Weaving lives
An innovative initiative to improve the socio-economic status of women in Satkhira

Background
The People of the proposed project areas are facing tidal surge, cyclone, draught, salinity intrusion, embankment erosion that forcing the people in vulnerabilities severely. Especially the ‘tiger widows’ and left behind women (Husband Abundant) are the most vulnerable. Because of the stigma and superstition, the tiger widows considered as outcast, wretched and sinister woman who are responsible for their husband death. These women headed families have limited options to engage with alternative income generating activities as well as there is hardly any financial organisation who provide them financial support without any mortgage or guarantor. To improve socioeconomic condition “Weaving Lives” project intends to work with them.

Goal:
To reduce vulnerability of women headed families and achieve gender equality by empowering women in the Sundarbans impact zone.

Objectives
- To increase benefit of state services for widows and women headed families
- To create a sustainable business model by ensuring comprehensive and sustainable economic advancement
- To build communities that are inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- To preserve traditional and indigenous handicrafts and promote practices of sustainable consumption and production through innovation

Major activity

1. Revolving fund support to the beneficiaries to undertake entrepreneurship with a minimum 140,000 taka, provided to each SHG.

2. Small cottage development with Nakshi stitching and Napkin production with the development of a marketing channel for the production of beneficiaries.

3. Awareness building of beneficiaries by monthly awareness raising meeting

4. Lobby meeting with Government and local government to sensitise them about the real situation of tiger widows and left behind women in the coastal area

5. Provide skill development training on alternative IGA of beneficiaries to run the enterprise.

Expected outcome
- 80 women headed families formed in shelf help group and functioning
- Awareness is raised among beneficiaries on human rights, social services, climate change and DRR as well as established well-running enterprise
- Local service providers eager to provide social safety net services to women headed families

Major achievement till March 2020
1. Conduct Inception Meeting with presence of public representatives, government official, NGO representatives, civil society member and community people under the project.
2. Organize 80 women headed families (tiger widow and vulnerable and disadvantaged HH) has been in 4 Self-Help Groups by community consultation and assessing their socio-economic status and awareness building.

3. Assess needs and capacity of all beneficiaries (80 women). Based on this the project started the Alternative Income Generating Activities (AIGA). LEDARS also provided them training and financial support so that they can start generating income.

4. Establish a small cottage industry with the participation of 20 beneficiaries under the project and Kewara Pickle production was started with the initiatives of cottage industry.

5. Support for resilient agriculture by providing training on resilient agriculture practices and provide support for homestead gardening to beneficiaries. 60 tiger widows and husband abandoned beneficiaries received seeds and seedlings from LEDARS.

6. Organize 5 days Nakshi Sari Sawing training from 1-5 February, 2020 for 10 beneficiaries and 3 days Napkin producing training from 16-18, March, 2020 with 10 tiger widows and husband abandoned women at LEDARS Srejon Production Center at Buri-gopalini Union of Shyamnagar Upazila of Satkhira District.

7. Marketing beneficiary’s product where 4 market channel already developed for Kawara Pickle marketing. In addition already sale’s activities started in Sonarbangla Shopping Complex and Chandar Hat Shopping Complex at Shymnagar, 2 shops in Sundarban Ecotourism Center.

8. Provide income generating support which is the core needs to increase the income with a amount of BDT-4,00000 to 40 beneficiaries to start the Alternative Income Generating Activities to tiger widows and abandoned women.

9. Organize 2 day long training on poultry rearing and micro business management at 27 & 29 February, 2020 to increase the income and income generating skill of number of 31 tiger widows and husband abandoned women.

10. Arrange a day long training on Curb Rearing and Fish Cultivation at 26 February, 2020 to increase the income, number of 09 tiger widows and husband abandoned women participated and was trained by a climate expert.