

Development

Matters

Monthly Development update from DHAN Collective

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Walkathon 2014

Agricultural biodiversity and food security



The Walkathon 2014 organized on the theme 'Agricultural Biodiversity and Food Security with relevance to small millets' for the second consecutive year had a overwhelming response from the public. Held across eighteen different places in four States viz., Tamil Nadu, Andrapradesh, Karnataka and Pondicherry witnessed a participation of more than 55,000 people in the rally.



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From the Editors' Desk

Dear Readers,

Greetings from DHAN Foundation.

This issue of Development Matters, carries an event article on Walkathon-2014, organized on the theme 'Agricultural Biodiversity and Food Security' with relevance to small millets. DHAN won the Sarda Equal Opportunity Fund award for its outstanding contribution for women empowerment and poverty reduction through its Kalanjiam Community banking programme, a note on which also is featured in this issue. An interview with Mr.Singarayar who has crossed three decades in his development career, has given strong suggestions for building up of local governance through panchayats. An article on success of DHANA project which highlights significance of the conjunctive use of tank and ground water, will certainly guide those involved in protection of traditional water resources. There are many unknown faces working silently for upliftment of the poor and deprived. A humble effort is made to bring their works to limelight by DHAN Foundation. Mr.Arulanandham is one such man whose contribution for the coastal community is presented in an article.

The readers are welcome to give their suggestions and feedbacks on the articles featured in the development matters. They can send their mails to dhancdc@dhan.org

Happy reading!

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Walkathon 2014

Agricultural biodiversity and food security



Walkathon is the annual event of DHAN Foundation. The Walkathon -2014 organized on the theme 'Agricultural Biodiversity and Food Security with relevance to small millets' for the second consecutive year had a overwhelming response from the public. Held across eighteen different places in four States viz., Tamil Nadu, Andrapradesh, Karnataka and Pondicherry witnessed a participation of more than 5000 people in the essay, slogan, elocution, recipe demonstration, trainings and over 55,000 people in the rally. The awareness reached over 2,00,000 people by way of distribution of leaflets, brochures, exhibition and sale of small millet produce. The event had a significant impact in creating large scale awareness on benefits of small millets cultivation and consumption.

DHAN Foundation organized Walkathon-2014 on 25th Jan, 2014 on the theme 'Agricultural Biodiversity and Food Security with relevance to small millets' in

different states across the country. This is in continuation of the Walkathon-2013, which was also held with the same thematic focus. The theme for Walkathon is highly relevant in the present context when there is threat to biodiversity and food security

The burgeoning population of the world, increasing demand for food, food price, threat to diversity of plant species due to human factors and climate change, degradation and scarcity of resources especially land and water, food losses and food waste pose a great threat to the future food security of the world. Presently 75 % of the world food needs are met only by twelve major food crops. The developing countries, reeling under malnutrition are to be the worst affected. Small millets, the hardiest crops that can grow in heterogeneous rainfed condition, with limited water and yet superior in nutritional quality to major food crops can be a solution to the future food needs.

Despite these advantages small millets are in a situation of crisis in South Asia. Their cultivation in India has declined drastically over the years (76 % decreases in total production) due to low productivity and reduced consumption due to change in food habits. The green revolution in India, projected rice and wheat and much research, extension and support through government policies remained on these two crops

Small millets belong to family Poacea and include an estimated 8000 species belonging to some 600 genera. Among them, eight small seeded species are used as food crops in different countries globally. These include finger millet [*Eleusine coracana* (L.) Gaertn.], foxtail millet Thinaï [*Setaria italica* (L.) Beauv.], proso millet (*Panicum miliaceum* L.-Pani varagu), little millet (*Panicum sumatrense* Roth. ex Roem. & Schult.- Samai, barnyard millet [*Echinochloa crusgalli* (L.) Beauv. & *Echinochloa colona* (L.) Link- Kudhiraivaali] and kodo millet (*Paspalum scrobiculatum* L.), teff [*Eragrostis tef* (Zucc.)- Varagu]

Small millets which can withstand climatic stresses and with superior nutritional quality can play a great role in meeting future food needs, provided proper research is done to enhance their productivity and when the government attach priority to its promotion, leading to enhanced consumption. The multiple malnutrition problems in the country like anaemia, underweight among women and children can be addressed if small millets occupy a definite place in the mainstream diet of the people.

