



Madurai Symposium 2021

Advancing Development: Community Swaraj

25-29 October 2021



Bulletin

Day 2: 26 October 2021

KNOWLEDGE BRIEF

Convention on Restoring sub-basin watersheds and eco system through community governance

The convention on restoring sub-basin watersheds and ecosystems through community governance was conducted with the participation of leaders and officials of experience. The approach envisages water harvesting by using hydrologic principles with community wisdom from individual tanks to watersheds to sub-basins and finally the basin and thus ensure 'holistic water conservation and management'. Systematic processes and procedures of building community social capital and their governance through enabling mechanisms such as leadership development, capacity/skill development led to Community Swaraj. Community governance could be ensured by continuous actions of rehabilitating, maintaining tank and watershed eco-systems by people themselves by creating innovative practices like shramdhan, endowment grant and community contribution.

Convention on Building Community Resilience - DHAN's Way

Community resilience is defined as the sustained ability of communities to withstand, adapt to and recover from adversity. Irrespective of the availability of different resilience frameworks and tools, not a single approach addresses the risks and vulnerabilities of communities living in varied social and economic contexts. People, system building, adaptability, transformability, sustainability and courage are the six basic foundations on which community resilience is built. Resilience building calls for a three-fold intervention: Coping mechanisms (Absorptive capacity), Adaptive capacity (for e.g. long-term livelihood investments such as creation of farm ponds, livestock and fodder development) and Transformative capacity (improved governance and enabling conditions) are equally essential and important in building community resilience practices. Facilitating direct democracy in building community resilience will supplement efforts in bringing about Community Swaraj.

Self-help group movement of poor women has shown greater resilience in coping with risks and vulnerabilities in so many different ways in different contexts. While savings and credit play an important role in building resilience

among the poor, insurance and pension play an even more significant part in the lives of poor from a long-term perspective. As a result, about 5.0 million persons have got protection against life (death and longevity), health, crop and livestock risks through various insurance products. It is evident from DHAN's work that resilience needs different capacities to cope and lead a new way of life.

Workshop on Financial instruments and their impact on economic swaraj of the community

Amidst technological transformations in the banking industry, the poor should get exposed to the various financial and digital platforms to get community swaraj in their hands. The principles of self-regulation, sustainability and community governance have paved the way for community swaraj for SHGs and their people institutions. The common assets of the SHGs have ensured the development of all, including non-members of the community. SHGs have introduced savings, credit, banking, insurance, pension and other upcoming banking services like remittance and technology adaptation for inclusive access to financial products and services like Jandhan, PMJJBY, PMSBY, ABY to ensure social security for the poor.

Workshop on Financial Literacy - An effective tool to leverage financial Inclusion

By enabling the community to make informed choices while accessing financial products and services from regulated entities, Financial Literacy plays a pivotal role in accelerating the process of Financial Inclusion. In spreading financial literacy, FLCCs run by commercial banks are not enough to reach out to the excluded community in large numbers. The Centre for Financial Literacy is now emerging as an alternative and effective model to fill the void that exists in financial literacy awareness strategy.

RBI's scaling up CFL project, now taken up all over India, provides enormous scope for exploring the untapped business potential in the rural sector. In the process of establishing CFL centres across the country, it is strongly felt that outreach and impact, the twin objectives of CFL, can be achieved only with the active participation of bankers, who should respond to the FL-aware community with empathy. What is more, to make the CFL movement sustainable in the long run, it should be institutionalized through Community Swaraj by identifying and empowering rural volunteers who can become an effective link between the bank and the community.

Workshop on WASH for All: Enabling Demand and Supply System

The benefits of having access to an improved drinking water source can be fully realized only when there is also access to improved sanitation and adherence to good hygiene practices. Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene – known collectively as WASH – has profound socio-economic impacts, particularly for women and girls. Today, 2.2 billion people lack access to safely managed drinking water services and 4.2 billion people lack safely managed sanitation services. The impact on child mortality rate is devastating with more than 2,97,000 children under five dying annually from diarrhoeal diseases due to poor sanitation, poor hygiene, or unsafe drinking water. Poor hygiene and unsafe water are responsible for 90 per cent of worldwide diarrhoeal deaths. Another major issue is the households without space for the construction of toilets and low or no maintenance of the Community Sanitation Complex in villages.

