

Providing prawn farmers with inputs, capital, information and knowledge through forward value-chain actors

Intervention brief- prawn



Brief background

To increase productivity of prawn farms, it is important to address issues like access to information and technical services, access to quality inputs and financial support for prawn farmers. This intervention is designed to address those issues and other existing problems in a sustainable manner through prawn depot¹ owners or other commercial enterprises in the sector. This intervention helps the actors in prawn value chain running their business better with a higher profit.



Major activities

Tapan Kumar Karmaker, a depot owner in Kalibari Bazar, Manirampur, Jessore, started his business four years back. He was struggling hard with his depot to make a business out of that waterlogged region, where the farmers lack improved cultivation techniques and access to quality inputs resulting in low yield. In the year 2006 Mr. Tapan came to know about contract/assist farming system after collaborating with Katalyst/ Winrock International's (WI) prawn initiatives and trained himself as a contractor. Katalyst/WI assisted him to get firsthand experience of improved cultivation techniques in Thailand, shared cost to hire a consultant, develop a training module and finally to train male and female lead farmers. He was also assisted to develop linkage with hatcheries and feed companies. He started informal contract farming with 150 farmers in his 1st year as a contractor.

Key outcomes / achievements

Four years back Mr Tapon's annual turnover was only BDT 5 million and annual income was BDT 140,000. Immediately after starting contract farming, Mr. Tapan experienced a dramatic change in his business with annual turnover more than doubled, and annual income rising to BDT 200000. Most importantly, this increase is due to better yield resulting from the initial change in farming techniques of his contracted farmers thanks to the training he gave to these farmers. In return, he started to give his contracted farmers more information on farming techniques and source of better inputs. He also started providing credits, in terms of inputs like Post Larvae (PL), feed to his poorest farmers, just to help them producing more so that the overall business of his region gets better. The contracted farmers experienced 20% increase in yield as they are getting better technology and quality inputs from Mr. Tapan.

In 2007 he became the agent of Sundarban Prawn Hatchery which helped him to ensure the timely distribution of PL among his farmers. He increased his farmer base to 350 and he distributed 700,000 PL among them. In the same year Mr. Tapan found new opportunity in feed business and became an agent of Mega Feed. He started to sell feed, which is another

¹ Prawn collection points from farmers



important input, among his farmers. Up to 2008, he sold feed worth an amount of BDT 1.6 million. His annual turnover (excluding feed) was increased to BDT 23 million and annual income to BDT 250,000 in 2007.

At present, Mr. Tapan has 400 male and 55 female contracted farmers. He opened up another distribution center adjacent to his Depot where feed are exclusively sold. Information about farming techniques as embedded service to the farmer played important role in boosting up his business as well as changing the fortune of those poor farmers positively and effectively.

In August 2008, Mr. Tapan got the recognition of his work when Department of Fisheries awarded him as the best farmer for his contribution with contract farming. Mr. Mohosin, Upazilla Fisheries Officer of Manirampur, acclaimed Mr. Tapan as the pioneer of Contract Farming in the sweet water Prawn in Bangladesh.

Way Forward

Based on the learning of this informal contract/assist farming, Katalyst- Winrock is working on alternative distribution channel for the feed companies and hatcheries with knowledge embedded in the transactions. Katalyst-Winrock is talking to feed companies and hatcheries to see if they take distribution channels like depot owners, commercial enterprises and so on in their marketing strategies and allocate budgets to undertake the activities. The plan includes piloting of this effort with a few feed companies and hatcheries with a capacity to reach several more depots/ enterprises/ farmer associations. Later the team will also try to scale up this system further with a distribution company.

Implemented by:



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