



WORLD FISHERIES DAY 2021 AWARDS



Best Hilly & North Eastern Farmer

Shri. Anup Kumar Sarmah

BACKGROUND:

Shri. Anup Kumar Sarmah is a resident of Khatarbari village, Biswanath district, Assam. After getting the post graduate degree from Guwahati University, he joined Regional Research Laboratory (RRL), North East Institute of Science and Technology (NEIST), Jorhat, Assam on adhoc basis. While working at RRL, his interest shifted towards social sector and started exploring possibilities on how the small and marginal farmers can be uplifted. Fish farming is one activity which he explored for alternate source of income to small and marginal farmers.



Picture 1: Shri. Anup Kumar Sarmah in his farm

MOTIVATION:

Shri. Anup Kumar Sarmah noticed that his 3-acre ancestral land located in Jokapura village, Biswanath district, Assam is in flood prone area. During his visit to the ancestral land in 2015, he found that around 50 Sq. km of the surrounding area is barren and remains submerged for almost half of a year. He discovered that that due to the absence of embankment, the water from overflowing Brahmaputra enters and entire area gets flooded during monsoon months. Considering the availability of enormous stretch of wastelands, he came up with the idea to convert 70-acre wasteland to fish farming by constructing embankment/dyke up to 13 ft height and 20 ft width on the top, so as to withstand the flood.



Picture 2: Wastelands turned into fish farming ponds

Shri. Anup Kumar Sarmah later incorporated “The Mahabahu Fisheries Pvt Ltd.” under Companies Act, 2013. He has now gained the knowledge of fish farming by visiting various research institutions and interacting with domain experts, progressive farmers/entrepreneurs.



PRODUCTION PRACTICES:

Shri. Anup Kumar Sarmah practices semi-intensive as well as intensive culture practices. Around 10 ha are devoted to semi-intensive culture and breeding of common carp, 2 ha area is reserved for intensive culture and the composite culture of carps is practiced in the remaining 17 ha area. In the beginning he used to procure the breeder seed from local fishers and hatcheries. The breeder seed so procured was used to produce fingerlings and yearlings at his own nursery. But the results were not so encouraging and hence, Shri. Anup Kumar Sarmah contacted NFDB – NFFBB (National Freshwater Fish Brood Bank), Bhubaneswar for the quality breeder seed of improved varieties. During the year 2021, he procured in total of 2 crore breeder seeds (spawn of Amur Carp, Jayanti Rohu & Improved Catla) from NFFBB. At present, his farm is housed with Indian Major Carps, Minor Carps, Pangasius, Vietnam Koi, Chital, Boyal and local Murrel species.



Picture 3: Spawns procured from NFFBB



Picture 4: Release of fingerlings into ponds

Shri. Anup Kumar Sarmah broadcasted the supplementary feed (floating & sinking feed) procured from the local private feed dealers @ Rs. 75/- per kg. During FY 2020-21, he produced approx. 70 tons of fish and the maximum portion of it was sold in the nearest auction center located at 10 kms away from his farm.

MINI FEED MILL SET UP TO REDUCE THE INPUT COSTS:

Shri. Anup Kumar Sarmah after venturing into fish farming for about 4 years realized that around 70% of production cost is expended towards the purchase of fish feed alone. At the same time, he discovered that there is no feed mill in Assam and feed used to get imported from other states which increased its cost due to long distance transportation. To overcome the problem, Shri. Anup Kumar Sarmah experimented formulation of feed with the locally available ingredients under the guidance of State Fisheries Department officials and experts. State Fisheries Department also motivated him to avail financial assistance under the Pradhan Mantri Mastya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) to set up a “Mini Feed Mill” with a production capacity of 2 tons feed per day.



Picture 5: Mini Fish Feed Mill established under PMMSY



Picture 6: Feed in pellet form

In order to ensure continuous supply of raw materials, Shri. Anup Kumar Sarmah started cultivation of Mustard, Maize and Wheat in 30 acres of land. He uses the locally grown ingredients to manufacture the fish feed which not only helped him to cut down the cost of feed to Rs 25 per kg but also boosted the income of local farmers.

WAY FORWARD:

With an aim to help the 400 small & marginal fish farmers, he constituted a Farmer Producer Company (FPC) named “Gohpur Fish Farmer Producer Company” in 2021. Government of Assam has sanctioned two projects worth Rs. 50 lakhs to the FPC through Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project (APART) funded by World Bank.

Vision of Anup Kumar Sarmah:

“Gohpur to be developed as the FRESHWATER AQUACULTURE HUB OF INDIA. The small & marginal farmers of Gohpur are SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY UPLIFTED.”

To avoid any complexity in the business, all activities related to live fish, fish feed, training & capacity building programmes consultancy services are taken up by Mahabahu Fisheries Pvt Ltd and seed production activities are managed by Gohpur Fish Farmer Producer Company.
