

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT OF PRODUCTION AND PRODUCER THROUGH STRONG MARKET LINKAGE

Association gave a technical input to increase the production:

Block Naugaoan of district Uttarkashi is in area of 37227 sq.km. Consisting of 107 gram panchayat is the biggest. The literacy percentage of this area is 39 %. The rate of land holding is higher in comparison to other parts of Uttaranchal. Agriculture, horticulture, husbandry, forest and water are the main component of village ecosystem. 98 percent of population is engaged in agricultural activities. Tough geographical conditions, scattered land holdings and limited agriculture land make the life of people of this area more difficult and limits the other options and opportunities for their livelihood. Keeping these harsh realities in mind, HARC started its interventions in Rawain Valley for the social and economical development of the local people by strengthening their capacities and knowledge building. Development process can be sustained only when people are organized and take the lead themselves. Sense of ownership among the community is the corner stone for sustaining any development process, action and activity. Adopting a collective approach to development, HARC organized the people of Rawain Valley into groups and associations. As a result of various interventions done in the area, Rawain Valley Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (RVFVGA) came into existence. To develop this association as self controlled and self managed institutions HARC strengthen the internal and external capacities of the association. On one hand these interventions resulted into improvement in quality and quantity of produce and knowledge building of the producer on the other it diversified the livelihood opportunities for the people of Rawain Valley.

Rawain Valley Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association (RVFVGA) took the initiative to deal with the problem of marketing the produce of the farmers in right hand and at right price. To meet the challenge of the severe competition in the market HARC motivated the association to prepare their production plans according to the market demand. Office bearers and members of the association were given opportunity to visit different fruit and vegetable mandis (whole sale market of fruits and vegetables), have discussion with whole sellers, big businessmen, mandi management association and helped the association to develop the market strategy of association according to the demand and supply situation in the market. HARC also developed the capacity of association and its members in grading, packing etc. There was increased production of fruits and vegetables but the quality of the produce was not according to the demand of the market. To address this problem of the farmers HARC provided technical inputs and hired the services of specialists to help farmers improve the quality of their produce. Through these technical inputs (sowing methods, quality seeds, manure, plant protection, nursery raising) there was remarkable improvement in the quality and quantity of the produce. Now the crop production plan is made more technically. At present there are approx 6000 families in this area who are selling their produce through this association and have directly linked with market. Due to the agricultural extension program of HARC in this area now the farmers have learned how to make the best use of their agricultural land and by diversifying their crops they are improving their economic condition.



In the process of capacity development of association and its members, more than 1000 farmers have been taken to Himachal Pradesh on an exposure to meet and interact the progressive farmers in Himachal Pradesh. These exposures broadened their horizon of understanding and they become confident on making the best use of their land.

These exposures had played great role in developing the entrepreneurship among the young farmers. As there was no technical agency in this area to provide technical inputs and information, HARC organized technical trainings for the farmers with the help of technical experts of two famous universities of agricultural and horticulture at Himachal Pradesh at the university itself. On the basis of these trainings a cadre of more than 100 local para technicians were developed who took the responsibility of extending the technical knowledge and information at village level in their local area.

Another important issues before the farmers were - management of soil, maintenance of soil fertility, plant protection from the diseases and use of the organic pesticides. To deal with issues and to motivate and encourage the farmers for quality produce HARC, conducted several demonstrations on vegetable production in Rawain Valley. Under these demonstrations more than 500 varieties of different vegetables were demonstrated with more than 2000 farmers. Farmers are now more confident to grow variety of vegetables and in its marketing. The crop selection according to the favourable condition of area was main thing that was focused during the training and demonstration. This was expanded pervasive.

How The Association Came In To Existence :

Before the association came into existence, the middlemen and big traders of the cities used to give all the agri inputs like seed, manure, medicine, packing material etc to the farmers of Rawain Valley for their production with a bond that the farmer will sell their produce to the same trader only. Traders took the maximum profit of the production and growers were given a small amount as a price for their produce. The growers could not raise voice against them as they were bound with the bond. This practice of middlemen and big traders resulted into the severe exploitation of the growers at their hands. The main reason for this situation was lack of availability of technical inputs and agricultural extension services at local level and no mandis for marketing their produce. To send the production to the mandis, the transport cost was very high. Many a times the production was spoiled at the field only due to lack of proper and cost saving transport facilities and some time bad conditions of the road in the hills. Due to all these problems the growers were bearing the heavy loss.



