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Advancing Development: Community Swaraj

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Convention on Community Swaraj in Namadhu Mannvasam: Contributions and Way forward

"The sole aim of journalism is service," said Mahatma Gandhi. Namadhu Mannvasam (NMV), as a development journal, replicates these words in all its endeavours. Development journalism is expected to bring the practitioners and community together and offer them a platform to convey their experience and insights to the society at large. Knowledge dissemination to the last mile community is the key social responsibility of development journalism to foster prosperity from the bottom of the pyramid.

Knowledge Swaraj is the key goal of NMV in bringing constructive changes in society. The entire circulation of the magazine is being invested by the community as a unique expression of knowledge search. Despite pandemic hurdles, the community system, including people functionaries, shouldered the continuity of the magazine without any break. Knowledge matters in the magazine are loudly read in group gatherings, including even illiterates, for shared education. The magazine is found in the hands of not only members, but also their family and friends. The community feels proud of seeing the magazine as their knowledge identity. The magazine aims to advance its contributions to Knowledge Swaraj through key initiatives like promoting community documenters, local solutions for contemporary issues, web version to go beyond borders, etc.

Convention on Advancing FPOs through farmers' governance

The small and marginal farmers are at the receiving end and their livelihoods are threatened due to instability of the environment, fragmentation of farm holdings and competition from nonfarm sectors like factors emerging out of urbanization. The farmers face issues like lack of access to credit, market and technology adoption and using appropriate value chains for getting better return for their produce. The formation of producer organizations from 2013 by the Government of India, with three years grant support for nurturing and enabling FPOs to become sustainable is not achieved fully. Therefore, a new policy by the Companies Act, giving access to finance for working capital, establishing marketing infrastructure in rural areas like godowns, cold

storages, are to be formulated to prevent the post-harvest losses incurred by the vulnerable farming communities.

The challenges before the promotion of FPOs are concept seeding to the members and selected representatives to deliver their role with institutional system and good Governance. The small and marginal farmers have to be empowered with knowledge on market value chain. The role of the promoting organization is very important to help them establish the relevant business ecosystem to increase the production and marketing.

Workshop on Community contribution in pandemic situation – Relief, Revive and Restore Livelihoods

The workshop aimed to showcase the best of community contribution during the pandemic, when livelihood challenges were witnessed across different contexts. Continuous virtual guidance of the members of federations across all thematic programmes ensured that relief, revival and restoration of livelihoods happened successfully. Frontline workers and community leaders joined forces to reach out to every household and facilitated the entitlements from state and central government through Public Distribution System, Anganwadis, MGNREGA and Suidha loans through banks etc. During the relief phase, DHAN collective's community institutions worked together to provide medical assistance, groceries, immunity building Siddha/Homoeopathy medicines to the families affected by COVID-19. Community leaders, workers and volunteers took active charge in creating mass awareness by promoting safety norms like social distancing, mask wearing and hand washing (SoMaHa); ensuring cleanliness in the community neighbourhoods and working intensively with health systems such as public health centres, sub-centres, panchayats, municipalities and corporations. Innovative approaches of many federations in setting Virtual Wellness Centre, dynamic data collection and monitoring of COVID infection among the members and neighbourhood promoted Health Swaraj.

Workshop on Effectiveness of community financing in leveraging resources and facilitating community swaraj at larger scale

Community Banking Programme built on a very strong social capital facilitate savings by poor women as the equity help to leverage credit from formal banking system for meeting the financial needs. The savings also get better rate

of interest. The poor women gained confidence over risk coverage of their families and started enrolling to mainstream insurance and mutual insurance products by paying the required premium to cover the risks such as life, health, asset, livestock, crop and the like. The community capital of poor beyond microfinance addresses poverty, and scaling up the social capital to reach large section of unserved poor and could be termed as development finance.

Community has evinced interest on the philosophy of giving back to the society through localised initiatives which need to be galvanised with community ownership at all levels. Health, nutrition, care for environment, enabling future search process for the community organisations are the prime agenda for strengthening community financing. The credit requirements of community are to be accessed taking into account their external debts, could help tap the resource leverages more wisely and would aid in addressing poverty faster. Women's economic empowerment transformed their decision making across the community institutions over these years have indeed strengthened the community swaraj.

