

Nazmina Begum: an Aqua Entrepreneur, an Inspiration

Nazmina Begum is one of the nine women in the Northwestern part of Bangladesh who was awarded as the "Best Aquaculture Farmers". The Department of Fisheries of Bangladesh organized this award-giving ceremony on the occasion of National Fish Week 2022. This recognition from the government has not only enhanced her confidence but also has set an example before the other hundreds of women who are working in the aquaculture sector.

Nazmina Begum got involved in the aquaculture business in 2012. This was a difficult journey for her as she lost her husband in 2012 and had two children 13 and 19 years old. She had to fight against many obstacles including the patriarchal notion that fish farming is not a women's job, She also had limited experience in this field, and her lack of network and unavailability of a source of knowledge was another limitation. In addition to all these, this widow had the struggle to raise her son of 13 and daughter of 19. Her daughter is now a government service holder and the son is assisting the mother after completing her studies.

Now, in 2022 all her struggles are gone, She won her fight. This year, she has sold fish for around seven lakh taka whereas, in 2012, she could manage to sell fish for only sixty-five thousand taka. In the last ten years, she has gained experience, made networks, received training, got connected to market systems and top of all these, she became confident. All these things have enabled her to expand her business. Besides operating her fish farm, she is now running a shop of fish feed and seeds. This business has created an opportunity for her to be connected with the forward and backward markets. Nazmina Begum is also working with the WorldFish Bangladesh as a Local service provider (LSP). As an LSP she has received Training of trainers (ToT) and now providing training and advisory services on aquaculture to the fish farmers group in her locality.

In Bangladesh, the number of women fish farmers is very limited and for this reason, recognition of their contribution to this sector is important. As recognition in many cases helps people to overcome social barriers. Nazmina Begum said, "I am happy that I got this award. I believe this award will be helpful for the society to understand that aquaculture is a profession and both men and women can be part of this profession."



Nazmina Begum received an award as the best aquaculture farmer