Walkathon-2014

Walkathon is an annual feature of DHAN Foundation organized on a specific theme for every two years. This large scale awareness event was held across different states in the country to reach the message to thousands by involving them in “Walk for a Cause”. DHAN organised Walkathon on January 25, 2014 on the theme of ‘Agricultural Biodiversity and Food Security’, with a focus on small millets, once again which had a overwhelming response from the public.

The event comprised of pre-walkathon events, which commenced well ahead of the walk for the cause event. Essay and drawing competition, poster completion, short film contest, quiz, recipe demonstration and other awareness programmes were held as a part of this

event, involving the younger generation and women to the extent possible. The event was held in eighteen different places covering the states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Pondicherry. The event involved rally of school students and farmers in the district head quarters followed by exhibition and seminar on the theme. Over 70,000 people including farmers, women and school students participated. Various stakeholders like National Biodiversity Authority, Agriculture department, Animal Husbandry department, Agricultural universities and KVKs participated in the event. Various public and private organisations supported the event by offering various types of sponsorship. Many promotional materials like booklets, pamphlets, posters, etc. were prepared in regional languages and distributed to large number of public.

The Walkathon derived inspiration from and was building on the action research project by name, ‘Revalorising Small Millets in Rainfed Regions of South Asia (RESMISA)’, anchored by DHAN Foundation in India. This project funded by Canadian International Food Security Research Fund (CIFSRF) of IDRC and CIDA, aims to increase production and consumption of nutritious small millets and associated pulse and oil seed crops in rainfed regions of India, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The findings and insights from the project for the two years, especially on the nutritional features of small millets, products developed and promotional materials prepared like recipe booklets were extensively used in the Walkathon event across the states. The entire Walkathon event was coordinated by Mr. Santhanam, Team Leader, DHAN Foundation.

Madurai, Tamil Nadu

More than 5000 student’s , women members from Kalanjiam Self Help group, general public and



likeminded organizations participated in the 'Walk for the cause' event, which commenced from Vandiyur Mariamman Theppakulam and gathered for a meeting at Tammukam Grounds, Madurai. The Madurai City Mayor Honorable Mr.Rajan Chellapah, flagged off the procession. Placards depicting the importance of small millet's, advantages of including them in the diet and slogans on the same were raised by the participants in the procession. Speaking on the event the Executive Director of DHAN Foundation expressed that small millet's apart from meeting the nutritional needs of a person, are excellent crops that can withstand and grow even in extreme climactic stress condition, with limited water. They prevent occurrence of health ailments like blood pressure and diabetic, since they are rich in dietary fiber and slow digestive rates he added. Mr.Palanisamy, Programme Leader said that small millet's requires very minimal external inputs for cultivation and are resistant to pest and diseases to greater extent. He expressed sorrow over the fact that small millet's which remained in the daily diet of rural poor, four decades ago gradually vanished from their food basket and its consumption currently is restricted only to certain pockets. The Chief General Manager of State bank of India Mr.Sarathi, cautioned about the growing junk food culture among children due to glossy television advertisements and necessitated the need for changing the mindset of children towards healthy diet. The children today have a weak body and unable to stand even for ten minutes continuously he added. The speakers at the event also stressed the need for inclusion of small millet's under the public distribution system. Mr.B.T.Bangera, Hi-Tech Arroy, Madurai, Mr.R.D.Thulsiraj, Aravind Eye Hospital Madurai and Smt.Sakthi Pursakar Chinnappillai are the other dignitaries who participated in the event. All the DHANites from Madurai also took part in the event.