DHAN's long experience of working for WASH through community governance has promoted the mission across all levels and made possible coverage of 4,48,994 families through safe water and sanitation products for eight years, benefitting 7,31,171 people. In total, 3,52,628 families have been reached through construction as well as renovation of toilets; 67,807 through household water tap connections and 23,535 by installing water filters. The community plays a major role in integrating the WASH programmes. Robust community governance identifies and understands the need of the community members at the village and cluster levels. Literacy level of the end-users and close monitoring by community governance helped family members to use the WASH products effectively. Each household's need is met by the community and a wholistic community WASH integration will bring sustainability in Health Swaraj.

Workshop on Advancing GAIN (Goat Advisory - Innovative and Natural) Knowledge Swaraj

Goat rearing is one of the poverty reduction tools for landless farmers. Adequate traditional practices and knowledge exist in the community on goat rearing. These should be exchanged among farmers and their knowledge transferred to the next generation. This knowledge building and sharing will lead to Knowledge Swaraj. There is a felt need for promoting people institutions for goat rearing farmers, which will act as a base for Community Swaraj. Marketing Swaraj is possible only if goat rearers are organized for promoting producer/marketing companies and when they start tapping the digital marketing tools.

Stall feeding will lead to Eco Swaraj. Promoting localised community volunteers as para-veterinarians is the only solution for disease control and reducing loss in goat rearing. Virtual Veterinary Wellness (VWV) centres may be promoted at the grassroot level. SHG members should be trained in traditional herbal medicine preparation and treatment to carry forward the traditional knowledge and

practices. Low-cost and high-yield fodder cultivation should be encouraged among goat rearers. Traditional herbal treatment and local fodder cultivation will lead to cost-effective rearing practices. Goat rearing is also considered a woman-driven livelihood and it leads to economic independence and woman empowerment.

Goat rearing is one of the livelihoods among the poor landless families and one of the allied activities of agricultural farmers too. The margin of profit in goat rearing is high but, at the same time, the risk involved is also very high. Farmers having 1-2 goats suffer during the loss of goats due to diseases/unhealthy practices. In most cases, goat farmers look for immediate remedies and use whatever medicine is available to prevent goat loss. Imprudent methods are often harmful and result in asset loss. However, there is enriched traditional knowledge and wisdom among farmers and elders but they are waning. The need to tap and document the traditional practices and knowledge is the need of the hour or else they will go to seed.

Workshop on addressing drudgery in Small Millet Sector for Community Swaraj

This workshop was held in continuation of the previous workshop in Madurai Symposium 2019 in which the drudgery of women in processing small millets and ways to overcome it were discussed. This year, the topic is broader and encompasses drudgery in the whole small millets sector and the ways and means to overcome it. Ways to empower millet farmers in attaining Community Swaraj by taking to collective marketing and value addition of produce were also discussed. Similar to OMM (Orissa Millet Mission), the state governments are expected to pay attention to millet promotion with exclusive focus, which would pave the way for addressing the drudgery of women to a greater extent.

Birth Centenary - Round Table on Advancing Development and Community Swaraj: Dharampalian Drishti

Dharampalji, a Gandhian thinker and political philosopher, said in his writings that if a radical solution was required for the country, the Constitution of India would have to be completely reformulated by rural and semi-rural Indians, who are indeed the ancient inheritors of India and its Paramparas. The new Constitution would be based on their ideas of community and harmonious living with the neighbourhood and nature. He was of the view that more than 'development', such a feeling of swaraj would help in the much greater task of integration of Indian society, the lifting up of depression which seemed to have settled over the country. This effort would lead to purposive action and a feeling of well-being.

Workshop on Partnership with Mainstream Stakeholders in Advancing Community Livelihoods

Rainfed farming is one of the livelihood programmes implemented across six agro-ecological locations. Livelihood

promotion and poverty reduction are the key challenges addressed with context-specific, multipronged approaches and strategies by this programme. Starting from promoting social capital and linking beneficiaries with mainstream partners for ensuring entitlements, capacity development and technology demonstration, the programme has advanced the livelihood of rainfed farmers with sustained income security. The partnership of the rainfed community with mainstream stakeholders like the government, academia, research stations and corporates has transformed it into a powerful demand stream. The rainfed farmers, over the years, have developed risk mitigation measures through crop and livestock insurance and water-tolerant multiple cropping systems, thanks to the continued collaboration with many government agencies.

