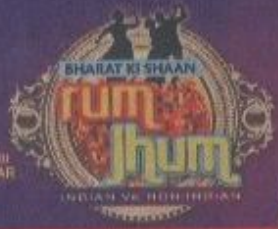


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# City school helps, hope floats in U'khand village

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** The tiny village of Rail Gaon is getting a helping hand. Located in Phata in Uttarakhand, the village has less than 100 residents. In the June floods, the village had suffered heavy losses and lost most of its farmland.

Now, a Delhi school is doing what it can to ensure a source of livelihood for the residents there. Teaming up with a Chennai-based NGO, Bloom Public School has been fundraising for them. Proceeds from the first fundraiser will go towards paying for a machine to process soya beans.

Sapna Sukul, who teaches at Bloom, had travelled to post-flood Uttarakhand in September with Vijaya from Aadarsh Samaj Sewa Shiksha Samiti. They met village elders of Rail Gaon and brought back videos, based on which they held a fundraiser.

"We have lost about two hectares of land and the village is in such a precarious position now that any more rain will wash it away too," says Dhir Singh Tinduri from Rail Gaon, adding that the village's connection with the world is tenuous as the bridges across the Mandakini are gone, the temporary one is not likely to last the winter and the rope-drawn "trolleys" are "not properly maintained."

"The school decided to get a first-hand account of the di-

saster and relate to the students, staff and parents, the impact of the natural disaster," says school principal, Ashutosh Batta. The students sold artwork for close to Rs 1.3 lakh and plan to hand over the cash to the villagers itself.

After exploring the markets, Vijaya had realized that the minimum cost of a commercial soya processing machine—used to extract milk—is about Rs 2.10 lakh. "From one kilogram of

beans, you can make four or five litres of milk. It can bring a good income as a kilo of soya bean costs between Rs 60-65 and a litre of milk sells for Rs 30-35," she adds.

But setting up a plant is a little more complicated—"We'll need land, electricity and also spend on loading and unloading." So far, only the school has been raising funds for this village and they are yet to receive compensation from the government.

## A VILLAGE RAVAGED BY FLOOD



<b>RAIL GAON</b> in Phata	No. of families	19	Total Population	84	<b>LIVELIHOOD</b> Farming. They've lost most of farmland
	Children	26 (9 in high school)			