Workshop on Use of Alternative Technologies in Housing the Ultra Poor

Building on the edifice of the social capital built by the people organisations, poor communities can build their governance to address the shelter needs. Shelter needs vary based on the context (Rural / Urban / Tribal / Coastal), hence there is a need for innovative products and services suiting the context. There is an immense need for specialized institutions for housing under the mother federation for deepening the activities and catering for more members. People institutions should collaborate with mainstream for ensuring entitlements and also leverage funds from the supply stream. Governance for Habitat Development of poor communities in People Institutions accelerates the pace of poor moving out of poverty. People Institutions are effective tools for exercising scale of operations in procuring materials and supplies as they are already successful in health, insurance and livelihood inclusion. Peer influence of the community will bring attitudinal change in adopting the cost-effective technologies at an affordable cost

Community Swaraj can also be expressed in sourcing materials for construction within the gamut of 5 to 10 km which will build the local / village economy and it should overcome climate change challenges by using relevant and appropriate cost-effective technologies and should not limit itself to the costs alone. Community swaraj will be expressed in having appropriate mix of using the traditional wisdom in using the local materials and also the modern relevant technology which supports the concept of liveable, lovable and affordability. There is possibility need to fulfill the shelter needs at an affordable cost when it is embedded in people institution.

Workshop on Showcasing Best practices on Safe Migration

Migration of people from different villages to abroad for higher studies, employment and livelihoods happens time

immemorial. In the process of migration, especially less educated, unskilled laborers undergo many hurdles such as getting duped by the fake agents, improper valid travel documents and work permits to stay in the countries abroad, etc. Though government also formulated guidelines through its foreign bureaus for facilitating the safe migration of poor communities from the villages to their destination in abroad, but it requires creating awareness about them. Creating alternative livelihoods in their source villages through community federations and financial institutions are essential to overcome the unsafe migration and the challenges faced in bringing back the migrant with active coordination with embassies in both the countries. Building relevant skills and creating employment at the source with adequate income generation shall be pursued.

Workshop on Small Millets Saturation in Jawadhu, Anchetty and Koraput for Community Swaraj

One in two people on this planet is malnourished. No country is exempt. The solution is neither in the larger genetic labs nor in medical sciences, but the little grains called 'small millets'. In this scenario, the Global and national platforms have aimed at filling a portion of everyone's plate with this little re-discovery. But on the small millets production side, it witnesses a declining trend over the decades. Loss in varietal diversity of small millets, poor cultivation practices, and low market value in the competitive market are the hindering factors. Serving a greater population is possible only when the production is high. Therefore, it is high time to invest in securing the high-yielding small millet seeds, re-practicing lost indigenous knowledge and technologies, and diversifying value-added finished products for a greater market value. Strengthening capacities of the farmer communities towards higher production by adapting to climate changes relying on the native wisdom, reducing drudgery in cultivation and processing by embracing the latest technologies has to be enabled through the collective enterprise model such as Farmer Producer Organisations. On the demand side, it is an opportunity for the economically poor 'women' population to create a wider market for the small millets consumers by adding value to it and also by encouraging 'self-consumption of the family.

Round table on Community Swaraj in Promoting Responsible Tourism and Cultural Immersion

Community Swaraj in promoting responsible tourism and cultural immersion becomes a reality when the community at the panchayat level and the thematic federations integrate as one of the important development components as part of their regular activities. When federations own responsibility of responsible tourism it would protect the heritage and safeguard cultural and natural heritage for future generations. Tourism contributes to poverty reduction in many countries. Intensive interaction with school children, villagers, including the youth, ensures growth of tourism,

and, in addition, generates livelihoods for people. Panchayats like Vikramangalam and Arittapatti must evolve panchayat-level Heritage Policy to promote and safe guard rural tourism so as to develop cultural heritage for the benefit of the next generation. Mechanisms like heritage walk, promoting tourism circuits with a theme and unique focus and virtual awareness products, in addition to tourism promotion materials printed in the local language, will sustain responsible tourism with community ownership and governance.

