



Feed the Future Country Fact Sheet

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Water Pump Brings Business Opportunity to Farmers in Bangladesh



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Mosammat Lima Begum and her axial flow pump.

At 24, Mosammat Lima Begum, who lives in a village in Barisal District in Bangladesh, is devoted to her family's security and well-being. She's also an accomplished agro-entrepreneur, respected by many for her initiative and business acumen.

A year ago, Begum's husband found work in Oman and emigrated there to earn more income for the family. His departure made Begum wonder, what could she do to generate more income so that their family didn't have to rely on remittances? She found her answer while attending a demonstration of an axial flow pump.

Begum had some familiarity with water pumps. Her husband, who farmed, had owned one when they got married. But the axial flow pump was new to her. At the event, run by the Feed the Future Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia-Mechanization and Irrigation (CSISA-MI) program, Begum learned that the axial flow pump is an inexpensive surface-water irrigation technology. It can reduce irrigation costs by up to 50 percent at low lifts (situations that don't require a lot of pump power because the water source is not too much lower than the agricultural fields).

In December 2015, Begum gained access to an axial flow pump and to training on its use through CSISA-MI. Then, during the January-to-April 2016 boro rice season, she started a business providing irrigation services to her neighbors. She now irrigates more than 28 hectares of land with the pump—and since there are 400 hectares of farmland in her village, there's plenty of opportunity for business to grow. In just 1 year, Begum increased her income by \$397. The money went a long way to help her purchase a new tiller, repair her home, and buy ducklings to rear.

"The farmers who take irrigation services from me are quite happy," she began, "because this year their paddy fields are getting as much water as they need, and the soil isn't drying up." Since the soil has enough moisture, the rice seedlings are growing better than before. "The roots have stretched well, and the bunches look pretty thick. It implies that there is a potential for better production this season if the fields are nurtured and fertilized properly."

Begum's business success has attracted the attention of other service providers and farmers, who now are also interested in purchasing axial flow pumps. At least 15 farmers in Begum's village have expressed their intentions to purchase one for the next boro rice season. Following Begum's lead, four service providers have already purchased the pump from local dealers who manufacture it and have partnered with CSISA-MI to test, target and disseminate efficient irrigation technology.

Begum's cousin, Mohammad Shah Alam Bepari, helps operate her axial pump. He supports her interest in purchasing a second one next year. "Our fuel costs have significantly reduced," he explained. Begum expressed her optimism about the future, saying, "As I have a plan to buy another axial flow pump next year, I wrote a letter to my husband to return back home. We will have enough money then to run the family together."