



**Convention on  
FUTURE OF NEERKATTI: WATER SWARAJ**

29<sup>th</sup> October, 2021  
DHAN Foundation, Madurai



*Madurai Symposium 2021*  
**Advancing Development: Community Swaraj**

October 25-29, 2021

## About DHAN Vayalagam (Tank) Foundation

DHAN Vayalagam (Tank) Foundation (DVTF) is a not-for-profit, professional and secular development organization working on water, agriculture and ecosystem regeneration. DVTF was promoted by DHAN Foundation for scaling-up community-led and invested water conservation and development across the nation. DVTF was founded on the Gandhian day of 2nd October 2006. As on March 2021, DVTF has facilitated promotion of 6273 associations and reached 3.9 lakhs households. The community institutions have renovated over 3500 traditional water bodies (Tanks, Ponds, Ahar & Pyne and other Water harvesting Structures) and DVTF has a rich experience of implementing and guiding the implementation of watershed projects in our country. At present DVTF is working in 7 States with the support of Government, National and International Corporate Philanthropies and other funding agencies.

## Background

Neerkattis are traditional water managers of village tanks recognised by village communities. They mainly regulate flow of water by opening and closing of shutters in sluice and allowing water to farmers field through irrigation channels. They monitor overall irrigation management for Ayacut farmers for crop cultivation. They are also guardians to protect tanks from any calamities and take own risks in order to perform their services. They receive remuneration for their services in the form of kind i.e. usually paddy grains on the basis of area cultivated. At the time of threshing of crops Neerkattis collect their share. They also play role in village festivals, communicators as village announcer, funerals etc.

Neerkattis mostly belong to poor or scheduled caste communities and they are on hereditary or appointed on annual basis. Traditional Neerkattis based water management system is efficient way of sharing available water for successful crop cultivation especially during water deficit period. Nowadays Neerkatti system is becoming defunct or not encouraging and it is facing critical stage of extinction. There is a need to explore future role of Neerkattis by improving their socio economic status while reviving tank based water management system.

## Objectives

1. To understand the present status of Neerkattis and their income level.
2. To explore additional income generating opportunities to supplement their income.
3. To initiate policy dialogue for protection of traditional water management system
4. To facilitate access to Government schemes.

## Expected Outcome

- ◆ Awareness on the importance of traditional water management system
- ◆ Identification of additional economic opportunities for the Neerkattis
- ◆ Positioning the importance of Neerkattis

## Participants

100 - 150 Neerkattis are expected to participate in this event. The participants include Neerkattis from Vayalagam, Neerkattis from system tanks, Farmers and Government officials

## Mode, Date of the Workshop:

The event is scheduled on 29th October 2021. The event will be organised on a digital mode considering the epidemiological situation. Very few participants will be invited to DHAN Central Office to share their experience.

## Registration and contact

Kindly confirm your participation by sending your brief profile, papers for presentation and power point presentation (optional) to the email: [dhantank@dhan.org](mailto:dhantank@dhan.org). You can also contact:

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## Programme Schedule

**29th Oct 2021 Friday | 9:30 am to 2 pm**

09.30: Registration

10.00: Inauguration & Welcome address

10.15: Inaugural address

10.30: Lead Paper Presentation

11.00: Sharing Experience

12.00: Group discussion & Presentation

01.00: Vote of Thanks

02.00: Global Closing Ceremony



## About Madurai Symposium

Madurai Symposium is a “Unique” Knowledge Mart inviting Development Stakeholders and those interested in Development. The events are scheduled from October 25 to 29, 2021. This is the Tenth Biennial Madurai Symposium, where many stakeholders with diversity development viz. Community Organisations, Civil societies / NGOs, Government, Banks, Insurance Companies, CSR Foundations, Donors, Philanthropists and Academia gather to share and learn from each other's experience and practices to serve the underprivileged community. The previous edition of 2019 saw participation of 10,000 stakeholders and deliberated on the approaches and mechanisms for building “Women Empowerment”.

The Madurai Symposium 2021 has a special significance as this year marks a century of Mahatma Gandhi's historic identification with poor by renouncing the formal attire for the simple Dhoti (White Loin Cloth) leaving the torso bare. This year, also marks the DHAN's Silver Jubilee of its development journey. The communities are at the heart of development, their distinct identity is the process of development and with their active participation and ownership would lead to not only sustaining development, but also communities taking charge of the development. Hence, the 2021 Symposium is organized on the title “Advancing Development: Community Swaraj, which is the vision of Mahatma Gandhi and Vino Bhave.