Workshop on Non-financial Risk Management Practices

Mutuality is naturally getting expressed as a sense of comfort, protection and security among the communities. It is a powerful social instinct of the human race that brings a feeling of belonging in social setup. In other words, it is a natural expression for achieving shared interest and shared purpose by the communities.

Social capital is one of the unique characteristics of Indian societies which convey social interdependence. The ethos of mutuality guides the communities to find the ways and means to address the life and asset risks. It brings innovative ways of preventing, sharing and reducing risks of the members enrolled in Mutual programmes and from the financial perspective, risk financing is met through several appropriate insurance mechanisms.

Micro insurance initiatives embedded on the social capital of thematic federations of DHAN Collective are an effective demonstration of mutuality among the community for sharing risk and vulnerabilities. Non - Financial Mutuality practices are the expression of solidarity. Nested Mutuality is the social capital foundation for Risk Management which has greater impact in addressing the development issues such as poverty, nutrition, the gender disparities, etc.

Convention on Best practices in enabling community swaraj through localization

It was Mahatma Gandhi’s dream that the real power must be in the hand of rural people. Empowering village Panchayat as a third pillar of democracy came as law in the year 1996. Its ultimate goal was to make the village economically stable, self-sustained villages. The present practices of sustaining Panchayat by collecting the taxes from the people and also grants received from both the federal and provincial government prevail. The community swaraj become direct democracy only if the hamlet level of Grama sabha, evolving annual micro plans at Panchayat level, social audits by the community on the funds utilization and empower the elected leaders aware about their rights to participate in all decision-making processes, enabling all functional groups like SHGs & farmers groups, Youth association work along with Panchayat made to happen across all the hamlets and Panchayats. The model Panchayats, empowering women Panchayat presidents about their roles and responsibilities, powers, decision making through capacity development in the past by the Panchayat Foundation could be scaled up and

localization of SDGs from global targets to Panchayat targets would strengthen community swaraj in the Panchayat in its true sense.

Workshop on Vaccination for all: Advancing Health Governance at Grassroots

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the lives of many and it did not spare community members in the working villages in all the contexts. The livelihood and health were devastated and they were struggling to meet both ends. The Pandemic shook very heavily and about 54 members or their family members in the first wave and 335 in the second wave died due to COVID 19. The first phase of the vaccination in the January rollout covered all the health workers and frontline workers who have been working across the country in all the locations. At Dhan, a special focus was given to them because they have been with the community and role models of the vaccination drive. The mainstream facilitation with the local healthcare system (PHCs and CHCs) enabled them to get the 1st dose of vaccination done in the first phase itself. Staff who are working across the country at the Cluster and Federation level is listed out and closely followed up.

Initially very few members had voluntarily come forward for getting vaccination jab. This indeed had broken the major chunk of communities blind myths and misconceptions about the jab. The major challenge was to address this hesitant group of members. Trust in the vaccines is vital, and is critically dependant on the ability of community governance. Their effective and sustainable behavioural change communication promoted confidence in getting vaccinated. Community Governance, the Secretary of each group has taken the responsibility of ensuring vaccination of the family members of non-vaccinated in their respective village.

Workshop on Community led management of faecal sludge and septage

Most of the country’s urban cities are declared as Open Defecation Free (ODF). But Faecal Sludge Management has been identified as one of the challenges in achieving the vision of an ‘Open Defecation Free’ India. Faecal Sludge and Septage management (FSSM) is a new concept in India where the roles of community and the stakeholders are not well defined. Access to improved sanitation in urban India has risen but the management of onsite sanitation systems such as septic tanks remains a neglected component of urban sanitation and wastewater management. In the value chain of the Faecal sludge and Septage management which starts from Containment, Emptying, Transport, Treatment and re-use where all the stakeholders find the gap to understand the roles and responsibilities for the holistic FSSM. Defining the roles in the collective way is path to kick start the effective FSSM. The scope of organizing the sanitation workers as group or Institution will facilitate them to avail entitlements from the government.

Even after Indian government enacted ‘The Prohibition of Employment of Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act 2013’ due to negligence the death of manual scavengers

occurs. This warrants Identifying the manual scavengers and providing them an alternative livelihood and empowering them to use mechanized desludgers is the effective way to implement the FSSM. The health of the Workers and the Public rely on the effective FSSM The collective action of each stakeholder is the way to achieve community swaraj in FSSM.