Workshop on Role of Community Swaraj in achieving SDGs

Improved quality of life: Rural poverty in India is a big issue due to the uncertainty associated with agriculture, lack of other employment opportunities and poor connectivity to urban centres. To end poverty in all its forms in the rural community, there is a need for proper categorization of poverty according to livelihood and family types. There should be a necessary focus on ensuring social protection, access to economic resources and opportunities etc., so as to address the needs of the poor and vulnerable, with a comprehensive under-standing of the kind of poverty that exists in villages,

Health: Securing nutrition and healthcare facilities for all individuals in the community fulfills the goals and targets under SDGs aligned to health. An important role that community swaraj can play in improving the health standards of the community is that of creating awareness of the drawbacks of unhealthy lifestyle and hygiene practices.

Education: To ensure access to free and inclusive education at the Gram Panchayat level, the community should go beyond ensuring that schools are operated in an efficient manner. Interventions by panchayat leaders to improve the learning outcomes of students can be in the form of starting a tuition class for academically weaker students, setting up libraries, computer centres and community resource centres for the education of all.

Environment: The major SDG targets that fall under the ambit of environment are related to water and sanitation, sustainable energy, climate change and ecosystem conservation. Given the rising importance of climate change and the impact of climate change-induced disasters on vulnerable communities, the Gram Panchayat needs to focus on improving its adaptation measures.

Since 60% of the population in India lives in villages, it is important to ensure a climate-resilient and safe environment for the development of these communities. This can happen through the integration of already existing programmes and the active participation of the Panchayat Council and its Standing Committees in creating awareness and empowering individuals to take action.

Gender Equality: The first step towards achieving gender

equality is eliminating discrimination and violence against all women and girls in the village. This can only happen if the community recognizes the need to create safe spaces for women to express their grievances. Simultaneously, women should be encouraged to become politically more active in the governance of the village. This effective participation of women can be extended beyond the Panchayati Raj to organizations that work for the development of the community.

Workshop on Green recovery in Point Calimere - Community led

The recovery of greenery such as mangroves through community participation in wetland ecosystem, its impact, pollution, how to conserve and utilise the available resources and resources affecting Point Calimere in the context of climate change become important while building suitable community institutions for each sub wetland eco-systems such as backwaters, creeks etc. The importance of mangrove forest seems inevitable while preparing the community for conservation of wetlands, especially Point Calimere with its 364 flower and 257 bird species and different marine living organisms. Scientifically, it is proved that a hectare of mangrove forest provides shelter for more than a million fishes, crabs, prawns etc.

Mangroves in the present context face many threats from anthropologic activity as well as natural calamities. Mangroves take part in controlling CO2 by absorbing CO2 and releasing oxygen. Bird migrations have reduced due to the degradation of habitat. The community leaders felt that wetlands are utilized by many stakeholders and the responsibility of conserving them rested not only with the Forest department or community. All the stakeholders should work inclusively to conserve the wetlands. Also, a small impact on the seashore will make big changes in other locations. So, conserving wetlands is the responsibility of the entire world. Community Swaraj in the coastal context must highlight all community-centric approaches, understanding and respecting the traditional wisdom and knowledge from the elders of fisherfolks, ecological biological process and the like. The enabling communities with appropriate institutional structure and processes hold key to sustaining green recovery initiatives in Point Calimere.

Workshop on Investing in Rejuvenation of urban water commons – Urban Water Governance

The water commons historically exist as a dynamic and collective resource that thrives by constant improvisation, negotiation, rebuffing and evolution. It is a form of social wealth governed by local custom which gets transformed as ‘cultural commons’. The cultural commons gained by the water-centric rural communities vapourised in the process of urbanisation, which turned the community into water-vicinity. The water-vicinity community treated the commons as ‘free ride commodity’ and the government converted it treating it as ‘public property’. Hydro-meteorological pressures such as long dry spells, urban

floods and fall in groundwater table adversely affected 'urban water security' impacting 'wellbeing' and so the 'land value'. The disoriented water-vicinity communities started to orient themselves towards waterbodies, realising that they are still 'water-centric'. This was the very early development of social capital for the urban water commons. Such a development gave new meaning to both 'shared' and 'sustained by' the water commons. The collective 'wakeup call' was not only sensed among the residential communities but also by the administration, politicians, judiciary and corporates.

