



This is the story of two young hunters of Nabi Bux Palari, a small village located in the middle of Jhimpir and Amirpir at Keenjhar Lake. Being the only two literate people in the village, they are an icon for their upcoming generations.

Kamal and Hameed are cousins belonging to the Palari family. They love hunting partridges and other water birds of the lake area.

According to Hameed, "We can hunt about 50 partridges ourselves on a single trip as well as help and facilitate other hunters. When the WWF survey team visited our village, they met and discussed with us the importance of natural resources like water, fish, forests and birds etc. Slowly, we began to realise that they made a lot of sense," said Kamal Palari.

It took a few more meetings with the WWF team for the Palaris to understand how natural resources are important and must be protected. More dialogue followed between the Palaris and the villagers.

They soon came to the conclusion that there was no contribution to environment from the community instead only exploitation of natural resources. An organisation to help solve social and environmental issues of the area was envisioned. After having a series of mobilisation meetings, not only the villagers of Nabi Bux Palari participated as a community based organisation but nine villages came together as the Keenjhar Maar Ara Welfare and Development Organisation.

"After the formation of the CBO, we have not only attended different trainings for management of the organisation but have taken self innovative initiatives particularly the declaration of the no hunting zone," said Hameed.

The 'No hunting zone' area is spread over on about 13 kms from Jhimpir to Chull Side, the northern side at the lake are. In this protected area, no one is allowed hunting of birds or mammals. After declaration of the no hunting zone, there has been a significant increase in the number of birds and other animals as well.

"We realised that hunting is not only a threat to indigenous birds species but at the same time it is also a crime that we were doing in the past. Now we are committed to conservation and protection of threatened bird species," agreed both the Palaris.

The Palaris have also taken the initiative of Eucalyptus and Jatropha plantation in addition to a village Farmer Field School in which about 30 farmers from different villages have been enrolled to adopt the best practices management model (BMP) with the implementation of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) technology.

Through the BMP model, farmers have been trained as master trainers. "We have established a Demo Plot for vegetables as well which is based on IPM technology," said Kamal.

Kamal as president of the CBO plans to continue such initiatives not only for the solution of social and environmental problems but at the same time for protection of Keenjhar Lake from various threats.

"We are going to establish a natural resource based enterprise to focus pan methods in shallow water for fish growth assurance," he further added. "The weight of fish will be monitored, fish stock will be secured and marketable."

If people like Hameed and Kamal can act as catalysts and bring about a substantial change agent in their little world, conservation of natural resources would not seem a far fetched idea at all.