

Project No. 60

CORR - THE JUTE WORKS

Principle:

Empowerment of rural women through skill development and increase of income through the production of handicrafts.

Objectives:

The main objectives of the project are:

- To promote and assist in the formation of handicraft producers as economically viable groups;
- To organize rural marginalized women and provide them with skill education for producing handicrafts as a supplementary source of income for their socio-economic development;
- To promote thrift, self-help and democratic practices among the handicraft producer groups in the management of their affairs and to make them self-reliant by group action;
- To initiate welfare and development activities for poor people, such as housing, educational, recreational and health care facilities for their better living conditions; and
- To establish charitable and development funds for the well-being of poor artisans irrespective of caste, creed and race.

Background:

CJW was established in September 2, 1973 and registered under Trust organization regulation of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in October 17, 1981 (DEED # 198). The organization became self-reliant from the very beginning and from that on advanced forward with endurance and steadfastness. At present 3,524 artisans in 140 groups and 58 regular staff members are making ongoing efforts in the implementation process of the organization.

Staff Strength: Total-58 (Male-38, Female-20)

Artisan data :

Artisan Group	140
Members	3,524
Female	3,381
Male	143
District covered	17
Upazila covered	36

Donors:

It is fully self-reliant project; there is no donor's support.

Expenditure: Tk. 162,571,431

Beneficiaries : Direct : 3,524
Indirect : 25,000 plus.

Target and Achievements:

Activities	Achievement as on June 30, 2008	Performances in FY 2008-09			Cumulative as on June 30, 2009
		Target	Achievement	%	
Business					
Export : Self	117,911,095	51,443,000	55,753,267	108.38	173,664,362
Export : Partners	287,128,587	97,340,000	110,166,072	113.18	397,294,659

Total	405,039,682	148,783,000	165,919,339	111.52	570,959,021
Product, Fair Trade, HR, Social Issues					
Product Development	831	500	714	142.80	1,545
Quality Control training	20	10	10	100.00	30
Fair Trade Seminar	4	2	3	150.00	7
TOSA Seminar	1	1	1	100.00	2
Gender Workshop	2	2	2	100.00	4
Awareness building	59	14	14	100.00	73
Environment training	22	2	2	100.00	24
IGA training	37	8	8	100.00	45
Capacity building	34	10	10	100.00	44
Health & Nutrition	3	2	2	100.00	5

**** Denotes performance from FY 2005-06**

Financial Report :

Export value of CORR JW FY2008-09	in Taka	55,941,854
Partners Product value		109,979,439
Total Turnover		165,921,293

During the reporting period CJW exported goods to 70 companies in 21 countries around the Globe worth Tk. 55,941,854. Besides, it provided expert services for as many as 11 Bangladeshi Craft Exporting Organizations under the licence of CJW. Altogether the total turnover in FY 2008-09 was Tk. 165,921,293. CJW achieved a sale growth of 11.24% against the previous fiscal year in spite of the Global economic recession. Its continuous efforts on design development and warm business relations with the venerated buyers helped attain this success. Increase of business volume means more earning scope for the artisans of the groups.

Impacts :

- Socio economic development of the destitute women is taking place as they have a dependable source of income.
- Most of the workers want to acquire adequate skills to cope with the prevailing trends of the market. So the women's professionalism keeps them busy upgrading their abilities. The more a woman becomes skilled, the more she earns.
- The group members' knowledge about primary healthcare gained during the project sponsored training courses which has helped them to lead a healthy life.
- As earning members they have a strong voice in their families and society. The in-built supervision and monitoring system has brought about positive changes among them influencing their neighbors.

