



### Energy based livelihoods in remote villages

Saima a 24-year-old married with four daughters comes from an ultra-poor household. She lives in Jafar Jhokio, a village five kilometers from a proper town in Thatta. Her husband was the only bread winner of the family working as a helper at a compressed natural gas (CNG) filling station earning PKR 6,000 a month. This was the only income for the family.

In 2016, Indus Earth Trust started working on a project 'Just light is not enough' (J-LINE) in 4 villages in Thatta. It set up solar mini grids for electricity to the villages. Soon after, IET started a livelihood project 'Livelihood Enhancement and

Enterprise Development' (LEED) in the same villages. This was the first time that IET provided electricity based livelihood support in rural areas.

Saima's household received assets worth 50,000 in the LEED project including a refrigerator and cold drinks. She started selling cold drinks and juices from home and started savings from the earnings. A year later, IET initiated a Community livelihood fund programme in the village. Through this project, Saima took a loan of PKR 25,000 loan and added the savings of 50,000 to build a shop. She shifted her business from home to the newly built shop.



This was the first time domestic items were available in their village. Before her shop, the closest store was 5 kilometers away in Gharo. Sales increased significantly by shifting to a shop placed centrally in a public space within the village. With the profits, she expanded her range of products to introduce domestic cleaning supplies, confectionary, grocery items including milk, tea, sugar, toys and ice cream. This led to increasing profits. They serve 70-80 customers a day.

With the profits, she purchased a motorbike for her husband which makes the stock easily available; she has repaired their house, and most importantly, she has started sending her eldest daughter to the public school in the village.

They have made a seating space outside their shop for customers and fellow villagers to sit and



enjoy their ice cream and cold drinks. Their store is a popular social spot in the village. Her husband serves customers at night as there are solar street lights setup in the village.

From earning a salary of 6,000 a month, they are able to save 25-30,000 a month. Their currently assets are worth PKR 400,000.

Solar mini-grids the only source of energy in this village. Solar mini grids are an effective intervention as it not only provides light but also helps increase income, supports livelihood and enables social gatherings. Community livelihood fund has proven to be effective in sustaining livelihoods.

Her husband entertains customers at night as there are solar lights in the village. There has been a significant increase in their income and they are able to save PKR 25-30,000 a month.

On International Women's Day, March 8, 2018, Saima won Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund's national award 'Amtul Raqeeb' given to appreciate significant increase in economic living standard of households.