

## NGO Forum for Public Health

4/6 Block-E, Ialmatia, Dhaka-1207

Sensitizing the Pro-poor Service Promotion Securing Rights and Governance project

### Success Story

*“If I had known earlier about the process of selecting female VGD member, I would have talked with the UP member”*

Sultana Begum, 32 years old, was married after completion of class eight. Her husband Harun-ur-Rashid is a driver and she has two sons and daughter who are doing well in their studies. She lives in Golapbari village of Shakharia Union with her family. She always engages herself in social welfare works. She is very courageous and hard-working. She is managing to bring back the economic solvency in her family through her husband's income and livestock farming. Besides, she is playing an active role in society by being a member of Union Citizen Forum of Grammen Alo.

Mostly, the extreme poor Hindu families live in this area of Golapbari village and most of the people of these families are uneducated and lack of awareness. They mainly earn living by making bamboo mat. Once a time they were unaware about education, health, sanitation and individual rights. However, under the leadership of Sultana Begum, a member of Citizen Forum, they become conscious day by day. While talking about the VGD selection process in the community meeting organized by Grameen Alo, Sub Partner of NGO Forum under SPSRG Project, the community people asked the respective project Facilitator with a discontent voice “why the hard core poor families like us are not getting the VGD card while the financially solvent families are getting card?” They also asked about the procedure of VGD selection and card distribution. They expressed their willingness through a decision that they will write an application to the chairman to know who were selected for VGD card and how the selection was conducted in the year 2014-2015.

Later, Sultana Begum on behalf of poor and hard core poor families of Golapbari village submitted an application on VGD issues following the application format for information under the Right to Information (RTI) Law 2009 to the Union chairman on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

It is noticeable that, on 14/07/2015 an orientation was conducted on right to information issues for UCF members, volunteers, UP members, Chairman and all other local people under the SPSRG project of SPO-GrameenAlo in the Shakharia Union Parishad. The chairman of the Shakharia Union Parishad facilitated the orientation. Now people from all tier of the area know about the Right to Information Law 2009. They have now learned about what is meant by information, what type of information they can collect and which they cannot, which authority to approach for seeking information etc. Besides, they have also learned how they can use the information collected on agriculture, education, health, service sector and other necessary information from local Union Parishad in developing their socio-economic status, making their living standard and livelihood better etc.

Laxmi Rani, Bondona Rani, Sonali, Chandana and others of Golapbari village of Shakharia Union now understand that the public welfare information's of the government and non-government service delivery institutions have been opened to the general people according to the Right to

Information Law 2009. They also now know that the availability of information will help in the welfare of the people. This act has been passed for ensuring transparency, accountability and reducing corruption of the government and non-government institutions. Members and secretaries now easily provide various information of the Union Parishad to the public after hearing the speech of the chairman in the RTI training. Remarkably, the secretary of the Union Parishad provided the information in the writing form to the public only in five days after the submission of the application to the Chairman on 14<sup>th</sup> November of 2015.

There are in total 112 VGD allowance receiver in the Shakharia Union. They were selected VGD members through home visit and made list of poor women by UP members and female representatives of the UP in small group. Besides, initiatives has taken to incorporate those people from poor families who were excluded from the list in others social safety-net initiatives. During the next VGD selection, the members of VGD card holders will be selected from those lists of poor people by taking the opinion of others.

Now Sonali, Bondona Rani and other women from poor families have discussed among themselves that “If we had known earlier about the process of selecting female VGD member, we would have talked with the UP member”. May God do good to SPO-GrameenAlo, PNGO of NGO Forum”.



*Sultana Begum in front of Information Open Desk*



*Sultana Begum with holding an application regarding VGD issues.*



*The Secretary became compliant to provide information in writing form*



*Sultana Begum and other women became happy by collecting their desired information*