

Kiran Project – A Community Based Vermicomposting Initiative of CESC Limited

In the heart of Dakshineswar Metro Colony slum, where the weight of daily struggles imprinted worries on resilient faces, Project Kiran emerged as a transformative force, placing beneficiaries like Jharna Das at its forefront. Jharna, a 45-year-old resident, had endured the uncertainty of her husband's irregular income as a painting labourer, casting shadows over their family. Monica, another resident, shared a parallel story, grappling with a husband whose earnings dissipated into intoxication rather than supporting their well-being. The desperate plea for a stable income reached CESC through its implementing partner Calcutta Rescue.

In 2021, the seeds of change sprouted as CESC envisioned Project Kiran—a venture intertwining climate resilience, community inclusion, and income generation. The slum, housing 180 families predominantly engaged in daily wage labour, became the area for this transformative endeavour.

The unsanitary living conditions of Dakshineswar Metro Colony slum provided the canvas for CESC to implement a small-scale compost plant. Kiran not only aimed to efficiently manage bio-degradable waste but also sought to empower residents with a sustainable source of income.

Kiran's journey unfolded with meticulous need analysis and community sensitisation. Jharna, identified through surveys for her leadership potential, became a pivotal figure in guiding the project independently. The community engaged in dialogues on waste management, fostering a collective understanding and a shared vision for the future.

As the project matured, it became a true community endeavour. Jharna and two fellow residents became the backbone of Kiran, earning a fixed monthly income of Rs. 3,500. The community, too, could participate by selling compost, creating an indirect income stream. By February 2024, Kiran processed 1,500 kgs of organic waste per cycle, yielding 200-220 kgs of high-quality compost. The project sold 1,789 kgs of compost, generating Rs. 26,835.

Beyond financial gains, the slum underwent a remarkable transformation. Cleanliness flourished, and the spirit of Kiran inspired residents to engage in small-scale gardening. The vision of CESC materialised—a replicable waste management project, a model for other slums.

With each cycle, Project Kiran not only elevated the lives of Jharna, Monica, and their families but also catalysed positive change in the entire community. The Project aims to achieve full self-sustainability by 2026—a beacon of hope and progress in Dakshineswar Metro Colony slum's heart.