

Development

January 2009

Monthly Development update from DHAN Collective

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Feature

Turning the Tide - Enabling Poverty Reduction

MDGs in Practice



Vagaries of monsoon and lack of effective coping mechanism among the rainfed farming community makes the rainfed farming lose its lustre as viable livelihood for many. Lack of suitable financial services further pushes the rainfed farmers into poverty traps.



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From the Editors' Desk

Dear Readers!

January issue carries articles from various programmes. From this year, the readers may find a case study on the MDGs in practice in DHAN Foundation. January issue features 'Enabling Poverty Reduction', how DHAN's programme work to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. Dr. Majanthes narates his experience in Pavagada in Practitioner's Diary. The Executive Director, M.P. Vasimalai emphasis on giving back to the society, Trusteeship, Social Entrepreneurship and Leadership. R. Lalitha explains how grooming leadership is a continuous process in DHAN Resource Centre, Karaikal. Mr. Vellaiappan speaks on the community participation in watershed activities. Mr. Santhanam writes his experience in organizing Madurai Marathon 09 "Run to be Free from Anaemia". There is an article by the folklore resource unit who worked behind the screen for the event. Tata DHAN Academy team agreed to write on development tool every month, it is a new series from this year. This issue has 'Transect walk' tool of Participatory Rural Appraisal.

We encourage the development workers to write more on their experience in the work front. We look forward many new writes to share their experiences, best practices, impact, comments, and critiques to improve further.

Happy Reading

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Turning the Tide: Enabling Poverty Reduction

S. Sathyanand*

Kamatchi is a rainfed farmer in Sengapadai village of Thirumangalam taluk of Madurai district. She is a member of Kalamman Uzhavar khulu promoted by Rainfed Farming Development Programme of DHAN Foundation in Thirumangalam location for the past five and half years. She has availed various fund support, credit facilities and various programme activities implemented through the group.

Kamatchi and her family

Kamatchi lives along with her husband and two sons who have got married some three to four years ago in Sengapadai. Her husband works as a load man in Madurai. Her eldest son had recently joined the army, and her youngest son lives with his family and takes care of farming activities apart from renting their bullock cart. She has two granddaughters and a grand-son. They all live separately. Her daughter got married some five years ago, and lives with her husband separately in the same village. Kamatchi's husband, who is working as a loadman, meagrely contributes to the family; he doesn't give money to the family and doesn't involve in farming activities. Kamatchi takes care of the farming activities alone with the help of her younger son.

She is a small farmer who cultivates around 6 acres of land, of which she owns 4.5 acres of land, and remaining 1.5 acres of land was



leased, in which she had been cultivating for the past 10 years. Out of this, around 3.5 acres is typical black cotton soil, in which she cultivates various rainfed crops. In the remaining 2.5 acres of land, she cultivates paddy in one acre of land and has planted dryland horticulture in 0.75 acres of land, the irrigation source being the farm pond constructed under the project. She grows neem and fodder sorghum, in the remaining plot of land for her goats and cattle. She has two draught animals, two calves, and seven goats with few country fowls.

Background of project area - Sengapadai village

Sengapadai is a typical rainfed village situated in Thirumangalam block of Madurai District. Most of the villagers are dependent upon

rainfed agriculture as the major livelihood. Farmers grow a variety of rainfed crops in this black soil area. Crops like cotton, black gram, green gram, sorghum, senna, coriander, cowpea, varagu, red gram, and different kinds of vegetables are grown in mixed cropping pattern; few farmers along the river bed grow paddy at a small scale. Income is also supplemented by rearing goats, sheep, and cows.

Irrigation sources are very limited or non-existent as there are no irrigation wells or tanks located in the village. The groundwater here is saline, making it totally unfit for agriculture. The existing water harvesting structures (ooranias, ponds) are all used for domestic purposes only and cannot be used for irrigation. Hence, the farmers

Towards the mission

Given the situation, DHAN Foundation, with its mission of enabling the poor communities towards self-reliance and poverty reduction, initiated its Rainfed Farming Development Programme (RFDP) in Sengapadai village. In realising this mission, RFDP programme is working with the shared purpose of making rainfed farming a viable livelihood. In order to achieve the purpose, the programme addresses the various rainfed farming issues with various development components *viz.*, land development component, crop production enhancement component, soil health enhancement component, livestock development component, supplementary income component and risk mitigation component. DHAN Foundation is the project implementation agency (PIA) NWDPR (National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas) in the project area.

Kalamman Uzhavar khulu

The Kalamman Uzhavar khulu was started on 5th August, 2003. There are 17 members in the group. Out of the 17 members, only three members were land-owners cultivating some 2 to 4 acres of rainfed land. Others were landless, and were cultivating on leased and on *savi* system (a traditional system where landlords rent the land to landless on yearly basis for an amount of Rs.300 to 500). Most of them have to dependent upon usurious money lenders for their credit needs.

There has been significant change among the group members, after joining the group. Every member of the group had availed credit facilities through the group for household expenses, consumption needs, and to purchase goats, sheep, cattle and milch animals.

They received interest free loans to purchase land, and to get land on lease. Now, out of the 17 members, seven members have purchased land availing loan amount of Rs.10000 each (out of the 8, 7 were landless); four members are now cultivating land for lease; and seven members are cultivating land on *savi* system basis.

have to totally depend on rainfall for agriculture. The North-East monsoon that starts in the month of September decides the fate of agriculture.

Vagaries of monsoon and lack of effective coping mechanism among the rainfed farming community makes the rainfed farming loose its lustre as viable livelihood for many. Lack of suitable financial services

further pushes the rainfed farmers into poverty traps. In the last two decades, there has been large scale increase in fallow land, selling of once-cultivated rainfed lands, diversifying to other non-farm livelihoods especially among the youths like construction work, and migration to nearby cities like Madurai, Tiruppur, etc. Few families have left agriculture and permanently migrated taking up hotel business.

Prelude

It is rare to find a women farmer taking up farming activities. It is usually the male counterpart who does most of the farm works, but it is not the case with Kamatchi. Her husband, doesn't contribute to the family, and doesn't get involved in any of the farming activities. As Kamatchi says, "He never even once stepped on the land for farming."

Rainfed agriculture plays an important role in Indian economy. In India 58.53 percent of total net sown area (141.4m.ha) comes under rainfed lands spreading over more than 177 districts. Nearly fifty percent of the total rural workforce and sixty percent of cattle heads of the country is located in the dry districts. In Tamil Nadu, out of 7m.ha of cultivable area 2.46m.ha is occupied by rainfed agriculture (NRAA Publication 2008). Ramasamy et al (2001) has classified thirteen districts of Tamil Nadu as dry districts. In Tamil Nadu about ninety percent of the coarse cereals, ninety percent of pulses, eighty one percent of oilseeds and sixty nine percent of cotton are grown under rainfed conditions. Besides the above mentioned facts related to economic importance, rainfed farming is important for the nation in terms of bio diversity and nutrition. In spite of the various benefits the rainfed farming is on the decline over years.

Also, the land is in the name of Kamatchi that she inherited from her father. Her husband belongs to the nearby village, and he had settled in Segapadai, his wife's native village. He doesn't give any money to run the family, and wastes the money on drinking. The family is solely run by Kamatchi and the income she earns from the farm and from the income that she earns as agricultural coolie.

Due to the lack of support from her husband, Kamatchi has to take care of both her family and farming activities all alone. She educated her first son up to 12th standard in Thirumangalam, and her younger son studied up to 10th standard; her daughter didn't attend high school for she supported her mother to do household chores. While her eldest son studied in Thirumangalam, her younger son used to help her in farming activities, after returning from the local school, to cultivate the land and to irrigate the paddy field, which he continues to do till now. She was unable to enterprise herself due to lack of support, financial and emotional, by formal or non-formal means.



She says, "... one has to walk four to five times to their house (the well-offs and moneylenders) to get a loan for urgent needs. They didn't trust us for we are from *Kallar* community, and even if one could get a loan it was at the rate of 5 to 10%." She was also unable to invest in her livelihood activities so as to increase her farm income. *Uzhavar khulu* turned out to be the helping hand for her.

In the 2.5 acres of land, in which she constructed farm pond, she cultivated paddy in some half an acre of land in which she was only able to take some ten to twelve bags of paddy. She could store only one foot of water in a natural depression in her land, and has to irrigate the field manually using traditional mechanism. In another one acre of land, she cultivated neem and sorghum, while the remaining one acre was left fallow in most of the years. From 2002-05, there was drought in the village, making the rainfed farming even worse.

A Ray of Hope

It is during this period that Kamatchi joined the *Kaliyamma Uzhavar khulu* (*uzhavar khulu* denotes rainfed farmers' groups)

with a bit of hope in her heart. She joined this group promoted by RFDP-DHAN Foundation on 5th August, 2003. The group has helped her meet various consumption needs and livelihood investment needs by supporting her with timely credit facilities and watershed funds.

Initially, the group members, including Kamatchi, saved fifty rupees per month. Slowly and steadily, the group started to grow, so did the members of the group.

It is to be noted that, from August, 2008 onwards, they started saving Rs.100, so did Kamatchi. Due to the sudden demise of the treasurer of the group, she also took up the leadership role as the treasurer of the *uzhavar khulu* from May, 2008 onwards. The *uzhavar khulu* gave the much needed support that she so long yearned for. It provided her with credit facilities and various livelihood supports. The group proved to be a safe platform to save, to access timely credit services, and to be supported by various livelihood interventions.

An Array of Achievements

As of today, she has a total savings of Rs.5600 in the group, and

had availed a total loan amount of Rs.70,191 from her group, with a loan outstanding of Rs.21,360. As part of NWDPPRA project, an amount of Rs.54,146 was invested in her land from the watershed fund. It would not have been possible without the presence of DHAN.

A. Watershed activity

Two farm ponds were constructed in her land to harvest the rainwater. An amount of Rs.52,646 was invested to construct the two farm ponds; Rs.34,250 for the first pond, and Rs.18,396 for the second pond were invested over a period of two years. She says, "For so long, I used to think of constructing farm pond for storing water to cultivate paddy; but it never got materialised. Only now it was done." In 2007-08, an additional Rs.1,500 was invested to plant dryland horticulture crops like



guava, sappota, amla, tamarind with *Jatropha* as live fence.