Though direct investments made by the supply stream restored the waterbodies, investing in community-led rejuvenations turned 'waterbodies' into 'water commons'. As the community-led process has the elements of community investment, community planning, community implementation, community negotiation for conflict resolution, community monitoring and maintenance, it enables the communities to practice 'values' essential for waterbody conservation. These 'values,' when practised by the associations for a period, turn into 'cultural commons' and so the waterbody turns into 'water commons'. Rejuvenation of water commons through community 'associations' served as a space for re-expressing 'cultural commons' acquired in the past, retrieving the lost 'cultural norms,' reviving the livelihoods and initiating the socio-cultural norms. Communities that exercise such values in the collective platforms continuously are the ones that establish it as 'cultural commons'. Disseminating it by creating desirable platforms for the relevant stakeholders, especially students and the youth population, will enrich the 'spirit' of the commons. Because 'knowledge of the commons is a wisdom which grows like tree rings consolidating a community'.

PROCEEDINGS

Convention on Restoring sub-basin watersheds and eco system through community governance

N. Venkatesan, CEO DV(T)F, outlined the objectives of the workshop. He said the event would facilitate the exchange of knowledge and experience on restoring sub-basin watersheds and ecosystems through community governance and bring together all stakeholders to develop a common policy framework. He said water stress could be avoided in Tamil Nadu by involving the community in managing sub-basins.

Community Swaraj in water can be associated with kudimaramathu, watershed associations, water-use associations, tank and pond associations, and river basin associations. Community governance at sub-basin watersheds should include conservation commons, disaster management, resolving of conflict over water sharing, ensuring future maintenance, effective management of resources and pollution control.

Palanisami, Treasurer and Trustee, DV(T)F, in his address, pointed out that the ecosystem had been damaged only by

climate change in the last 40 years.

Nishith from Munger Region said that they were involved in the renovation of waterbodies for poverty alleviation. He suggested community governance at micro and macro levels for water resource development. Sub-basin maps should be available at village level, he added.

Convention on Building Community Resilience - DHAN's Way

The convention aimed at facilitating sharing of best practices of resilience in managing various risks, synthesizing the knowledge areas that have proved effective for practice and identifying challenges that need to be addressed collectively by involving different stakeholders.

In his keynote address, M.P. Vasimalai, Executive Director, DHAN Foundation, said, "Savings first, credit next, insurance must and pension is best." While stating that the demand and supply systems always determined the community's needs for social security, he said the Federation Mutual mainly focussed on self-sustenance, self-growth and self-development. He also spoke about the need to facilitate community self-decision and collaboration with government stakeholders for connecting new insurance products.

In his special address, Narayanan, Divisional Manager, LIC of India, Madurai, appreciated DHAN People Mutuals for supporting community risk management not only through risk reduction but also by way of risk reduction and risk mitigation.

In his inaugural address, L. Chendurnathan, Senior Divisional Manager, LIC of India, said the LIC always focussed on need-based policies. At the same time, there was a need to create awareness of various insurance products among people who had been left out of the social security system.

The lead presentation made by Ahila Devi, CEO, People Mutuals, described how the adoption of appropriate technology and the creation of an enabling environment worked in favour of the mutual movement. She also explained how members were selected through a participatory process involving several tools like resource mapping, perception mapping, wealth ranking and household survey. The community institutions were owned and governed by the local communities and they focussed on mutuality, self-help and self-reliance.

Sub-group discussion among community participants from six States took up risk reduction, challenges and the role of community in a bottom-up approach as topics. Life Mutual Programme for all without upper age limit, evolving suitable products, Health Mutual for secondary health care and Livestock Mutual for cattle emerged as potential leads for action.

Workshop on Financial instruments and their impact on economic swaraj of the community

A. Umarani, CEO, Kalanjiam Foundation, in her opening remarks, called upon the SHG leaders to learn, use and

educate their fellow members on how to use the financial services and platforms of bankers. Grassroot democratic decision-making in the SHGs, aided with access to financial instruments, could facilitate community swaraj in a big way, she said. Ms. Umarani pointed out that the saving habit had helped the poor in creating an identity for themselves with the bankers.

S. Sivanandan, Programme Leader, DHAN Foundation, in his lead presentation, highlighted how saving, credit, remittance, insurance, pension and technology (SCRIPT) have been integrated. He said that the community-managed savings of Kalanjiam Movement stood at Rs 709.48 crore and 11.84 lakh insurance policies were in force for members and their spouses' lives.

Outcomes of deliberations on the lead question

Best Practices: Conscious understanding of the members that saving is treated as an asset and security at old age. Many old members have spared their savings for their last rites. Incremental savings and tapping potential savings have increased. The practice of opening a bank account for all members is systemized. Special savings products are catching up, yet there is a need to popularise them among the members. On insurance products, life and mutuals are very familiar and have been institutionalized. It is understood that remittance practices have become familiar among members but technology adaptation is found wanting.