Dindukal, Tamil Nadu

The Walkathon rally in Dindukal commenced from Collector Office Camp and ended in Nayudu Mahajana Mahal, Dindugul. Honorable District Collector Mr.N.Venkatachalam, IAS inaugurated the event, which had overwhelming response from the public and students. More than 1000 students from thirteen schools in the district and 800 members from eight Kalanjiam SHG federations participated in the rally apart from the general public. Prior to the event essay, slogan and drawing completion were held to school student



sin which 229 students participated and submitted their entries.

Mr.N.Rajendiran, DGM, Canara bank Circle Office, Trichy, Mr.K.Sakthivel, Chief Manager, SBI, Dindugul, Mr.K.Sakthivel, Mr.John Nelson, LDM, Canara Bank, Dindukal, Mr.Manivannan, Chief Manager, Canara bank, Dindukal, Mr.Sundar, Senior Manager, Bank of India, Dindukal and Mr.N.M. B.Kajamohaideen were the dignitaries present during the event.

Krishnagiri, Tamil Nadu

The Rainfed Farming Development Programme of DHAN Foundation in Krishnagiri organized Walkathon on 25th Jan, 2014, which comprised of Pre-Walkathon and Walkathon events. The Pre-Walkathon events were held at school and community level in all location offices of Krishnagiri Region. Awareness programmes at schools, exhibition of small millet's and their value added products, essay, drawing and elocution competition were held as pre-Walkathon events. Recipe demonstration and awareness through street play and folk songs to the general public was also done in which more than 3800 members got benefited.

The walk for the cause event held on 25th Jan, 2014, had participation of more than 800 people who went



in a procession and raised slogans on small millet's cultivation and consumption. The rally commenced from RC boy school and reached Vinayaga Mahal, Krishnagiri witnessed by the general public of Krishnagiri.

In the meeting held at Vinayaga Mahal, Krishnagiri, Mr.Karthikeyan welcomed the participants and gave a brief about Walkathon and the significance of theme. Dr. Anandha Seetharaman, President of the Millet Society, India in his speech said "Millions of living organisms inhabiting the earth depend on each other in one way or other. The human intervention with nature over the years led to decline of the natural agricultural biodiversity, leading to extinction of many precious crop varieties. In this context, the Walkathon even held is much relevant and the small millet's can play a vital role in ensuring the food and nutritional security of the poor'. A folk art performance, street plays and songs on importance of small millet's in our daily diet added color to the event.

Dr.Ravi, Assistant Director of Agriculture, Krishnagiri, Dr.Jayanthi, ICDS, Dr.Nirmala Kumari, Professor of Plant breeding, TNAU also were present during the event. Mr.Selvakumaran, Regional Coordinator, Gudiyatham delivered the vote of thanks.

Tanjore, Tamil Nadu

The Walkathon even in Tanjore District, Tamil Nadu witnessed participation of over 250 school students and 1000 women SHG members. The rally was flagged off by the Mr.Ravichandran, Municipal Commissioner, Tanjore and Mr. Vinsi , Chief Manager, Bank of India. There was a meeting after the rally graced by the presence of Dr.Ram Manohar, District Eco coordinator, Education Department, , Prof Dr.Sugumaran, Prof and Head, Dept. of Biotechnology, Periyar University and Mr.Kameshwar Rao, Senior Manager, Bank of India



and other dignitaries . Their speech during the event sensitized the community on importance of small millet's and their consumption. As pre Walkathon events, essay and drawing competitions were held to the school students

Nagaipattinam, Tamil Nadu



The Walkathon -2014 rally, in Nagaipattinam was organized with the support thousand's of participants from schools, colleges, self help group federations and other like-minded organizations. The rally commenced from Avari Ground near new bus stand, flagged off by Mr. Jothi Muthuramalingam, Inspector of Police, Nagaipattinam and culminated in Lalitha Mahal, where a meeting was held to highlight the significance of the event.