The table no.1 shows the kind of watershed activities done in Kamatchi's land, the year and date of work, and the total investment for each work along with her contribution. A total of Rs.54,146 was invested, for which she contributed a total amount of Rs.11,750 both in money and labour.

Table No.1 Activities in Kamatchi's land

Year	Watershed Activity	Member Contribution	Total Investment (Rs.)
2008-09	Rs.18396 Farm pond construction (11/12/08) (26*15*1.5 cubic meter)	Rs.2000, and manual contribution of Rs.1000	Rs.18396 (with 16.3% contribution)
2007-08	Rs.1500 Dryland Horticulture crop seedlings with <i>Jatropha</i> as live fence(20/10/07)	Rs.750; pitting and planting costs were borne by Kamatchi	Rs.1500 (with 50% contribution for the seedling material)
2006-07	Rs.34250 Farm pond construction (18/06/06) (60*16*1.5 cubic metre)	Rs.6000, and manual contribution of Rs.2000	Rs.34250 (with 23.3% contribution)
2003-04	Joined the group promoted by RFDP-DHAN Foundation on 05/08/03		

Benefits of the work

Before the farm ponds were dug, the 2.5 acres of land was not productive enough. She cultivated paddy in half an acre of land, which she irrigated manually. In another one acre of land, she planted neem, and did sorghum cultivation; the remaining plot was left fallow. In 2002-05, there was drought in this region, and she was unable to take an assured crop. As mentioned before, she was able to store only one foot of water, and could take only some five to six bags of paddy. But things started changing, once she constructed the farm pond and store water.

With the first farm pond constructed in 2006, she was able to harvest 14.4 lakhs litres of rainwater, which was otherwise not possible. The second farm pond was constructed recently, and she is yet to realise the benefit. With this she could irrigate another half-an-acre of land.

In the first farm pond, she carried out fish rearing activity both years. But due to the overflow, the fish escaped through the outlet. She wants to continue fish rearing this year also, and hopes to get a good harvest.

Table 2. Impact of the watershed activities

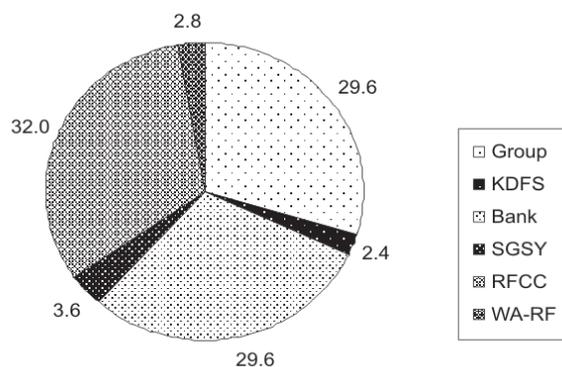
S. No.	Before (till 2007)	After (2007 to 2009)	Impact
1	Irrigated some half an acre of paddy field	Irrigates around 1 acre of paddy field	More area under irrigation; Increase in acreage of paddy cultivation; Assured paddy crop
2	Paddy yield of 5 - 6 bags	Paddy yield of 24 bags in 2007-08 and 20 bags in 2008-09	Increased paddy yield
3	Manually irrigated	Oil engine purchased with help of group loan in the beginning of 2007	Pump more volume of water and irrigate more area of land;
4	Manually have to spent two days for one irrigation	Irrigates the paddy field in 5 hours	Saves valuable time
5	Irrigated every alternate days - irrigation work for 4 mandays per week - as less volume of water pumped dries out quickly	Irrigates twice a week as more volume of water could be pumped per irrigation	Reduced labour
6	At a labour cost of Rs.600 for 4 mandays, at Rs.150 per person, for a week	At 1 litre of diesel per hour, it costs Rs.350 for 10 hours (two days with 5 hours each day) for a week	Reduced labour cost
7	Cultivated 120 days paddy	With the advise from the organisation, cultivates 100 days paddy	Reduced plant growth phase, means reduced usage of irrigation water, saves 2-4 irrigation, reduced vulnerability to rainfall risks
8	No dryland horticulture	Planted around 50 seedlings of horticulture crops	Brought fallow under cultivation; Projected increase in farm income

B. Loan portfolio

Through her group, she availed various institutional credit facilities viz. from banks (State Bank of India, Sengapadai), SGSY loan (Swarnajayanthi Gram Swarozgar Yojana), KDFS (Kalanjiam Development Financial Services, Madurai), RFCC fund (Rainfed Farming Coordination Committee, Thirumangalam), WA-RF Sengapadai Watershed Association Revolving fund, and from the internal group fund.

The figure 1 shows the percentage distribution of the loans

Percentage distribution of the loans availed by Kamatchi from different sources



Source: Cash book of Kalamman Uzhavar khulu and Member pass-book of Mrs.Kamatchi

Fig. No: 1

availed by Kamatchi from different sources. Loan from the bank and KDFS were received at an interest rate of 24% p.a., while RFCC fund and watershed revolving funds were received as interest-free loans for livelihood activities. The SGSY loan was also availed at 24% p.a. with 25% subsidy component.

“In earlier days, none of the banks cared us of our credit needs. Now, the bankers they themselves invite us to take loan from their bank, for they know our group’s credibility and discipline, and trust us,” says Kamatchi. And these loans were used for variety of purposes.

The figure.2 shows the percentage distribution of the different kinds of purposes for which Kamatchi had taken the loan. It shows a mix of needs for both consumption purposes and for income-generating activities.

It is to be noted the nearly 65.4% (Rs.45910) of loan is used for livelihood activities:

1. 38.3% (Rs.26,910) for livestock development to purchase goats and a milch animal,
2. 21.4% (Rs.15,000) to purchase an acre of rainfed land and to purchase oil engine, creating farm assets, and
3. The rest 5.7% (Rs.4,000) for various farm working capital requirements like FYM (farm yard manure) application, and seeding and weeding expenses.

Recently, she has taken Rs.12,000 to construct farm house in her land. She has already bought construction materials; the work is



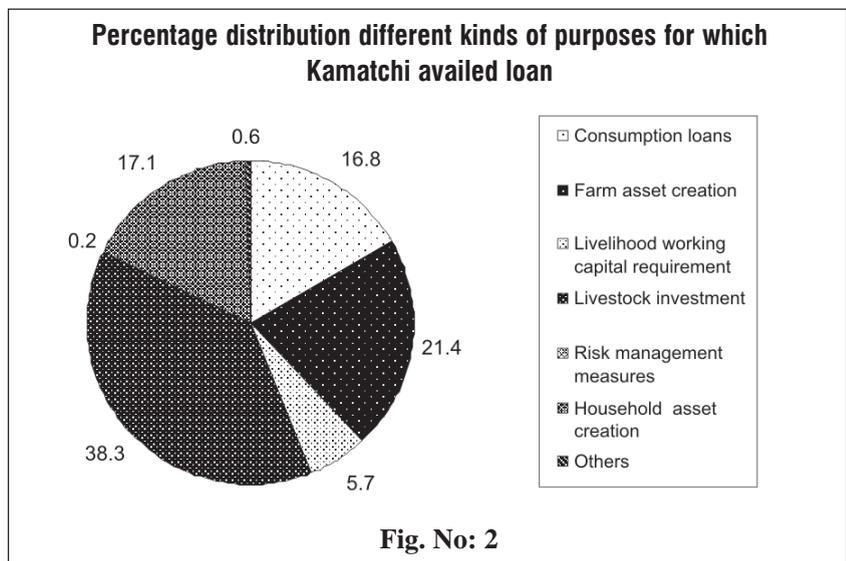
yet to be completed. Apart from this she has taken a variety of loans for various consumption needs like medical expenses, marriage expenses, outside debt redemption and household expenses.

Benefits of the loan facilities availed

1. With Rs.26,910, Kamatchi purchased goat and milch animal.
 - a. She purchased goats and started maintaining a regular stock of 15 to 20

goats with the help of loan availed. This, in turn, helped her to face uncertainties, absorb shocks, and able to pay off her debts by selling goats. Kamatchi said she was able to recover from the shock; thanks to the group, she again purchased goats from the loan availed from the group.

- b. She also bought a cow for milching purpose. She



- kept it for one year, and sold it. Some one year before, she bought two cattle with her own money.
2. With the help of group loan,
 - a. She was able to purchase one acre of rainfed land, in which she cultivated maize last year, and varagu and red gram this year.
 - b. She also purchased oil engine with the help of the group loan adding another valuable asset to her farm. The time of purchase was significant, in the same year when the farm pond was dug. So, she was able to use the water harvested in the successive season.
 3. Further, time and time again, she had also taken loans for working capital requirement of her farm activities.
 4. Construction of the farm house is in progress.

Livelihood outcome

In the past five and half-years, Kamatchi found that little spark that had major changes in her life and livelihood. The various intervention activities resulted in the following outcomes in the lives and livelihood of Kamatchi and her family.

Table 3. Showing the crop produce and income from the farm in 2002-03 and 2008-09

Crop Year	Crop cultivated	Area cultivated	Produce	Price	Income
2008-09	Paddy	1 acre	20 bags	Rs.750 per bag	15000
	Fodder sorghum	0.75 +1.5 acre	2800 mudi	Rs.3 per mudi	8400
	Dryland horticulture crops	0.75 acre	yet to realise		
	Cotton	1 acre			3000
	Black gram		10 measures	Rs.25	250
	Green gram		70 kg	Rs.30	2100
	Varagu & red gram	1 acre	Varagru crop loss		
			Red gram-40 bags	Rs.35 per kg	1400
	Total area cultivated	6 acres of own land		Total	30150
2002-03	Paddy	0.5 acre	10 bags	Rs.750 per bag	7500
	Sorghum	2 acre	3 quintals of sorghum	Rs.1000 per quintal	3000
	Red gram		30 bags of red gram	Rs.35 per kg	1050
	Kuthuraivali		2 quintals of kuthuraivali	Rs.700 per quintal	1400
	Cotton	1.5 acre			5000
	Fallow	1 acre			
	Total land	5 acres		Total	17950
	Total land cultivated	4 acre		Difference in income	12200
				% increase in income	68.0

The table above shows an incremental income raise of Rs.18450 per year from the farm. This would mean 68% increase in farm income.