Gaps: Withdrawal of savings is a matter of concern and it has to be addressed significantly. Insurance products for health, crop and livestock have not been well received by the members though they have felt their importance. The need for pension is not well understood though everyone wants to have it. Age and low literacy levels are constraints in accessing digital technology and transactions.

Issues and Challenges: Institutionalizing non-formal products into special savings practices has to be given priority. Livestock insurance has to be mandated and integrated with the loan products. Awareness of term insurance products and their advantages should be created among members to have wider coverage.

Effective mechanism to intensify SCRIPT for Community Swaraj: Awareness creation and capacity building on financial literacy and safe use of technological tools and platforms have to be carried out more rigorously. Cashless transactions have huge potential to save time, energy and money of the members and hence popularizing them among the poor alone could ensure their economic swaraj in the long run. Or else, a digital divide may be on the way and this could prove to be a missed opportunity in poverty reduction.

Workshop on Financial Literacy - An effective tool to leverage financial Inclusion

M. Kalyanasundaram, CEO, INAFI INDIA, looked at FL as an effective tool to promote sustainable community financial inclusion. He said the CFL programme should address the problems of women, students, youth and the unorganized sector that were vulnerable to a financial crisis. It should

ensure accessibility, affordability and appropriateness of financial products to the community. The whole financial literacy process happened through banks that acted as a fulcrum to financial services and pulled the community towards additional capacity building on investments, credit, insurance and pension, apart from savings. Along with FL, digital literacy was growing side by side due to the development of digital money. CFLs should also develop an awareness of fraud and mishandling in digital transactions. Apart from literacy, these centres should also envisage community advancement and sustenance in financial terms.

S.C. Mohanta, General Manager, Indian Overseas Bank, highlighted that FI was an Integral part of the development agenda of the government and it envisaged reaching the unreached. Few JAN DHAN and social security schemes met the supply stream of financial inclusion but the untouched demand side was achieved primarily through financial literacy awareness initiatives by enabling the community. He also pointed out that the RBI believed in multi-stakeholder approach by roping in the services of development agencies to reach out to the unorganized sector. Financial Swaraj began with inculcating the habit of making a household budget and recording financial transactions, he said. Financial Swaraj facilitated mutual empathy between bank officials and customers, he added.

Uma Rani, CEO, Kalanjiam Foundation, spoke about their contribution to Financial Inclusion through various initiatives. She said the CFL Pilot Project started in 2017 now covered over 25 blocks in Odisha, Karnataka and Rajasthan. More than 3.25 lakh individuals had been reached through CFL and the community was enabled with new account opening, activating the dormant accounts, enrolling in social security schemes and in digital transactions. She said that the KF CFL Scale-up Project planned to reach 510 blocks in 81 districts in 6 States and 2 Union Territories by establishing 170 CFLs.

She also highlighted the implementation process through the concept of mithra (volunteers) at the village-level to ensure sustainability.

M. Kathiresan, Advisor, DHAN Foundation, explained the difference between FLCC (Financial Literacy Credit Counselling Centre) and CFL. He also emphasised that the community must be enabled to choose the right financial product. He was confident that the CFL resource team would emerge as an organic link between banks and the community to facilitate community access to banking services.

Workshop on WASH for All: Enabling Demand and Supply System

R. Rajapandian, CEO, pinpointed the role of community governance in realizing cent per cent sanitation and a safe drinking water system for all. He further added that though the Government offered subsidy for toilet construction, the scheme was not utilized to its fullest extent. Hence, advancing community governance was the need of the hour to deepen health interventions.

In his keynote address, Manoj Gulati, Executive Director of

water.org, said that a project was initiated in 2013 with the goal of ensuring 10000 loans to the community exclusively for WASH purposes. The potential for the loan had been identified and now more than 250000 loans had been provided to community members. The journey started in Tamil Nadu and it had now spread all over the country where DHAN was working. Water and sanitation were a solution not only to a family but also to the community at large. Family toilets for all kinds of people (special needs and aged) were being utilized by the community with the technical support of DHAN engineers. Bankers also came forward to support the initiative by lending for the creation of water sources. Social water entrepreneurship should be promoted so that the village could get the appliances for toilet construction and water tap connection from the local shop, he said.

