

# FARMER ACHIEVES HUGE PROFIT



**Palash Biswas nets out his fish and prawns**

His father and grandfather have long farmed shrimp and fish, so Palash Biswas (Chitalmari, Bagerhat) has known the business since his childhood. Now he is a lecturer in accounting at a government college but sees the potential to make a good profit in aquaculture if he can develop it as a successful sideline. When the SAFETI project formed a farmer group in the Chitalmari area, he became interested and joined the three modules of training and the coaching sessions on “Prawn-Carp Polyculture.” This convinced him to adopt the technology.

His father and grandfather traditionally cultivated two crops a year: first rice — then after harvesting that, and once the annual rains filled his gher (pond), stocking shrimp, prawn, and carp together, and planting vegetables on the dikes. Palash followed the same system in recent years, sometimes making a profit and sometimes a loss.

Palash has 5 ghers altogether with a total area of 2.6 acres. For a trial in 2018 with the SAFETI “Prawn-Carp Polyculture” technology, he chose one gher of 52 decimals (0.52 acres) area. At the time he started on the SAFETI training, that gher still had growing rice, so he prepared a separate area as a nursery to stock golda (giant freshwater prawn) post larvae (PL). Once the rice was harvested in the main gher, he prepared the pond bottom according to the SAFETI recommendations and installed blue net fencing around it to ensure biosecurity. After holding the PLs in the nursery for one month, he released them into the main gher, where the water depth was the required three to four feet.

With the stocking in May 2018, he put in 8,000 prawn PL, 150 rohu (rui) carp fingerlings and 20 catla carp fingerlings. He fed them twice a day and treated the pond regularly with lime. There were no disease problems and he was able to harvest 277 kg prawn (equivalent to 1,316 kg/ha) and more than

100 kg of carp (475 kg/ha), one-and-a-half to two times more than in his other four ghers. Palash exclaimed with excitement, “The profit I made this year, this is the highest in our farming life, we have never made such a huge profit.” On the day of his final harvest, 20-25 neighboring farmers came to watch. They became very interested in the technology and want to follow it in 2019.

By spending only 78,000 taka (US \$900), Palash made a profit of 130,000 (US \$1,500). He had taken a loan of 100,000 taka (US \$ 1,155) from CODEC, which he was able to repay over 11 months in eight installments. In early 2019, Palash planted rice, and after the harvest he plans to adopt the SAFETI “Prawn-Carp Polyculture” methodology in all of his five ghers for the 2019 production.

*“This is the first time I have stocked PL based on calculating the gher area and a target density,” said Palash Biswas.*

*“Before I just used to release a large number of prawn and carp seed and hoped it would work out OK. I also used a cheap feed. In fact, with more careful stocking and use of good quality feed my production costs have been reduced dramatically, to about half. The only problem I had this year was that I wanted to buy good quality hatchery PL through the SAFETI project but there was not enough available. If farmers in this area could buy quality PL, it would benefit us a lot.”*