Table 4. Showing the net worth of the assets

Asset (as on 2008-09)	Net worth (Rs.)	Asset (as on 2002-03 – before joining the group)	Net worth (Rs.)
Land 2 acres of rainfed black cotton soil land (Rs.30000 per acre)	60000	Land 1 acres of rainfed black cotton soil land (Rs.30000 per acre)	30000
Land 1.5 acres of vertisol land near the village (Rs.45000 per acre)	67500	Land 1.5 acres of vertisol land near the village (Rs.45000 per acre)	67500
Land 1 acre of irrigated paddy land (Rs.50000 per acre)	50000	Land 0.5 acre of irrigated paddy land (Rs.50000 per acre)	25000
Two farm ponds	54146		
One oil engine	5000		
Goat - 7	21000	Goat - 5	15000
Cattle - 2	24000	Cattle - 1	15000
House (in process of construction)	12000		
Total	293646		152500
		Value of the additional asset created	141146
		% increase in asset value	92.6

Similarly, there has been a significant increase in the net worth of the asset holding. An addition asset worth Rs.96,146 was created, with an increase of 147.9% in total asset value.

Table 5. Total income and expenditure, with net income from farming and allied activities in 2008-09

Expenditure	Amount (Rs.)	Income	Amount (Rs.)
Paddy cultivation in one acre of land	9645	Yield of 20 bags of paddy at Rs.750 per bag	15000
Cotton and varagu cultivation in two acre of rainfed land with pulses like red gram, green gram and black gram	9749	Cotton (250 kg * Rs.12)	3000
		Black gram (10 measures @ Rs.25)	250
		Red gram (40 kg @ Rs.35)	1400
		Green gram (70 kg @ Rs.30)	2100
Fodder sorghum cultivated in some 2.25 acres of land	3680	Yield of 2800 bunches of sorghum @ Rs.3 per bunch	8400
Milch animal rearing: Fodder expenses per year (punakku, cumbu and pottu) at Rs.52 per day	18980	Income from milch animal rearing with an yield of 6 litres per day at Rs.10/litre	21900
Goat rearing: 20 goats		Selling of goats at Rs.3000 per goat	60000
Total expenditure	42054	Total income	112050
		Net Income from farm and allied activities	69996

The various livelihood strategies adopted have made possible the following livelihood outcomes.

- ✓ Increased income
 - Brought more area under cultivation
 - Brought more area under irrigation
- ✓ Reduced vulnerabilities and risks
 - Increased land holding size
 - Increased food security by increased paddy cultivation
 - Crop diversification with cultivation of dryland horticulture crops
 - Reduced vulnerabilities to risks – insured in human life insurance programme, and also insured goats
 - Reduced dependency on money lenders and increased access to mainstream financial institutions
- ✓ Increased fixed asset holdings, and asset value appreciation
 - Conversion of rainfed to irrigated land
 - Purchase of land
 - Invested in farm assets like oil engine
 - Purchase of livestock - goat rearing and milch animal purchase

Impact of the work

The Rainfed Farming Development Program (RFDP) of DHAN Foundation had increased Kamatchi's access to institutional credit facilities, and reduced dependency on money-lenders. There has been an increased

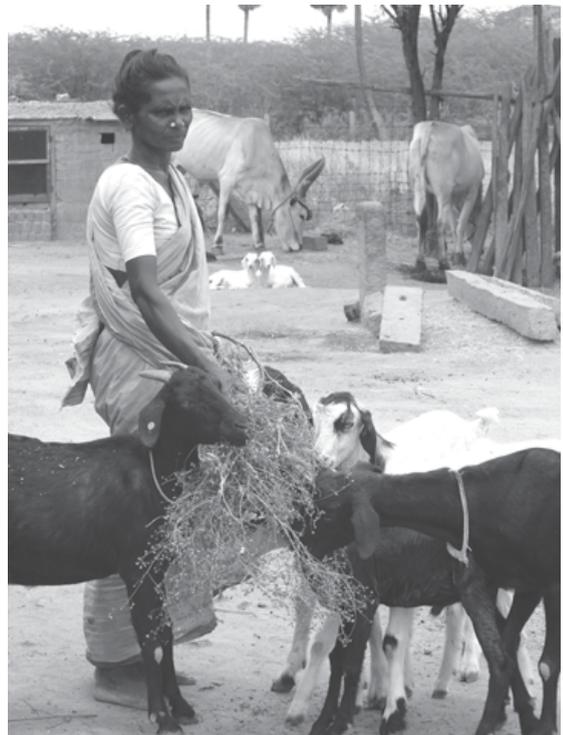
awareness and an increase in social recognition being front-runner in her leadership role. She speaks to bankers to get loan for her group, "Now the bankers approach us by themselves, for we have shown our trustworthiness," she says.

With the additional income from the farm, she had further invested in purchasing a pair of cattle, and a bullock cart; she also planning to complete her farm house, for she had the gained confidence to face the future. This shows a positive trend in moving towards a farming-based livelihood options, which was once a not so dependable source of income.

Way Forward

Kamatchi now hopes to purchase and rear a pair of milch animals. She wants to deepen her first farm pond from 1.5 to 2.0 metre, and this year wants to rear fish in both her ponds, of course, without letting them escape. It is also planned to construct a supply channel so as to capture the overflow discharge from the first pond to the second pond.

Apart from this, she put forth few demands that need to be implemented by the organisation. She wants the office to supply farm inputs like seeds, fertilisers through the group by buying quality seeds at wholesale rate. This could reduce the per kg cost of seeds for the farmers, and farmers also can avail better quality seeds.



She also proposed another idea to the organisation. DHAN Foundation has newly introduced maize crop and has also procured the farm produce providing a fair price and fair means of trade to the farmers. Kamatchi said that the local traders create 'syndicate' among themselves and fix prices which prevents the farmers from negotiating for a better price. She suggested that it would be useful, if DHAN could procure and market their farm produce, just like maize. Obviously, this would ensure a fair means of trade and farmers could get fair price for their produce, thereby more income.

Through the support rendered by the uzharvar khulu, and with the bit of hope in her heart, Kamatchi proved it could be done – to move out of poverty with a sustainable source of income. She is now a beacon of light, and a source of hope, both for her own villagers and the community at large. ■

Catalyzing Collective Action

- Pavagada Experience

Dr. Mahanthes H K*

This article is the story of my experience with Jala Samvardhane Yojana Sangha (JSYS) project in Pavagada taluk of Karnataka. Working for this programme (Vayalagam Foundation) for six and a half years has been an immense learning experience in realizing the needs/priorities of the people, analyzing the delivery mechanisms to the grass root, and finding ways of achieving the single most change required for development-positive attitude. In Pavagada, 41 tanks have been renovated till June 2008. Besides the people of this block, we have been supported immensely by senior DHANites and JSYS staff.

As we all worked for this programme, and saw the results, it was only natural to give priority to this work. Perhaps no other Government programme necessitates people's participation as elaborately as this programme, and hence perhaps the sustainability of this programme is most assured. The description starts with the physical force (team) who has worked for this programme with passion. Further it describes the learning experiences in triggering change. The special role of people representatives and trigger persons is explained.



Team

Who shall do this work? Whose responsibility is this? In Pavagada, one good thing that happened was deputing a team of professionals for this work. It was essential that some people work for this programme exclusively so that they can give enough time that this work demands. My team was, from the beginning, made to work quite differently than normal hierarchical set-up. It works like a family. There is a trust, first of all. Everyone knows that the programme is a difficult one involves dedication and hard work, and therefore those who are in it are not out of compulsion. My team had a determination of steel. When we approach a village, they are not sure

as to how many times or for how many months, we may have to interact with those villages/villagers. But we are positive. We have the skills-technical, inter-personal communication...we are equipped. We know of the trigger/potentially trigger persons in the village. We know that someone from the village must imbibe the passion to continue the work in between their visits to the village.

This core team, designated as Cluster Facilitation Team (CFT) worked in those villages [68 villages] which had to be tank renovating villages by March 2003. The staff was motivated, then, not by carrots or sticks but by projecting this programme as a sole opportunity for

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us all to improve our image. Initial two to three months we spent in observing the people, building rapport with them and gaining confidence from them.

Once the goal was clear, and there was motivation, then, as we all realize, there were many ways to achieve it. The programme has been a learning experience in experimenting with different modes of communication to bring about a positive behavioral change. We realized that rapport must be struck with the village at the first and each step. When we started this programme, the first principle that we followed was that our mindset had to change first before we stepped out to change the mindset of the people. We constantly remind ourselves that if we go to the village to do 'enabling' sitting on inevitably unequal platforms, nothing much would be achieved. Hence a very deliberate attempt was made to enter village leaving our 'master degree clothes' out. The village employees, in the course of their work, do not get to meet rather the people do not get to see them all in the village. By all, we necessarily mean including the economically and socially backward. The crux of this programme is that because we have to promote a level institution village goal, all in the village must be involved. A village accountant/Anganwadi teacher may not have reached out to all in the village. Usually, there is no forum in the village to discuss the common issues of the village. There are Gram Sabhas, but usually to select few individual beneficiaries...and hence involvement of all people of the village is rarely achieved. Therefore

we spent about one month to two months developing rapport with the people. This was a time not to preach, but to listen. PRA exercises were conducted in the villages, and corner meetings at sheet, one-to-one dialogues were held to have a better idea of the village in general, and to pick up from there as to what would trigger change in that particular village.

Rapport building continues through the process. It only gets strengthened with time. This happens through small gestures like addressing villagers as *yajamanre, amma, anna* by resisting efforts to find faults with the village's, and appreciating their good work immediately.

Once rapport was built with the people, our manpower was adequately trained so that they do not approach the village with incomplete solutions. A 'Technical Manual', project implementation plan and an 'Inter-personal Communication Manual' were prepared for the district. Trainings were more in the form of sharing experiences with each other on a regular basis, because the hurdles faced in the programme were more or less similar. Having perfect answers to questions is a must before the village is approached, as also the knowledge about when to reveal this information for best results.

We also ensured that these villages get to see an ideal self initiative village and see the change for themselves. "**Seeing is believing**". No amount of lectures and discussions can clear doubts or change minds as well as a visit to a

good village. This was also not easy to achieve. We would lure villagers to get to see some nearby religious places and also show an ideal village on route. Most often the visit had a tremendous effect and villagers would often take pledges/begin to plan even on their way back.