These problems mounted at the time of tomato crop, as there was no packaging material for tomatoes and big traders were asking high price for providing packaging material. The farmers raised this problem before HARC in a monthly meeting of para technicians. Till that time HARC did not thought of facilitating or exploring marketing channels for the produce of the farmers but when this problem was raised by the farmers HARC studied the whole scenario at local level and made the farmers realized that all these problems took place as they were not organized and due to lack of collectives, it has become very easy for the middlemen to exploit them. The marketing problem and exploitation by the middlemen was the main reason for Rawain Valley Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association coming into existence.

The Process Of Formation Of Association :

In Ranwain valley, there has been continuous expansion of agriculture techniques through HARC since 1990. To sustain the process and to develop expertise at local level HARC selected a few progressive farmers to give them different types of technical information and trainings, which further disseminated by these farmers to all other farmers in their area. These informed cadres of farmers are called Para technicians. To have a regular interaction with these para technicians monthly meetings were held with them in which they had discussion on different aspects of vegetable production techniques and prepared collective plan. Due to its results the production of vegetable increased in this area. In 2001 there has been production of tomato in large quantity but the



marketing of this produce was the main problem. There was an intensive discussion about the marketing of tomato in this meeting of Para-technicians HARC facilitated this meeting and encouraged the farmers to be organized in the form of farmers Interest Groups at village level and then in to the association for collective marketing of their produce. HARC built their perspective on collective approach to socio- economic development. This meeting was followed up by several round of meetings by the farmers and HARC on the issue of getting organized and getting rid off exploitation from middlemen. These meetings helped in generating awareness among the farmers on the benefits of collective working for the solution of all their problems like quality production, marketing etc. They decided that all the producers would work collectively for the marketing of tomato. This gave to the birth of Rawain Valley Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association in Rawain Valley. This association was registered under the society act 1860 in 2001 with the help of HARC.

Expansion Of Association Through Organizing Village Level Meeting

The formation of Rawain valley fruit and vegetable association is not a result of single day but it is a part of various interventions that have been carried out by HARC to strengthen the development process for last five years. To develop a clear understanding on the importance of association and its internal and external processes HARC took the members of working committee of the association to Himanchal Pradesh where other associations were functioning. This helped in motivating the farmers to strengthen their association. With the facilitation of HARC, village level meetings were organized by the Para- technicians for discussing and providing the detail information on the objectives and structure of the association to all the farmers in the villages. Only those growers got the memberships who were involved in agricultural practices.

Structure Of Rawain Valley Fruit And Vegetable Grower Association:

For developing a democratic structure of the association the 68 villages of the working area of HARC was divided in to 7 wards, and for each ward one ward in charge has been appointed. Ward incharge is a selected representative from the village level Farmers Interest Groups (FIG). This ward- in -charge is the members of the managing committee of the association. They carry the information from the village to association and from association to village. The president of farmer's groups in the village is the member of wards level cluster.

The Aims Of Rawain Valley Fruit And Vegetable Grower Association:

Rawain valley fruit and vegetable association, for the welfare of its members and its organization had prepared the aims of association as follows:

- ↻ To work for the economic and social development of its grower members
- ↻ To explore the possibilities of production of off- season crops and to increase production according to the demand of the market.
- ↻ To protect the interest of the farmers and reduce the exploitation from big traders and middlemen.
- ↻ To provide stability to agriculture system and there by improving the economic status of the growers.
- ↻ To build up the network with different agencies for getting technical inputs for growers.
- ↻ To motivate members to adopt practices of organic farming.
- ↻ To develop the skills of farmers to produce crops of good quality and to increase the diversification of crops.

The Strengthening Process Of Association:

Once the association came into existence, intensive interventions were done to strengthen the operational and managerial capacities of the association for this purpose HARC organized different training program on leadership development, management of association, account management, development of organizational structure, different production techniques etc. To develop their understanding and knowledge on market trends HARC conducted exposures and surveys for the farmers to different mandis. These interventions helped the members and office bearers of the association to increase their work efficiency.

To improve the quality of fruits and vegetables HARC conducted an intensive quality campaign at village level in mission mode. In this mission the farmers were oriented about increasing the quality of produce according to the demand of market, pre and post harvesting process, good quality of seed etc. as A result the production and quality of production increased in Rawain Valley.

This association has become a source of inspiration and motivation for the farmer of the other areas of with in and out side of Uttaranchal for commercial and organized agricultural activities. The produce of this area like tomato, Capsicum, cabbage, pea, potato and French bean etc are

being supplied to local market as well as to the Mother Dairy agency of National Dairy Development Board, New Delhi.