Round table on Building HR for Community Swaraj through International Knowledge Exchange Programme

Building human resources is the core of building Community Swaraj. DHAN, as an HR organisation, has built HR in different ways. One of them is this Knowledge Exchange Programme (KEP) hosted for professionals with the support of the Norwegian Agency for Knowledge Exchange (NORAC). DHAN has hosted KEPs in the last three years, partnering with Wave Foundation, Bangladesh. DHAN would like to expand KEP with partners from other countries and use it as a tool for building HR for Community Swaraj. Twenty 20 persons from Norway, Bangladesh, Cambodia and India participated in the round table, which was held in the hybrid mode.

DHAN has more than three decades of experience in KEP. It is also part of many international networks with whom it shares its practices and experience as knowledge. International KEPs are exercises in enabling enablers. Enablers' knowledge gained through co-learning with partnering agencies gets transformed to the community. Ultimately, this knowledge exchange leads to Knowledge Swaraj.

Gandhi, was a basic element of Knowledge Swaraj where knowledge was found worthy when it created impact on the value system of one's life.

Professors from academic institutions praised NMV for its positive tone and neutrality as a development journal. They also applauded it for grooming many young writers in development journalism. Leaders and people functionaries from various Mutual Movements recalled their journey with NMV and proudly declared that the magazine was more useful in empowering women. Many members had a habit of sharing their copies voluntarily with neighbours, family, and co-passengers during travel, etc. "The magazine educates us about rights, increases our knowledge, encourages us to write," they said.

B. Thirumalai, Editor, acknowledged the commendable support of the community in continuing NMV without any break despite pandemic difficulties. He detailed about the various themes being published, the way contemporary issues were articulated and the style that empathized the readership composition. Prof. G. Gnanasambanthan called for readership expansion to reach the unreached sections in the community. T. Ravichandran of Gandhigram Rural Institute appreciated Mr. Thirumalai for his passion. He narrated an instance from the life of Mahatma Gandhi as a leader, reader, and writer. The Namadhu Mannvasam is a great knowledge tool to bring patience and prosperity to the community, he said. V. Venkatesan proposed a vote of thanks.

Convention on Advancing FPOs through farmers' governance

During the introductory session, it was mentioned that DHAN Foundation has promoted 115 producer organizations across six states in India. All are 2-3 years old and are in the formative stage. Jeevidam producer companies have enrolled 50,000 farmers as members and have done a business for Rs. 60 crores till date showing very large scope. It is planned to reach out to one lakh small farmers and a business turn over for Rs. 1 crore per FPO by next one year.

M. Palanisamy, Programme Leader, presented the lead paper and highlighted the key areas like structure of DHAN Collective, roles of General and Executive body, integration of regional council in FPO functions, etc

Dr. Sivakumar, CEO, Madurai Agri Business Incubation Forum (MABIF), Madurai, in his chief guest address briefed about creating the right business ecosystem and formulation of business plan by giving the ideas for setting up the business, and the physical capital.

Special Address was given by Venkateshwara Rao, Senior Executive, Mulukanoor Cooperative Society & Rural Marketing, Mulukanoor. The society provide input services like crop cultivation loans, seeds, fertilizers and need based trainings to cultivating the products. The profits earned have been redistributed to the farmers as a dividend. Welfare activities to farmer's families are also taken care by them. At present they operate with 3000 farmers with a share capital is Rs. 7,000 per member.

PROCEEDINGS

Convention on Community Swaraj in Namadhu Mannvasam: Contributions and Way forward



In his inaugural address, Sudarshan Iyengar, Chairman, Reflection Publications Trust, appreciated DHAN Foundation's initiative of setting up an exclusive publication wing like Reflection Publications Trust to deepen Knowledge Swaraj. He pointed out that 'Vivegam,' as used by Mahatma

Dr. P. Sivasubramanian told that the leaders who understood their roles and reasonability clearly will be capable of bringing success to their institutions, which is the core expression of community swaraj. A good leader should possess the qualities like openness, team work and good decision-making skill, he said.

