

# Greater Kashmir

'Forest-Based Communities reaping enhanced benefits under new NTFP Policy'

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**Srinagar, Oct 3:** The Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) Policy launched by the Government of UT in December 2022 has started yielding benefits to a large number of households residing in and around the Forests, said Pr. Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF & HoFF) J&K Forest Department, Roshan Jaggi at Bandipora.

The PCCF, who was on his two days tour of Gurez, Tulail and other areas said that this innovative policy has changed the institutional framework for collecting various valuable herbs/shrubs from forests, by eliminating the Contractors as middle-men who were operating in the erstwhile system. He said the rights of collection and sale of NTFPs have now been entrusted to local people, who are at liberty to sell the collected produce to those buyers who offer them better rates instead of selling to a particular Contractor on the monopolistic pattern. A small amount of royalty also goes to the Biodiversity Management Committees, who utilize these funds for the development of forests and Biodiversity Conservation at Gram Panchayat level, he added.

During the visit, the PCCF also reviewed various developmental and infrastructure related works of Bandipora Forest Division.

At Kanzalwan, he inaugurated a Public Park with way-side facilities which have been constructed by the Forest department with the help of NHPC by developing a Muck-dumping site from Kishanganga Hydro Project. The developed site offers basic facilities of rest-rooms, children park etc to tourists/travelers.

A similar way side facility is under construction at TDM along Bandipora – Gurez road which will become operational shortly.

PCCF, who was accompanied by regional APCCF Kashmir region and other senior officers of Forest and NHPC also threw open a 04-km trek route from Dawar to Pattalwan Sar which would help boost eco-tourism related activities in this area.

Forest department in the last few years has developed more than 65 track routes passing through mesmerizing forest landscapes, offering opportunities to students, nature lovers and trekkers to enjoy nature in its pristine wilderness. Forest department offers residential accommodation and other facilities to eco-tourists at many such locations which can be availed by online booking.

During the last six months 5.90 lakh people have enjoyed facilities of trekking routes passing in different Forest Divisions. New avenues are coming up in rural remote areas with such initiatives, the official spokesman said.

During interaction with local people, PRI representatives, PCCF announced that in next year's plan, more afforestation related works shall be taken up in Gurez, Tulail, catchments for betterment of forests and also to generate employment for local people.

The PCCF also reviewed the working of Forestry Training School at Chitternar and interacted with trainees. He also laid the foundation of DFOs Residential quarter at Forest complex Bandipora.

He reviewed the preparedness of the afforestation programme which will start in the entire Kashmir valley in the ensuing winter months. He said department is targeting to bring all 4291 Gram Panchayats under massive afforestation programme by actively involving representative of Gram Panchayats (GPs) under initiatives like 'Har Gaon Haryali', 'One Beat Guard One Village' and 'Paed Lagao Beti ke Naam'.

Source: <https://www.greaterkashmir.com/business/forest-based-communities-reaping-enhanced-benefits-under-new-ntfp-policy>