With repeated follow-ups from our side, and continuous visits to villages, our team began to achieve positive results. They would sometimes be pleasantly surprised to realize their potential. The love and affection that they got on achieving the result was enough not to just keep them moving, but was also inspirational for others. Our team employees began to get strengthened, as our roots in the community began to spread. The trigger persons from the villages became our best friends and companions. We happily realized that officials from other departments also began to get involved and the reason was not too far to reach. Each one of us has roots in the village, and realizes the need for renovating tanks, as also the complexities involved in triggering a positive behavioral change in the village as a whole.

The 'stories' form an important component of our dialogues/lectures to the people. Attention is not easy to capture, especially if those addressing are demanding an action from you! To drive home the fact that villagers shall have to work themselves if they want to improve their village, I used to compare their situation to stray-dogs, who would run after a car on seeing it, try to catch it and then return empty-handed! [Not to be tried before



rapport is developed with the village and the village believes your genuine intentions for the village].

Bhashans [lectures] have their limitation. They are, at best useful in initial IEC and environment building. To actually trigger change however, one to one discussion on a logical plane is required.

Tact is the word. Many a times, repeated Gram Sabhas, touring, PRAs and all workable appeals etc. had no visible effect on a village. There exists then a danger of getting angry with the village and pushing the programme on a down slide. My team spoke to the villagers in a manner that is both tactful, full of jokes and with events villagers can relate to, and the subtly moves on to the subject.

There still remains a possibility that all our efforts at triggering behavioral change do not succeed. In such exceptional villages some veiled threats/or even gestures like not accepting 'food'/walking out etc. work. These are not practiced very

frequently by our team. But there may be villages, which are unable to cross that critical line between intention and action. We spoke very emotionally with them, telling them that a good village like theirs, which we wanted to help out of the way through positive acclimatization, had cheated on us and we were very hurt! We also issued a veiled threat that because they had failed in following the principles. We might consider withdrawal of the same. I reiterate that this strategy is to be used very selectively, otherwise sustainable results are unlikely.

Mindset cannot be changed forcefully! But yes, a shock is sometimes required for people to give serious thought to an issue. We used this strategy only in villages where we were sure that the village had already been convinced enough of the change required but was lacking in execution for one reason or the other, and after we had worked long enough on all other triggers possible. This strategy was also used selectively in 'difficult'

'rich' villages, villages those are rich, and have seen Government schemes coming to their villages over the years. Even if once in a while, this programme has given an occasion to back-question back the community on their responsibilities, participation and receptiveness. This is important to shake off the village from its slumber.

Behind these veiled threats/harsh language/insulting language remained our love for the people. Our team used to visit the village frequently, even stayed overnight for many times had built rapport and a mutual affection with the village. This is what gave them strength to speak to the village in harsh language. How else would a village allow my team to give them abuses such openly? I wonder if ever there has been an attempt made this seriously in any other NGOs driven government programme to involve people at such a large a scale. But naturally, it is a new experience for us as well as people. And after reaching out sometimes it needs loud voice for people to hear! Ends justify the means!

Lastly, on the point of sustainability of the programme, we followed three principles of success in village development. First, the 'leaders/key persons' of village should leave their differences apart and come together for the development of the village as a whole. Second, any good work/project must start from 'self'. Third, some sacrifice on the part of each person in the village-monetary, time, skill etc.-is required. There are examples of villages who have done good work temporarily but because the above

three principles were not followed, the good work did not sustain.

Dissemination...

T N Betta committed to make their village number one in the district to break the record of Kunahally of neighboring taluk and they achieved it. The spirit of competition is important. In Karnataka, the success of using this strategy of competition has worked tremendously. Whether such a programme which seemingly was entirely opposite to existing programmes where there was no subsidy in this programme and success had to be achieved by *shramdaan*, would succeed. However, competitive spirit proved to be a major factor for villages to come together and work for their own development. The pride that residents of tank villages feel makes neighboring villages envy them, and join the wave eventually. This competitive spirit also works at a very micro level that is within the village.

This brings us to discuss another important tool in scaling up- 'social restriction'. No law is as effective as social restriction. Rural areas still form very compact societies where everyone is linked with each other and the village intimately. In such a set-up, it is very difficult for a few to oppose the village as a whole. This positive social pressure is inevitable for any positive change that is to be effected. In Hanumasagara, the village announced a social fine on anyone who does not turn up for *shramdaan*. These social restrictions surpass any law in implementation. The social institutions of Gram

Panchayat and Gram Sabhas can be very effective in implementing such bans. This does not mean that goal is achieved by coercion. This only signifies that for the good of the village as a whole, if a few people for their habit or convenience are willing to take the village to ransom, there must be positive checks. Responsibilities must be adhered to.

Reaching out to people psychologically necessarily requires reaching out to them physically. We have, during this programme, been with the people from the times when they would not be interested [and even avoid our teams!]; to winning over a few of them and working with them; to be with them till the entire tank is renovated and sustained to facilitate their development beyond tank renovation. Touring and night halts have been a regular feature of our efforts. The night halts especially prove revolutionary, because that is the time when all distances between 'us' and 'them' dissolve and meaningful discussions are held. Touring gives us, firstly, a first hand knowledge of villages. Villages may carry different images-developed

either by representatives, media or staff- but going to each village gives first hand information about the 'character' and everything about the village.

Rapport building with people's representatives is the second advantage, as also knowledge about their strengths, standing and intentions. Working with them improves friendship with the 'good' ones, as also resolves unnecessary suspicions between them and us. They also realize we are working with good intentions in areas of their political interest and create a kind of moral burden/responsibility on them to join in spreading the message.

The best impact is on motivation of own staff. Those who are already working get a refreshing surge of enthusiasm...and even those not yet fully involved tend to get involved.

We have a policy of halting in tank villages with the entire team. This helps in first appreciating the work the village has done, and also experience the positive outcomes-in the form of comforts like 'social





unity “positive environment in the village with no false complaints/quarrels and other developmental works undertaken by the village with transparency and efficiency-things which are not possible by just pumping funds! This brings us further closer to people as well as sensitize us all further to their needs and problems. Our faith in the capacities of people is strengthened and the love and affection that people give us rejuvenates us for work elsewhere.

The surprising difference between villages [their responsiveness to programme like this] is a matter for detailed research. For lack of a scientific research we only make some speculations based on experience and common sense. We have realized that poor villages [as also poor amongst the villages] adopt this programme much faster than rich villages. The poor amongst the village, even if they have no representation/voice, are amongst the first to realize the need for tank renovation and work for it. Rather,

we have realized that an affirmative action by them towards their own tank and village brings to them advantages beyond the obvious in the form of other developmental schemes flowing to them.

Local Officials (people representatives)

The traders/ businessmen have never and would never do the religious class also would never take up/work for these issues; the service class has its limitations. The leaders alone therefore carry hope. The involvement of people’s representatives is also interesting. There are no generalizations of course. But some observations can be made. First, the sane ones cannot afford to stay away from any programme that is beginning to become a mass wave. Returns in the form of political gains or recognition in the form of highest awards or a desire of more developmental schemes flowing to the village indirectly or a pure desire to make their village a model one attracts

people’s representatives to this programme. Also, the very visible difference, the programme brings in the village in the form of outward appearance of the village-appeals to one and all. Also, politics being based on party structure, conviction of the top-level leaders percolates down. One paradox is too obvious not to take note of. While on one hand, politics in a village is the biggest hindrance to the successful implementation of this programme, on the other, if this one hurdle is overcome by them; the sustainability of the programme is inevitable. I shall explain how. In most villages, there exist political factions. These are days of many ‘leaders’ in a village, instead of olden days where there used to be one or few elderly people to whom everyone in the village would listen to. And politics/ Gram Panchayat elections are very closely fought. The opportunity to obtain space of people’s representation is very constricted. Issues exist, but for all the ills that have corrupted the system, the abilities to occupy this space have also narrowed. Now, any attempt by any one faction to take a lead in the programme is naturally looked upon as the others as a further constriction of their space and hence the problem. Most of the people representatives mention that this programme, like no other programme, has given an opportunity to people’s representatives to go to the people. This is one platform providing people’s representatives an immense opportunity of mass contact.

We have found this programme a tremendous opportunity to look at public representatives from a close

angle. The development of rapport is most essential to work in a democratic set up effectively and this programme is providing a unique opportunity for that. Firstly, we have realized that an unnecessary distrust exists between the officers and people's representatives...probably any demand from people's representatives is looked at with skepticism by the officers; and any 'no' from the latter is considered by the former as an example of red-tapism, insensitivity, inability to understand, and an overall negative attitude. It is only through joint touring etc. with them that one understands to appreciate their concerns on merit and sensitivity. One reason is that the actual standing of the politician amongst the people he represents becomes clear; and this helps in better understanding of his demands raised on behalf of the people. We have realized, that but for the involvement of lowest level [village] representatives, results are hard to achieve. This programme has begun with the involvement of sarpanches first who have turned their villages into oasis of cleanliness.

At most places, it is the sarpanch, at other places it may be ex-sarpanch, up-sarpanch, an active member of the Gram Panchayat, youth groups or other triggers within the village. But it is very essential that, after initial motivation, there may be a few natural leaders from within the village, who have the spark and imbibe the programme and not let the spirit go down. We realize that the potential of public representatives in convincing the people is much more than non government / government servants. It is almost

impossible to believe in the success of the programme but for the political support to it from the highest levels. They live amongst the people and once they start a job, are more apt in solving numerous hurdles that can best be solved only at the lower levels.

Women

Having realized the necessity of a tank, and the urgency for renovating it, the process of women empowerment starts. It proceeds from a very basic level. The first step obviously is to make women realize that they must speak up for this very basic necessity denied to them. The self-help-groups are a very important medium of bringing together women and giving them strength to raise such issues. In most villages, SHGs take up this issue in the village. The SHGs extended internal loans out of their savings to renovate their tanks. In Davadabetta, when the last 20 per cent of the village was reluctant to make contributions, the SHGs of that

village owned the responsibility and finished the task. Women are beginning to take pride in this accomplishment. The work is much beyond the solution of a major inconvenience of women. Symbolically, and otherwise, the status of women in such villages is improving. There are some villages where the women pleaded in open Gram Sabha that while they desperately needed tank renovation, their men-folk were involved in liquor and did not care for their needs. This put village to much shame and proved to be a turning point for the village. The unity of women is giving them strength, and this is turning to be a compelling factor for transformation of villages. Tank renovation is only a reason...an Opportunity.

