

EVALUATION REPORT

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**Association of Development for
Economic & Social Help [ADESH]**
October 2010



**PROJECT:
GENDER RELATION & SOCIO-ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

SUBMITTED TO:



BANGLADESH

FEW WORDS ABOUT ADESH

Association of Development for Economic & Social Help (ADESH) had begun its journey as a small Non-Government Organization (NGO) in 1988 from few unions of Savar Upazilla (sub-district), some 22 km away from capital Dhaka. In 20 years it has expanded its activities, mostly vertically, to few more unions but remained within the Upazilla.

Mission of ADESH also remained the same to build an equitable society through ensuring participation of both men and women for promoting democracy, human rights and economic justice for all to achieve a sustainably developed society.

According to the profile of the organizational objectives of ADESH are shown as:

- Facilitate the disadvantaged people of the society, specially the distressed women folk, to make them conscious and self-reliant so that they can initiate and control their own development activities.
- Provide supportive social services through unity, loyalty, discipline and tranquility.
- Ensure development of the project area through socio-economic programs.
- Take effective measures to eliminate the occupation of begging.
- Undertake possible efforts for rehabilitation of the shelter less, disabled and the destitute.
- Provide livelihood training like handicrafts, cottage industries and dress making, farming.
- Strengthen mass literature/education programs.
- Establishment of children, adolescent and youth welfare centers, and
- Take initiatives to promote rights, justice and gender concepts in life and living.

Association of Development for Economic & Social Help (ADESH) established in 1991 to promote sustainable development through promotion of democracy, human rights and economic justice for all. Though its initial focus was more on women but gradually incorporated men responding to gender perspectives.

Following are the sectoral focuses of ADESH:

- **Poverty Alleviation**
(through institution building, savings, micro-credit)
- **Women's Development**
(establish gender equity, gender training & conscious raising, motivation, seminar & workshop, rally and debate etc.)
- **Health, Water & Sanitation**
(health education & motivation, installation of slab latrine & tube well).
- **Human Rights**
(legal education & training, legal aid support, program for development for persons with disability)

- ❖ **Development Education**
 (group training on basic orientation, human development, leadership, IGP skill development training, adult education)
- ❖ **Environment & Climate Change**
 (building consciousness on environment issues through billboard, tree plantation, seminars with group women and civil society, adoption).

Present intervention areas of ADESH is spread over 7 Unions of Savar Upazilla now, which are:

- ❖ Savar,
- ❖ Tetuljhora,
- ❖ Ashulia,
- ❖ Birulia,
- ❖ Pathalia,
- ❖ Yearpur, and
- ❖ Bonogram.

ADESH's project area covers about 200,000 population of Savar Upazilla through 376 groups. It is currently dealing with number of projects. It was mentioned by the Members of the Executive Committee that ADESH's Micro-Credit program begun with 300 groups, which were formed by 20 to 25 members and funded by CARE International. Now they have 376 groups, which meant that the volume of the credit program increased vertically in a very considerable manner. As a result number of beneficiaries did not increase considerably; rather the financial strength of the beneficiaries has grown in quite formidably.

The projects of ADESH and their major focuses are given below:

Name of Projects	Major Focuses
Gender Relation & Socio-Economic Development (GRSED)	Improvement of Gender balance among the rural people of Savar Thana through various socio-economic motivation, training, education and activities.
Disabled in Development	To ensure equal rights of the disabled people and bridge them with the national development process through utilizing their potentiality and creativity as productive manpower.
Micro -Finance	To create self-confidence and as well as reliance on organization to improve inhuman condition of the distressed women as well as self reliance towards economic control and social status.
Water & Sanitation Program	Sustainable improvements in hygiene behavior and re3duction in exposure to9 water and environmental sanitation risks for urban poor communities, especially women, adolescents and children living in unhygienic environments.

Involvement with Diakonia: ADESH is involved with Diakonia with the project titled Gender Relation & Socio-Economic Development from 1992 and the gender project had began from 1995.

OBJECTIVE (S) OF THE EVALUATION

The specific objectives of the evaluation were to find out situations/perceptions, performances and expectations on

- Conceptual clarity about Gender Relation and Socio Economic Development
- Experiences with expanse on formal and non formal rights, justice and gender situation
- Coping mechanism with feelings/realizations leading to changed actions
- Services/Facilities available/extended to ensure Gender Equality & Socio-Economic Development
- Role/Potentials of committees/forums to benefit from its services/facilities in a sustainable manner.

