

## SOLAR HOME SYSTEM (SHS) FOR INCOME GENERATION BY RURAL WOMEN IN BANGLADESH-A CASE STUDY BY OF GRAMEEN SHAKTI

Women in Bangladesh suffer most because they do not have any economic independence. Lack of easy access to electricity and energy compounds these problems and increases the burden of women. In Bangladesh only 30% of the people have access to grid electricity and most of them live in the cities.

Grameen Shakti (GS) is promoting and providing pollution free efficient lights through easy to use PV based solar home system (SHS) to rural women at low cost to reduce the burden of rural women and giving them working extra time after dusk so that they can take part in income generating activities.

The installation of SHS is fully backed by the provisions of soft loan and innovative financial support mechanism to bring down the costs of solar PV and to primarily keep the manageable level of refund by the women members. Warranty and free and reliable back-up service is integral part of up-to three years period, which can be considered as the key to the success acceptance of by the rural women.

Laxmi Rani Roy has opened a small cottage industry and uses Solar Home System (SHS) purchased from GS to sew different designs on wall mats, bed sheets etc. Each member of her group earns US\$ 50 monthly. Because of Solar Home System she and other members of her group are enjoying better working environment, reduced health risk and more importantly gaining economic independence, increasing their rights in the society.

Solar PV technology is especially applicable for remote inaccessible areas and rural communities which cannot be covered by grid electricity. Health cost and kerosene cost is reduced. After making full payment, there is very little addition costs.

To sum up, the Solar Home Systems (SHSs) can enhances the ability of rural women to generate additional income, making Solar PV technology cost effective. However, some of the main reasons for the success of this programme have been easy to use, maximization of income, following of socially accepted integrated approach by the local village community.