

Stories of the 'Shwapno Joddha'

Known for quality products and top-notch service, Shwapno has contributed immensely to keeping their customers and employees happy during difficult times. Yet, the women behind the scenes have gone unrecognised. However, their immense leadership and sense of responsibility have been recognised by Shwapno through 'Shwapno Joddha', an expression of appreciation and gratitude towards every employee.

Let's take a deeper look into some of these women's lives as Shwapno employees.

Luthfun Nahar Subarna

Working with Shwapno for two years, zonal customer relationship manager Subarna, currently looks over the Gulshan and Banani branches. As the family's sole provider, she was relieved to have a secured job in Shwapno during the COVID-19 lockdown. Without any fear of unemployment, she dedicated herself to her work.

Subarna was mindful of how crucial it was to provide customers with their desired products in online shopping. She felt a greater responsibility when customers living abroad would want to have groceries delivered to their families in the country. She extended her responsibility while facing a bigger challenge, catering to infected customers.



She believes that it was her duty to ease any fear presiding over her team. It was up to her to mentally strengthen and motivate them. It was only fair that such customers were treated like any other and no compromises were made.

In some instances, she herself had stepped into the field, saying, "If an employee felt hesitant, I went with them."

However, she had her concerns. What if she catches the virus? Her courage came from powerful support systems; her family and Shwapno.

Her biggest motivator and the most rewarding part of the job is customer feedback, reassuring her that they have earned their customers' trust.

"Being in the frontline, customer service is important to keep us going and feeling satisfied with the risks we're taking," states Subarna.

Making people happy through her efforts in such trying times was not limited to the customers. Subarna made sure to keep her team mentally motivated by encouraging their bonding, maintaining all safety protocols and checking up on each other if they fell sick.



Mahfuza Jolil Esha

Being with Shwapno for a decade now, working during the pandemic and lockdown felt like nothing out of the ordinary for Esha. Due to the management's effort in maintaining spirits high and a calm and normalised environment, she considers herself lucky to be a Shwapno employee.

As the Mirpur outlet's operation manager, Esha's responsibilities start from product availability to customer satisfaction. She elaborates how her team looks at her as a leader and respects her decisions. Going beyond her role as leader, she built an intimate relationship with her team as their friend to maintain morale.

She credits Shwapno for giving her the training to successfully do so. Furthermore, she highly appreciates Shwapno's zero tolerance attitude when it comes to harassment and protecting their female employees.

"Female employees are prioritised and as a female employee, I get a lot of benefits along with respectful treatment," she says with gratitude.

She concludes, "I thank Shwapno and am grateful to be working here. It's like we never experienced a pandemic within these walls."

Sultana Begum

For 12 years, Sultana Begum, the senior outlet operation manager of the Zindabazar branch in Sylhet, has never had second thoughts about her job. The selling point, for her, is the emphasis Shwapno places on employee safety and the respect she is given.

"Our management is respectful of female employees, something rarely found in other places," she says proudly.

The lockdown was a critical time for Sultana due to her pregnancy. Naturally, she was a little fearful. However, as the management provided all security possible, she stayed true to her duty.

"My responsibility outweighed my fears. I was also aware of my own safety and being recognised as 'Shwapno Joddha' I was inspired to work," she adds.

Along with receiving timely salaries and the management handling travelling costs, if female employees were unable to come to work, they still received full payments.

For Sultana, Shwapno took responsibility for 75 percent of her medical expenses related to her pregnancy with a 4-month maternity leave afterwards.

Sultana did not have to sacrifice being a mother. During her lunch breaks, she goes home to her children. As instructed by the management, family emergencies are always brought to light and employees are given days-off without pay cuts.

A little respect goes a long way, and Sultana's experience in Shwapno is exemplary of the success women can achieve when given fair opportunities.

She describes her work experience by saying, "When I do something well, higher management congratulates me. I feel like a valuable employee and it motivates me to keep pushing thrice as hard."

She beautifully concludes by illustrating her relationship with Shwapno and her team, saying, "I'm grateful and proud that I work in Shwapno. Before I go to work, I have a family. Once I enter the store, I have another."

With reduced working hours during the pandemic, proper payments, transportation, meals and safety gear, these women were able to dedicate themselves to the betterment of society with confidence and undivided attention. Being acknowledged as warriors, they have never stepped down from their responsibilities in the workspace and in their families, continuing to do their rightful part in keeping society together.

By Puja Sarkar
Photo: Prabir Das and Sheik Nasir