home as a housewife, she will not get progress. Women have to take initiative to change their own destiny. The situation of society cannot be understood by being entangled in the web of patriarchal beliefs. Social awareness does not develop without relationships and communication with different organizations. Skills do not develop without productive work and one's ability is not understood. *Sharmin* got emotional strength after hearing this statement of the worker. When she expressed her desire to join the group, the worker included her as a member of the PROSHIKA *samiti*.



After joining the *samiti*, she received training on socio-economic issues. After receiving training in project management, Sharmin Akhter received loan assistance from PROSHIKA for rearing cattle. At first she started the project with only two cows. She has continued to earn money by selling their milk. She has sold milk and repaid the loan. After repaying the loan, she took another loan and bought two more cows. She has now six cows on her farm, including a calf. In this way, after few years, she built a *pucca* house by earning more money from selling cow's milk. It cost her around Tk. 10 lakh to build the house.

*Sharmin* had the direct cooperation and support of her husband Taimur Alam in this work. PROSHIKA's staff encouraged *Sharmin* to save some money. Gradually, she expanded her farm with more loans and her own money. Poultry and pigeons are also reared there.

*Sharmin Akhter* feeds the cows with her own hands, cleans the cowshed and gives treatments to the cows from time to time. At present, the amount of *Sharmin's* capital is several lakh taka/more than lakh taka. *Sharmin* is now a source of inspiration to neighbors. She has taken all necessary steps to educate her children. She is living happily with her husband. *Sharmin* has now become an enterprising entrepreneur.



She has proved that when women get freedom, they can do all the work efficiently like men, can achieve self-reliance and can be self-sufficient. She expressed her gratitude to PROSHIKA for her success.

## Azida Khatun, a Shining Example of Women Empowerment

It's a journey of a woman who were once an extreme poor, is now a shining example of her society and an elected chairman of *Bhangura pazilla*. Many women of her surroundings desired to be like her and to follow her life's standard.

*Azida khatun*, once upon a time, she couldn't imagine her present position due to intense poverty. Every morning she has to fight against poverty only to collect some food for family and for herself too. She has now not only overcome her poverty but a pioneered of the poor. She started her first journey against poverty as a group member of PROSHIKA named '*Ghaduli Bhumihin samiti*' at the PROSHIKA development area of *Sharutia* village which is situated at *Bhangura Upazilla* of *Pabna* district. In 2008, she joined to PROSHIKA *samiti*. Her financial condition was very worse before her joining in PROSHIKA *samiti*. An industrious and motivated to development *Azida Khatun* received several training courses from PROSHIKA after her joining to *samiti*. She participated in various financial development and social development training courses organized by PROSHIKA.



*Azida Khatun* experienced seeing the PRHOSHIKA group members who overcome their poverty by receiving PROSHIKA training courses and loan for the purpose of agriculture, fish farming, small business, handicrafts, rearing poultry and cattle, etc. She saw her earlier group members how they benefited from these kind of projects. Then she received loans for various projects from PROSHIKA and applied her maximum effort to gain success from the project. She invested her loan for rearing poultry and cattle, in homestead gardening and sewing and boutique, etc. as per the advice of the PROSHIKA's worker. Gradually she becomes self-reliant. But she didn't stop herself only for her success. She also encouraged and advised other women of her society to join PROSHIKA's *samiti* and to follow her to become a self-reliant. Everybody took her advice easily seeing her success in this regard..



*Azida khatun*, somehow, realized that if women were organized everything will possible for them to improve their life. All the women of her society, even all the people of *Bhangura upazilla* saluted her for her conception of the development of women. In 2019 she accordingly for their wish, became a candidate of vice-chairman, *Bhangura Upazilla* of *Pabna* district and she was elected. For electing her vice-chairman of *Bhangura Upazilla*, the help and cooperation of the group members of PROSHIKA were key factors of her success. And the support of the local people of the society of *Bhangura* was in favor for electing her as a Vice-Chairman. *Azida Khatun*, believes that the assistance of financial help, trainings, providing courage to become successful in any field, there are no alternative without PROSHIKA. She is very much grateful to PROSHIKA, its group members, staffs, managers for her present life.



She is now an elected representative of the people and works for the poor especially the women. Self-reliant *Azida Khatun* wanted to highly educate her children and to make them self-reliant too. She has two children. One of them is son studying computer science at *Shylet Polytechnique* Institute and another one is daughter studying B.A. Honors at *Pabna* government college.

## A zealous Imitative career of Mahfuza Khanam

Fortune always favours the brave. *Mahfuza Khanam* proved it. Once an element of disgust, disgrace and disregard, is now a representative of the people and a woman leading a life with her head high. She is her own example to imitate. She gratefully said that PROSHIKA provided her the responsibility, the chance and the realization that women are no less than men in any way.

Her full name is *Moshammat Mahfuza Khanam Beauty* and husband's name is *Md. Abdur Rahman*, at *Kumuria* village, of *Upazila* and District *Naogaon*. The name of the *samiti* of which Beauty is a member is '*Gandharaj Mahila Samiti*'. She joined PROSHIKA's *samiti* in 1997. She is the bride who belongs in a poor family. At first time, she had no idea about development or organization. After talking to PROSHIKA's worker working in her area, she realized the importance of her own development. After talking to the worker, she became a member of the PROSHIKA *samiti*. According to *Mahfuza*, she could not easily associated with the development work of PROSHIKA. The hundred-year-old reformed elders of the village have criticized her as well as PROSHIKA. According to their commentary, these organizations are Christian led organizations. It is not permissible to associate with Christians. Therefore, loan assistance cannot be taken from these organizations. *Mahfuza* did not listen to their words. Because, no one would bring food to her house if she listened to these people, she added. She will not come forward to redeem the lack of her world. She, herself, has to decide about her life. She further stated that with the help of PROSHIKA, many poor women and men have become aware of financial and social issues and become self-reliant. Thus she became involved in the development activities of PROSHIKA. After a few days, she joined the *samiti* and received training on poultry rearing. After receiving the training, her idea about PROSHIKA became clear and she started raising poultry and cattle on loan. In addition to being financially profitable from this project, she received another loan and started to make bags and sell them at home. She earned enough money by doing this business. Thus, her project continued to be implemented. She is known to the people of the area as an honorable woman. She gained popularity and acceptance through her polite behavior, acquiring leadership qualities and sharing people's joys and sorrows. At one stage, the people of the area requested her to contest for the post of counselor in the Union *Parishad* elections in 2019. She was elected councilor in the reserved women's seat in the interest of the people of her village. At the same time, she is working for the development of the area as a people's representative and on the other hand, she is succeeding in implementing financial projects with the help of loan from PROSHIKA for improving of her family.

"Currently, I have gained the trust of the people as a public representative and I have been serving the people of the area all day long," she added. She said this very emphatically, "PROSHIKA makes people self-reliant by developing their talents. I myself am the best example of it. If I had not joined the PROSHIKA's *Samiti*, I would never have reached the responsible position of social status that I hold today". In this way, she has expressed her gratefulness to PROSHIKA.

