

Raheed Burriri breaks the cycle of debt



The month of December is a time of nervous anticipation for Rasheed Burriri as he prepares to sell his rice harvest in the market. Not too long ago he did not look forward to crop harvest since all of his earnings from his hard earned labor were used to pay off his local village money lender as debt repayment. *“There was no choice but to take loans because I didn’t have the money to buy fertilizer or seed,”* he explained.

For many farmers like him in Shikarpur district a good price will make the difference between prosperity and poverty. Only if he managed to make a profit after paying off all his debt and expenses, he could proceed to sow the forthcoming wheat crop. This vicious debt cycle was only driving him further down into poverty. Furthermore, his financial constraints kept him from running a small shop of general items for some additional income. *“I was about to close my shop down, my fields were lying fallow and it was difficult to repay my debts,”* he added.

When he heard about OSDI’s Agricultural Development Project, through which small holding farmers like him are provided easy, affordable loans for purchasing farm inputs such as fertilizer, pesticides and seeds, he walked up to the field staff asking to be included in the program. Aside from being provided microfinancing, Rasheed Burriri and many like him have routinely been provided training on best cultivation practices such as application of farm inputs and modern farming techniques. Rasheed Burriri has especially benefitted from sowing hybrid seeds through OSDI’s consultation. *“My yield used to be around 50 mounds of rice and it increased to 80 mounds after using these seeds,”* he exclaimed.

Such productivity gains helped him not repay his loans to OSDI but also turn a generous profit on them amounting to Rs 212,000. His new found fortune has enabled him to do things that were impossible only a year back. He has reinvested his earnings into running his shop and buying food rations for his household.

Free from usurious debt, Rasheed Burriri is finally accumulating savings. *“I am calm and content. I am not in debt and do not owe anyone,”* he says with a reassuring smile.