Bhuvanewari of water.org said complete sanitation could be achieved by bringing a change in ourselves. A healthy community could only have a healthy environment and this could be achieved from individual sanitation to family sanitation, neighborhood sanitation, village sanitation and panchayat sanitation through a ripple effect. Now the quality of water was an issue and it could be addressed by the installation of a community water filter at the village. She insisted that the inclusion of water and sanitation agenda in the village action plan was the first and foremost need. Samreen of water.org felt that knowledge of water and sanitation among community members was very vital.

In his lead paper, Saravanakumar, Project Executive, spoke about the experience of DHAN in enabling the demand and supply streams for WASH. Subgroup discussions were initiated subsequently with five lead questions, covering the best practices, challenges, governance policies and sustainability in relation to WASH.

Members felt the need to sensitize the community towards WASH products. The forum declared that community mobilization and ownership were critical to the success of any programme. It was recommended that community members, especially from tribal areas, should be sensitized through cultural programmes on the need for availing themselves of WASH products. Dr. K. Rajeswari emphasized cent per cent coverage of WASH in all contexts which would be a unique expression of Community Swaraj.

Workshop on Advancing GAIN (Goat Advisory - Innovative and Natural) Knowledge Swaraj

K. Ilavarasi, Team Leader, DHAN Foundation, explained the purpose of the workshop. M. P. Vasimalai, Executive Director, in his lead remarks, stressed the need to create a platform for Community Swaraj, Knowledge Swaraj, Marketing Swaraj and Eco Swaraj in goat rearing. He said that the organisation would give focus to goat rearing as a poverty reduction strategy among poor landless farmers. He foresaw the success of the workshop leading to the promotion of 1000 goat rearing associations to enhance income, livelihood and greenery.

B. Muthukumarasamy, Programme Leader, in his lead presentation, outlined the links among community knowledge, swaraj and FPO promotion. P. Vivekanandan, Founder, SEVA, in his paper on 'Traditional and natural practices in goat rearing,' highlighted traditional herbal medicinal treatments, practices for increasing the weight of goats, fodder cultivation methods, livestock volunteer promotion and training related to goat rearing.

K. Shanthi explained the importance of FPO promotion among goat rearing farmers. Amutha Rani of Vayalagam Radio spoke about the application of ICT tools for experience sharing.

Sharing of farmers' experiences by Chitra, Ramasamy, Sathya Moorthy and Lakshmanan threw light on the challenges faced by them in disease control, imprudent medical practices and marketing.

Sub-group discussions revolved around promotion of traditional herbal medicinal treatment and creation of FPOs. The forum came out with a few key declarations like educating landless farmers to go for goat rearing and integrating the digital platform to make the initiative more successful.

Workshop on addressing drudgery in Small Millet Sector for Community Swaraj

In his welcome address, Saravanan, Team Leader, said that the workshop provided space to share and reflect on the experiences in small millet conservation, harvesting, processing, value addition, marketing and policy matters. One of the main factors in the decline in production of small millets was the drudgery of women in production and processing.

While delivering the keynote address, M. Karthikeyan said that since 2011 DHAN, as a consortium, attempted to address the constraints from cultivation to consumption of small millets with partners, like the Tamil Nadu Government and Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. He listed production constraints, post-harvest constraints, inadequate attractive products, inadequate awareness and inadequate access as reasons for declining consumption. He pointed out that drudgery was high in small millets in weeding, harvesting, grain shattering; and threshing.

He also explained how DHAN members were addressing the drudgery. Communities in Madurai used pulse hulling machines and people in Jawadhu Hills used mixed grains for reducing drudgery. In case of production drudgery, farmers in South Karnataka and Tamil Nadu adopted line sowing using Coorigai-bullock-drawn seed drill and used 'bakkar' for weeding. Two types of harvesters were used to reduce harvesting drudgery. At present, India, Sri Lanka, and Nepal were improvising existing threshers for small millets to arrest drudgery, he added.

Nagesh Rao of SELCO Foundation, in his presentation on 'Sustaining access of small millet' through case studies from North Karnataka, said their main objective in providing machinery to villages with small millet production was to help them avoid drudgery.

Bijay Kumar, who shared the presentation of Tapas Chandra Roy, Agricultural Officer, Koraput, Odisha Millet Mission, said that the aim of the Mission was to promote household consumption, set up decentralized processing units, improve the productivity of millet crops and remote FPOs for marketing, besides the inclusion of millets in ICDS MDM and PDS.

