

# Ms Suchim: A Small-Scale Farmer Turned Entrepreneur from Nagaland



Suchim extracting honey from an apiary

**M**s Suchim is a 57-year-old young-in-spirit entrepreneur. Hailing from the quaint Penkim Village, nestled in the Khongsa block of Kiphire District in Nagaland, she is a self-made woman overseeing the production of Kholar beans (an indigenous variety of kidney beans native to Nagaland) and other seasonal crops on her farm. An inspiration to many, Suchim lives with her husband, daughter, and five sons with an inherent love for cultivation. She says, “Since childhood, I had a deep and thoughtful feeling of joy, love, and inspiration towards farming.” Suchim is part of the Agro Business Cluster in Nagaland which was set up by the Indian Micro Enterprises Development Foundation (IMEDF), a social enterprise-development initiative of Development Alternatives, with support of the Ministry of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) under the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) in 2019. The cluster is led by 500 women including Suchim who grows kholar beans, ginger, and turmeric. She makes extra income through beekeeping as well.

IMEDF aims to promote green and inclusive entrepreneurship through innovative technology-based business models, provision of credit and finance linkages, technical skill building, mainstreaming of products into high-value and local markets, and collaborating with institutions to support cluster development. Suchim thinks of life before cluster development and sadness overshadows her as she recollects instances of hardship when her additional yield used to go to



Workers de-weeding ginger fields

waste and was frequently attacked by pests in granaries. Many farmers like Suchim were unaware of concepts like marketing and product manufacturing before the IMEDF intervention. Turing optimistic Suchim shares, “The crop losses have minimized because of training on pest management and guidance received as part of capacity building training”.



Kholar Beans Harvest

IMEDF introduced Suchim to methods like branding and value addition of raw materials into marketable products like honey jars, dehydrated ginger flakes, and turmeric powder. The surplus produce was marketed under the name 'The Good Tree' which expanded her target market exponentially. Suchim and her fellow cluster farmers can now sell their produce throughout the nation at a better price—a development that has widened their profit margins and relieved their economic hardships. Kholar bean cultivation in the region has also been transformed into a profit-garnering business ever since the IMEDF involvement.



Ms Suchim (on the extreme left) proudly stands with her family at her farm

Suchim expresses her gratitude and pride over the year 2022's bountiful yield of 288 kgs of kholar beans with more than 195 kgs sold. The remaining produce was utilised for production purposes and household consumption. Being a member of the Saramati Beru Area Multipurpose Cooperative Society, a micro-enterprise set up as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) of the cluster, also benefited her business considerably. The Saramati Beru Area Multipurpose Cooperative Society plays a big role in marketing the products of these entrepreneurs and securing access to e-commerce platforms. Suchim comments that this mode of collective marketing and value addition has extended the reach of her business. Like Suchim, several other women entrepreneurs have received a great push to their cultivation businesses through initiatives by IMEDF and Saramati Beru Area Multipurpose Cooperative Society. Thus, beneficiary schemes and cluster development projects are pioneering development in the social and economic upliftment of agrarian societies, especially in the remote hilly regions.