

Annual Report on *“Education Support Project in aid of Dalit Community”*



Reporting Period: January 2021- December, 2021

Funded by:

Ashar Gan Onlus

Implemented by: *Dalit*

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Preface

Due to the low incidence of Covid-19 in early 2021, the field activities of Dalit started well. Although everything was fine till March, but the Bangladesh government has again issued a lockdown as the outbreak of the dangerous type of corona virus 'Delta' has been increasing since April. In this way, sometimes severe lockdown and sometimes relaxation, the country was following this rule. Therefore, organization Dalit was also adapted to this situation and implemented the activities of its projects. 'Education Support Project in aid of Dalit Community' is one of Dalit's education support projects, which has helped disadvantaged students to continue their studies despite the Covid-19 risk. Dalit is deeply grateful to the donor Ashar Gan Onlus, because without their support in these difficult times, the educational life of thousands of children would have become uncertain.

Although teaching at school level has been suspended for 4 months (April- July 2021) due to various government restrictions, but teachers of Dalit Schools have alternatively visited students' homes, provided teaching materials and paid stipends. In addition, house-to-house awareness techniques and proper hand washing with soap have been taught to keep villagers safe from the risk of coronavirus outbreak.

The project has been played a significant role to develop children's potential through quality education, character building lessons and awareness building on their rights and duties, improving women education and social awareness in 12 villages of Khulna and Jashore district. This report summarizes the activities of the project for the period January - December 2021.

Objectives of the project:

Most of the people in the project areas are extremely poor and socially neglected. The objectives of the project are to improve the quality of life of these disadvantaged people as follows:

- encouraging the children to go to school regularly and reducing dropouts from education;
- to increase literacy rate in dalit & disadvantaged community;
- to increase knowledge on women rights, social rights including human rights amongst adolescent girl students;
- to keep the health of the children risk free;
- to interaction with the goal of creating social awareness for the prevention of child marriage and increase public awareness against child marriage system;
- enhancing awareness on establishment of human rights and elimination of caste discrimination;

Working area & beneficiaries:

District	Upazila/ sub-district	Unions	Villages	Beneficiaries (direct)
Jashore	Keshabpur	2	2	200
Khulna	Khulna city	4	4	223
	Dumuria	3	5	498
	Digholia	1	1	88

Status of scheduled activities:

Sl.	Activity Title	Scheduled	Completed/ Status
01	Tuition Program including materials support	12 months	12 months
02	Monthly stipend to school students	1 time	1 time
03	Financial support to college level students	12 times	9 times
04	Financial support to the SSC examinee	1 time	Canceled
05	Providing health check-up and treatment to the students at Dalit Hospital	150 students	144 students
06	Distribution of mask	918 children	418 children
07	Distribution of health protection materials	169 children	85 children
08	Distribution of health care materials to college level students	6 times	3 times
09	English spoken course	5 students	Canceled
10	Internship course for college/university students	5 students	Canceled
11	Special support including accommodation facility to college/university students	5 students	Canceled
12	Training on communication skills development to college/university students	1 time	Canceled
13	Monthly guardian meeting	144 times	75 times
14	Annual meeting with the guardians	12 times	Canceled
15	Inspiring gathering of S.S.C and H.S.C passed students	2 times	Canceled
16	Monthly orientation for Teachers'	6 times	3 times
17	Annual meeting with Village Development Committee	1 time	1 time
18	Annual SMC meeting with Dalit schools and other local schools	1 time	1 time
19	Drawing competition	12 times	12 times

Activities in brief

Tuition program

Dalit's school activities has been closed since April 2020 due to the increase of coronavirus outbreak, but Dalit adopted alternative teaching method so that the education of the children of the backward communities would not be stopped. That is why the teachers of Dalit Schools went to the houses of the students and formed a group of 5/6 students and started teaching them. But it has been done in accordance with the physical distance and hygiene rules.