Speaking on the event Mr. Suryamurthi, a social activist said that we can lead a disease free life by going back to tradition, during which small millet's remained in our daily diet. Mr.Navanitham, Branch Manager, SBI, expressed his pride for participating in the event which created awareness about agricultural biodiversity and food security to school children, college students, women and general public. Mr. Rajasekar, Senior manager, LIC (P&GI scheme) shared that is growing incidence of diabetics and other life style diseases pose a threat to the health scenario of the nation, which in turn is due to unethical food habits. Including small millet's in our diet can do away with many nutritional problems he added. Mr.Naguveer Prakesh, Director, Kalanjiam community radio spoke on creating awareness on small millet's through SHGs, which will effectively lead to increased consumption'

Mr.Mohanraj, Regional Coordinator, Nagaipattinam Region, Smt.Jeyalakshmi, Branch Manager, Corporation

bank, Mr.Punitharaj, Federation coordinator, Karaikal and Mr.Muthuraja, Federation Coordinator, Thirunallar were present during the event.

Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu

The walk for the cause procession in Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu on 25th Jan, 2014, had participation of more than 1500 people from schools, colleges and SHG federations. The rally passed through a distance of 2 km from Cuddalore Collector Office campus, through St.Joseph road and Uppalavadi road, gathered at Government Higher Secondary School campus ground. The rally was flagged off by Mr.S.Sankararaman, Chief Manager, SBI, Cuddalore.

The meeting commenced at 11.30 am, had the presence of Mr.S.Sankararaman, Chief Manager,.SBI Cuddalore, Ms.Anbalazhi, Project Officer, ICDS Cuddalore, Mr.Sasikumar Agriculture Officer ATMA Cuddalore, Federation leaders besides the participants in the rally. Mr.A.Suresh, Regional co ordinator, Cuddalore Region delivered the welcome address and also shared the purpose and focus of the Walkathon -2014. Mr.Sasikumar, Agriculture Officer, Cuddalore spoke on the importance of small millet's, its present status and cultivation practices. He stressed the need for reviving small millet's, as they are suited to rainfed condition and can be raised organically, with least inputs. Ms.Anbalazhi Project Officer from Integrated Child Development Project (ICDS), Cuddalore delivered the resource lecture on the nutritional superiority of small millet's particularly for woman and children. She also expressed that ICDS is ready for any collaborative work with Kalanjiam federations in this regard.

Mr. S.Sankararaman, SBI asked the participants especially the students to discuss regarding the health benefits of small millet's with others and also consume

the same. A DVD on small millet recipes was released by the hand of chief guest.

A stall with small millet's and its value added produce was also organized in the venue.

Pondicherry

Puduvai Vattara Kalanjiam organized Walkathon event consecutively for the past two years on the theme "Agricultural Bio Diversity and Food Security" with relevance to small millet's on 24th Jan, 2014. The rally inaugurated by Mr. B.Ranganathan, Inspector of Police, Villiyanur reached Lakshmana Krishna Mahal, where a meeting was scheduled. The auto campaign in front of the rally helped in propagating the message to the general public, apart from the slogans raised by the participants. The meeting at Lakshmana Krishna Mahal commenced with prayer, lighting of the lamp by Chief Guests and Federation leaders followed by a good Baratha Natiyam performance by Selvi T.Divya. The welcome address was given by Ms.Geetha, President of Puduvai Vattara Kalanjiam and Mr K.Sakthivel, Federation Coordinator shared the significance and purpose of the event.