However, focuses of the evaluation cover:

- ❖ To find out the project's effectiveness and impact on life and living, especially women
- ❖ To assess the results/outcomes of the project and the degree of achievements of the project's objectives
- ❖ To assess the strategies followed together with its appropriateness, effectiveness and efficiency to address the issues of Gender Relations and Socio-Economic Development through involvement of various stakeholders and community members
- ❖ To identify major problems faced including their causes during the implementation of the project
- ❖ To identify the future directions and sustainability (program sustainability) of the project interventions and the project as a whole;
- ❖ To assess the social, political and economic impact of Diakonia supported project of ADESH and
- ❖ Recommend measures to improve the performance and capacities of ADESH.

METHODOLOGY

Considering the objectives of the evaluation and assessment, appropriate methods/techniques were employed for collection of information, feeling and expectations considering socio-economic and geographic situation, the project purpose and expected results. The methods/techniques and respondents were:

- ✚ Collection and review of the available documents, records/reports and information;
- ✚ Briefing from the Members of the Executive Committee of ADESH through an exploratory meeting;
- ✚ FGDs with (male, female, mixed groups where adolescents were also present);
- ✚ Consultation with selected local leaders, community members, group leaders;
- ✚ Interactive Workshop with the staff members;
- ✚ Consultation with the stakeholders in project areas, and
- ✚ Numbers of cases were also collected to suffice/support the study.

Various tools and checklists against methods/techniques and the respondents were also developed accordingly. Most of the interventions took place in field locations with support and participation of the concerned communities.

This evaluation, however, did not explore performance of other projects (supported by other agencies) implemented by ADESH within the project area though those may have influenced the gender project to a certain degree. But the effect of gender project was noticed.

In total 175 respondents were also covered apart from the Executive Committee and the senior staff members of ADESH in two phases. There were 125 female and 50 male respondents were present in the FGDs, Consultations and Interviews during the two days of interventions by the evaluation team.

The Evaluation Team met with all the partners of Diakonia, who were evaluated by the team after all of them were provided by the draft evaluation report. The consultations were held at the Diakonia office in Dhaka in presence of the senior management of Diakonia. Valid and reasonable comments and/remarks by the partners were also incorporated in the report. But, they were kept separated in a box after the findings of the evaluation team's report.

It could also be mentioned that the OCTAGON TOOL has been mentioned in all reports in a generic manner, as this tool had been provided by Diakonia for monitoring of the organizations and the projects, although some of the partner organizations did not receive training to use OCTAGON TOOL.

For ADESH: The Evaluation Team visited two villages (Nikrail & Sadapur) of the Bonogram Union of its intervention area on 3 December 2010 for further evaluation, as ADESH mentioned that they could not take the Team to the hardcore poor area during the first visit. In total 35 respondents were present in two FGDs, while all the respondents were female.

THE PROJECT

According to the Project Proposal the project aimed to organize and activate a capable and sustainable organization of the poor/destitute women of ADESH intervention area to provide skills to manage their organization independently and protect themselves legally against any oppression and ill-treatment from their family or society and jointly protect such acts against any women member and live with dignity and self-respect.

The project was designed not only to create awareness among the women but also their men counterparts and other male members of the community to respect women and their rights and recognition. The project was supposed to advocate for rights of women and gender equality in all spheres of life. ADESH has so far organized 376 groups with 5,191 female & 705 male members in 7 Unions.

The project has planned to organize male groups during this project plan. ADESH planned to organize 60 male groups in 60 villages having minimum 20 members in each group. That means that the project planned to organize 1,200 male members in the project area during 2007-2010. According to the Progress Report on the project ADESH mentioned that actually the project covered 1800 male members to build awareness on "women Rights". ADESH informed the Evaluation Team that "though they have male group in each village, but they are also delivering training on women rights to the male members.



