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# SUCCESS STORY

## Rina, a champion of women’s empowerment

**Rina Begum’s path to empowerment through agri-business is exemplary. She embodies hope for other women in her neighborhood and beyond.**



Photo: SALAHUDDIN/CSISA-MI

**“With my own money, I renovated this house and this makes me confident.”**

– Rina Begum, female LSP

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Cultivating a knack for the agricultural services business, Rina Begum (35), a housewife in Dhutrahati village in Nagarkanda, Faridpur, embarked on what would be a life-changing venture. Her initial access to credit from a local microfinance institute, aided by the Cereal Systems Initiative for South Asia – Mechanization & Irrigation (CSISA-MI) project, enabled her to purchase a new seeder attachment for the family’s power tiller. Soon after the purchase of the power tiller operated seeder (PTOS), she played a pivotal role in establishing their business, which offers planting services to other farmers. She enthusiastically communicated with her client farmers, collected payments and tracked incomes and expenditures, whilst her husband, Firoz Molla (45), a seasoned machinery technician and CSISA-MI trained PTOS operator, operated the machine in the field. Additionally, at various social gatherings, Rina actively motivated others to become entrepreneurs just like her.

In 2017, Rina’s profit was tk. 50,000 (US\$ 595), which enabled her to pay for her second daughter’s wedding, an investment that left her immensely gratified. She invested this year’s profit of tk. 40,000 (US\$ 476) in renovating her house, purchasing new furniture and installing a tubewell for safer drinking water. Now her 3<sup>rd</sup> daughter, Zannatul (10), and the youngest son, Riadul (9), can afford to go to school, which makes her very happy. She said, “having proper education, they should break the curse of poverty. They are our hope.”

Apart from tending to her family and the business, she also accompanies her husband to the field while he provides agricultural services. Their teamwork and CSISA-MI’s support for women entrepreneurs were instrumental in growing their thriving business. With her new-found confidence and perceptive field observations, she plans to purchase a CSISA-MI promoted reaper to expand her business into harvesting, which should generate additional profit. Rina passionately believes that more women should be involved in agri-business, because it’s a huge window of opportunity to increase women’s empowerment and to break the poverty cycle in southern Bangladesh.

The USAID-funded CSISA-MI project has facilitated the emergence of 64 female service providers like Rina Begum, in southern Bangladesh. CSISA-MI is a five-year project led by the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) in partnership with iDE Global.