At the beginning of this period, there were **916** students studying in 12 schools at Primary and Secondary level. But as coronavirus outbreak continued to rise after March 2021, so did the number of students dropping out of school at the end of December. This is mainly due to the growing economic crisis, which is forcing students to have child marriages. The following table lists the students after 21 students dropped out:

Sl no	Name of Schools	Nursery			Primary			Secondary			Grand Total		
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1.	Sholgatia	4	5	9	13	15	28	19	9	28	36	29	65
2.	Mikshimil	7	2	9	17	17	34	18	16	34	42	35	77
3.	Modhugram	13	3	16	33	22	55	28	28	56	74	53	127
4.	Dumuria	3	2	5	20	17	37	23	15	38	46	34	80
5.	Chingra	6	5	11	19	16	35	19	16	35	44	37	81
6.	Arongghata	2	6	8	19	9	28	15	29	44	36	44	80
7.	Sonadanga	5	6	11	15	14	29	12	14	26	32	34	66
8.	North Kashipur	4	3	7	7	8	15	7	6	13	18	17	35
9.	Banorgati	4	3	7	9	15	24	6	4	10	19	22	41
10.	Moheshwarpasha	3	4	7	17	5	22	10	13	23	30	22	52
11.	Burulia	5	3	8	19	25	44	25	17	42	49	45	94
12.	Sujapur	1	7	8	23	26	49	19	21	40	43	54	97
Total		57	49	106	211	189	401	201	188	389	469	426	895

Out of the mentioned 916 students, 17 girls dropped out of education due to child marriage. In other words, at the end of December 2021, the number of students was 895. According to field data, the rate of child marriage during this period was 1.86%.

Info of Child Care Centre

Outbreaks of Covid-19 have increased the level of poverty in rural households, forcing all men and women in a family to work. As a result, their young children (kids) at home spend their days unprotected and helpless and have no opportunity for entertainment and education. To help parents overcome this problem, a child care center have been set up under the project since January 2021. The following table provides information about it.

Sl no	Village/ Centre	Nursery		
		Boys	Girls	Total
1.	Moheshwarpasha	4	7	11



At present, the parents take their children to the child care center at 8 am and go to work and at 1 pm they take their children home. During this time the child care center assistant teaches children through entertainment and conducts activities that help them develop their

talents. In addition to recreational lessons, children are also provided with light snacks, 22 masks and 33 soaps.

Distribution of study materials, tuition & exam fees

During the reporting period, Dalit distributed exercise books, slates, pens etc to the school students. Distributed materials were as follows: Nursery Book 106 and Slate 106 pieces, Exercise books (large) 5,432 pieces, Exercise books (small) 5,886 pieces, Pen 4,868 pieces and Chalk 274 boxes to 916 students. Dalit also distributed stationary materials to all schools. In the month of June and December 2021, Dalit has paid

monthly tuition fees to 589 students from grade IV to X to guarantee their attending classes in other schools. They received BDT 4,55,830 as monthly stipend.



Financial support to college level students

In continuation to provide assistance in higher education, Dalit arranges motivational seminars with college and university going girl and boy students to raise-up their voice against early marriage and establish women rights in the society. But due to the increase in coronavirus outbreak, students gathering were stopped from March to July 2021 as per the government instructions. Since then, stipends have been sent to the students mobile banking account every month. That means, during the reporting period; Dalit arranged 5 seminars (physically) in February, March and August to October 2021 and distributed 4,89,295 Taka (for 9 months) to 82 students.



Health check-up and treatment to the students at Dalit Hospital

In addition to teaching children, measures have also been taken in this project to keep them disease free. The children of the village suffer from various diseases throughout the year, as a result of which they are sometimes absent from class. In addition, their health risks have increased due to the ongoing outbreak of Covid-19. So the purpose of this project was to cure at least 150 sick children through treatment. Following this, a total of 144 students have been provided medical services and medicines from August to October in collaboration with Dalit Hospital. As a result, the children have recovered from various common diseases and the number of class attendance has increased by 87% as compared to earlier.



