



Growing Hope: A Community-Led Journey Towards Sustainable Livelihoods in Sukna village

Sukna, a remote village under Bhutura Gram Panchayat in the Mahammadbazar Block of Birbhum district, is home to predominantly Scheduled Tribe families. Agriculture is the mainstay here—entirely rainfed and increasingly vulnerable due to the changing climate. Erratic rainfall has caused declining crop yields, leading many male members to migrate seasonally for work. Malnutrition and household conflicts due to low income were once a part of daily life.

In 2021, a significant transformation began when the **Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRCSC)** initiated a climate change adaptation and livelihood project, **TECSAI**, in the village. The project began by forming a mutual cooperation group called **Sagun Kunmi Sushil Somaj Songothon** with 26 of the most vulnerable households.



The objective was clear: **build resilience through collective effort.**

Building Capacity for a Better Future

Each household received training in climate-resilient agricultural practices—developing year-round nutrition gardens, cultivating low-water crops, conserving soil moisture, and managing livestock. These practices started showing results as the households began growing more food, improving their health, and saving small amounts regularly.



With support from DRCSC, the group also received **productive assets** such as vegetable seeds, fruit saplings, and small livestock like goats, hens, ducks, and pigs—laying the foundation for alternative sources of income.



The Game-Changer: Vermi-Composting

In 2022, a breakthrough came when DRCSC facilitated a partnership with another organization to establish a **large-scale vermi-composting unit**. Group members underwent hands-on training in production, packaging, and marketing. Support also flowed in from the Department of Agriculture in the form of weighing and sealing machines.





Their plan: run at least three production cycles a year, each producing 20–25 quintals of compost. In 2023–24 alone, the group produced **175 quintals**, selling them for **₹1,75,000** and earning a **profit of ₹1,40,000**. A fresh batch of **75 quintals** is ready to hit the market.

Their compost is now being sold to local farmers, nurseries, and government departments—making a lasting impact on local agriculture and their own lives.



Voices of Change

The impact went far beyond financial figures which are really encouraging to see. **Hemlata**, one of the members, shared, “This collective vermi-compost business has changed my life, even if just a little. Now, I always have at least some money in hand—it helps me buy food for my daughter when she needs it. What more do I need to be happy?”



Elin said with hope in her eyes, “I couldn’t continue my own education because of money, but now I believe I’ll be able to give my children the chance to study further.”

And **Dhanmoni**, whose husband has been bedridden, added, “I thought I was going to lose him because we didn’t

have the money for treatment. But now, this business is giving me the support I need to continue his care. I truly hope he recovers soon.”

The collective initiative at Sukna shows how sustainable livelihoods, when combined with community action and climate-resilient practices, can bring lasting change. What began as a response to crisis has now become a **beacon of hope and resilience**—a model that can inspire similar communities across the country.