The special address was given by the chief guest A.Thirunavukarasu, Programme Co-ordinator – NYCF (New Born and Young Child Feeding Foundation) who explained about malnutrition problem in women and children, and importance of them to remain healthy for developing a good, strong and healthy generation. He also appreciated DHAN's effort in promoting small millet's

Ms. J.Shanmugapriya, Dietician, Sri Managula Vinayagar Medical college and Hospital, Madhagadipet during her speech highlighted the nutrition value of minor millet and vegetables and the wide range of



nutrient they contain including vitamins. She insisted to consume small millet's along with vegetables regularly. K.Mohan, Branch Manager, LIC of India, Puducherry appreciated DHAN initiatives and spoke about healthy living. Vote of thanks was delivered by Ms.Vasantha, Federation Leader. A exhibition stall with small millet's was also place in the venue, which had a good sales of 350 kg of different types of small millet's in a single day.



Thiruvallur, Tamil Nadu

The Walkathon even had a participation of over 650 people, students, SHG members and vayalagam members from Thiruthani, Thiruvaalangu and Poondi. The meeting was held at Dr.Radhakrishnan Government higher secondary school, Thiruthani during which nutritional superiority of small millet's and their ability to prevent many life style diseases from occurring was discussed.

Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu

The Walkathon even was organized for the fourth time by Mugavai Vattara Kalanjiam, at Ramanathapuram on



25th Jan, 2014. The event began with a rally from Raja Higher Secondary School, flagged off by the Honorable District collector, District Chief educational officer and Mr.Anjaneyamoorthy, Chief Manager, State bank of India.. The rally had a overwhelming participation of over 2000 persons, students and Kalanjiam SHG members and concluded at Raja Dinakar RC high School, Kennikarai where a meeting was organized. Mr. Pernadic., District Coordinator of National green crops, Mr.Ganesa pandian teacher, Bro.Sathanantham Head Master of Raja Dinagar RC School, Mr.Vasavalingam Vayalaga Iyyakka Leader Mr.P.Subhuraj Team leader DHAN Foundation, and Mr.Govindan Neithal Movement Leader were present during the meeting and spoke on the importance of small millet;s cultivation and consumption.

Salem, Tamil Nadu

The Walkathon- 2014 rally organized by Salem region, witnessed a participation of 1619 members from different schools, colleges and SHG federations in Salem. The rally commenced from Asthampatti Muniappan Temple, Salem flagged off by Mr.L.Sureshkumar, Pallavan Grama Bank, Salem, Mr.A.Mohana Perumal, Senior Regional Manager, LIC of India, Salem, Mr.L.Venugopal, Chief Manager, SBI, Salem, Mr.M.S.Mohanakumar, BOI, Salem and by Ms. B.Sivarani , Regional Coordinator, Salem Region, DHAN Foundation. The rally passed through a distance of three kilometer and reached Sri Vasavi Mahal where a meeting was organized to highlight the importance of the event.

The meeting at Sri Vasavi Mahal commenced with lighting of lamp by Mr.D.Ravichandiran, Bank Manager, Indian Bank, Salem, Ms. S.Gayathri, Branch Manager,



SBI, Salem, Mr. P. Rajmohan, Manager, LIC (P & GI Scheme), Salem, Ms.Jeyathi, School Teacher and Selvi. Priyadharshini, School student. The welcome address was given by T.Madheswaren, DHAN Foundation.

Speaking on the event Ms. Sivarani spoke that this Walkathan is a mega event of DHAN Foundation conducted simultaneously across different states to create awareness on the cultivation and consumption of small millet's. She also highlighted the nutritive value of small millet's and about eating healthy foods which was mentioned even in the Tamil ancient literature Thirukural.

The highlight of the event is the speech by the girl students on anemia, balanced nutrition and benefits of small millet's in our diet. Selvi. Gopika spoke about haemoglobin in blood and the health issues in teenage girls, due to anemia. Selvi.Menaka spoke about the six type of small millet's that nature has bestowed with and their nutritive value and Selvi.Deepkia spoke on balanced nutrition for healthy living.

The junk food culture of the present day generation was mentioned with concern by Mr.P.Rajmohan, Manager, LIC of India, Salem who also stressed the need for educating the youth regarding the same to build a healthy and vibrant society.

