

Story-01: Nazma'S Life-Livelihoods in Covid war and a Farm

Nazma Begum is a farmer. She is 52 years old, living in the 'dihgir par, Khal par village under Nababgonj upazila of Dhaka district. She is with husband till 36 years. She can write her name only; could not get scope for having further education. She has one daughter and two sons. Around 10 years ago, her husband initiated this farm with five (5) indigenous dairy cows as Shekh Alek (Nazma's husband) was used to rear cows, goats since childhood. Gradually over the time, farm is being extended--two to four, four to six; also purchased crossbred cow. Both Nazma and husband were dedicated to look after their farm intensively. In addition, they had to manage land as 'share cropping' system for maintenance family living cost along with cattle farm income. That was the as usual standard of Nazma's life and livelihood. But very unfortunately Covid'19 reported in Bangladesh which damaged her life and livelihood harshly. During this time, **her husband passed away** suddenly from life and farm got affected by the 'covid 19'---lockdown, no movement, financial crisis etc.

As a widower ultimately, she is turned into the head of household. Now a total of 11 cows along with calves are existing in her farm. Children are also helping their mother for taking care of animals as and when required. Now this farm is the only source of family income. So, she has to pay enough labor for the farm every day. Nazma was about to cry describing the real situation of Covid'19 **"Oh Allah! it was very bad time for us. Due to 'corona', we were afraid always, could not sale milk, gave others, waste out to the drain, could not able to buy feed for cows, at the end sold one cow with a less price than the normal time. Also, I was**

thinking, for sale more cows and take lease land for cultivate to save my family”.

Right that time, someone from ‘Livestock and Dairy Development Project’ of Upazilla livestock office visit her house and listed as ‘corona affected’ farm. Nazma came to know, Bangladesh government will provide some financial support to the affected farmers. She gave information like name, guardians name, address, NID, phone number, Bikash number and signed as required by the office. Finally, last February, 2021 she **received 15,000 BDT** as compensation of damages to continue the farm. Nazma expressed, she got a breath and hope by this financial support. First of all, she **bought some granular feed for cows** and then **purchased a female calf** by adding some more money as she sold out before.

In the mean time **she received some de-worming tablet** for the cows and feed them as per suggestion of Livestock officers. Nazma seemed that her cow’s health got improved than that of before. After 6 months again she has to feed de-worming tablet. She also noticed that never she went out before to the Livestock office for treatment or suggestion even not purchased medicine by her own. But now she is moving out and doing everything alone.

Gradually, Nazma is getting mental force to move forward with this farm. Thus, she is leading her family now-a-days. Now **she is dreaming for becoming a big farmer** and planned to improve cow shed soon. Because this farm is the main and only source of family income.

Story-02: Farmer's dream in emergency support

Mossammat Jelly Begum is a 35 years old hardworking person. Her husband is a day laborer. She is living in Belgari village of 'Phapore' union in Bogra Sadar upazila. She is a dairy category cattle farmer. Jelly Begum started the farm with 2 female calves. At present, she is having 4 cows on her farm; also has some native chickens. She herself sells cow's milk in the villages at a price of BDT 50 per kg and with the money from milk sale, she runs their family including five daughters. Besides, the husband works as a day laborer and provides financial support to the family. In this way, Jelly Begum was working hard day and night. She said, she had suffered a lot including the daughters and the helpless cows during the epidemic situation. She expressed **"I couldn't feed the cows properly. At that time, I could not even move out due to government restriction and being furious of pandemic too. It was not easy to sell milk as well, not easy to work. I know, what a hard time we experienced, even we were starved"**.

After sometimes, she bought cow feed from the village shop with debt and committed to pay money by selling the milk. Meanwhile, suddenly an employee from the Upazilla Livestock office came to the house and visited farm, listed her name, mobile number, checked out voter identification card and took pictures of farm.

A few days later, Jelly Begum received BDT 10,149 on her mobile. She never thought that she would get any help for the damage of the farm by covid'19. Having financial support, she got emotional and burst into tears; Says "I could not make understand what a surprised after getting this money; I never imagined even. I will make my farm bigger now". Expressed gratitude to everyone who selected her for incentive including the Hon'ble Prime Minister.

She paid off the cow feed debt with some of the incentive money and said she will renovate the floor of cow shed with bricks and sand.

Jelly Begum says, the cows are blessings for her, she got money like a magic. Now her dream is to establish her daughters and to be a successful farmer to make her family happy.