Ramesh, a mechanical engineer and organic farmer, spoke about value addition in small millets. Senthilarasi and Balamurugan explained the activities of the Thiruvallangadu FPO. At present, the machinery was operated by men and, in the future, they had planned to train women for the job.

Lakshminarayanan Reddy said that in recent times more farmers were coming into small millet cultivation. Janakan of Mahilagam Foods shared his experience in processing small millets. Premanand, Chief Executive, Small Millets Foundation, summarized the day's proceedings.

Birth Centenary - Round Table on Advancing Development and Community Swaraj: Dharampalian Drishti

The event was organised by DHAN Foundation in association with Dharampalji Gurubandhu Sangh at the ongoing Madurai Symposium 2021 to commemorate the late Gandhian thinker's birth centenary that falls on February 19, 2022. A host of erudite scholars who are inspired by Dharampalji's writings and still continue to follow the Dharampalian Drishti participated in the virtual-cum-face-to-face round table along with development workers and academicians.

In his opening remarks, M.P. Vasimalai, Executive Director, while recalling his association with Dharampalji, said that the Gandhian's model of crop production with the community in the early 1970s in Chengalpattu district was better than the Green Revolution. He called for documenting his works for the benefit of the new generation.

Sashikala Anantji, Architect from Chennai, felt that the future of India would be hanging on the past. She pointed out that most of us depended too much on the western system of science which acts on the symptoms and not on the cause and underscored the need to learn Parampara Shiksha through team effort. Geeta Dharampalji, daughter of the Dharampal, recounted her learning from her father that Community Swaraj was evolved by the people through the inheritance of the values of Paramparas and good education.

Academician Madhu Kishwar was of the view that modern education was one of the deadliest poisons injected on us. Pawan Kumar from Uttarakhand called for an exploration of the past through epics and other literature in order to refine modern education. Halley Kalyan highlighted the need to look at the self-image of each community. Srinivas Pratra shared his experience of learning from the weaving community in Adilabad and his acquaintance with Dharampalji at Wardha Ashram.

Workshop on Partnership with Mainstream Stakeholders in Advancing Community Livelihoods

The event was attended by rainfed stakeholders like representatives of the State Government, Cotton Corporation of India, Central Institute for Cotton Research and rainfed farmers across six agro-ecological locations. M. Palanisamy, Programme Leader, Rainfed Farming Development Programme, recalled its evolution in the last two decades. It envisioned food, income and ecology security by promoting resilient people institutions among small and marginal rainfed farming communities.

Sebastin Brittoraj, Assistant Executive Engineer, Agricultural Engineering Department, detailed the challenges in the linkages of community and mainstream in ensuring access to government schemes and programmes and the ways to overcome them. Rainfed farmers in Tamil Nadu should not settle for any less yield than the minimum of 600 kg per acre of any pulses, oilseeds and grains, instead of the present yield of 150-300 kg/acre. He lamented that there was no preparation such as quality seed, variety, duration and soil moisture conservation work prior to cultivation and insisted that farmers must adopt standard operating procedures in crop cultivation to ensure higher production from rainfed lands. The SOPs are quality seed with certification, enough seed quantity, three-time ploughing, field bunding, timely sowing and harvesting.

In virtual mode, Prof. Ramasamy of Krishi Vignana Kendra in Vellore district, explained how livestock productivity among rainfed farmers could be enhanced to achieve a better livelihood. Techniques like herbal extract to address the problems of ecto-parasites, administering feed additives such as Sodium bicarbonate to milch animals and Ethno veterinary treatment for Mastitis were highlighted by the scientist.

Usha Rani, Principal Scientist, Central Cotton Research Institute, Coimbatore, in her virtual presentation, explained the different extension systems of promoting rainfed desi cotton and special organic cotton intervention based on research findings.

Workshop on Role of Community Swaraj in achieving SDGs

Shanthi Maduresan, CEO, DHAN Panchayat Development Foundation, in her lead address, highlighted the necessity to address five core areas to achieve community swaraj -- quality of life, health, education, environment and gender equality.

The chief guest, G. Pankajam, former Vice-Chancellor, Gandhigram Rural Institute, explained the ways and means of Gandhian approach in achieving rural development. She asserted that community swaraj was the best suitable model to enrich development activities in the rural context.

N. Janakiraman, COO, DHAN Foundation, narrated the story of how quality of life was ensured in Tamaraikulam, a tribal village in Tamil Nadu, through DHAN's intervention.