The vote of thanks was given by Ms.S.Pachayammal, Ponnampettai women SHG federation Leader

Mysore, Karnataka

The Walkathon-2014 at Mysore got flagged off by MCC Commissioner P.G.Ramesh, from Palace North gate and ended on the Scouts and Guides ground, Mysore were



a grand exhibition with small millet's was held along with a meeting. More than 250 varieties of small millet recipes and snacks displayed in the venue attracted many passersby had a significant impact. The event was honored by the presence of Dr.M.A.Saleem, Police Commissioner, Mysore , Dr.Maheshwarappa, Joint Director of Agriculture, Mysore , Dr.B.V.Satheyendra Rao, CFTRI Scientist, Mysore and Mr.Vijakumar, AGM, Corporation Bank, Mysore. Apart from this students from schools, colleges and women SHG federations promoted by DHAN Foundation participated in the event participated in large numbers in the event.



Mr.Chanderasekar, Regional coordinator Mysore and other DHANites viz., Lokesh, Sindhu, Krishna and Nadheem made the arrangements to ensure the success of the event.

Vizag, Karnataka

The Walkathon rally held at Vizagapattinum on 25th Jan, 2014, organized in a grand way by Vizag Region, DHAN Foundation witnessed the participation of over 4000 member in the Walk for the cause. School and college students, NSS Volunteers, members from Sarvodaya, Vikasa, World Vision and Mohision Eye Bank, Officials from agricultural, ICDS, banks Food and nutrition department participated in the event. A exhibition was also organized in which SUHAM Primary Health care, Apolla, Mohisin Eye Bank and stall of women SHG federation with small millet products was displayed.

Besides this Walkathon even got held in Tumkur and Gulbarga in Karnataka, and Chittoor District in Andhra Pradesh, by the respective regions of DHAN Foundation.

DHAN bags Sarda Award

Yet another feather in the cap of DHAN Foundation

Development of Humane Action (DHAN) Foundation, was conferred with the SARDA EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AWARD (SEOA) at a glittering ceremony held in Mumbai. Shri M P Vasimalai, Executive Director DHAN Foundation received the award from Shri. Balasaheb Thorat (Minister of Revenue – Government of Maharashtra). The Sarda Equal Opportunity Award ceremony was presided over by Smt. Neela Satyanarayana, State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra. The award was given for its outstanding contribution for women empowerment and poverty alleviation which had a significant impact on livelihood of 8,88,168 families enrolled in 45,330 SHG across different states in the country

DHAN Foundation has won the prestigious Sarda Equal opportunities award (SEAO) for the year 2013. The national award is given every year for individuals and organizations making exceptional efforts to provide equal opportunities for welfare of women and children, for sustained income generation and education. The focus is on contribution that helps large sections of underprivileged Indians hone skills and fulfill their potential.

The SEOA instituted in 2000 by the Sarda group, in memory of the late Bastiramji Sarda, a leading industrialist and philanthropist, carries a cash prize of ₹7.5 lakh and a citation. In a unique departure from the routine SEOA does not depend on nominations. A surveillance team visits the sites of socially committed activities done by organizations and individuals and checks the quantum and quality of work. The awardees of the year was selected by an eminent jury during the final selection process.

Our organization was honored with the 14th edition of this award for its outstanding contribution in women empowerment and poverty alleviation through its community banking programme, that has created a significant impact on the livelihood of 8,88168 families by establishing 45,330 Self help group federations and making each of the members self reliant and economically independent. Our work for more than two

decades and reach across twelve states, and the success of the model leading to replication of the same by many state governments women development program was acknowledged through this award.

The award ceremony of the same was held on 24th Jan, 2014 at Mumbai and presided over by Smt. Neela Satyanarayana, State Election Commissioner, and Maharashtra.