It needs to be mentioned that ADESH was working in the area with female groups, focusing on micro-credit, prior to initiation of the Diakonia supported project (GRSED). This provided base support to ADESH in starting the GRSED with women groups. However, ADESH revisited the baseline information and group situation to initiate the activities through

- a. Raising their awareness about their situations, problems and potentials through non-formal education and interactive sessions;
- b. Expand their awareness/education on various human aspects e.g. social, economical, political, environmental, and judicial and equality among humanity, more preciously gender equality.
- c. Conduct different kinds of awareness building activities like group meetings, uthan boithak (courtyard meeting), seminar/workshops with stakeholders, participation in public meeting, rallies, campaigns launched by different organizations. Such activities were also expanded to schools through discussion sessions, organizing debates, special day observation, etc. involving students and teachers.
- d. Apart from awareness building groups were taken through different kinds of livelihood skills training based on their interest, potential and scopes available with members and the locality. These courses include agri-farming, compost/fertilizer production, animal husbandry, poultry rearing, handi-needle works, small business, etc.
- e. These types of activities were expanded to men folk also through formation of male groups, initiation of saving and micro-credit activities, training interventions as appropriate, etc. so that a mutually supportive and appreciative relation and culture is created among men and women.

It is appreciable to note that ADESH was conscious in relating gender dimensions in its concepts, activities (education, health, water, sanitation, training, awareness building, business ventures, etc.) and processes in implementing the process though there are rooms for improvements.

ADESH has so far organized 376 groups with 5,191 female & 705 male members in 7 Unions, while total number of beneficiaries is 29,880 and involved with them from one to ten years through the process of its organization building activities. ADESH has assigned field workers for each of the group to supervise and monitor their activities. The staff members have organized these groups, provided them conscious raising training on basic social issue (health, education, water-sanitation), organization building, skill development training to utilize savings and credit support activities including management of accounts and processes related to "Gender equality". Each staff attends monthly meetings of their assigned group where group members discuss their agenda.

The group members give their opinion along with criticism, recommendations, suggestions and proposals to staff in their monthly meetings, which are submitted and shared in the monthly staff meeting of ADESH.

Staff members review the monthly progress and problems of the group during each Staff meeting of ADESH and their activities including their recommendations and consider them very positively to reorganize the plan if it is necessary & feasible. This is a continuous process of sharing ideas in between project and target people which ultimately help ADESH to design all its policy papers, reporting forms and project designs, as it was mentioned in the Project Proposal.

ADESH has some documents and guidelines for smooth operation of the organization, which could be mentioned as strength of ADESH. The policies and guidelines are as follows:

- Gender Policy & Gender Indicators
- HR Policy,
- Procurement Policy
- Administrative Manual
- SRHR Policy
- Accounts Policy & Guideline
- Savings and Credit Manual
- Provident Fund Manual, and
- HIV/AIDS Policy.

ADESH also conducted baseline survey before commissioning the project of Diakonia. Report/Information is available with them which needs revisiting as the situation has changed quite a bit.

ADESH has 7 model villages in 7 Unions, as stated by ADESH and they are as follows:

Union	Village
Savar Pourashava	Joipara
Ashulia	Deyon
Birulia	Moistharpara
Pathalia	Monudia
Iyarpur	Tajpur
Bonogram	Gandhuria

Progress Report: ADESH submitted a Progress Report to Diakonia about the development of the project. Progress Report of 2009-2010 shows the following chart, which shows about the Project area, target groups/rights holders and number of beneficiaries:

District	1
Upazilla	1
Village	70
House hold	2,609
Target Member	5,896 (Male 705 + Female 5,191)
Beneficiaries	29,880
Total Group	376 (Female 328 + Male 48)

Following are the results of the project achieved so far by ADESH according to the Progress Report submitted to Diakonia.

Result – 1: Improved access to income and social service

Result – 2: Awareness and respect of human rights increased

Result – 3: Actors working for democracy including civil society strengthened, and

Result – 4: Gender equality improved.

ADESH implemented the project “Gender Relation & Socio Economic Development” according to the Proposal submitted by them to Diakonia. But, they had to shorten & reduce some of the activity and also could not materialize some activities as proposed due to shortage in fund supply caused by currency devaluation during 2010.

ADESH implemented the projected activities to ensure improvement of gender sensitivity/equality, improved access to economic resources, awareness building & create respect to human rights and strengthen the actors for democracy including civil society through seminars, workshops, group discussions, trainings, provisioning of legal aids for the victims, and provided orientation on HIV/AIDS. ADESH has also created a gender model village named as Joypara through activating the whole community of the village.

It also provided trainings to its staff in order to build their capacity on different issues including gender, rights and HIV/AIDS.

ADESH’s Progress Report of 2007-2010 provided with analyzing tests on each results or achievements, where it depicted Output Indicators, Outcome Indicators and also the Impact Indicators under all thematic areas of the project.

