

Collective sale – harvesting symbiotic benefits

Mohammad Haleem ¹

Cheena is a small hamlet in the sub valley Bashigram inhabiting 16 households of a single collector community. Total population of Cheena is more than hundred and they partially depend on medicinal and aromatic plants growing in the forest for earning their livelihoods. In summer, the residents of Cheena migrate to a nearby meadow known as Baitham for rearing livestock and collecting herbs.

During project interventions last year, a male interest group was formed in Baitham. Later, a female group was also formed. In Cheena the male group members used to sell their products individually in the Madyan market and purchased daily commodities from the same place. Women had no access to the local market. Hence they sold their product either through men or were exploited by mobile buyers (banjaras).

This year, the project established a collection point in Cheena to facilitate collective sale of products collected by male and female groups. The project provided the groups with scales to facilitate weighing of products at the collection point. The groups selected Ali Mohammad as their Collection Point operator.

Collection being a seasonal activity, Ali Mohammad also runs a small shop in his house in winter. When Ali started gathering products



in his house, the groups started purchasing daily commodities from him. Keeping in view the needs of the groups, Ali diversified his business and included other items of daily



use in his shop. He now gathers the products from the groups in his house and sells them on weekly basis in the local market. He pays the money back to the collectors after deducting cost of transportation. The group members in



return buy daily commodities from his shop. The collection point has increased his customers, diversified his business, improved his income and has become an activity of mutual need and interest. The groups are not only enjoying extra income from the collective sale of their products but extra days inefficiently used in the market by individuals are now saved for collection in the field.

¹The author is a member of Tanzeem Zalmay Kul Teerat (TZKT), a local partner NGO of Innovation for Poverty Reduction Project (IPRP)