

Human Interest Story of Tearfund Canada's India partner EFICOR and a

Food Security Project

Badudha is a remote village situated in Pakur district of Jharkhand state, India. Mr. Gonga Deheri, an ethnic Malto (tribal group also known as '*Paharia*') in his late twenties, resides in this village with his 25-year-old wife, Rekha Deheri, and their two children. Gonga's livelihood primarily relies on farming, where he cultivates crops such as corn, pigeon pea, green gram, and sorghum.

Additionally, to make ends meet, he collects minor forest products to sell in local markets.

The Paharia community, including Gonga, faces significant challenges related to climate change and soil erosion, particularly because they live and farm on hilltops and hillsides. Their agricultural lands have been adversely affected by these issues. Moreover, the extensive stone quarrying and coal mining activities in the nearby Rajmahal hills, across their district and neighbouring districts in Jharkhand have further compounded the problems faced by the Paharia community. The monsoon heavy rainfall and high-water flow intensity exacerbate these issues, directly impacting the livelihoods of the Paharias.



Tearfund Canada's partner EFICOR has been working among the Malto community in eastern India for years doing integrated rural development projects to ensure food security. EFICOR's intervention has been instrumental in raising awareness among the community about these challenges and identifying potential solutions. In addition to problem identification, the community has actively participated in implementing solutions, such as constructing stone bunds across sloping fields. These bunds are constructed using stones and rocks found in the land, representing a nature-based solution to the problems at hand. Initially, Gonga was hesitant about the intervention, but as he witnessed his fellow villagers' lands being cleared of rocks and soil erosion being mitigated, he decided to adopt the same approach on his own land.

As a result of this intervention, Gonga is now content for several reasons. Firstly, he was able to find employment during the implementation of the project. Secondly, he successfully preserved the soil on his land, preventing further erosion. Lastly, the construction of stone bunds contributes to the recharge of groundwater, which is crucial for the sustainability of the community's agricultural practices and overall well-being. Gonga is grateful to EFICOR (and donor Tearfund Canada) for showing a way to stop the erosion in his farming, and get better yields, with a future for the next generation!