



Voice-based service to help small businesses with record-keeping

Hishab, backed by a Bengali speech recognition system, enables small businesses to digitally record transactions by talking, eliminating the need for paper-based records.

The challenges: literacy and lack of reliable record-keeping

In Bangladesh, small businesses such as grocery stores and local vendors lose a lot of money due to a lack of reliable book-keeping. 41-43% of retail sales are on credit, and at least 3% of those sales become unrecoverable every year. Grocery alone loses GBP 94.87m.

In addition, verifying the authenticity of transaction detail of ledger books is very difficult, for which banks and microfinance institutions (MFIs) are reluctant to extend loans to MSEs.

Hishab's voice-based solution

Hishab is a voice-based mobile phone service, backed by a Bengali speech recognition system, that enables users to keep records with verbal instructions. This eliminates the need for literacy, as users can use their voice to record transactions and receive SMS reminders of outstanding dues.

The system also creates and sends SMS notifications to vendors and their customers to inform both parties about transaction details.

In addition, the system can also generate reports of transaction data, which financial institutions can use to extend loans to MSE retailers in Bangladesh.

How **HISHAB** works



Call

User calls **165-13**. Hishab's voice-based ERP works on every phone and does not require an internet connection



Inform

User speaks information about the entire transaction, including sales details, persons involved in a transaction, and transaction amounts



Confirm

Hishab sends an SMS to both parties in the transaction to confirm transaction details. Hishab also sends reminder SMS



Receive

Automated documentation of MSE's cash flow, income statements and relevant business analysis

MONJU'S EXPERIENCES WITH HISHAB



100 percent. Monju feels that the Hishab project enhanced his business in terms of increased revenue. Now, he keeps track of his store's purchases and sales, thus stimulating better inventory management, resulting in 15% increased income.

Savings, expansion

The new orientation also induced him to develop a habit of savings, and he is now better-informed about financial issues.

As a result of this increased income, he has employed another person, who now manages the grocery shop along with him. In addition, Hishab can enable Monju to gain access to formal financial services and enjoy coverage under life, health and credit portfolio insurance.

Monju has owned a grocery store in a dense urban area of Dhaka, for 15 years. In mid-2017, he learned of the Hishab project. He got involved to help his retail record-keeping, get reminders of credits or customers dues, and increase his opportunities to access to formal financial services.

Benefits of using Hishab

Everyday, Monju sells large volumes of grocery items, and he reports. Hishab's data accuracy at almost

70,000

MSEs automated with Hishab's voice-based ERP solution

26m BDT

worth of micro loans disbursed to MSEs

50%

lower loan processing time

IMPACT on Monju's business



Automated documentation of business cash-flow



Better inventory management and increased efficiency



Habit of savings



Create employment



Faster and better services



Increased financial literacy

About the BFP-P project

The Business Finance for the Poor in Bangladesh project is a £25m strategic partnership between the UK and Bangladesh governments to boost access to financial services for small businesses.

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Implemented by



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