

Made in Pakistan..... An interest group on floriculture in Haripur

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You may have noticed these kinds of decoration pieces often being sold in the markets as Chinese products. Some of you may even have bought some pieces for your homes and offices from market places like Swat, Peshawar, Rawalpindi or Lahore. Have a look... these are made in Pakistan... the wholesale dealers choose to tag them as imported to satisfy their marketing tactics.

Mohammad Ahsan worked as a motor mechanic in Karachi. His family originally came from Haripur, village Chappri, but they were settled in Lahore for a long time. In 1987 he had a brutal road accident in Karachi in which



he crushed his leg and ended up with several complications. It took him five years to recover. During this period he lived a difficult life and sometimes tried petty jobs, which he could never manage due to his disability. He began rickshaw driving in Lahore (1992), but that was not the best idea with a weak bone structure – hence he ended up with yet another accident. He concluded that he should do something on his own – without being frequently exposed to the external environment. He attended floriculture classes organized by the agriculture department in Lahore. He got a chance to learn Japanese floriculture and dry flower techniques (1992). He decided to begin a business of his own. This art helped him out of a feeling of disappointment and hopelessness – he also got attracted to his own environment in his village where he could find plenty of material



for dry flower arrangements. He settled in his village with his wife and four kids in 1999. By then he was fully skilled in making unique flower arrangements, including arrangements using unique pieces of farm wood and artificial foliage (fabric and plastic). He could make best use of his earlier links in Lahore and Karachi for marketing his products.

In 2003, FFSP partner, Pind Hashim Khan Network contacted him and he got even more skills for marketing his products. In addition, he organized an interest group in the village



and trained many men and women in this business. Now it is a big producer group, making several arrangements on order for wholesale dealers. Ahsan acts as a resource

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person for PHKN community members and he also trains selected community members identified by other partner NGOs in the district. He is a producer, a resource person (trainer) as well as a middleman – who acts as a marketing window for many families who perhaps are not able to directly access market as easily as he can. Ahsan says that in wholesale business, there is hardly any margin for the producer. Earlier he had been selling his goods to the retailers but that was always on credit with a lot of exploitation. The only way to maximize profit will be to open a shop somewhere in an urban center where he could sell his own and his fellow villagers' products – but that could be too expensive. I thought perhaps that would be a way out, but he smiles and says what he has achieved is already enough!