Jeyakumar, Director, Illupur Farmers Producer Company Limited, Tamil Nadu, mentioned that they are doing land development, Water Bodies Development, Village Level Women Empowerment. They are receiving revolving fund support from MSSRF, Chennai. The company also invested in seed production, purchase of a milk van to collect milk from member families, poultry farming, organic paddy cultivation and Rs. 30 Lakhs worth of rice mills and with the support of NABARD they offer trainings to the farmers and it showed community swaraj with direct democracy principles.

M. Anbalagan, Director, Kottampatti Farmers Producer Company Ltd, Tamil Nadu said that the company has 1000 farmers and have mobilized Rs. 45 lakhs worth of state government schemes. The company focused mainly on Coconut and Groundnut cultivation with scale. At present they are selling the Coconut and Groundnut Oil at assured quality with reasonable Price. During COVID they sold grocery kit to the poor farmers at low cost. Now the FPO is procuring paddy and also planning for value addition.

Workshop on Community contribution in pandemic situation – Relief, Revive and Restore Livelihoods



S. Sivanandan, Programme Leader, said the objective of the workshop was to showcase community initiatives during the pandemic and explained the efforts undertaken to provide relief, assist revival and restore livelihoods during and after lockdown. All DHAN thematic federations and programmes across 14 States demonstrated their synergy with multi-pronged strategies to restore the health and livelihoods of the poor. He categorised community intervention in phases -- relief phase from April 2020 to June 2020; COVID adaptation phase from July 2020 to June 2022 -- and said the next three years, till June 2025, would be transformation phase. A virtual wellness centre was set up by many federations to interact with doctors for medical advice and they also ensured that entitlements of government and livelihood

loans availed from banks reached the beneficiaries. The Jeevidam Programme of DHAN coordinated the supply of groceries, vegetables, immunization and tablet distribution to all farmers. The workshop came up with way forward actions by the federations and community members of Kalanjams for the ongoing livelihood restoration phase and ensuring transformation phase.

Workshop on Effectiveness of community financing in leveraging resources and facilitating community swaraj at larger scale

A. Umarani Chief Executive, DHAN Kalanjiam Foundation, in her introductory remarks shared that the thirty years of Kalanjiam community banking experience has given a lot of insights and leads for advancement through community finance. She shared how Gandhi used to create wealth from nowhere from the community to serve the needy. He used to create development institutions for the community from the resources generated locally. His belief in gram Swaraj is relevant even in today's world as community Swaraj for creating democratic processes and decision making for using the common resources for benefiting all and take it forward for the next generation.

M. Shanmugam mentioned that community finance inculcates the "culture of giving forward" which is needed very much to serve the scale of poor in the communities and create their demands system to attain development. Saving system is a major community resource contributing 600 crore, followed by 200 crore from interest income and 50-75 crores is being mobilized through Jothi contribution. Other than this regular financial contribution community has also mobilised resources to the victims of disasters and had been in fore front to deliver the same at the immediate aftermath of the disasters. The community swaraj contributed over the years in amortization of promotional capital used for promoting them into nested thematic institutions and establishing systematic processes in economic empowerment of the poor women members. The community are adequately trained and understood he principles of cost coverage and the community financing is getting rooted in ensuring sustainability. The transparent accounting and audit system, sharing them at Annual General Body helped to gain the trust and confidence of the poor community towards community financing.

Chief Guest Babu Joseph, former ED, Axis Bank Foundation, spoke about the Kalanjiam formal group has become a larger family and his created empowerment and transformed decision making that cannot be measured and quantified. He asked the Kalanjams to focus on areas like digital literacy for the illiterate to do banking transactions online, ensure that the members are taking enriched food habits like consumption of millets, fruits, pulses and safe food; focus on preventive health care and early diagnosis of NCD, create awareness on climate change and facilitate community contribution in the form of say no to plastic, recycling, reuse, conservation of natural resources, food residue etc.

Leaders of the people institution should have a three to five years plan for localised social contribution to transform

community commons. He called on the community banking to transform into a bank for the community so that it could tap more resources at low cost to widen its operations to reach more poor. He referred to the history of Rabobank which two hundred years back was formed as cooperatives to serve local communities has become an international bank of acclaim.