He said that quality of life was a highly subjective factor that concerned the general well-being of individuals and societies. Quality of life included quality of environment, financial wellbeing, sense of belonging, personnel safety, work, emotional well-being, social relationships and health.

R. Rajapandian, CEO, SUHAM Trust, classified the focus of SDGs in health as people, prosperity, peace and partnerships.

S. Iyyappan, Regional Coordinator, Dindigul, made a presentation on 'Education and its relevance in fulfilling SDG targets' in which he listed the gaps prevailing in panchayats in enrolment ratio in primary education like lack of infrastructure and amenities, poor access to vocational education and non-availability of quality teachers. He called for new mechanisms to be adopted by the community at the panchayat level to achieve the targets by overcoming the gaps.

Workshop on Green recovery in Point Calimere - Community led

In the inaugural session, Arivoli, District Forest Officer, talked about the system of wetlands and its effective usage in the environment. The role of wetlands was to enhance the ecology and have a direct impact on groundwater recharge. Avantika from GIZ India explained the significance of wetlands and their characteristics and the principles to be followed to maintain the balance in the system of wetlands.

Asaithambi, Team Leader, DHAN Foundation, shared DHAN's experience in wetland conservation and CALL programme's main intervention, 'Promoting people institutions, Livelihood intervention, Conservation activities and Disaster management.'

Prof. Kathiresan of Annamalai University, in his talk on the speciality of Point Calimere, explained that each hectare in the mangrove forest held more than five million fish and acted as a bio-shield in the coastal area. He felt that integration of agriculture, aquaculture and sericulture would facilitate higher livelihood opportunities for the coastal community

A.Selvam, Mangroves expert, highlighted the importance of mangroves and their topography and demography as the major influencing factors of the ecological process. Coastal literacy on protecting mangroves among the community played a vital role in conservation.

Prof. Stella of Karunya University said mangrove forests acted as a barrier during natural calamities and safeguarded people and their livelihood. Community leaders and Dr.Prema of Karunya University spoke about community action in green recovery across the coastal context.

Dr. R.Ramasubramanian, Director, MSSRF, shared his life-time experience in preserving mangroves, using PRA tools at the community level. P. Sivasubramanian proposed a vote of thanks.

Workshop on Investing in Rejuvenation of urban water commons – Urban Water Governance

The event was inaugurated by N. Venkatesan, CEO, DHAN Vayalagam Tank Foundation. He shared with the participants the legacy of the Madurai Symposium and explained the initiatives of Vayalagam in the urban context.

In the lead presentation, Elamuhil S of CURE explained how the built-up area in Madurai City had increased five-fold in four decades by engulfing 23% of the water commons (irrigation tanks and ponds). He explained the expression of 'cultural commons' (cultural norms, regulations that are practised by a group over a longer period) of the water-centric rural Madurai and loss of the same in the process of urbanization, as the communities are just at the vicinity of the water now and not water-centric. He spoke on how the loss in cultural commons resulted in treating 'water commons' as 'free ride commodity' by urban individuals and 'public space for conversion' by the government. He also dwelt at length on the type, nature and extent of the encroachment as collective encroachment, individual encroachment and religious encroachment. Long dry spells, urban flooding, fall in groundwater aquifers, and a decline in value of 'land and rent' were factors triggering the movement of the community towards the conservation of waterbodies.

He felt that investments through community institutions were key to building community ownership which, in due course of time, would turn into 'cultural commons'.

Dr. T.V. Ramachandra of the Centre for Ecological Sciences, IISc-Bangalore, emphasised that a balanced diet for healthy wellbeing was made possible only because of nature's bio-diversity. He pointed out that Bengaluru City that had 80% tree cover in the 1960s, currently has 89% of built-up area engulfing 1269 waterbodies. This resulted in the rise of average temperature from 21°C (in 1990) to 38 °C (in 2020). He said that a responsible community, recycling wastewater, roof water harvesting, reforestation and restoration of wetlands would ensure sustainable ecology.

Prof. Fazia Tarannum of the Department of Regional Water Studies at the TERI School of Advanced Studies touched upon the importance of integrating cultural aspects in the rejuvenation process to continue the maintenance aspect. She explained the importance of developing a 'community wetland restoration plan' which would demand the supply stream to invest. She called upon the community organizations to tap resources from government schemes that were relevant to the rejuvenation of water commons. She opined that community engagement activities were essential to keep the community organisations alive. With the way forward and declarations, the workshop was concluded by Lokesh Sinram.