MAJOR FINDINGS

The Evaluation Team led by Mr. Anish Barua covered almost the whole project area of ADESH, specifically the project intervention area supported by Diakonia. The major findings of the evaluation are as follows:

1. It can be mentioned that ADESH is a well structured organization whose staff members seemed to be well organized and committed to the projects of ADESH. Many of the staff is attached with ADESH for very considerable amount of time and staff dropout rate is very negligible as it was told by the Members of the Executive Committee. It has kept its activities confined in only Savar Upazilla and did not seemed to expand elsewhere in the country. Savar has a big concentration of NGOs, but there are only few including ADESH are contributing positively. It appeared to the evaluation team that ADESH management conservative enough in expanding for fear of losing focus and quality that can be questioned for suffering complacency.



2. Diakonia supported project focus on specific themes like human rights, gender, HIV/AIDS, disability and also climate change. ADESH, for not having direct interventions in all the theme areas, it tried to extend the support as much as possible. Some examples are sharing the concepts of rights and gender in group interactions, schools, training services, support to disables, business/income generating activities, etc. However, in certain cases, male-female seclusion is still visible/maintained due to cultural bias the communities have. Sometimes, this created better opportunity/access for women as well.
3. ADESH extended its support in the agricultural field by providing training support to farmers in organic farming or preparing organic fertilizer. But, it was notable that the training support was provided to male farmers more, while it could be more beneficial if the female were given the trainings as most of these activities are part of household activities benefitting all. The ADESH authorities also agreed to that and also mentioned that female members are being involved in preparation of organic fertilizer.
4. It was also seen that group members of ADESH have a degree of knowledge on gender, HIV/AIDS, rights and a little bit of responsibility as well. But, the level of clarity on these issues were not that much visible among the members, especially the female members. It could be mentioned that a long standing activity by ADESH have been of great help in memorizing the issues and some meaning of them, but a doubt could be cast on the fact that the knowledge may not reach to the whole community with proper meaning and use of them. On the other hand, especially the female members, had become more of agitators then that of motivators. It may well be happen that the female members were more enthusiastic to project their level of knowledge in front of the evaluation team, as they were speaking a loud & in groups during the FGDs.
5. Level of clarity on the issues like gender, rights were also found to be weak among some of the senior staff members of ADESH. The Executive Director of ADESH had also agreed to that and mentioned that further trainings are required for the staff members, although there were a number of trainings delivered to them on the above mentioned issues.
6. Progress Report of ADESH, submitted to Diakonia, has mentioned the activities performed within the project purview. But, the successes and completion of activities were only quantified, although there were room to qualify them, as Diakonia had set Output Indicators, Outcome Indicators and Impact Indicators against all the results. For that reason it is difficult to assess the actual development of the activities achieved, as only numbers and percentages over the years of the project period do not portray the real success/results of the project.
7. It has already been mentioned earlier that ADESH's Micro-finance activity is marked with a vertical growth, not horizontal. The Website of ADESH mentioned that there were 2,635 household were in its micro-finance net during 2007, while the number was 2,800 during the end of 2008, which marks a very meagre improvement in terms of horizontal growth. Loan outstanding was 22,257,452 during 2007, while the outstanding of 2008 was 48,769,800, that depicts a huge vertical growth in amount. It was also seen that majority of the members of ADESH are financially well off, while the evaluation team met with the members of ADESH.

During the second phase of the intervention of the evaluation team on 3 December it was also found that a considerable number of ADESH beneficiaries are almost hardcore poor. They have received and perceived the trainings rendered by ADESH on rights, women and children rights and also the issues of HIV/AIDS and other things. 50 per cent of them were the credit beneficiary of ADESH. They also clarified that ADESH do not force the members to take loans from ADESH.

8. It was mentioned by the management of ADESH that they did not provide any training directly to the Union Parishads', but they have effective relationship with the Members & Chairman's of the Parishads. It had been informed during a meeting with the local representatives, elites of the society that female members of the Union Parishad's are getting some kind of awareness building support from ADESH, but the Chairman's and other male members' involvement in the whole process is yet to find a positive result.

It can also be mentioned that, ADESH was basically working with the female groups right from its inception. But, now they are also forming male groups so that the males could be supportive to their female partners.

