



## Friendship in other areas:

- Relief and Rehabilitation:** Due to constant flooding during heavy rain and storms, food and essentials are reached to the marooned islanders over the districts by boats. "We have also been working to providing expertise and direct help for any emergency relief work within the country," adds Runa. "Be it for natural or man made disasters." An innovative project of risk sharing credit and micro saving is being implemented now, started by the Friendship Char Development Committees (FCDC), and sponsored by Carrefour Foundation. "This is a new method based on old concepts, for empowerment of the poorest of the poor to be more or less self-sufficient in food in 3-5 years," says Runa. "This will eventually help the islanders with communication, agriculture, livestock and capacity building." The flood washes over the houses forcing the Nomad Islanders to live under 3-4 feet of water for weeks and sometimes months. Plinth raising, designed by the Friendship Research Group is being piloted for 82 households over 3 Nomad Islands which will eventually be expanded over to more islands.
- Education:** The Friendship Education project has 10 schools in 10 chars, which are modelled keeping in mind the natural geography and limitations of the area. The Friendship Educational Programme, in cooperation with FIVDB, sponsored by Erikshjalpen of Sweden, to date has enrolled 360 children and is expecting another 300 in the up coming session. Rural Social Education is also something that Friendship emphasises on, bringing awareness of the Rights of Respect and Values to the people of the area amongst themselves in their social context through the satellite programmes and through the education programme.
- Cultural Preservation:** This unique project, sponsored mainly by the Bengal Group and the German Embassy, aims to bring back the pride of the National Heritage of the boat builders throughout the country by bringing awareness of this technology to the world through the Living Museum of Country Boats by the River Dhaleswari in Savar.

local doctors and carry on with the operations. They help our doctors give secondary level surgical interventions to the people of these remote areas every year, where the patients have never seen a doctor before. Health care services on a paramedical level are also provided to over 32 chars every month with the help of local doctors, health educators and satellite programmes. The Char Livelihood Project of the British Government has recently agreed to sponsor this programme. Satellite paramedics move all around the year in boats from one island to another rendering family planning, health education, rural social education, paramedical cares and peer training. "We have local professionals who come in to talk to these islanders about reproductive health care," says Runa Khan. "Child health care, adolescent care, communicable disease control, for example, STD, HIV, referral service for needed interventions with our hospital, behavioural change and communication and counselling for social issues and problems as well." In the social education classes, the islanders are taught about family planning, female education, hazards of child marriage and values of life and respect for those around them. "In fact, there are some areas that are under the jurisdiction of the Government, where issues like family planning and social education are to be handled by government officials," Runa explains. "However, many of the *thanas* in the Nomad Islands and the Riverine areas in the district of Gaibandha and Kurigram have been allocated to Friendship by the Government for our exclusive work on family planning issues."