



Knowledge Product

Suchana:

Ending the cycle of undernutrition in Bangladesh

**IGA- Aquaculture Tilapia-Carp Polyculture
(Mono-sex tilapia dominating)**

“We sold a total 285 kg (carp 75 kg, tilapia 185 kg) that earned BDT 35,755, expending BDT 12,500 in around 300 days from the total harvested fish. We eat nutritious fresh fish and vegetables regularly, and purchase other diversified food from the additional income by selling the surplus to fulfill the nutritional requirement of our family. We improve livelihoods from my homestead pond and vegetable gardens at pond dikes and the surrounding areas.”

**Rujina Begum, IGA-Aquaculture beneficiary
Sreemangal, Moulvibazar.**



Introduction

Suchana: Ending the cycle of undernutrition in Bangladesh is a multi-sectoral nutrition project which aims to achieve a significant reduction of undernutrition in children less than two years of age. Suchana adopts an integrated approach to prevent chronic malnutrition within the critical 1,000 days from conception until a child reaches their second birthday. A total of 235,500 beneficiary households from 157 unions, 20 upazilas of Sylhet and Moulvibazar districts will receive support within 6 years of the programme.

Suchana promotes Income Generating Activities (IGA) through farmed fish production that is environmentally sustainable. This enhances the contribution of aquaculture in poverty reduction, food and nutritional security, and natural resource management. Primarily, it focuses on commercial species fish tilapia (mono-sex) with carp using mixed culture practices that earn more profits. These are quick-growing tilapia (mono-sex), and are thus generally considered more profitable. Besides the monoculture of tilapia, some carps and mola along with small indigenous species (SiS) are also encouraged for better utilisation of feeding, increased productivity, and making it more nutrition-sensitive. Beneficiary households (BHHs) supported for income generation with aquaculture usually receive higher quantities of commercial fish feed, and greater financial support compared to the homestead food production (HFP) beneficiaries. IGA-BHHs are very poor households from the bottom 40% of Suchana BHHs. Production of various vegetables round the year using pond dikes and homestead is

also integrated there as one of the common components of Suchana. Considering the interest from the beneficiary households and local potentialities, some IGA-BHHs have received support on other fisheries-related IGAs like semi-commercial fishing, fish drying, fish and fingerling trading, among others.

Context

According to a national study undertaken by the Government of Bangladesh, districts under the Sylhet division in Bangladesh performed the worst in terms of nutrition and minimum dietary diversity for children. Sylhet also had the lowest percentage of children meeting the WHO and UNICEF's Infant and Young Child Feeding practice guidelines. The division has also performed worst in terms of access to potable water, sanitation, and women's empowerment indicators. Finally, Sylhet was found to have the highest rates of undernourished mothers and children, and the highest rates of mother and infant mortality. Suchana interventions are working to reduce instances of chronic malnutrition in women, adolescent girls, and children, and to empower women by engaging them in homestead food production (HFP) and income-generating activities (IGAs). The programme selects beneficiaries for HFP or IGA according to their poverty status, production capabilities, access to resources, and the market, need, and mobility.



These interventions are market-based, gender-sensitive, and climate resilient. The programme adheres to the following principles to ensure the lasting impact of aquaculture and food production interventions:

- Business planning awareness built up
- Engagement of the Department of Fisheries (DoF) and local private actors
- Facilitation for group marketing in collection points

Objectives of aquaculture and Fisheries in addition to horticulture interventions

- Increased production of fish and vegetables
- Improved income opportunities
- Increased adaptive capacity in response to risks

Approach

- Nutrition-sensitive
- Market based
- Gender-sensitive
- Climate resilient
- Environment friendly
- SBCC: Social and Behavior Change Communication

Interventions for BHHs

- Training on improved management practices for aquaculture
- Business planning
- Coaching and technical follow-ups year-round

- Provision of critical inputs like lime, fish fingerlings, and fish feed for fish culture
- Involvement of Department of Fisheries (DoF), and Department of Agriculture (DAE)

Interventions for other stakeholders

- Capacity building of local fish hatchery on quality spawn and fry production
- Capacity building of fish nursery operators on
- Improved fingerling production and marketing
- Capacity building on fingerlings transportation and stocking technology for the fingerling retailers
- Conduct linkage building event between fish hatcheries and fish nursery operators
- Organize linkage event with fingerling retailers and fish nursery operators
- Conduct orientation on improved aquaculture for IGA and Fisheries interventions of Suchana to share with DoF officials
- Conduct orientation on pro-poor, nutrition-sensitive homestead horticulture interventions of Suchana to share with DAE officials
- Facilitate upazila level half-yearly coordination (progress, sharing lessons learnt, and next planning) meetings with DoF representatives by WF and IPs
- Conduct linkage events to showcase the results of the demonstration to the participants, non-participants, GoB, and market actors



Outcomes of IGA-Aquaculture: Tilapia-Carp polyculture (Mono- sex tilapia dominating)

- Average annual fish production increased from 38.0 kg to 86.5 kg per IGA-Aquaculture BHH
- 42.7% reproductive age women of HFP-Aquaculture households consumed a minimum diversified diet
- 36% of children (6 months to 23 months of age) of HFP aquaculture households consumed minimum diversified diets

Source: Suchana Semi-Annual Survey 2019

Focused species of fish

- Tilapia
- Rui
- Silver carp/Catla

Achievements (up to December 2020)

- 8,389 IGA-BHHs have received IGA-Aquaculture and support for fisheries
- 2757 IGA-BHHs have received support for Aquaculture

For effective participation in markets, small-scale producers must overcome specific constraints. Suchana supports them to integrate with markets, both as consumers and successful producers of goods and services, to increase productivity, consumption, and incomes.

About Suchana

Suchana: Ending the cycle of undernutrition in Bangladesh is a multisectoral nutrition programme that aims to reduce chronic undernutrition leading to stunting among children under two years of age living within 235,500 poor and very poor households in the Sylhet and Moulvibazar districts of Bangladesh. The programme involves an integrated approach to nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions, and is a sustainable and replicable model that can be scaled to other regions.

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