

## Masura Begum: A Broken Hope Turned into Reality

*“I am having a daily life with lot of sufferings. I understand that life will be difficult for being a woman. If financial condition of any parents is not good then it will be more difficult.”* This story will start with above statement made by Masura Begum who lives in Boaldanga village of Sreeula union in Assasuni Upazila under Satkhira district. She is 35 years old lady and currently doing her profession as a daily basis worker. She attended class-1 but could not move forward due to her family’s economical status. Previously she tried to help her poor father and took a job in RMG sector in Gazipur.

### Life with harsh reality

At that period, she met Mr. Abdur Rahim and they get married in 2005 at the age of 18. After a long period of time, they had a baby girl but her husband was expecting a baby boy. Their relationship was getting bad and after some period of time she left her husband and returned back to Assasuni. Then her husband never was in touch with them and she decided to live in her village in her small shelter on



Figure 1: Masura begum with her daughter in front of her shelter

government land. But she doesn’t have any land and so no options for her to shift the shelter. She is working fishing pond (“Gher”) for repairing bank, cutting grass and son with half of regular payment. The employer is making gender discrimination and paying fewer wages to female worker though she is spending her full physical energy for the same working hours like male. So it is difficult to manage basic food for her daughter with this amount of money and she could not arrange any special food. She thought that in this point she is an unsuccessful woman.

### Sufferings from complex situation regarding water

Apart from her personal sufferings regarding low-income whole village is having a scarcity of safe drinking water. There is a big crisis of fresh water in the context of salinity. Because of her poverty she is fighting every day for safe water and hygienic toilet. It is matter of shame for her that she do not have any toilet and using neighbors one which is 100 m away from her house. In her village, 170 families are living and most of them have tube-wells which are free from arsenic but contaminated with high salinity. In addition to that, there is a river Goalghashia nearby her villager but they could not use it due to high salinity. So she was fetching fresh water from a green marked deep tube-well in Gazipur village, which is 3 km away from her house. People (not everyone) from other villages also collect their drinking water from that tubewell which are creating long queue.

### Arsenic Safe Union Intervention and taking action

To address these kinds of severe issues, the Arsenic Safe Union project started on 2019 in Assasuni funded by Embassy of Sweden and



Figure 2: Masura begum receiving safe water options from GoB-UNICEF project

implemented by DPHE-UNICEF. The main target of this project is to provide safe water for all and education on sanitation and hygiene. Safe water point allocation includes a series of analysis i.e. baseline survey, CSA, equity based site selection through evidence, community mobilization on WASH, arsenic, caretaker training for proper operation and maintenance and finally training on water safety planning in users level.

During Community Situation Analysis (CSA) a committee was formed to evaluate the WASH situation in each and every community. From socio-economic analysis it was revealed that Masura Begum is living in a pro-poor category and did not have any safe water option close to her house. Along with this assessment awareness program on WASH was conducted in community level through workshops and courtyard sessions. From that session she understands the importance of safe water, improve sanitation and best hygiene practice and also the process for getting safe water options for her community. Inspired by those sessions she with her neighbors appealed for a safe water option for that community through proper channel. Selection committee reviewed the baseline and CSA results and a site was selected for safe water options.

After that social assessment a detail feasibility survey was conducted and Technical Review Committee (TRC) assessed those results and allocated a safe water option with appropriate technology (RWH). With the support from GoB-UNICEF project, EPRC and union chairman she is drinking safe water. At last, she thanked to the almighty for all kinds of support.