9. ADESH organizes issue based debates at the school and college levels and those debates create a huge level of enthusiasm and also help in awareness building on empowerment of women, gender, rights, human rights and HIV/AIDS. Initially, ADESH organizes orientation programs for the students on the issues and then debates are organized. Both, female and male students participate in this kind of programs. The knowledge gathered through these debates also impinges at home. However, selection of issues for debate appeared to be too flat and do not expand the dimensions with logic and realities that could expand understanding better.

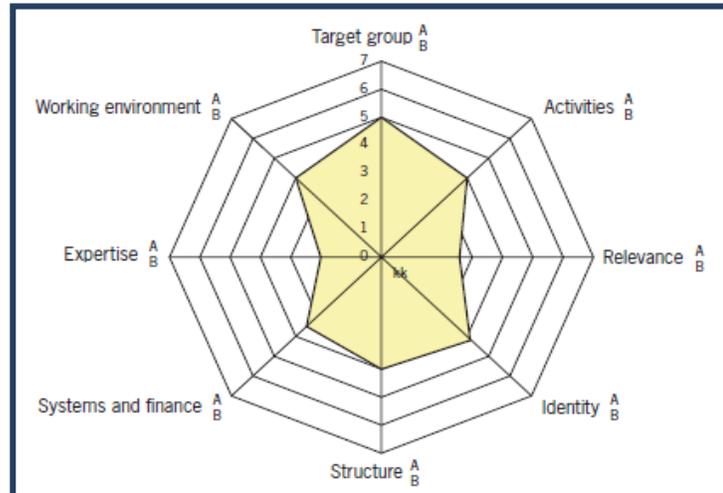
10. ADESH have number of training modules and manuals, but they are not updated. ADESH authority also agreed on updating the modules/manuals and they informed that the process of updating them is being undertaken.

11. Though ADESH claimed of certain achievements but those are not well founded with concrete monitoring records-reports and or serious research findings. The record keeping forms/formats, monitoring tools (provided by Diakonia) are there but ADESH used it more from quantitative dimension bypassing quantitative aspects which is essential for the project. Proper use of tools and absence of analysis of the monitoring findings can also be seen as a limitation that demand attention.

12. Documentation is an area where ADESH is still weak. Most of its documents are quantitative in nature and do not reflect the qualitative aspects. The analysis of information are poor and learnings are not surfaced or reflected. However, it can also be mentioned that, ADESH maintains an impressive website, although it was not updated regularly.

- Diakonia partners' along with ADESH uses the **Octagon** tool, which is a tool for the assessment of strengths and weaknesses in NGOs and was developed by Swedish SIDA. The Octagon's aim is to obtain an overall picture of the organization and to get to know it well. It can also serve as an aid

for the selection of partners; for grouping partner organizations in relation to their needs of internal organization development; or for identifying the point in time when the Swedish organization, as the financier, was phasing out its support for organizational development. The Octagon is based on the idea that it is possible to obtain a comprehensive picture of an organization's capacity and development profile by making systematic reviews and assessments.



During the evaluation process, it was found out that the Octagon tool had been very useful in assessing the capacity of the organization, and its strengths and weaknesses. The tool was translated in Bangla with the support of Diakonia for more effective use by the partner NGOs. But it was not very clearly visible that the NGOs or ADESH had a clear understanding on the Octagon itself as the tool is quite complex in nature.

ADESH, during the dissemination meeting with the Evaluation Team and Diakonia Management, mentioned the following:

1. The population of the intervention area of ADESH is above 500,000 and for that reason they have only 29,880 beneficiaries who are directly involved with ADESH.
2. ADESH follows the indicators e.g. output, outcome and impact indicators as set by them for monitoring and evaluation purposes and they do not follow that of its donor organization.
3. ADESH mentioned that they had conducted trainings on OCTAGON TOOL after two years of the inception of the project.
4. About the Recommendation 5, ADESH said that the credit facility provided by ADESH is not mandatory and they have 5,896 members in the gender project and only half of them are included in the credit program but gender responsiveness is mandatory for the groups, as stated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While there are some reasons to be appreciative of the performance of ADESH, there is room and need for further improvement. No NGO should be complacent with whatever it is doing and or have achieved so far as the communities and country still has lots of problems, needs and also expectations. Government alone cannot respond to all. Even if it can, creating basic awareness and a supportive environment should be in place that the NGOs are good at. The theme issues, human rights, socio-economic justice, gender, democracy, peace, etc. that Diakonia is focusing on are essentially important ones for creating such a base. Performance of ADESH is surely commendable though too confined to a small/limited area.

