

From scarcity to solvency

Two-day training changes Hafsa Akter's fate

Scarcity has always been a constant companion to Hafsa Akter (pseudonym). It was so bad at one point that Hafsa's kids were unable to attend school as she was unemployed while her husband was a day labourer but could not find work everyday.

Living in a one-bedroom house in the Misri Para area under Hilla union of Teknaf, she was finding it difficult to support her husband.

"Last year, I got a two-day training on goat rearing from the upazila livestock office in Teknaf and since then, the situation has started changing," Hafsa said.

After training, she got Tk 4,000 cash from Oxfam to buy goats for rearing.

"I bought a goat for Tk 9,000. It gave birth to two goats. I sold one and bought some chicken," she added.

Hafsa then received five days of training on vaccinating animals from the same office and later got a vaccine kit from Oxfam.

In the second instalment from Oxfam, Hafsa got Tk 6,600 and started farming in her yard alongside rearing goats and poultry while also providing vaccination services.

She started selling eggs and vegetables cultivated in her yard, and also increased the number of chickens.

"But I earned more money and fame through vaccinating other people's animals. So far, I have vaccinated 10,000 poultry and goats," she said, adding that she is now known as a vaccinator.

Hafsa then came up with another idea of vermicompost fertilizer. She started preparing vermicompost in one corner of her yard, making 1,000 kilogrammes (kg) of the fertilizer so far.

"The demand for vermicompost is huge and I can sell it for Tk 20 per kg. I have a plan to increase production of the fertilizer," she added.

Seeing the success of Hafsa, her husband Hanif Mia (pseudonym) came forward to help her.

"I don't work as a day labourer anymore. Now, I work with my wife and take care of the goats and farmland," he said.

With their newfound solvency, Hafsa's two children are going to a local primary school.

"There is no end to learning and no age limit to learning. Oxfam has opened my eyes and people from around the village come to consult me about various issues. It's a new journey of my life," she said.

Hafsa now plans to start a large poultry farm to increase her income and encourage other women in her area to become self-sufficient.

