

Tasbeeh making with wild olive seeds

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Bibi Jan living in village Bandi Munim of Union Council Bareela is the wife of a poor watchman who could hardly meet his family needs with his marginal income. Being a good housewife, Bibi Jan also supported her husband in generating income through embroidery and tailoring at home. But this was not sufficient for her family's livelihood, as many women were already engaged in these activities in the village. Bibi Jan started looking for other unique / innovative and viable economic activities which she could start at home.

The Farm Forestry Support Project, in coordination with Mashal Development Organization (MDO) Bareela District Haripur, introduced Tasbeeh (prayer beads) making from wild olive seeds as an enterprise for women. Bareela has rich resources of wild olive trees, which were only being used for firewood by local communities. Due to the lack of knowledge among the people, large quantities of seed were wasted every year. This enterprise had a religious value as the product was used in prayers. Access to raw material (olive seeds) was not a problem. Market share could easily be created through a little effort at local level since traditionally Tasbeeh was known in the communities for prayers. Bibi Jan showed great interest in this enterprise. Bibi Jan, along with other interested women entrepreneurs, attended a three-day skill development training in Tasbeeh making from a local trainer Fazal-e-Rahim through MDO with the support of FFSP at village level. Training in entrepreneurship development and marketing promotion was also arranged, by MDO through FFSP, where Bibi Jan got sufficient understanding and knowledge on how to promote her business using unique raw material locally available from the wild.

In order to start a Tasbeeh making enterprise, FFSP provided the trained women with the drilling machines for converting dried olive seeds into beads. Bibi Jan's family began this activity as a family enterprise with the lead role



and ownership resting with Bibi Jan. Initially, Bibi Jan earned a total amount of Rs.1400 by selling Tasbeehs @ Rs.5/- each, which gave her an opportunity for developing proper linkages in the market. Building on her market linkages and improving her skills through frequent production of Tasbeeh, Bibi Jan, began scaling up Tasbeeh production within four months. Now, she is producing almost 70 Tasbeeh (containing 35 beads) and 40 Tasbeeh (containing 100 beads)



in a month. She is selling these @ Rs.10 per unit and Rs.30 per unit respectively. She is earning a net income of almost Rs.1600 per month from this enterprise, whereas the total production cost is only Rs.300. Meanwhile, Bibi Jan also produced 15 jewelry sets using the same skills and earned an amount of Rs.300 from these

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products. Bibi Jan has also started training other community women in Tasbeeh & Jewelry making. She is charging Rs.50 per person for imparting training. She is earning Rs.100 by training two women per month on average.

Bibi Jan is also selling processed olive seed (soaked in solution of baking powder & holed with driller). She is earning a net income of Rs.160 in a month only from this activity, which is simple, and less time consuming. Consolidating her all income, Bibi Jan is earning Rs.1960 per month from the olive beads and Tasbeeh making enterprises.

The news is spreading fast and people are now getting to know the value of olive seeds, which were earlier, treated as garbage. The economic value attached to the seeds encourages them to protect the remaining olive trees in their villages.

Based upon Bibi Jan's increasing linkages with potential markets (facilitated by FFSP and its partners), Bibi Jan has now decided to supply her products in huge markets situated in Murree. She is regularly promoting her products (Tasbeeh & Jewelry sets) in many exhibitions arranged in Haripur and Abbottabad by different organizations. Looking into her skills and linkages with markets, she is confident that this enterprise could become a regular source of income for her family in future.