CORR-The Jute Works' Contribution Towards Mymensingh Indigenous Students

Mymensingh Diocese runs a good number of primary schools to arrange basic education for *Adivasi* (indigenous) pupils. Most of the parents are so poor that they are unable to bear educational expenses of their children. Mymensingh Diocese needs a lot of money to pay teachers' remuneration and meet other expenses. The Board of Trustees, staff and artisans of CORR-The Jute Works are conscious of their social responsibilities. They gave emphasis on the expansion of education among ethnic community people and allocated Tk. 750,000 from its annual surplus to Mymensingh Diocese Education Fund during FY 2008-09. Last year Tk. 500,000/= was given to Mymensingh Diocese from the CORR-The Jute Works for same purpose. This monetary help enabled the Diocese to materialize its primary education program to some extent.

Conclusion :

Now-a-days we see a clear shifting in “customer choice” – from “traditional products” the market is leaning toward more “marketable products”. This indicates a great challenge for us. In order to respond to the situation we are re-equipping our artisan groups with new skills and assume semi-technology to accomplish the demands of the market. This is however a task that cannot be achieved overnight and we need to work relentlessly to realize the main objectives of the project.

Bright Daylight



Premlata Hazra (45) lives in a village named Koligram under Muksudpur *upazila* (sub-district) of Gopalganj district. Her husband Jagodish Hazra, is a fisherman by profession. She studied up to class-V. She has two sons and two daughters. The elder son is now 29 years of age, who could finish grade ten. Now he works at a motor workshop in Dhaka with a monthly income of Tk. 1,000. Her second son who is physically disabled was deprived of receiving basic education. Premlata’s first daughter passed the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination and works for an NGO in Chittagong with her husband. The second daughter stays with her sister and reads in a college at higher secondary level.

At the time of marriage, Premlata was 15 years old. Her parents were marginalized cultivators and very poor. Her husband’s family was also poverty-stricken and their earning source was from catching fish in a nearby river or ponds. They had no land of their own and lived in a relative’s house. Both the husband and the wife are hard working persons. Premlata performed household work and took care of her children. Her family size began to increase gradually and she searched for a means to support her family as she did not like to depend on others. In the circumstances, one of her neighbors inspired her to join the CORR-The Jute Works (CJW) group. She showed her eagerness and in 1979 Premlata joined Koligram Sika Mohila Samity under CJW.

This group was skilled in making different jute goods such as *sika* (reticulated bag), doll, mat, toy. She became an active member within a short period of time. Finishing her household works, she utilized her time to make jute items and her monthly income increased rapidly from Tk.1,500 to Tk.4,000 per month. Thus she was able to help her husband and children’s tuition. Fulfilling her own demand she saved Tk. 8,965 during the reporting period with the group scheme. Now her family can afford to arrange three meals a day. Premlata joins meetings regularly and produces jute items as per schedule. She is a craftswoman of high category in her group. Once she was elected President of the group for her leadership role.

Premlata bought two decimal of land with an amount of Tk. 20,000 and made a tin-roofed house for an amount of Tk 100,000 with the earning from handicrafts. To purchase the land and to construct a house she had to spend Tk. 50,000 from her savings and wages. She also bought some agricultural land. She has invested Tk. 5,000 in the fishing business (buying and selling in local market) run by her husband. She took loans from the CJW three times, refunded on time and made a good profit. Premlata explained this situation as transition from darkness to daylight in her life. She felt that without joining the CJW jute product making group she could not gain this success.

Premlata received trainings on leadership, accounts keeping, women rights, health and environment besides craft producing activity. Now she has changed her life economically and socially. Once her world was small and now she is able to talk to the community, attends decision-making meetings and travels elsewhere easily.

During the time when the cyclone Sidr devastated the area, she arranged a shelter for group members and rendered service to the affected people. Premlata holds a position of honor in her village and the local people respect her. Premlata encourages the village women to get involved in economic activities by sharing her experience with them. She listens to their problems and solves them by means of sharing with others or placing the same in the union council meetings.

Premlata has respect for the CJW, which has shown her a path to a sustainable development. She is proud of her social dignity. She now works with poor women for their socio-economic development. She remarked, “Women are involved with the CJW groups to get out of the captivity of poverty and achieve financial solvency with dignified position in social life.”