

Bangladesh Post

a daily with a difference

Bridging gaps in healthcare of rural Bangladesh

Published : 08 Jan 2021 06:51 PM | Updated : 08 Jan 2021 06:51 PM

83 Shares

Moriom Begum has been a trained Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) serving the community for the last 40 years. Hailing from a small remote village under Chokroda union of Shibpur Upazila, Narshingdi, she was married at the age of 15 to a low-paid worker (office messenger). She has been active in compassion from a very young age, ministering the poor pregnant and childbearing women in her community who are deprived of primary healthcare services.

It is of no surprise that concepts of economic freedom, empowerment and self-reliance were almost unheard phenomena in her locality. Being inspired by one of the Community Mobilizers of SMC in 2016, she participated in a training organized for Community Sales Agents (CSAs) currently branded as Gold Star Members (GSMs) network.

Entering into a new horizon of social marketing, she learned how to disseminate health messages and sell public health products. Realizing the growing need for primary healthcare services as well as commodities at affordable prices, she was determined to establish herself as a woman entrepreneur besides her philanthropic activities.

She initiated her new business buying healthcare products of Tk 2,000 from SMC and started selling them within her catchment area. In the very first month, she found the business profitable, and currently her sales stands at TK 10,500 with a profit margin of TK 2,500. She continues to disseminate health messages focusing on healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy, family planning methods, first 1,000 days of care, personal hygiene of adolescent girls including referral of potential Long-Acting and Reversible Contraceptive - LARC clients and suspected TB patients to the nearby health facilities.

Moriom, capitalizing on her positive image, is now well accepted in her community popularly known as 'doctor apa' (sister) among adolescent girls and young women.

Talking about her position at family and community, she says, "I really enjoy my work and I receive cordial support from my husband and in-laws to continue my business. We jointly take decision about our family matters relating to child's health care, education, which I couldn't do before. I love to serve the community and achieve further success in my business by expanding my product basket with SMC public health products and thereby become a role model in the community to inspire other women to join us in this initiative." Moriom has proved that no boundaries can stop if someone aspires to dream and turn that into reality.