The best practice is the use of community resources for creating own building infrastructures, promotion of new locations for the poor and downtrodden. community establishments like life centre, hospital, are serving the vulnerable. People plan should look at the resources, needs, and define the community finance and scope for tapping external finance.

Workshop on Use of Alternative Technologies in Housing the Ultra Poor

Prof. Manu Santhanam, IIT-Chennai in his speech shared about the need for improved construction materials and also pointed about new technologies available for house construction with no additional cost. He also highlighted the PMAY- Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and ASHA policy.

Ms. A.R. Vishnu Priya informed that the National Institute of Rural Development has a unique space for rural interventions and works with various types of institutions. She spoke about the contemporary issues in housing and also the sustainable housing as the solution to the issues. She also displayed a pictorial presentation of various sustainable housing technologies like Filler slab roofing, Oxide flooring, and jail openings, etc which could be considered by DHAN HOPE.

While sharing his experience on sustainable housing, Mr. Annayal Kaalimuthu explained how his entire house was built within 35 days using red soil, around 15,000 bricks, kind of stick and 35 pillars. His initiative was appreciated by many and he was also interviewed by media. We need to build these kinds of houses to bring our tradition back to the society, he said.

In his lead paper presentation, Dr. A. Madhan Kumar reiterated that there is an immense need to fulfil shelter needs of the community at an affordable cost. Contextualising Community Swaraj calls for having shared values in building structure, systems, style, staff, skills, strategy, and sustainability in addressing their shelter insecurity. Our community should join together and explore embracing alternative housing technologies to improve their quality and standard of living. Evidence shows the positive impact of microfinance on poverty reduction as it relates to the first six out of seven Millennium Goals which shows the SHG's have been successful in social, financial and livelihood intermediation, he said.

Workshop on Showcasing Best practices on Safe Migration

Mr. Seran, President, Meetpu trust shared his life experience of working in Dubai and his struggle in paying a huge sum of money to the fake agents and the sufferings he faced in

returning to India during 1995. On returning from Dubai, he got into farming and living life peacefully with self-esteem and pride now. In the workshop, the guidelines, rules, and regulation to migration process, linkages with government departments, remittances and mechanisms for proper investments on the money earned in foreign countries are shared by A. Ramesh, Programme leader of DHAN who anchor the Migration and Development Programme.

Dr. Muthuraja Professor, American college, told that COVID has adversely affected migrants and their livelihoods., especially more stress on women and children. He suggested that the government of India has to make demand side policies and have a holistic approach to tackle the migrant related problems. The efforts taken by Migration and Development programme at Kalvarayan hills was shared by the few migrants who used to be Seasonal migrants for the jobs like felling trees and labour in Coffee estates. They narrated as how Kalanjams created local opportunities by setting up tailoring units, horticulture plantation and livelihoods credit to members to arrest the migration.

Workshop on Small Millets Saturation in Jawadhu, Anchetty and Koraput for Community Swaraj

In his lead paper presentation, Bijaya Nayak informed that the lack of suitable high-yielding varieties, poor quality of the seeds, and unimproved cultivation practices pushed the yield much beyond 33%. Later, he told about DHAN's Small Millets Foundation has developed context-specific sustainable agricultural practices, enhanced the capacity of farmers in collaboration with partners, and demonstrated processing units to attain the village level small millets saturation. He mentioned that Odisha Millet Mission had initiated ragi procurement through the Tribal Development Co-operative Corporation and this encourages the tribal farmers to cultivate millets.

Ashish Agarwal, SBI Youth for India Fellow explained about the development of women SHG led social enterprise model of making millet cookies called 'Koraput Cookies'. He highlighted that creating greater market opportunities for value-added millet products is one of the keys behind increasing millet cultivation area.

Saravanan, Team Leader of Small Millets Foundation presented on the 'White Paper on Millets' developed by ICAR-Indian Institute of Millets Research, Hyderabad. The subgroups discussed on policy interventions, research and development, regulatory measures and export strategies, awareness creation and promotion, training and entrepreneurship development.