Distribution of health protection & hygiene materials

Awareness-raising activities were underway to keep the children at risk from the coronavirus. The teachers in the project visited every house in the villages while maintaining physical distance and taught the children how the Covid-19 is spread? This has raised awareness among the children and the rate of infection in the villages is lower than in the cities. In addition, 418 children have been provided with 4,615 mask and 2,037 soaps to 85 children in the month of June to keep school children safe from Covid-19 infection. Soon an equal number of students will be given the same amount of masks and soap.



Under the same program, health care materials have also been distributed among male and female students studying in colleges/ universities. In June, August & October 49 female students were given 244 packets of sanitary napkins and 33 male students were given 160 packs of soap.



Monthly meeting with the guardian

Village level parents are not very responsible towards their children; they are busy with their professional responsibilities all day long. Moreover, social awareness is very rare among them. By direct discussion with the guardian of the students, various social problems can be informed from them; they can be advised to solve the problem as well. For this reason, monthly guardian meetings have been arranged in 12 villages through the facilitation of Program Organizer. Several issues like presence of students in schools,

demerits of child marriage, human rights and environmental cleanliness, home based earning etc. As a result of series of years of continuous meetings, there is a positive reflection of behavioral change, increase of home based



income and the prevalence of superstition is less noticeable in the villages. During the reporting period Dalit arranged 75 meetings (another 69 meetings canceled due to covid-19 restrictions), where 1,463 female and 160 male guardians were participated at these meetings.

Monthly orientation for Teachers

Dalit has been arranged monthly orientation session for the teachers to develop monthly study plan, giving them motivational guidelines and review the progress. During the reporting period Dalit arranged 8 orientation sessions for them, where 13 teachers participated under this project.



Annual meeting with Village Development Committee

The activities of the youth club have been started through this project with the objective of involving educated men and women in the development of the village. To this end, a committee consisting of 10 educated men and women (aged 18 to 35 years) has been formed in 8 villages under the project. The task of the members of this committee is to play an important role in the social and economic development of the village; for example, preventing child marriage, resolving social and family conflicts locally, focusing on children's literacy, becoming self-reliant through the formation of savings funds, etc. In continuation of this, an annual coordination meeting was organized on September 11, 2021 at Dalit Hospital hall room, Chuknagar, Khulna. Total 36 participants of 12 committees were participated at the meeting and expressed their opinions and recommendations.



Annual SMC meeting with Dalit schools and other local schools

The members of the school management committee consisting of representatives of the dalit community are the guardians of the schools locally. Every year Dalit arranges a coordination meeting with the members of Dalit School and other school managing committee to run Dalit schools properly. Through this meeting, the members of the management committee directly present their views, demands, complaints, plans, etc. to Dalit authority. As well as all the committee members coming together in one place, they also get the opportunity to exchange experiences. For this purpose an annual coordination meeting was organized on September, 2021 at Dalit Hospital hall room, Chuknagar, Khulna. Total 32 participants of 12 committees were participated at the meeting and expressed their opinions and recommendations.



Drawing competition

Drawing competitions was organized to increase the confidence of dalit children and develop their talents to survive in competition with the other community children. In the month of March, Dalit organized 2 competitions at the school level. Due to the



Covid-19 alert, it was not possible to hold competitions in the remaining 10 schools. After the government restrictions were relaxed in August, drawing competitions were organized in the remaining 10 schools in August and September.

A total of 217 students (Girls 140, Boys 77) participated in the competitions, who painted according to a specific theme. Our invited guests enjoyed the competitions and handed over the prizes to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd placed participants.

Covid-19 vaccination and other Govt. services registration camp

To control the Covid-19 pandemic, the government of Bangladesh is providing free vaccines to the people, but the vaccine is available only by registering online. Apart from this, one has to register online to get various government assistance programs like widow allowance, old age allowance etc. As people from disadvantaged and backward communities are still far away from the benefits of modern technology, they do not have access to such registrations, so they cannot be covered by these support activities. Therefore, in order to bring the beneficiaries of this project under government assistance and to register them for receiving the Covid-19 vaccine, arrangements have been made to register about 31 people from the 7 villages under the project through service support camps. Dalit school teachers and field workers have used their smart phones to register the poorest beneficiaries.