Of Outcomes

If we were to point out a single most important outcome of this programme, we would mention the unleashing of positive energies of the people. The villagers tell with pride



that the tanks once the place for nature calls of people, understandably, a blot on the village have now by shramdaan been converted into tanks again. Other 'dirty' places in the village, where no one in the village ever visited, have also begun to get changed. The village small roads, where stagnant water gave rise to many illnesses, are now clean because of placing the soil by using the savings money of the tank. Young and old, men and women, rich and poor, all feel proud of the way they have transformed their village. It is their achievement.

The programme proves helpful to provide an opportunity to people in the village to develop leadership abilities in them. We first look for these triggers amongst sarpanch/ upsarpanch/ member of GP etc. But in some villages, the sarpanch would confide in us that if he tells people about this programme, people believed he had a vested interest in the same! The standing of each people's representative in the society thus becomes clear in this programme as also his abilities. In such villages therefore we have to appeal to all present and motivate them that some of them should take lead in showing the right direction to the village. The process is thus participative, and hence likely to be sustainable. Besides the core team formed in the village of development persons, every one contributes in renovating the village tank and the village. From a painter who would do paintings on the subject to masons of the village who would

work at minimal cost to a young poet of the village who would motivate the village with his poems to a handicapped boy who would assist our team with review on progress of work in all the villages

An indirect advantage, and a very major one, of this programme is that our staff begins to visit, and even stay in the villages where they are posted. No amount of coercion could have made this possible, as best as this programme. One, they have a reason now because they have a goal the achievement of which necessarily involves people's participation. Secondly, we feel that this kind of bonhomie between people and NGO is going to go a very long way in better and more transparent delivery of all other services. Whether it is education, health or rural water supply, the effective and sustainable delivery of most services requires people's participation. This is perhaps a big lacuna currently in delivery of Government services. The end result of this programme-in the form of a positive spirit in the village of having overcome all obstacles and achieved something,

As community awakens to its responsibilities towards monitoring and participation in various Government programmes, our work becomes much easier, joyful and accountable. The programme, because it necessarily involves reaching out to the people and grass roots, helps to see the implementation of other

programmes/schemes from close angles. Invariably in Gram Sabha for these programmes, we take review of parents' involvement in education and try to sensitize people towards social issues such as malnutrition.

Gyadikunte village provided us an example that is so very heartening and speaks volumes of an underlying unity still prevalent in our villages, especially if it comes to an issue involving the village. This village is known for Hanuman temple. The village has a sizeable Muslim population. When we addressed the village, and made them take pledge to make transparent effort in renovating the tank, we were surprised to find a Muslim fellow taking pledge of Hanuman to work for the programme. If this sort of respect towards each other's religion is developed through this programme, we are very happy and proud to be involved with the same.

Way Forward

You are so special...Vayalagam (Tank) Foundation describes the work accomplished in Pavagada taluk of Tumkur district. Further scaling-up is required for remaining 80 per cent. There are other things we can try-involve NSS students, religious leaders, or trigger persons from programme villages. The strategy may also have to be revised-experimenting with the concept of triggering behavioral change banking upon elements of people representatives and women. It shall be new learning, new experiences, new hopes and new achievement.■

Giving Back to the Society

Trusteeship, Social Entrepreneurship and Leadership

M.P. Vasimalai*

Giving Back to the Society: Social Entrepreneurship, Leadership and Trusteeship that reminds us of the contribution of great people for better humanity and makes common people as change makers. I would like to start with Mr. Einstein's quote "Everyday I remind myself that my inner and outer life are based on the labours of other men, living and dead, and that I must exert myself in order to give in the same measure as I have received and am still receiving".

It is so profound and highly relevant to today's world. It compels us to think and act for the society.

Gandhian Trusteeship

Mahatma Gandhi wrote extensively and practiced the theory of trusteeship. It means, "Earn your wealth but understand that your wealth is not yours; what belongs to you is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of your wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community; wealthy people should outgrow their greed and sense of possession, and to come down in spite of their wealth to the level of those who earn their bread of labour". (Harijan, 1939, p.145). Mahatma Gandhi has added further "Those who own money now, are asked to behave like trustees holding their riches on

behalf of the poor. You may say that trusteeship is a legal fiction. But if people meditate over it constantly and try to act up to it, then life on earth would be governed far more by love than it is at present.... Absolute trusteeship is an abstraction like Euclid's definition of a point, and is equally unattainable. But if we strive for it, we shall be able to go further in realising a state of equality on earth than by any other method." (Harijan, 1931. p. 376).

This is what need for modern days' social responsibility in spirit and practice. Now-a-days we are talking about Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Academic Social Responsibility (ASR), Government Social Responsibility (GSR) and Individual Social Responsibility (ISR). It is nothing but 'Trusteeship'. Do we understand and act on it? If wealthy corporations imbibe the concept of trusteeship, then peace, prosperity and equality would prevail on earth. The Trusteeship concept is a powerful concept at individual, family, institutional and at society level to breed love and peace in society. It would definitely reverse the present malady of the society as we see today. "Approximately 50 per cent of the World's population has 10 per cent of the world's wealth and the richest 20 percent has 71.2 per cent of world's wealth".

We are witnessing sweeping power of state and it goes against the philosophy of trusteeship. In the name of globalisation, modernisation and development, the State is assuming more and more power in controlling the lives of people, corporates, nature and all walks of life. Here and now we need to remember and value the comments of Mahatma Gandhi on State. "I look up on an increase of the power of the state with the greatest fear, because although while apparently doing good by minimising exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality, which lies at the root of all progress. We know of so many cases where men have adopted trusteeship, but none where the State has really lived for the poor." (The Modern Review, October 1935, p. 412)

Concept of Giving (dhaan) : It is part of our culture. There are different ways of giving for the benefit of the poor:

Sampatti dhaan	Wealth gift
Buddhi dhaan	Intelligence gift
Samaya dhaan	Time gift
Sarvasava dhaan	Gifts everything
Shram dhaan	Labour gift

People with compassion do any of the above for the benefit of humankind. Acharya Vinoba Bhave,

the first Sathyagrahi of Mahatma Gandhi, made a significant experient - Bhoodan (land gift) in non-violent method of redistribution of land in fifties and sixties of last century. Different religions follow different forms of giving from one's own earning to the society. Humanity grows with this philosophy.

Development Professionals :

According to Webster, the term '**Profession**' means **A Calling** requiring **Specialised Knowledge** and **often long and intensive preparation** including instruction in **skills and methods** as well as in the scientific, historical, or scholarly **principles underlying such skills and methods**, maintaining by force of organisation **high standards of achievement and conduct** and committing its members to **continued study** and to a kind of work which has for its prime purpose the **rendering of a public service**.

It truly reflects the development dimension as the core purpose of profession. What do we see around us? Medical doctors, lawyers, and engineers make money by all means.

Social Entrepreneurship

When superordinate goals become core purpose in one's self, Social Entrepreneurship takes roots. They are seeds, not grains. Grains have a utility to support life forms but it has short life and purpose, while seeds has an eternal feature by becoming a gene and an embryo to many, many generations. Social Entrepreneurship are seeds with distinct features of:

- Vision and Mission
- High risk-taking ability

- High achievement motivation
- High relationship skills
- High persuasive communication skills
- Strong belief system
- Sensitive to environment
- Both transactional and transformative skills

Some of the seeds are hybrids which give desirable impact in the first generation only, while some of the seeds are pure line selections which provides continuous improvement and stability in their productivity and impact. When Social Entrepreneurs become leaders, they are impacting beyond generations. The concept of Social Entrepreneurship and Social Leadership are institutionalised forms of society with certainty and quality.

Human potential is in dormant form when so called secured jobs are taken as livelihoods. Primacy of livelihoods, comforts, family takes shelter in stabilised work environment and moves away from meaning of life purpose for betterment of humanity. When the primacy is on the 'cause' and superordinate goal, it unleashes the human potential to unthinkable level. Many factors tie us with livelihoods focus. It needs an 'extra effort' or 'conscious effort' to become a social entrepreneur and social leader. It also requires different 'mind set' with alternate perspective and attitude.

Mr. David Bornstein, a journalist who specialises in writing about social innovation advocates six qualities for successful social

entrepreneurs, in his recent book, "How to change the world: Social Entrepreneurship and the power of New ideas"

- Willingness to Self-correct
- Willingness to share credit
- Willingness to break free of established structures
- Willingness to cross disciplinary boundaries
- Willingness to work quietly
- Strong ethical impetus

We are seeing these qualities not only with social entrepreneurs, but more so with social leaders.

Social Entrepreneurship operates with the core principle of triple bottom line. The foremost bottom line is social viability, social cause with equity and justice and it is non-negotiable. Second bottom line is economic viability of the initiative to sustain and grow. The third is ecological viability or environmental sustainability. These three aspects are non-negotiable in the order of priority. Though it seems to be a difficult challenge, many social leaders have managed, balanced, and successfully demonstrated that it is doable.

Community Entrepreneurship and Leadership

It is amazing to see social entrepreneurship and social leadership among poor. Substantial national investments are always provided to the so-called educated class to work with society for its betterment. Though least efforts are made for common people, their natural and spontaneous

entrepreneurship and leadership are expressed in an abundant way. Life experiences and their living environment mould common people as change agents. Many SHGs practice direct democracy and their leaders allocate their time liberally without any remuneration. They do *Samaya dan, Buddhi dhaan, Shramdhaan, and Sampatti dhaan* without any hesitation. Community leaders give their efforts over years without any expectation, primarily for helping neighbourhoods. Large scale selfless community leadership keeps the society not only alive and kicking but also liberated, enriched and empowered.

They are committed without payment; accountable without control; systematic without sophisticated system; transparent without written information system; impacting qualitatively and quantitatively without substantial investment. Do we document these numerous unsung heroes or heroines and unsung leaders? And what are our academic and research institutions doing in this functional area? There is a goldmine of experience available in every corner of our country. If we do a systematic research on community entrepreneurship and leadership, we could develop a rich knowledge system guided by native wisdom. Profiling their motivation and values would throw deeper insights on process of mentoring and their significant contribution.

Social Enterprise

Social enterprise brings mutuality, synergy, collective action and liberation from exploitation. If it is not done properly, negative aspect

of above qualities would emerge and ruin the goodwill and confidence of people. Hence extreme care should be given when social enterprises are initiated. Negative characteristics of economic entrepreneur would be neutralised by social enterprise with social leadership.

