

### **iii) How a housewife became a successful entrepreneur in cut flower sector:**

Imamul Hossain, husband of Sajeda Begum lost his leg in an accident 19 years ago. The illness of the sole breadwinner in the family brought indescribable poverty. That's when Sajeda Begum took control of the family. With her husband's inspiration and little capital, she started cultivating gerbera flowers on 10 katha land bought by Barga next to her house. He also got success through hard work. There is no shortage in Sajeda's house now. Sajeda built a one-storied house on four and a half acres of land next to the government primary school in Haria village of Jessore's Jhikargacha upazila with money from flower farming. The gerbera flower cultivation of 10 khata land has now increased to four and a half bighas (one bigha in 33rd decimals). Experimental liliun flowers are also being cultivated in three decimals of land. She is dreaming of educating her two sons and daughters in higher education. She has saved money to buy land in the field.



Sajeda Begum told that she got married before reaching adulthood. Husband Imamul Hossain cultivated flowers. In 2004, he fell from a tree and became paralyzed. He was treated in many hospitals but his leg did not heal. At that time, she started cultivating flowers herself. From morning till night, she started working hard to feed her family. She also got the price of that labor. Officially visited India several times to receive training in floriculture. Now several lakhs of taka are earned annually from flower farming.

Sajeda Begum said that she will marry her daughter after passing at least BA (Honours) even if she studies up to class VIII. Tanya is now studying in the second year of Honors in Government College of Jhikargacha Upazila. Tanya helps her in sending flowers to different places including Dhaka also in internet communication and money transactions. The boy is studying in class VIII in secondary school.

Three years ago, Bangladesh Agriculture Development Corporation (BADC) gave Sajeda a modern controlled drip irrigation steel pipe shed on one bigha of land free of cost in the flower field of Haria village. That shade took her a few steps to become self-reliant. Next to the shed there was already another shed of one bigha land. Now built another gerbera flower shed in the adjacent field. Now she has a total of three gerbera flower sheds. Gerbera flowers are marketable three months after planting.

Sajeda Begum said, to build a shed with gerbera flower garden on one bigha land now costs 12 lakh taka. However, the flowers are salable after three months of planting. Each gerbera flower is sold for an average of five rupees throughout the year. However, from January to April, the price of flowers is higher. Florists and traders are especially busy around this season. The price of flowers increases several times during this time compared to normal time. During these two months there is a booming flower business.

Sajeda is taking special care of gerbera to get more flowers. She said that organic and chemical fertilizers and irrigation have already been given by spending three thousand taka. If the temperature is low during this period, more and better-quality flowers will be available. A lot depends on cold and hot.

Abdur Rahim, president of Jessore Flower Production and Marketing Cooperative Society Limited, said that in 2018, seven sheds of gerbera flowers were constructed on one bigha land from BADC to encourage seven ideal flower growers including Sajeda Begum of Jhikargacha upazila. The shed is equipped with a controlled irrigation system with solar power, which has revolutionized the cultivation of flowers in Gadkhali. Sajeda is very hardworking and energetic. Phul Samiti has a role to promote her as a woman entrepreneur.

Sajeda Begum was selected for Advanced training and adaption in high technology for 10 days from 07 March, 2023 to 16 March, 2023 in cut flower in DR. YSR Horticulture University, West Godavari district, Andhra Pradesh, India under the project “Designing and Implementing of Piloting Programme for Development of business Capacity of Women Entrepreneurs on Cut flower sector” under the Bangladesh Regional Connectivity Project-1 (BRCP-1) under the Ministry of Commerce in order to ensure the maximum use of flowers in the production of by-products of flowers. She had been trained on theory and practical session (Chrysanthemum, Rose, Gladiolus, Gerbera, Marigold, Cut-Beli flowers), theory on drying methods, drying methods for various flowers (Chrysanthemum, Rose, Gladiolus, Gerbera, Cut beli), availability of flower drying machine and probable cost, practical session on different methods of drying cut flowers, hands on training on preparation of book marks, greeting cards, wall mats, pot pourries, use of flower waste as feed supplement, oil extraction, preparation of rose water, preparation of mosquito repellents with cut flower waste, preparation of resin based pressed flower articles (keychains, visiting card, ornaments etc.) preparation of medicine and cosmetics (Uptaan, Face pack or Mask and Soap) from cut flowers, preparation of pesticides from cut flower waste and preparation of perfume from cut flowers.