Conclusion

Although currently there are no covid-19 related restrictions in Bangladesh, but the people of this country are at risk of infection with the new variant of corona 'Omicron'. We are worried that we may have to deal with a difficult situation again and it is not possible to predict how long this situation will last. Therefore, in the interest of the beneficiaries of the project, Dalit has been implemented the project activities in limited extent. Local villagers and stakeholders provided all kinds of support to Dalit and took part in the activities. Dalit is deeply grateful to **Ashar Gan Onlus**, for extending a helping hand to Dalit in the midst of global coronavirus panic, economic recession, conflict and various disasters. We hope that the year 2022 will open the door of new possibilities for us, we will move forward with new initiative. Thanks for being with us.

Case study

Shimla Das; an example of success

Shimla Das is a girl from Sahos village of Sahos Noakati union, belonging to Dumuria upazila of Khulna District. She is from a destitute family; her father's name is Subhas Das. Without being beaten by poverty she continued to carry on her study. Her family is comprised of 3 sisters and parents. Nevertheless it is unlikely to afford the family cost so educational cost bearing is questionable. She was about to experience close of education. Meanwhile under this project several villages were selected from Dumuria upazila for providing support to the college/ university going poor girl students. Shimla was selected consequently to the condition of family and encouragement for the education.



The stipend provision by Dalit has reanimated Shimla. It has resumed her nearly closed education. She used her stipend money for paying tuition fees, buying books and other personal important purpose. During her study after passed the higher secondary level a circular for the admission of Diploma in nursing course was published in the newspaper in July, 2021. She applied for the training course. After successfully passing the written and practical test she has been admitted in Bagerhat (a district) Nursing Institute on November 1, 2021. Till October 2021, the cost of her study was managed with the stipend she received from Dalit. Shimla expressed her gratitude to Dalit and said, she could dream of bright future due to cooperation of Dalit. Shimla proved that, strong will power and hard work makes any difficult tasks easier.

Success was captured in the life of Joy Das

Joy Das belongs to a poor family of Sujapur village under Jashore district. His father Krishno Das is a day labourer and mother is a housewife. Joy has a brother, among them he is the elder one. In spite of many shortages and hardships, Joy was able to pass the H.S.C exam. In the past, the condition of the education system in this area was terrible; there were no high school passed students in the whole village. However, the situation changed after Dalit started school activities there. In its continuation, there are many students studying in higher education in this village at present. Besides, the standard of living and the rate of social awareness have also increased a lot there. Joy has been in Dalit School since childhood. In 2021 he was studying at the graduation level of 4 years.



At this circumstance, he was looking for a job; one day he was informed about the recruitment of Sepoy by Bangladesh Police. He applied for the post. After successfully passing the written, physical and viva test on the job interview, he joined as a trainee sepoy in Jashore District Jail. Joy gratefully reckoned about Dalit organization that if Dalit did not have implemented the education program then it would not have been possible for him to study higher level and hence he would not have availed that current job so fast. He is indebted to Dalit for changing his life.

Sudeb became a Prison Guard

Sudeb Das also lives in Sujapur village under Keshabpur upazila of Jashore district. This village is involved in various social problems like lack of education, social unawareness, child marriage, superstition etc. In order to overcome this situation, Dalit started their activities in Sujapur and in the present context, Sujapur Rishipara is on the way of development, it can be said! Sudeb Das, the eldest son of Sukumar Das of this village, has recently got a government job which is a big success for this family. Sukumar is a van puller by profession. It is very difficult for him to bear the expenses of the family



including the education expenses of 3 sons on a small income. Sudeb has been in Dalit School since childhood. In continuation of this, Sudeb passed the HSC examination in 2021 with the help of Dalit. Due to financial difficulties of his family he was looking for a job after passing the HSC examination.