Saritha, narrated her success story of running a huller processing unit at Jawadhu hills in Tami Nadu and it serves the needs of farmers of 35 villages. Vedyappan, Team leader of Rain Fed Development Programme of DHAN, in his presentation shared that, "producing adequate high yielding small millet quality seeds and distributing to the farmers, encouraging usage of proper sieves to improve seed quality, shifting of sowing period to avoid wet harvest, assuring seed

priming and timely weeding are the action-leads to increase the production. The social capital of small millet cultivating farmers and involving women groups in the location for processing the millets would sustain community swaraj.

Round table on Community Swaraj in Promoting Responsible Tourism and Cultural Immersion

Dr. G. Sethuraman, Art Historian, said that tourism all people from region to region. In the earlier days, pilgrimage was considered as tourism but now the trend had changed. Each village and family have its own history and tradition and these should be known and transferred to future generations. Village tourism has to be developed and all monuments and historical sites preserved and protected. Responsible tourism must be developed wherever social, economic, cultural and ecological environment development can be created. Pilgrimage alone is not important lot for monuments and historical sites to be preserved.

Dr. V. Vedachalam, Archaeologist, who highlighted the importance of water bodies, said their maintenance should be taken up as a tourism promotion activity. He emphasized that responsible tourism would enhance livelihood development. Responsible tourism made foreign tourists appreciate intercultural understandings, said Annette, Mutual Insurance advisor from The Netherlands, who participated in the meet virtually. N. Janakiraman, COO, DHAN, asked the participants to showcase village history and tradition to tourists. People institutions should take up the responsibility to preserve and protect. He emphasized the importance of promoting responsible tourism through documentation, demonstration, dissemination and development. Community participants from rural areas in Madurai acknowledged that their groups and federations could come forward in promoting heritage tourism as well as preserving the monuments.

Workshop on Non-financial Risk Management Practices

The workshop commenced with a briefing about importance of mutual insurance. The speakers highlighted about the scope for non-financial risk management through our sound social capital.

Indeed, the social capital paves a greater platform for mutuality and solidarity. It was emphasized that the non-financial mutuality practices in managing the risks in Life, health, Livestock and Crop are to be synthesized and appreciated for a wider sharing. The existing practices in DHAN collective which increases the longevity of life through traditional food practices, safe drinking water, sanitation, early diagnosis of diseases, vaccination, small millets consumption, etc were also reiterated.

V. Avudaiyappan presented the lead paper on “non-financial risk management practices” and he highlighted the key areas of risk management like identification of risk, measurement of risk, control of risk and financial risk management. It was insisted that the mutuality is a powerful social instinct of the

human race that brings a feeling of belonging in social setup. He also highlighted about how the farmers are mitigating risks through augmenting water in farm ponds, village ponds, renovation of tanks, controlling surface run off through field bundling, etc.

The forum deliberated on three lead questions emphasizing the aspects like strengthening non-financial risk management practices, accumulating funds for implementing or expanding the existing activities, and the roles and responsibilities of community leaders in it. In connection to the lead questions, the progress across different locations was discussed and declarations have been evolved to further strengthen non-financial risk management practices across the federations. A study done through ASKMI was also referred to generate leads for action.

Convention on Best practices in enabling community swaraj through localization

Padmashree Chinna Pillai, in her opening remarks, insisted the necessity of enforcing total ban of alcoholism in the villages as dreamt by Mahatma Gandhi. S. Singarayar, Programme Leader briefly explained about the history of Panchayat since British ruling. He told how important is village administration and its mandatory activities. He stressed execution of the social audit, setting up Panchayat Parliament with active participation of locals and making referendum as a mandatory mechanism and these could ensure democracy and governance.

Sri. Samuel Inbadurai, Director, SIRD, in his Chief guest address told village is the integral part of the country. Empowering the community and Panchayat leaders are vital to empower the village as a whole. Sustaining the rural economies, ensuring stable livelihood activities and awareness among the villagers will ensure sustainable development in Panchayats. He has highlighted the role and activities played by SIRD in building capacities of Panchayat level functionaries in making the villagers realise the true democratic processes at Panchayat level.

N. Shanthi Maduresan, CEO, DHAN Panchayat Development Foundation briefed about Grama sabha, micro planning, Right to Information Act. By making every one in educating their roles and responsibilities and active participation in all grama sabha meeting would strengthen the functions of Panchayat for the benefits to the people. R. Selvapandian, Project Executive, explained the functions of Panchayat Working committee, Panchayat volunteer and citizen progress card. Establishing and strengthening these mechanisms would empower the people participation and he proposed vote of thanks.

