

LEADING THE WAY



Souren Mazumder sorting his harvest

Souren Mazumder, of Bagerhat Sadar, Bagerhat, started in aquaculture seven years ago after finishing his university degree, as he was not able to find a suitable job in his field of study. He saw that a few people in his area were making money from shrimp and prawn farming, while after Cyclone Aila rice production in the region had decreased. This made him think about investing in the shrimp and prawn business. He attended a training course run by the Bangladesh Fisheries Research Institute (BFRI) in Bagerhat and started up production. In his first few years, he was able to make an annual profit of around BDT 50,000 (US \$577) on costs of BDT

20,000-30,000 (US \$230 - \$345). He cultivated shrimp, prawn, and carp together in his 91 decimal (0.91 acres) gher (pond) and although in 2017 he made a good profit of BDT 120,000 (almost US \$14,000), in several other years he lost money because his pond suffered an outbreak of disease or was over-flooded. He was not happy about these ups and downs in production, so when he heard about the SAFETI project, he enthusiastically joined his local farmer group with the hope of getting better harvests in the coming years. He attended all three of the SAFETI training modules as well as the coaching sessions to improve his knowledge. Recognizing his enthusiasm and interest in adopting and investing in the improved farming methodologies, SAFETI selected him as one of its demonstration farmers for 2018.

During previous years, he had faced problems in obtaining good quality post larvae (PL). Also, he had never removed the black mud from the pond bottom, prepared the pond dike properly, maintained biosecurity measures, or fed regularly. In 2018, guided by the SAFETI project, he excavated his gher to increase the water depth to five feet, removed the black mud from the pond bottom and sun-dried it, and installed blue net fencing around the pond for biosecurity. He still had difficulty in obtaining good quality PL due to scarce supplies and had to stock seed that gave him a large size

variation. He also experienced some oxygen problems in the ponds on two occasions and had to aerate the water with a pump. Despite these drawbacks, he had the best harvest he had ever seen — 423 kg prawn and 377 kg carp (equivalent to 1,148 kg/ha prawn and 1,023 kg/ha carp). His total expenditure was BDT 160,000 (US \$1,850) and he made a profit of more than BDT 200,000 (more than US \$2,300). Souren reported that “SAFETI’s technology and record keeping system has been very helpful to me. Before I did not keep detailed income and expenditure records, but now I write everything down and it helps me calculate my real profit.”

Inspired by the good harvest and increased profit he plans to follow the SAFETI “Prawn-Carp Polyculture” technology in another of his ghers in 2019. He has five ghers in total and in the other three he wants to try SAFETI methods for bagda (black tiger shrimp) farming. Many of his neighboring farmers watched his production and came to see his harvest. Now they often come to him for advice and are interested to follow the SAFETI technology in 2019.

Souren said, “Now I am following the SAFETI technology that I learned from the training and other events; in the future, many farmers will follow this. I think if they do, they will be successful like me.”