Organized Marketing System of The Association:

The main problem of farmers of Rawain valley was the marketing of their produce as there was no facility was available for marketing the produce at local level. As a result of this the middleman and commission agents were getting a big chunk of the profit. The growers were exploited at the hands of middleman because they were compelled to sell their product to these commission agents. HARC made the farmers realized the importance of collective marketing. The need of collective marketing was the main factor for the birth of Rawain Valley fruit and vegetable growers association.



At the initial phase very few grower joined this association but latter other growers also realized the importance of association and joined the same. In year 2001 farmers of 05 villages took the membership of the association. At present this number of villages has increased and become 36 and farmers from 15 villages has also applied for becoming the member of association.



HARC organized exposure to mandis, market demand survey, logistic study, networking with seed and manure companies for strengthening market linkages of the association. As a result now seed companies are participating in monthly meetings of association for negotiation of rates of their products. As a group farmer now have more bargaining power and they can negotiate with the companies on their own terms and conditions. Initially association was giving its product to local mandis but today association is supplying fruits and vegetable to Kanpur, Delhi,

Sharanpur, and Dehradun mandis. This year they have demanded for advance of Rs 50 thousand from each whole seller for supplying the fruit and vegetable and this conditions was accepted by wholesalers.

The different interventions and facilitation by HARC resulted into building strong linkages with marketing agencies. In year 2002 for vegetable marketing association fixed the target of 450 tonn, which was achieved. In year 2003 the target was 700 ton and in year 2004 the target was 1200 ton, which was achieved by association easily. This target was fixed with Mother dairy only but the actual supply (including the supply to other agencies) was much higher. Association makes selection of crop and its variety according to market demand so that farmer could get more profit from its product. Today more than 50 varieties of vegetables are grown in Rawain valley. Now association is looking forward to supply fruit and vegetables to the mandis of Kathmandu in Nepal.

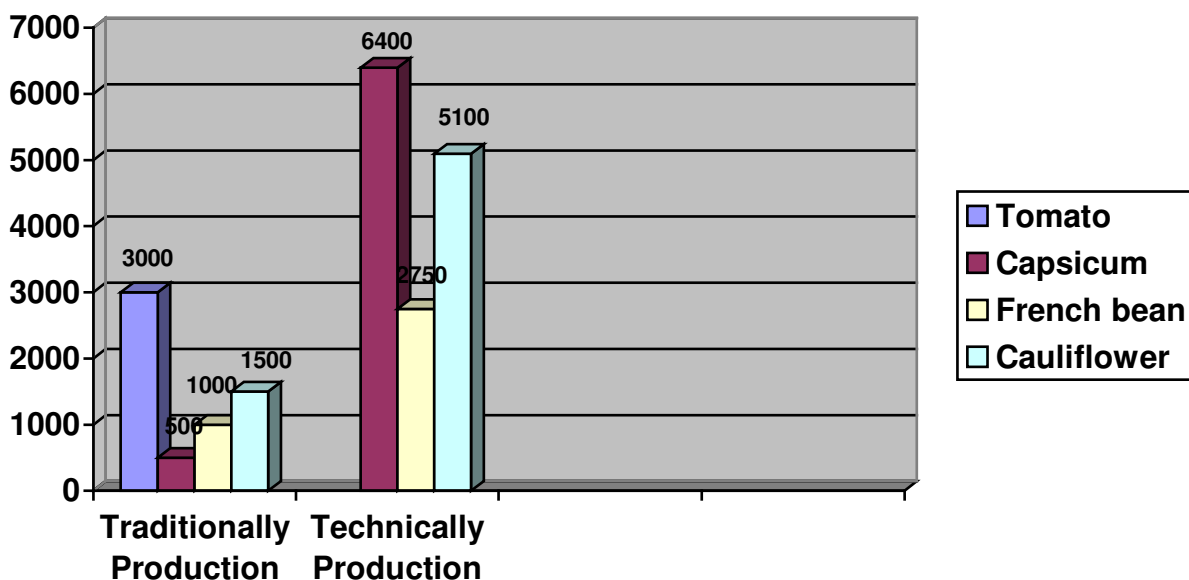
HARC is getting the rates of fruits and vegetables from the web site of different wholesale markets in the country and providing it to association. The association disseminates this information to grower at village level. This helped the grower to take decision about the selling of their produce. The logistic survey report was helpful in providing information to the association about the facilities available in mandis, transport facilities in different part of country, government proposal, which is helping them in preparing their marketing strategy.

Production Packaging Cost :

For the marketing facility association had bought 2300 plastic carets in which he sends vegetable to market. Carets had reduced the packing cost by 95 percent. There are different collection centers according to location of villages for the settlement of market and special attention is paid in grading and packing at each collection center. Through this the better quality product is send to market. For the packaging of fruit association has discussed in all methods with packaging companies.