Workshop on Vaccination for all: Advancing Health Governance at Grassroots

R. Rajapandian, CEO of SUHAM Trust in his inaugural address told vaccination is a solution for all the eligible age group to prevent oneself from infection. Now the government of India has been announced that children under



12 years of age group can also go for Covaxin. The team members of SUHAM closely works with the regions across India to understand the dynamic vaccination data in regular periodicity and made the secretary of the community capital along with the health workers take the responsibility of ensuring vaccination by all eligible members and spouse. Community Governance plays a vital role in vaccination drive and they take various strategies to reach people who are in the last mile to get vaccinated. The private-public partnership is critical in the coverage of vaccination drive.

In her keynote address Dr. Ambica Baranirajan, Medical Officer, Urban Public Health Centre (UPHC), Villapuram has recalled UPHC experience of close association with Madurai urban region in controlling and preventing Covid and more particularly driving vaccination among the poor and vulnerable. She proudly told about 90 percent of vaccination in the slum dwellings in Madurai was possible due to active community participation and ownership.

Dr. K. Rajeswari, in her lead presentation shared the multi-pronged approaches and strategies such as bi weekly meeting, collecting dynamic data and monitoring the performance to address the gap initially towards relief and of late on the vaccination. The thematic federations across all the regions have taken full responsibility and approached vaccination in a mission mode which resulted in highly positive results in the working areas of DHAN Collectives across the 14 states.

Workshop on Community led management of faecal sludge and septage

The diverse group of participants such as Sanitation workers, Desludging operators, Builders and the ULB officials are part of the workshop. N. Venkatesan, Chief Executive Officer of DVTF, welcomed the participants and illuminated the need for organising community involved in faecal sludge and septage management in relation to the concept of Community Swaraj.

In her keynote address, Dr. Hemalatha, Expert, FSSM mapped the roles of community value chain in sanitation where she highlighted the health impacts caused due to mishandling of faecal matters. She also emphasized users to regularly de-sludge containment (Septic tank) and builders to ensure proper design. She accentuated the participants not

to use the word “Man hole” instead to use “Machine hole” to ensure humane justice.

Amardeep, Assistant Engineer, Madurai Corporation, stressed upon the regulations of corporation on SOP and also listed the livelihood support and entitlements from the government. He recommended sanitary workers to get enrolled with the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis for availing loans.

Lokesh, Project Executive, DHAN Foundation, presented the simple questions about life, science, society and government, which made the participants to realise the importance of sanitary worker in the society. Murugan, owner, Tamilan septic tankers, shared his life experience in the field as a sanitation worker. He claimed himself as a third-generation sanitary worker, in spite of his education the societal pressure made him to choose this job. He added about Gandhi’s view on “sanitation is more important than independence”. He suggested replacing the manual scavengers by advanced machineries. In this regards, N. Venkatesan suggested that a collective multi-stakeholder approach will give a better solution for ensuring dignity, justice and operational safety.

Balamurugan, a builder from the Madurai city shared the conventional practises of constructing septic tank and he highlighted the importance of the trainings for the Manson’s which helps for better sanitation structures.

Round table on Building HR for Community Swaraj through International Knowledge Exchange Programme

Tor Rand, Programme Adviser, NOREC, said building community governance was related to Sustainable Development Goal No:16- “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”. Decision-making was one of the key challenges of community governance, he observed and said it was necessary to build the knowledge of decision making to build good governance. KEP also brought about cultural and attitudinal exchanges, besides knowledge exchange on a particular domain among participants.

Accountability was one of the major issues with community governance and the KEP should build the accountability of enablers to build community governance. India, he said, was known for building local governance. Community participation and action should be part of this local governance system. The KEP should enable enablers in policy advocacy from community participation, practice and knowledge sharing. Local resource mobilisation, he felt, would add value to community governance and hence the enablers should be enabled in context-based resource mobilisation.

He said KEPs were creating impact at the individual, institution and community levels and hence they should be expanded with different partners in different countries.