



Finding Livelihood Alternatives at Home

Location: Mahishasthali Gram Panchayat, Bhagawangola-I Block, Murshidabad

Project: MORZADA

Supported by: BMZ Germany & NET Bangladesh

Implemented by: DRCSC

Before the inception of the MORZADA project in 2019, most men in Mahishasthali GP's 13 villages used to migrate to other states in search of work, leaving their families behind. Women members of the project's SHGs struggled to manage their households with irregular income and long periods of separation from their husbands — some returning only once or twice a year.

During the **COVID-19 lockdown**, the situation worsened. Many men were stranded outside the state, while others were forced to stay home without work. Families faced acute financial and emotional distress.



At that critical time, **DRCSC field workers** facilitated a series of **counselling and planning meetings** with both women and their husbands. They encouraged them to explore **local Income Generating Activities (IGAs)** and prepared small-scale livelihood plans. With continuous guidance from DRCSC, several families began investing savings and group funds into small local enterprises.

As a result, **95 husbands** of SHG members (out of 353 total) have now started earning through local IGAs such as tea stalls, vegetable vending, grocery shops, totos, and other small businesses. This shift has helped them **reduce migration, stabilize household income, and strengthen family bonds**.

The initiative has also inspired neighboring villagers, who are now adopting similar livelihood options, making “**working within the village**” a growing movement.

Examples of New Livelihoods Adopted:

- Tea stalls – 5
- Toto driving – 15
- Van pulling – 6
- Vegetable vending – 18





- Fish selling – 4
- Grocery shop – 4
- Snack and fried food – 4
- Basket and bamboo crafts – 8
- Miscellaneous business – 18
- Hawking – 4
- Desi poultry farm – 1
- Sugarcane juice making – 2
- Shoe selling – 1
- Pillow and quilt making – 1
- Ice cream selling – 1
- Fruit vending – 1
- Goat feed selling – 1
- Bread selling – 2



Result:

Families now enjoy steady income, reduced dependence on migration, and stronger social cohesion. The initiative has not only created local employment but also built community resilience through skill development, savings use, and joint decision-making.

Key Learnings:

- Joint meetings with both men and women encourage family-based livelihood planning.
- Local IGAs reduce distress migration and ensure sustainable income.
- Community-led efforts can spread new livelihood ideas across villages.