Through an advertisement, one day he was informed about the recruitment of Prison Guard by Bangladesh Police. He applied for the post. After successfully passing the written, physical and viva test on the job interview, he joined as a trainee in Meherpur District Jail. His family and society are very proud of Sudeb's success and at the same time Dalit is proud of him as Sudeb was a student of Dalit.

The family of Sagorika lost their way of income due to Covid-19

Sholgotia village is situated under Dumuria upazila of Khulna district. A small number of Kayputra (pig rearer) community lives in this village. One of them is a struggling woman

Sagorika Mondal. Sagorika was married to Polash Mondal of the same community, whose ancestral home is at Arongghata village in Khulna. After her marriage, a daughter is born in their family. But still there is unrest in their family. As a result, their marriage ended in divorce. Sagorika Mondal returns to her father's



family. Sagorika started living with her daughter there. But there is also a big problem. Sagorika's elder brother and his family could not accept this. As a result, his brother moved away from home to his father-in-law's house and started living there with his family. Sagorika became very helpless. Later she started working in a jute mill. She was fighting poverty and somehow she was continuing her family. She was making a living by suppressing all the sorrows of the past. Her daughter was also admitted to the school. But because of the pandemic, she is now in great danger again. Sagarika is now jobless as her workplace, the jute mill has closed. During the family visit, Dalit's Program Organizer came to know about this and told her to increase her self-confidence. Sagorika is currently working as a day laborer in order to survive. And that's how her little family survives like candlelight.

Lipika took a step forward on the path of self-reliance

Sholgatia is well-known as an agricultural village in Dumuria upazila of Khulna district. Some members of the Kayputra (pig rearer) community lives right next to the Sholgatia Union Parishad. It is true that the people of the society call them lower class people. But their own unconsciousness is largely responsible for this. Because, despite knowing the fact that, education is the backbone of the nation, they still show reluctance towards higher education. They are a little more indifferent, especially when it comes to girls' higher education. However, a conscious family lives in this environment, headed by Baburam Mondal. He has been struggling with poverty day after day. His family of four members has a daughter named **Lipika Mondal**. The trend of child marriage is still very high in their society. In that case, girls do not get the opportunity to study here much. But the thoughts of Lipika Mondal and her family are different from others. Lipika's family and Lipika herself are very interested in studying and that is why she is still continuing her studies despite the difficulties. As a result, only Lipika is now the most highly educated girl in their community. She is currently a 1st year Post Graduate student. At the end of her studies, Lipika wants to do a good job and wants to be self-reliant.



Lipika has been supported by Dalit since childhood and Dalit still provides her monthly stipend. She is also a sponsored student (2/023). Dalit took her one step ahead on the path of fulfilling her dream. On 01/07/2021, she was appointed as the teacher of Sholgatia Dalit School. That is why Lipika and her family are very happy. At the same time, their status in the society has also increased to a great extent. It is the expectation of all of us that a modern-minded girl like Lipika should be formed around us to stop the misconceptions, superstitions and unconsciousness of the society.

Ridoy Das has got a job

Ridoy Das was a student of Sholgotia Dalit School in Dumuria Upazila. He passed the SSC examination in 2017. Due to financial difficulties of the family, he had to continue his studies with great difficulty. Now he is a student of 4 years graduation course. Ridoy is the eldest of two siblings. His younger brother is studying in higher secondary level. His father Robin Das is a rickshaw-van puller and also a day laborer and runs the family. His mother Kabita Das is a housewife. The total number of their family members is 4. With his father Ridoy worked on other people's land to alleviate the family's financial problems. Ridoy was looking for a job in addition to his studies in order to alleviate the family's financial crisis. Finally, with the help of an acquaintance, he got a job at Mongla Port (2nd sea port of Bangladesh) in January this year. He is now employed as a Worker Supervisor at Mongla Cement Factory. Ridoy and his family are very happy, now they have some comfort in life. They are grateful to Dalit for providing financial assistance to Ridoy for higher education.