In this context, the evaluation team would like to recommend the following for its consideration:

1. Savar Upazilla, the location of the project is too close (only 16-20km) to the capital city and is quite in the lime light of everything for habitation, transportation, business potentials, availability of facilities/services, exposures/opportunities, attention of central government including NGO outfits. As the saying goes, darkness is thicker under the light, was the situation 10 years back while ADESH started working there, but presently situation has changed drastically. It is now an area of widened exposures, opportunities that impacted on the life style, mind set and needs/expectations of the people as well. Most of the groups/members are no longer poor or destitute rather rich (compared to national standard even), their children are going to schools/colleges, even universities, most have their own houses (half being constructed and storeyed buildings), owns own business and have landed/productive properties.
 - a. The evaluation team, recognizing the experience and skill ADESH has, would expect it to expand their activities to new or more remote areas where the needs are real and greater.
2. Working in same area for such a long time, mostly with same groups, on similar issues appeared to be over done! This is reflected in respondent's approach/style in answering the questions/issues raised with them. Most had ready answers (quick expressions in unison based on rote learning, limited interpretation/analysis, absence of reflection, crude disclosure of unity as power, sort of aggressiveness in dealing expectations, etc. This also justifies that ADESH need to move ahead as this community can manage their own means. However, ADESH can assign 1-2 staff members to monitor group cohesion, recognition of rights/justice, gender considerations, participation, etc. in their decision making and actions.
3. Group members, at present, appeared to be more interested/concerned with higher amount of loan availability for their business ventures with higher income/profit potentials. Though they are talking about rights, justice, gender, etc. but there are scopes to be suspicious/skeptical about their intentions. The fear of their becoming touts or exploiters cannot be ignored! ADESH needs to develop realistic but terse indicators for monitoring of the group activities where there is room for improvement.
4. While the understanding and commitment of the EC members are commendable, the staff members need to be taken through a serious grooming exercises. Their sincerity and seriousness level is high but they need better conceptual clarity on the issues/terminologies, confidence to

relate/apply of the concepts in life and living of group members and skills for better interaction, mentoring and monitoring based on well defined criteria and indicators.

5. The evaluation team is appreciative of efforts for incorporating gender perspective in different activities/services being extended by ADESH but felt that its value is being over shadowed by credit operation. There is high possibility of losing group cohesion if credit support is not there. ADESH needs to study the situation while intensifying the promotion of ethical issues/ interventions as the economic lot of the group members have improved.
6. ADESH, with the exposure, experience and recognition it has with the communities should try to promote rights, justice, gender, democratic principles, etc. in educational institutions, local government bodies, government service facilities like clinics, hospitals, offices and private sector business entities that are operating in savar area in abundance where deprivation, discrimination and exploitations are high. It can start with advocacy interventions with the management authorities leading to extension of mentoring/monitoring supports.

In fine, it can be said that ADESH has gained substantial exposure, experience and recognition to expand the activities to new/further remote areas with mentoring/monitoring support to existing groups, initiate advocacy activities with institutional leaders for promotion of rights, justice, gender, democratic principles. ADESH did not do those for financial limitations they had. It is recommended that ADESH can be supported for adjusting their operational/management capacities leading to mainstreaming gender issues widely.

CASES OF SUCCESS

CHANGE IN AKBAR MEER

Akbar Meer was a businessman of a village named Joypara of Savar and her wife is Kulsum Begum. They have two daughters and a son. Kulsum is a member of a group formed by ADESH. Initially Akbar did not like her wife to go and attend the meetings of ADESH. He used to scold her and very often asking her to quit the group formed by ADESH. On a day, Akbar had noticed that his wife hurriedly completed the household works and she said that she is going to attend a training course by ADESH and it would be day-long training. Akbar was curious about the training and wanted to know what actually happens in those trainings. Akbar Meer was listening to the contents of the training from a distant place. It made him interested and that intrigued him to attend some more training. His conscience had begun changing and he wanted to be a member of ADESH when he learnt that ADESH is in the verge of forming male groups. He organized 15 members from his village and from his relatives and contacted ADESH to join in as group. He had participated number of trainings on gender, HIV/AIDS, Women's Rights, Human Rights along with his group members. Now, he helps her wife in household activities and they share with each other while taking any decision on family matters. Akbar's wife has received training on Mushroom cultivation and that adds extra earning in to their family.



