

**There is no substitute to hard work-
The Story of Gopal Barik & Soudamini Barik**

Gopala Barik of village Jhenganadihi is a small farmer having three acres of un-irrigated land. Because of financial problems in the family he had to drop out from class-IX but he had a strong urge for higher education. He thought that he could not avail higher education but the younger children of the village must not be deprived of higher education for which he took initiative for setting up of a high school in his village. With the initiative of several others the high school was started in 1995 and since then Gopala Barik worked as a Peon in the high school without any salary. However, even if he would not get any salary he was always very sincere in his duty and he was liked by all the teachers as well as the students as an ideal employee. To his good luck recently the school started to get Government Aid for which now he gets a salary of Rs. 2500/- per month.



Gopala cultivates paddy in some of his land just to meet the staple food requirement of his family but he also grows vegetables using the well irrigation which gives him enough cash income to meet cash requirement of the family. To supplement to the family income he also does Pisciculture in a community pond by paying a lease amount to the Gram Panchayat.

When his children grew up and they were to be admitted to college Gopal needed additional income and at this time his wife Soudamini ventured to take up paper cup plate making in her house. Gopala co-operated her by mobilizing a bank loan to procure a second hand cup plate making machine and also to arrange necessary raw-materials. Now soudamini alone is able to earn about 6000 rupees every month.

After attending a few trainings organized by SVA during 2006 Gopala could realize the harmful effect of chemical fertilizer and since then he has been making several type of organic manures and gradually shifting towards organic agriculture. Not only in the village but in the whole area Gopala is recognized as an ideal farmer and a social worker.

(Report: T.Rana & HKPradhan)