Several child marriages occurred due to Covid-19 outbreak

(1) **Champa Das** is a daughter of Kalidas Das lives in Burulia village of Keshabpur upazila, Jashore. She is 17 years old. Champa was studying in 10th grade. She is a sponsored child (2/340). Her father is rickshaw-van puller and mother Shefali Das is housewife. Kalidas Das's dream was to raise his 4 daughter to a higher level of society by teaching them. But Champa was not very good at studying. She has already failed several times in class. That is why Champa's family was not interested in educating her anymore. However, with the help of Dalit and the advice of Dalit school teachers, Champa continued his studies.

Meanwhile, due to the lack of work in Covid-19 situation, Champa's father was not able to pay for her education. In this situation, to reduce the burden of family expenses Champa's father decided to give her marriage.

In the middle of this year her marriage was completed with Aradhan Das, who lives in Sholgotia village. Unfortunately her husband is a saloon worker by profession. Later, a teacher of Burulia Dalit School came to know about the matter and met Champa's parents and told them about the bad impact of this child marriage. In response, her parents said there was no other way because of poverty. Champa's life was ruined in this way.



(2) For the last 16 months, all the students have become helpless as the school; college has been closed due to the coronavirus. On the other hand, many students have lost interest in studying because unsuspecting parents do not pressure their children to study. One such incident took place with **Shimla Das**, a girl from Chingra village of Dumuria upazila in Khulna district. Shimla is 16 years old and a student of class X. Her father Parimal Das is a shoe polisher by profession and mother is a housewife. Shimla is the eldest of one sisters and one brother.

Parimal Das wanted to educate his children and take their lives to a dignified level. But as the deadly virus Covid-19 spread across the country, like other families, Parimal Das faced an economic crisis. Shimla Das's school was closed and she was spending all day playing sports and mingling with her neighbors. Suddenly one day she met a boy



named Protap Das. He lives in nearby village Baratia of Dumuria upazila. He makes a living by working in a decorator (caterer service) shop. He liked Shimla. Shimla also spent some time talking to Protap. Thus a very good relationship developed between of

them and they decided to get married. When Shimla informed her family, the family did not agreed and on 26/03/2021 Shimla ran away from home and got married to Protap.

Similar Incidents are as follows:

Name of victim	Age	Sex	Education level	Date of marriage	Student of	Photo
Juniya Khatun	17	Female	Class X	2 February, 2021	Madhugram Dalit School, Dumuria	
Joti Mondal	15	Female	Class IX	5 March, 2021	Arong ghata Dalit School, Khulna	
Snigdha Das	15	Female	Class IX	27 February, 2021	Sonadanga Dalit School, Khulna	
Sangita Das	16	Female	Class XI	14 March, 2021	North Kashipur Dalit School, Khulna	
Sathi Mondal	16	Female	Class VIII	16 April, 2021	Sholгатia Dalit School, Dumuria	

Name of victim	Age	Sex	Education level	Date of marriage	Student of	Photo
Antora Mondal	15	Female	Class IX	3 May, 2021	Arong ghata Dalit School, Khulna	
Swarnali Mondal	17	Female	Class X	5 May, 2021	Arong ghata Dalit School, Khulna	
Antora Das	16	Female	Class X	22 June, 2021	Mikshimil Dalit School, Dumuria	
Antora Das	17	Female	Class X	6 August, 2021	Sholgotia Dalit School, Dumuria	
Barsha Das	14	Female	Class VI	14 September, 2021	Sonadanga Dalit School, Khulna	

Name of victim	Age	Sex	Education level	Date of marriage	Student of	Photo
Anita Das	16	Female	Class X	2 September, 2021	Sahos Dalit School, Dumuria	
Sharmika Das	13	Female	Class VIII	21 November, 2021	Sonadanga Dalit School, Khulna	
Oishee Roy	14	Female	Class VIII	17 November, 2021	Burulia Dalit School, Keshabpur	
Smriti Das	16	Female	Class X	(Married in India)	Burulia Dalit School, Keshabpur	