



Districts in Focus

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Paper boxes for a living

Probhat Chandra Adhikari (second from right) and his workers in Jhenidah are making small and large paper boxes and cartons that are high in demand in the district and neighbouring areas.

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

AN entrepreneur from Nischintapur village in Kaliganj upazila has taken up an uncommon business to make a living. He has not only found work for himself, but also engages his family and neighbours to make paper boxes and cartons.

Probhat Chandra Adhikari, son of late Madhab Chandra Adhikari, may be the only one in his community who has made it successful in the paper box and carton business, but he has done it with flair, sincerity and ingenuity.

Adhikari is now a well-known paper box and carton maker in the area and is earning good profits. He supplies the boxes to businessmen in Jhenidah and nearby districts.

Adhikari says his father was a poor man. He used to solder iron pots. Due to extreme poverty, he could not

study. He took the responsibility of maintaining his family of seven.

Adhikari began work selling ground nuts in the area and continued the trade till the age of 30. Later, he gave up selling the item and started to supply paper boxes and cartons made by his brother-in-law in the Magura district to different markets. After seven years of trading in paper boxes and cartons, he took up making the items by himself. Now his wife and two sons assist him.

He buys raw materials from Dhaka, Khulna, Kushtia, Jessore and Magura. About 50 housewives and 20 female students make paper boxes and cartons, contributing to their livelihoods.

He makes paper boxes that pack sweetmeat, saris, shoes, cakes and oil pots. In addition, he makes other kinds of boxes and cartons when he gets the orders. He sells sweetmeat boxes for Tk 200/800, sari boxes for Tk 900/1,200 and shoe boxes for Tk

600/800 per hundred.

He also has to paste the names and labels of the stores on the paper board. Sometimes, the shop owners supply the labels to him.

Pinki Biswas, a student of Faizur Rahman Women's College, says she makes paper boxes and cartons on her holidays and earns something extra to contribute to her education expenses. She gets Tk 7 for making 100 small boxes and Tk 12 for the large ones.

Luxmi Rani, a housewife in the village, says she makes paper boxes and cartons at her leisure. She is making good use of her time as she can earn some extra money as well and contribute to her son's education costs.

Tapen Kumar of Kola Bazar under the Kaliganj upazila says he buys paper boxes and cartons from Adhikari and supplies it to different shops and restaurants. He says he



makes handsome profits from it too.

Sadhan Shah of Jhenidah district town said he also collects boxes and cartons from Adhikari to supply to shops and hotels in Jhenidah town. He says he maintains his family's expenses from this trade.

Adhikari says he now has a stable future and he is at his ease with his earnings. His elder son studies man-

agement in Cyprus and his second son will appear for his high school board exams next year.

He plans to expand his business to generate more employment for housewives and female students in his area, to better the quality of their lives.

Adhikari's wife Luxmi Adhikari says they are happy with their three sons. They lead a solvent life now.

The flower cultivator



Shakhawat Hossain of Jhenidah tends to his 'kashphool' field.

AZIBOR RAHMAN, Jhenidah

A'kashphool' cultivator in Jhenidah, Shakhawat Hossain has chosen a different form of agriculture. He figured that he would earn far more cultivating the flower than any other traditional crop.

Cultivation of the flower requires almost no labour and not much investment either. He even reaps good profits from it too.

Hossain, who lives in the Paikpara village under Kaliganj upazila in Jhenidah, used to cultivate sugarcane on 4 bighas and 7 decimals of land 15 years back. The crop meant hard labour and needed much cash. Even after so much labour, he often failed to get permission to deliver the crop at the mills due to malpractices and nepotism.

Livestock from neighbouring farms used to harm the sugar cane in the field at times as well. At last, Shakhawat started cultivating the kashphool (a weed), which grew uncared for in the fields.

Cultivation of the flower requires almost no labour and not much investment either. He even reaps good profits from it too

His acquaintances and neighbours were astonished to see his profits from the crop that needed little care to flourish.

"I weed out the bushes twice from the plot and I apply some fertiliser twice -- once when the seedlings are small and once again at the end of the Bengali month of Bhadra. I apply fertiliser in the Jaistha and Sravana months."

"In Kartik, I harvest the flowers. I get Tk 70,000-Tk 75,000 from my plot a year whereas it costs me only Tk 20,000-Tk 25,000 as input. I do not have to look for

customers far and wide either as there is high demand for the item."

"Betel leaf cultivators also buy this kashphool from me. They use the flowers in their betel leaf plots for thatching."

Alim Uddin, a farmer in the village, said they never thought that the flower could ever turn into a cash crop.

Betel leaf cultivator Robin Thakur of Gopalpur village under Kaliganj upazila said it is very useful as thatching material in betel leaf cultivation. "It protects plantation against biting colds and sheer heat and keeps the tender betel leaf fresh. It does not rot easily."

Another betel leaf cultivator, Ashim Biswas of Balarampur village of the same upazila, said this flower protects the betel leaf from fogs.

Kaliganj upazila Agriculture Officer Md Alimuzzaman said, "I was not aware of this form of cultivation. I must direct my assistant agriculture officers to look into the matter and follow-up on its cultivation. If needed, we will train them."