

Collective Actions and Linkages Development Realizing Worth of the Resource!

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inter
cooperation
Natural Resource Management
Rural Economy
Local Governance and Civil Society

Shishi Koh Valley is situated in District Chitral at a distance of about 55 km from Drosh Tehsil towards North. About 95% of the inhabitants belong to the farming community having small land holding of about 4 kanal per household (app. 2000 sq. meters). These lands hardly produce enough food for four months. The local inhabitants depend on food supply from different charities or alternate sources of income for the rest of the year. Income generation opportunities in the valley are almost non-existent. A minor proportion of the population earns its livelihood from serving in Chitral Scouts, Police, Education, etc. Some leave the valley in search of jobs in the down country. Majority of the families are living below the poverty line.

The IPRP surveyed the valley and identified two products for further promotion, the pine nuts and the walnuts. These two products were purchased by the down-country contractors at a minimal price. This practice not only deprived the poor collectors of their due remuneration but also kept them ignorant of the real worth and potential of the products. Both the products were purchased in raw form from the collectors. Moreover, the marketing chain was broken at the farm gate (Shishi Valley) which kept the collectors uninformed about marketing processes and market players. Many collectors blindly collected pine nut cones and walnut from the forest in order to meet their immediate economic needs. They often caused serious physical injuries to the collectors and damages to the forest while plucking cones from the tall trees on the steep

mountains. The Forest Department imposed a ban on cone collection to conserve the jungle. This caused a serious set back to the poverty stricken people of the valley. It was at this critical stage when IPRP in collaboration with a local partner Chitral Innovative Development Organization (CIDO) intervened and held discussions with the Department to overcome this menace.

The IPRP in close collaboration with the local Forest Department and with the help of CIDO raised awareness among the locals regarding conservation value of Chalghoza Pine forest. The project also promoted economic incentives for the local communities by building confidence that these forests could bring them income on sustainable basis provided they would follow conservation principles. The collectors could only convince the department to lift the ban if tree branches were not damaged and safety measures were adopted. The Department finally lifted ban on cone collection. IPRP and the NGO partner conducted an in-depth study on pine nuts and walnuts



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production in the valley and potential markets in Pakistan to identify constraints at the field/market levels and improved practices at both levels.

In the light of the findings the following steps were taken:

- The collectors were organized through the NGO partner. Pine nut and Walnut marketing associations were organized and trained for functioning at field and market levels.
- A pre-harvesting training was organized to properly harvest the cones and walnuts with enhanced safety to plants and human lives.
- Post-harvest management training was organized wherein proper pine nut separation techniques and grading skills were extended.

After awareness building and need-based trainings, the collectors collected the produce for a collective test marketing trial at the end of the season. Fifteen collectors with their produce were taken for test marketing to Bannu and Lahore where market hubs for the nuts existed. The aim was to introduce them with the whole market chain and train them how to market their produce. Interestingly, 5 of the collectors' representatives had been to the down country for the first time in their lives. The pine nuts were marketed in

Bannu and walnuts in Lahore with the representative collectors.

The results of the test marketing trials reveals an increase in net income from



collective marketing in the Bannu and Lahore by 77% and 33% respectively compared to the price at farm gate. The Forest Department on the other hand, was delighted to observe that the project and its partners were actually helping the department in effectively conserving the forest through sustainable utilization of the resources. Seeing is believing!!