DHAN's Experience

The core philosophy of dedicating one's own life by 'choice and leading a way of life' for disadvantaged people in the society is the 'soul' of DHAN Foundation. It is a powerful form of giving back to the society. Young people are available and they are willing to explore and to become 'seeds' for the society. They may be few in number in selected colleges but they are also available in large numbers with educational institutions. They require mentoring and learning space with freedom and guidance. DHAN has a 'model' to identify and shape young professionals to become social entrepreneurs within five years to make three thousand poor people's life different, meaningful and towards prosperity. Their creativity is unleashed by creating a Federation of Self Help Groups either with women or farmers for their own development. It is happening in large numbers in DHAN with the guidance of senior colleagues. There is a continuous learning beyond social entrepreneurship and they are provided with 'leadership' space to lead a cause or theme. When a person becomes clear about purpose, meaning of his or her own life, giving back to the society is automatic. In fact, all of us in one way or other contribute to the society. But social entrepreneurship

and social leadership provide space for many to contribute. They are truly value-loaded seeds with their pro-action to find right environment to germinate and to grow as mothers, grand parents and institutions.

A decade of conscious and rigorous practice of the following philosophy in DHAN Foundation created nurturing ground for social entrepreneurship and leadership.

- Mothering development innovation for poverty reduction
- Mentoring by building professionals to build communities
- Creating people identity by building institutions for generations.
- Building partnership between mainstream institutions and the poor
- Upscaling for reach and impact
- Grassroots practice and learning to influence development policies
- Building leadership for development action
- Knowledge building and sharing from practice
- Nurturing philanthropy for development
- Initiating new social order through people movements and collectives.

Many institutions like DHAN are nurturing social entrepreneurship and leadership and a wealth of experience exists in our society. It would be worthwhile to document and share the experience beyond the NGO world. ■

Grooming leadership through Dhan Resource Centre

R. Lalitha*

Introduction

DHAN Foundation invests extensive energy to build the leadership of the people in their collective bodies at different levels. It builds the capacity of leaders in planning, organizing, conflict resolution, and guiding members. Finally these leaders, through their leadership skills, facilitate effective democratic practices at each of their institutions. So far, DHAN Foundation has been able to unleash the leadership potential of thousands of women and farmers in South India. Presently there are about 35,000 women leaders the Kalanjiam institutions in various capacities and about 2,500 farmer leaders in Vayalagam institutions at various levels. In a typical Kalanjiam, within a period of eight to ten years, all the members would get an opportunity to hold at least one leadership position, either at Kalanjiam (self help group), cluster, or federation level. All DHAN Foundation initiatives are aimed at achieving grassroots democracy over a period of time.

Selection

Leaders are selected based on the consensus among the members. At each level, equal representation is given to the villages at cluster level and to the clusters at federation level. Leadership rotation is another unique feature of the people’s organizations promoted by DHAN Foundation.



The leaders are rotated once in 2 or 3 years. They give way for the other members to become leaders.

Capacity building

DHAN Foundation strongly believes in enabling the communities to achieve self-reliance. Hence all its strategies of promoting people’s organizations are centered on building capacities to the leaders and members. A variety of capacity-building events are organized on different areas of leadership development, such as:

- Induction and orientation programmes to impart the concept and structure of the institutions and roles of leaders at various levels.
- Training programmes to explore the leadership values and qualities, to understand the group building, self-development, group dynamics and effective communication methods.

- Exposure visits to encourage cross-learning of best practices and new initiatives in locations, and conflict management by being involved directly in problem solving
- Experience sharing by various leaders and facilitation dialogues with them to learn various leadership traits and values.

DHAN Resource Centre (DRC)

DHAN Resource Centre is the training centre which is working for community leadership development. It is giving a wide range of training to the community to become a good member and leaders to their groups, clusters and federation. Through getting training from DRC, community could get clear knowledge on their groups, clusters and federation. Especially community could get clear knowledge on leadership development. DRC is playing important role in grooming leadership.

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Trainings through DRC

DHAN Resource Centre is giving training in various levels to the leaders. It is giving training to the group leaders, cluster leaders and federation leaders.

- Through various trainings leaders could get clarity on their roles and responsibilities in their group, cluster, and federation. The trainings are given to the leaders to know the bye laws, regarding the stages of cluster development association, financial management of Kalanjiam, cluster and federation
- After forming the new Kalanjiam, the basic training is given to the leaders and members.
- By asking questions, the answers are derived from the leaders themselves for the all type of questions. This enables them to brainstorm for solutions.
- Interaction among members is enhanced by the group discussions, and concept clarity is given to members on their questions.
- By sharing experiences of others, citing examples, singing songs, and telling case studies of others, the explanation is given to the members

Exposures through DRC

DRC is arranging exposure visits to the leaders and members. DRC brings the people to other federations to show their activities in group, cluster and federation level. They show various initiatives other than the federation activities like business

activities, and other scheme activities. In these types of exposures, other federation leaders share their experiences from their own federation to the new leaders.

When hearing the experiences of others, people could get confident and start owning their federation. Their eagerness level increases to achieve their goal. People get an opportunity to interact directly with the experienced people. Then they can ask questions with the experienced people regarding their doubts. Through getting answers directly from the people they could get clarity on their doubts regarding groups, clusters and federation.

Classroom sessions

In the classroom sessions, the trainers handle classes in different methods. They take classes through lecture, drawings, games, stories, songs and case studies. Good and experienced trainers handle the classes. They draw some pictures to explain the concept. They explain with the help of audio visual aids to facilitate easy learning. Through all these activities, the trainers enable the leaders and people functionaries to come out with their own solutions to the problems faced by them in grassroots. To break the monotony, trainers conduct some useful games to think and act. Through telling stories, case studies and singing songs, trainers give effective training to the people. These types of training encourage the people to listen carefully.

Organizing and celebrating events

Many events are organized and celebrated in federations like cluster Mahasabha, federation Mahasabha,

AGBM, Independence Day, Republic day, Movement day, and DHAN Foundation day. The first preference is given to the leaders in these events. All the responsibilities are given to the leaders to conduct the event. Then the ownership level is increasing with the leaders. Through these events, people could know about their good performance of the cluster and federation. They feel confidence for the growth of the people institutions.

Republic day and Independence Day is celebrated every year in DRC. In these events flag hosting is done by the leaders. Leaders feel their ownership through these events. The leadership qualities increase with the leaders, their involvement is increasing. The leaders realize the roles and responsibilities.

Other works of DRC

- To develop the leadership qualities with the members DRC is performing its role well.
- To select the Executive Committee leaders DRC helps the federation. DRC is grooming the leadership qualities with the leaders. Leaders could perform well in their group, cluster and federation.
- Through the training and exposures people get the power to face the challenges and come out from the challenges.
- DRC builds the confident level with the people to perform well in the administration's functions.
- People could feel freedom, ownership, and involvement to perform as a good leader. ■

Community participation in Watershed

Experience of Vandari - Athipatti

U. Vellaiappan*

District Watershed committee nominated DHAN Foundation as a project implementing agency for restructured NWDPR project to implement the programme in Vandari-Athipatti watershed. It is one among ten such projects during X five year plan in Madurai district. Vandari Athipatti Watershed is situated in Sedapatti block of Madurai district and it is connected in the enroute of Peraiyur to Elumalai main road. The village is situated 12 KM away from the taluk head quarters. This watershed has covered 6 revenue villages consisting of 7240 people. Athipatti is one of the important revenue villages out of six in Vandari Athipatti watershed. Totally 900 families are residing with 2500 peoples in this village.

In this village have many ooranies, natural gullies and more acreage of rainfed lands. Kannimar oorani is also one of the natural depression places in Athipatti village in which gets water storage during monsoon period and benefits to the village for various purposes particularly to meet the drinking water to all from its origin onwards. The beneficiaries of this oorani belong to Athipatti village. This oorani is used by the people for the domestic uses, drinking water to the cattle's, recharging **bore well and open wells**.



It is not serving directly to the peoples for drinking water and provides ground water recharge to the near by bore well in which its being supplying drinking water facilities to the village community till 1999. The village peoples are mainly depending on this oorani water for their drinking purposes.

This oorani situated in across the odai and its gets the water from the free catchment area as well as surplus course of Udaikulam tank in Athipatti village. This oorani is also called as Muniyandi/Oortugal oorani because the tank and excess land water was diverted during monsoon period as seepage movement to the oorani with out having any checks or obstacle in front of the channel

inlet as well as outlet of oorani. The oorani is situated enroute of Mangalrevu to T.Krishnapuram main road in west direction of Athipatti village.

Over the periods of time the water storage capacity has been reduced in the oorani due to heavy siltation and lands are occupying with heavy jungles across the oorani bed at the same time there is no obstacle for check the water for recharge. This situation was caused to reduce the water level in the oorani bed and creates negative implication on defunct the water aquifer in the bore due to in arresting of recharging zone between the bore and oorani.

So the peoples were facing drinking water scarcity from the

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period of 2000-2003 because they were depending on this storage water for recharge of near by bore well was constructed by the village panchayat during the period of 1992. The people fetched the water from the near by well and reached inaccessibility area to get the water during the time of scarcity. The villagers were unsatisfied about this situation due to the defunct of this bore well.

The Udaikulam vayalagam has been approached the Vandari–Athipatti watershed association and demanded the peoples’ desire on the development of oorani bed as well as revival of defunct bore well. The watershed association was considered the **cautious matter and important issues on drinking water for 900 families in Athipatti villages.**

The user group vayalagam of Athipatti village has been decided and contributed Rs. 4100 for with expected assistance of Rs. 41,000

(forty one thousands) to take over the proposed works are renovation of Kannimar oorani, formation of inlet to avoid quick siltation and construction of check dam with weirs across the gully at the outlet of oorani to store the water throughout the year and enhancing adequate recharging facilities of near by bore well as well as open well in and around of the oorani.

With their expectation was fulfilled by the watershed association to the cost incurred for Rs. 41,000 during the period of 2003-2004 and the members contribution is retained in the corpus account of watershed association for further maintenance in coming period of years.

After renovation of oorani, the original water storage capacity of the oorani is being ensured and the happiest movement in the community is continuing among the villages due to get back their desires to break the issues on drinking water problem.