Comparison Detail Of New Technology Knowledge With Production:

Different technical input given by HARC has helped the farmer to produce according to market demand Rawain Valley Fruit and Vegetable Grower Association has also prepared an annual crop calendar. On the basis of this calendar and geographical features of the region different varieties of crop is being produced. Earlier the production of tomato in 0.1 hectare was 800 kg and now about 2000 kg of tomato is being produced in same area. By using new and feasible technologies association is increasing its productivity. For eg. wire staking is being used by farmers in tomato and they are also increasing the practices of organic farming. Today with tomato other produce like Cauliflower, French bean, Capsicum, Lettuce, Broccoli are also coming in market. The comparative details of pure profit which is getting to members of association through production is as follows:



S.No.	Details of Crop	Details of Profit in Rs. (in 0.1hac)	
		Traditionally Production	Technically Production
1	Tomato	3000	6400
2	Capsicum	500	2750
3	French bean	1000	5100
4	Cauliflower	1500	7900

Reduced Cost of Transport:

Farmers initially were not organized and there was no collective approach for marketing, so every grower used to sell the produce individually, which resulted into expense of Rs. 36 for each 10 kg produce. Rawain Valley of Fruit and Vegetable Association reduced the expenses up to 70 percent through collective marketing. This reduced cost on transportation gave extra benefit to growers. Now the association is able to talk directly with transporters and marketing agencies. The comparative detail on cost of transport is as follows:

S.No.	Details of Crop	Expense in Transport in Rs. (per 10 kg)	
		Marketing arrangement of association	Self Arrangement
1	Tomato	14	36
2	Capsicum	15	40
3	French bean	12	30
4	Cauliflower	14	30

Networking of Association with Different Institutions:

S.No.	Details	Number
1	Seed companies	26
2	Organic manure and Technical Institutions	12
3	Universities and Research Institution	08
4	Marketing Institution / Entrepreneur	08
5	Scientist	24
6	Financial Institution	05
7	Packaging Institution	02

To organize the daily routine work, association has employed their 04 members on salary basis in their office. Today association has become so strong that after opening collection centers it is looking forward for ropeways and having their own trucks.

Details Of the Marketing

Rawain Valley Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association is providing marketing facility to its members since 2001. Collection center has been established in different location to collect and

grade the produce. One collection center caters to at least 7-8 villages. The association pays much attention to the grading and packing of the produce so that quality could be maintained and grower get more profit. This year some new vegetables have been introduced in the market such as lettuce, broccoli, red cabbage, and fruits like pears and apples. These vegetables and fruits have been supplied to different mandis and marketing agencies. Lettuce, broccoli and red cabbage were exported through a local exporter. Details of the total supply of vegetables and fruits for last four years is as follows:

Year	Marketing of Vegetables (In Ton)	Total Amount (In Rs)
2001	80	800,000
2002	448	4,200,000
2003	600	20044,473
2004	31500	40,000,000

Facilities Provided by Association to its Members

Rawain Valley Fruit and Vegetable Grower Association has clearly mentioned in their by-laws that it will work in interest of its members. The association is providing following facilities to its members:

- ✦ Association has started building a relief fund for its members to save their interest. For marketing of produce of its members the association charges Rs 2 for every 10 kg from its members for generating resources for the relief fund. In case of damage to the produce during transportation of the produce to the market, the association bears the loss of member by compensating to member from this fund. So that respective member may not bear any type of loss.
- ✦ For the availability of high quality seed and organic manure, association has directly established linkages with seed companies. Growers get the high quality seed in reasonable rates.
- ✦ For the marketing of produce association has agreement with Mother dairy and wholesaler dealers of other mandis. Association receives and disperses the payment through the cheque.
- ✦ Association through this process has helped to introduce the produce of small farmers in market who were earlier not able to give their produce in market because of low production. In this way feeling of organization has developed in them and today now they are increasing their production in organizing way.
- ✦ Association has purchased 2300 plastic carats for packaging, which he gives to its members and due to this the packaging cost has reduced to 70 percent. Association charges for farmer management Rs. 0.50 paise per kg for using carats.

- ↪ Association has available useful agricultural equipments to its members like spray machine, seed sowing machine etc. with the help of HARC. Members pay fees for using these equipments, which is used in its management and to buy other new equipments. Association for increasing the information of his members buys magazines, new papers etc for collecting information on new technology from agriculture and horticulture universities.

- ↪ For maintaining the quality of product association gives training to its members for grading and packing in collection centers for which he takes services of HARC specialist continuously. For quality control and availability of product in market through out the year crop calendars are prepared according to geographically condition to increase the production of the region.