The expected impact of the work is:

- Ground water recharge of near by bore well as well as open wells have been rejuvenated for drinking purposes and agricultural purpose respectively
- **Certainly 900 families with 1200 peoples** in vadakkupatti of Athipatti village got benefiting through drinking water usage.
- **Now the 1200 Peoples are not hesitating for their drinking water because they got assured water supply through out year.**
- Access to the water for domestic uses and drinking for cattles also
- Storing the run off water efficiently
- At present the oorani is with the surplus weir structure. The Kannimar oorani is also situated across the stream which leads the water from the Udaikulam tank and the western free catchment area. So provision of the surplus weir is not only results in storing of more quantity of water but also reduce the speed of the water by act as a check dam.
- There are 5 near by open wells gets the increased level of water table to cultivate the successful crop of every year by 5 farmers with 20 family members.
- The village community as well as government officials are eagerly appreciating this work to have completed in minimum cost with quality manner. ■

Madurai Marathon 2009

M. Santhanam*

It was in August 2008 when I was assigned to take up my new role in Centre for Facilitating Philanthropy, I was also indicated to be the Event Manager for Madurai Marathon – 09. Further, the targets were to raise one crore as funds and a lakh people participation. My first reaction for this was ecstasy; a mega event would require pooling of all my strengths and resources with the coordination of all stakeholders for smooth conduct of the event to make it a resounding success!

It was made clear that this is also one of the main fund raising events by our centre. I must admit that I was initially very apprehensive but none-the-less confident to put up a good show true to DHAN's well established tradition. Madurai Marathon – 09's theme, as announced last year, was quite laudable: **“Run to be Free from Anaemia”**. This theme enabled me to get the various stakeholders' identification very simple and smooth.

As Mr. Vasimalai, the Executive Director of DHAN Foundation envisaged, fund raising was split into two - for the conduct of the event and for the 'cause'. DHAN had already entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for piloting a project to bring down the levels of anaemia in adolescent girls and pregnant women with the State Health Society – Tamil Nadu in 5 blocks. Hence we had no hesitation



to approach them for collaboration. Thanks to the good offices of Health Secretary – Tamil Nadu, and Mission Director, State Health Society of Tamil Nadu, they readily agreed to collaborate for this noble cause. With the stamp of a 'government program' for Madurai Marathon – 09, we went about meticulously to seek fund support with various agencies, both in government, private and corporate sectors.

As I was in Chennai, access to these agencies was not much of a problem. We solicited the support of like-minded institutions, with a detailed presentation on DHAN's experience in conducting similar events in the last two years, its reach and impact. Madurai Marathon – 09's objectives and the various events planned were clearly defined and various support options both financially and materially were provided to all.

TANSACS, Tamil Nadu Tourism and BSNL readily agreed to fund our programme besides Tamil Nadu Pharma manufacturers Association.

It was the State Health Society – Tamil Nadu that immediately responded with a fund allocation of Rs. 4.5 lakhs, and to our surprise, also released the amount well in advance of the event. Our team finalized the date, venue, logo, and target community for participation. We decided to have it on a working day rather than on a holiday since we expected better turnout of students' fraternity. Individual program-wise likely numbers were also deliberated and task force/ anchor teams constituted well in advance. The students from different educational institutions both in private and government side were identified and letters to the school/ college principals were sent in advance seeking their whole hearted cooperation for spreading the theme

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on 'anaemia eradication'. The Madurai Corporation Commissioner was indeed very supportive for our cause and had no hesitation agreeing to various demands from our side. He gave the consent to use Thamukkam grounds, agreed to advise the students to participate en masse for the event, and also agreed for publicity support for the event.

As the event is targeting youth, we approached the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, Sriperumpudur. The director was impressed with the cause and agreed to support us in three ways: to bring out a booklet on Anaemia, to support organizing volunteers' training program, and to have campaigns in villages for dissemination the messages on anaemia. With this support we kick-started our campaign in the villages through the Centre for Development Communication (CDC)'s Folklore Resource Unit. It was a good experience to convey critical message in a very passionate method for easy reach to the target audience. The volunteers' training also was simultaneously started by drawing volunteers from various institutions including NSS and Nehru Yuva Kendra.

The conduct of the event was a major task on hand and in order to achieve the expected participation, committees were formed and anchor persons were identified. For the 'Walk for cause' event, members from Kalanjiam, Vayalagam, and other programmes were listed out and members from federations were enumerated. For 'mini-marathon' event, the schools and college teams were meticulous in contacting the concerned for en masse participation. The response from some private schools was indifferent as they felt that their students will have to concentrate only on studies. I am lost for words when I think about their attitude towards a general-awareness issue. However, with the support of corporation of Madurai, a respectable number of students' participation was expected. The city colleges also had assured good numbers but their participation was practically nil for the 'mini-marathon' event. Similarly separate teams were formed to get the desired numbers of other events like the 'Half marathon', 'senior citizens' walk', 'differently-abled walk', and 'Roller's skating'. The half marathon was originally planned for men; subsequently, as the District Sports

Development Authority also wanted to join us, a separate event was planned for women also.

Proper advertisements thru' radio jingles and the press; flex hoardings were erected in vantage locations in Madurai to give the event the required publicity, which again was supported by BSNL and Madurai Corporation. As part of the campaign, Sivakumar of CDC had arranged for a press meeting involving the local Deputy Director (health services). The event was widely covered in all press, and the theme also was significantly brought out.

At this time, suddenly Election Commission of Tamil Nadu announced the Thirumangalam constituency bye-polls on the very same date when we had planned to have the Madurai Marathon 09 i.e. on 9th Jan 09! Quick rounds of discussions lead ourselves to believe that it was not so relevant to us at Madurai and decided to have the event as per our original schedule.

Subsequently with Kodai FM, a program to sensitize the theme was broadcast on a Monday for an hour under "Vanavil". A gynecologist working with us in SUHAM hospital answered the queries on anaemia related ailments and on my part clarified DHAN's objectives and various themes and also stressed on participation in Madurai Marathon 09 by all section of society. I understand that 21 districts is being catered by Kodai FM and nearly 2 ½ crore population listened to its broadcast.

The Day was fast approaching and suddenly a call from Health Secretary, Chennai suggested rescheduling the event to a later date

owing to unrest in the constituency. This was quite unexpected and Mr. Vasimalai suggested postponing it to 22nd Jan, 2009 after Pongal. We thought that this postponement shall give us more time to pool all our resources and reschedule all our activities.

Once again letters to various agencies were sent informing them on the changed date. All schools and colleges were also advised and police permissions for the changed dates also sought for. However some school students were not properly informed and they had come to the venue on the 9th Jan, 2009!

As usual, drawing and essay competitions were organized in Fatima College on a Sunday, and a good number of students participated. It was so nice of the Fatima College authorities who rendered all possible help to us for this event. All DHAN Foundation volunteers made needed arrangements for the event.

The philanthropy team worked tirelessly for the logistics of the event with the able guidance of all senior DHANites. Mr. Vasimalai spared no effort to coordinate all concerned in order to make the event a success. The District Collector also readily consented to inaugurate the events.

The half marathon, for 21 km, and **rollers skating** was flagged off by 7:00 by P. Seetharaman, the District Collector, V. K. Siranjeevi, BSNL General Manager, M. P. Vasimalai, Executive Director of DHAN Foundation, and B.T.Bangera, Managing Director of Hi Tech Arai from Thamukkam grounds.

Walk for a cause was flagged off by 7:20 from Madura College by the Madura College Principal, T. V. Krishnamoorthy and Ms. Chinnapillai of Kalanjiam Foundation.

The Mini Marathon was flagged off by 7:30 by Director of Public Health, Dr. Elango, Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Dinesh Ponraj Oliver, SE, Madurai Corporation, Mr. Sakthivel and Fatima College Principal, Sis. Fatima Antony.

Walk for the disabled and senior citizens was flagged off by 7:45 from race course by DGM of Indian Bank, Mr. Kathiresan.

The participants of all the events reached Thamukkam grounds one after the other by around 9:00. There was a colourful cultural programme to entertain the participants at the stadium. A few participants and winners shared their experience for the massive audience. Indeed, Thamukkam Auditorium was brimming with people from all sections of the society in Madurai.

Mr. Santhanam, Event Manager of Madurai Marathon gave the welcome address. Mr. Seetharaman I.A.S., the district collector of Madurai in his special address spoke, "to create a healthy world by encouraging sports among students and public". Prizes were distributed to all winners by the district collector, Director of Public Health, Dr. Elango, Ms. Chinnapillai and other guests. Prizes were also distributed to winners of essay writing and drawing competitions conducted on the theme.

Dr. Elango, in his address, emphasized the importance of awareness about anaemia especially

for adolescent girls, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. Anaemia is seen in more than 80 per cent of women. This marathon event should create a big change especially by taking nutritious food and iron-rich foods. The Government is giving Rs. 3000 to pregnant women before delivery and Rs. 3000 after delivery. If women make use of the Rs. 6000 for taking nutritious food, both child and the mother will be healthy. The birth weight of every child should be above 3 kilograms. If birth weight of any child is below 2.5 kilograms, the possibility of infant mortality is high. Infant mortality is seen only in human beings. Each one of should resolve to reduce infant mortality rate.

Mr. V. K. Sanjeevi, General Manager, BSNL, said, "Madurai Marathon has created awareness about creating an anaemia free world especially for rural public. I am happy for BSNL is also a part of the grand event. Ms. Chinnapillai shared the importance of being healthy and free from anaemia. Mr. Solai M. Raja, Advisor, TNSDA, Mr. K. Jayamani, Regional Sr. Manager, SDAT, Madurai were present in the stage and Mr. P. Krishnamoorthi compired the stage event.

Mr. Santhanam, Team Leader, Centre for Facilitating Philanthropy, DHAN Foundation, Chennai, Tamil Nadu proposed the vote of thanks.

Finally all the events unfolded on the 22nd January, 2009 as per our plan and without any untoward incident, DHAN positioned the event with the message going across to around 50,000 people of Madurai!! Jai Ho!!! ■

Folklore team's journey to create anaemia free world

K. Muthaiah*

DHAN Foundation organized Madurai Marathon – 09 to create anaemia free world. To increase the reach of awareness folklore resource unit (FRU) of Centre for Development Communication (CDC) planned to conduct cultural shows in various places.

A three-day schedule was prepared by the team. On the first day the story for the street-play and composed few songs. The team practiced both street-play and song in the successive two days. In the concluding session, We received inputs to improve after seeing the trial performance.

The journey of creating awareness on anaemia touched 50 villages of 11 Kalanjiam federations in Madurai rural and urban area was made successful with the cooperation of concern federations. A team of 10 folk artists made their mission possible in mobile theatre with audio-video facilities. The team reached the venue half-n-hour ahead of time and made door-to-door visit and invited them to the venue by giving a notice prepared for the purpose. The programme was initiated with a “Thappattam” receiving and greeting song. Kalanjiam leaders of that village were invited and they gave the inaugural

address. Welcoming song, ‘*vandhanam ayya vandhanam*’ was followed by ‘*va va yosikka venum*’, a song on anaemia awareness were sung. Then, there was a mock interaction between two team members revealing numerous facts and figures about anaemia. It was followed by a ‘Karagattam’. Successively the street-play was performed at duration of 20 – 30 minutes. The street-play details the reasons, symptoms for anaemia among adolescent girls and pregnant women, it also throws light as ways to combat the deficiency of iron and overcome the disorders. There are songs about ante-natal care sandwiched between mock interactions with volleys of vital information. The programme was closed with anaemia awareness songs, ‘*naama nalla vaazha venum...*’ and ‘*anbaana amma mare*’. After the programme was over, the feedbacks from the audience were collected.

Impact and feedbacks

Sivakami from Kottaimedu says, most of our villagers believe in superstitions. If any one falls sick, they are taken to spiritual people and apply holy ash and believe it would heal. They consider spending for medical care is an utter waste. The

street-play vividly showed such superstitions belief(s) may cost valuable life. I am confident that villagers who saw the street-play would act wisely to undergo medical care when they fall sick.

Prema of Idayapatti says, the entire programme emphasized on two things. First, the girls must be married only after 18 years. Such adolescent girls should regularly take iron tablets as a supplement to nutritious foods. Second, the pregnant women’s do s and don’t s were explained in detail with the scientific facts.

Pavithra of Idayapatti shared that she learnt what happens when Hb level goes down and its cause and symptoms, to adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers. She also got knowledge how to overcome the problems by taking iron rich vegetables, fruits, greens and iron and folic acid tablets.

Sellapandi of Thethoor was excited about her learning from a scene in which the doctor explains how to find out the Hb level and by including green leafy vegetables, eggs and fish the Hb level can be increased. No one should have superstitious belief(s) to overcome health problems. ■

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of the economy of the village is agriculture. The village has brownish-red fertile soil. Farmers have planted mostly cash crops like tomato, lady's finger, brinjal, and sugarcane. Also, a large part of the land is also used for plantation of cashew-nut, mango and silk-cotton. Rice is not cultivated anywhere in the village due to water scarcity. They switched to cash crops due to low rainfall and depleting ground water. The variety of crops they cultivate is mostly hybrid varieties. As we walked around the field, we saw deep wells from which they draw water for irrigating the lands; in some parts, bore wells are also in use. We also walked through a dry canal which is dry for most of the year; previously, it was a perennial source of water for irrigation, but now it has turned into a road to the agriculture fields. The methods of cultivation have also changed over time. The fields are ploughed using only machineries like tractors. We could not see traditional bullock in farming activities any where. They market their products without any middleman involvement. Fodder crops are also cultivated in many patches of the land and it is cultivated for their cattle and for sale. Livestock rearing is the secondary occupation in the village. One could see one or two cattle in front of most of the houses. They are mostly hybrid varieties and are stall fed for milking. Goat and sheep rearing is also popular in the village. Some of the households are absolutely dependent on herding 30 to 60 goats. Some have their own herd and others have someone's herd and get remuneration on the basis of equitable distribution of the new born stocks. Some of the stocks are stall fed to increase the rate of growth of the stocks. The villagers are endowed with a large tract of forest land which they use for grazing the

sheep and goats. In some parts of the land, quarrying is also carried out, but in a lesser extent. It was seen that the villagers had a good produce of the crops and good marketing facility of the produce at reasonable price. The use of inorganic fertilizers is still meager; they usually use natural fertilizers like excreta of cattle's and goats.

From the transect walk, we were able to find out the resources available in and around the village. The reason is that there is a good resource and space around them for cattle rearing. From our walk, we observed that the maximum number of cattle an owner has is only two and in most cases, they keep only one. There is a good market nearby with good transportation facility. Also, there is good produce of fodder crops in the village. We suggest that more people can be encouraged to take up the activity with more cattle so that it will increase income and provide more job opportunities.

Transect walk with health theme (Konnaiyanpatti)

We went to Konnaiyampatti village in Dindugal district in Tamilnadu. This village is considered as remote as it was surrounded by the mountain. There are many coconut and mango gardens. Our team started its transect walk in the morning at 8:00 am, going in and around the village and collecting information regarding the village's infrastructure, livelihoods, food pattern, type of house, etc.

The main occupation is gem cutting. They purchase raw material from the merchants in the district town. This occupation harms the health of the people. In this, people sit continuously and work; latter, around the age of 35 to 40 years,

they suffer from back pain and loose their eye sight. There is increased probability of accident in this occupation. Globalization also affects their livelihood. Now-a-days Chinese products are available in the market at a cheaper price. This has reduced the demand of the villagers' product and they less compared to the past.

The secondary occupation of the villagers is agriculture. When we went for a transect walk outside the village for getting more information related to agriculture, we learned that the main crops were onion, tomato, medicinal herbs and cotton. They preferred multiple cropping in their field. According to villagers there is no proper marketing facility for selling the agriculture products. In this village we found that the irrigation facility for agriculture is good. Villagers have their own wells which are run on electricity and diesel. When we interacted with the farmers they said that the electricity for the well is free and also it is clearly seen that most of the farmer have two motors on their wells. They don't have drinking water facility. There is a hand pump and a water tap in which water is available for three days.

According to villagers the water contains a high quantity of chlorine, hence people suffer from tooth diseases. There is a common tank available in the village. As this village is surrounded by mountain, people face a lot of problems during rainy season. In those days they are unable to go outside the village for 6 – 7 days continuously. There is a primary school which is built on the tank bed. The houses are very congested. There is no health as well as sanitation facility in the village. The main problem here is the lack of space due to which they suffer a lot. ■

Transect Walk

PDM 8 batch students of Tata-DHAN Academy*

Transect walk is an important participatory rural appraisal (PRA) method. It is one of the development tools usually done in the beginning preceding most of the techniques, because many of the things observed during this process will initiate many discussions and it will be helpful in triangulation when conducting other techniques. It gives the learners an overview of the village and its surroundings by observation and through conversation with the villagers. “It provides a cross-sectional representation of the different agro-ecological zones and their comparison against certain parameters including topography, land type, land usage, ownership, access soil type, soil fertility, vegetation, crops, problems, opportunities, and solutions”, says Shanthi Maduresan, a development practitioner. It is also useful for building rapport with people; by walking in and around the village, the learners get the chance to meet people and make their presence felt in the community. This method helps a lot in collecting information about any location. By this method one can get the idea of inside as well as outside of village. This depicts a spatial dimension of people realities. In this method people roam inside as well as outside the village for getting a cross-sectional view of the village.

How and why a transect walk should be conducted?

A transect walk is a highly effective method for gathering

information. In this technique, the learner goes to common places where people are gathered in large number like a tea stall. After a brief initial informal interaction and conversation, the learner casually requests the people to give a tour of their community. Then with anyone volunteering, the learner tours the community and the village periphery. This method is useful as it provides an opportunity to learners to be able to spend a long time with the people of the community and establish a rapport with them. As they walk through the community, the people of the community act as guides and familiarize the learner with the locations in the community and the places important to them. It helps to identify areas of focus, assets of the community, factors that may prove to be a hindrance, etc.

We are going to describe transect walks conducted by two teams, one with a microfinance focus, and one with a health focus.

Transect walk with microfinance theme (Upputhurai)

We went to Upputhurai village of Theni district, Tamil Nadu to focus on microfinance aspects. The technique helped us to learn about the village dynamics. The observation and the objective is based on finding out the resources which contribute to the income of the people and the occupation and critical observation of other spatial dimension of the resources. It is also to observe the utilization of land and the productivity, and the potential

future providence or threats on the livelihood, agriculture, and environment.

Since the villagers go to the field to work during the day it was planned to conduct early in the morning when there will be people available to walk along around the village. In the night, the team charted out the schemes of the transect walk, and brainstormed about the plan on how to conduct the event, and what things to be considered in relation to microfinance. The team decided to look on the aspects of resources which are available in and around the village which can generate income for the people, and keenly observe resources whether these resources are well utilised. Also, to look at the land and its productivity, the types of crops planted and the marketing facilities available to them and the utilization of resources.

Early in the morning we went to the tea shop. Usually, in the morning, many men are in the tea shop. We had tea and talked casually with them. Then, we asked some of them to take us around the village and show us the community. Some declined but we found someone willing to come with us. Then, three people came to show us the village agriculture lands, and the various resources they utilize in the village. They took us around the village boundary. We also casually interacted with people we meet on the way as we took the transect walk around the village.

The village has a large tract of agriculture land; indeed, the mainstay

MDGs in Practice: 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

Enabling Poverty Reduction

2009



- **Contextualising poverty reduction initiatives** in rural, urban, tribal and coastal contexts
- **Organising the unorganised:** Over 7,00,000 poor families are involved in poverty reduction initiatives in 9,500 villages of 11 Indian states
- **Microfinance for Poverty Reduction:** Poor families mobilised savings of Rs.1,296 million and availed Rs.7,534 million credit for consumption and production needs

“Poverty and hunger are two complex and fundamental challenges. Enabling poor to access sustainable livelihood opportunities help prevent hunger and poverty. Keeping Poverty Reduction as an overarching goal, DHAN believes firmly on the enabling approach, where the poor families are facilitated to organise their social capital in the form of self-governed nested institutions around microfinance, water, rainfed farming and ICT. They, in turn, conserve and develop the natural capital, such as land and water bodies traditionally enjoyed and protected by them; gain access and control over financial capital through contextualized microfinance services and products; enhance human capital by building leadership and enterprising skills; create and strengthen physical capital in the form of income generating assets.”

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