Shrirang Sarda's (Trustee-Sarda Charitable Foundation) welcoming the dignitaries and the Awardee stated that "The SARDA EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AWARD (SEOA) is our humble attempt at acknowledging good work across the country and to bring the Awardee into focus, who otherwise are happy doing such impactful work anonymously. We are making a modest effort to recognize people who are working in the social sector as a matter of choice with devotion. Their selfless service brings smiles on the faces of millions of beneficiaries including women and children. It is our privilege and honour to have DHAN as the Awardee for 2014 i.e., the 14th edition of the SEOA"

Speaking on the event, Shri M.P.Vasimalai, Director of DHAN Foundation expressed is delight to accept the award on behalf of DHAN family and said 'This award for the DHAN family comes as a outcome of good work and collective contribution of all stake holders including the poor communities with whom we work, mainstream institutions, banks and philanthropic organizations. The DHAN community is proud and privileged for being acknowledged by the Sarda Charitable trust. I also thank the jury members for selecting the organization for the award through a transparent process and personally and physically scrutinizing DHAN's work". He also added that the emancipation of exploited and under privileged section of the society calls for a much more collective will and collaboration among volunteers, professionals, NGO's , banks, government and corporate India.

Shri. Balasaheb Thorat (Minister of Revenue – Government of Maharashtra) and other dignitaries were present during the event. Mr.Krishnamurti and A.Umarani from DHAN also participated in the award ceremony.

About Sarda group (In Box)

Sarda Group is established in 1922 by Late Shri Bastiramji Sarda is 88 years old which started its presence in bidi industry. Presently the organization valued at ₹ 100 crore, is steered by his younger grandson Shirrang Sarda. It has a pan India presence dishing out variety of products from health and tasty ayurvedic beverages and chewable. The sarda group has successfully forayed into diversified areas of real estate, floriculture and hospitality.



Mrs. Neela Satyanarayana, State Election Commissioner- Govt of Mah, Mr. M. P. Vasimalai, Executive - Director DHAN Foundation, Mr. Balasaheb Thorat, Minister of Revenue - Govt of Mah & Mr. Shirrang Sarda, Trustee- Sarda Charitable Foundation.

Development of Humane Action (DHAN) Foundation, a Madurai based NGO was conferred with the SARDA EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AWARD (SEOA) at a glittering ceremony held in Mumbai. Shri M P Vasimalai, Executive Director - DHAN Foundation received the award from Shri. Balasaheb Thorat (Minister of Revenue – Government of Maharashtra). The Sarda Equal Opportunity Award ceremony was presided over by Smt. Neela Satyanarayana, State Election Commissioner, Maharashtra.

More powers should be vested on Panchayats

Interview with Mr. Singarayar, Program Leader, Panchayat and CALL Program



Mr. Singarayar, Program Leader, Panchayat and CALL program has a more than three decades long carrier in development sector. His rich grassroots experience and in depth knowledge about the local governance is revealed in this interview on functioning of the local governance system in our country. He perceives that panchayats can definitely play a crucial role in development of the country if more powers are vested on them. He also is confident that women panchayat leaders can prove very effective in transforming the local governance, provided they are sufficiently trained.

'Create belief that you are working for community

Then the community will listen to you'

Local Governance is our heritage. Panchayat raj institutions in India have the history of more than 2000 years. From Vedic period – Saba / Smithy

system onwards it has great significance in village administration. In the period of Vijayanagar kingdom, the introduction of “Maniyam” system for tax collection in village governance has led to centralization of power. Then, slowly our native knowledge in village governance started to deteriorate. In the initial phase of English government, some initiations were taken on revitalizing the local self-governance system. But, it doesn't allowed common people to participate. In the mean time, our father of nation, Gandhi was insisting the importance of local self-government throughout his life. But after independence, the concept of Panchayat raj institution (PRI) was given very less importance in the constitution. After a long struggle, in 1992, the rural local self-government was constitutionally approved by 73rd Amendment.

DHAN Foundation launched the Panchayat Programme during the year 2003 to strengthen the local governance

to address the issue of poverty. Panchayat programme was experimental initially in 25 panchayats of seven blocks in five districts. The goal of the program is to bring grassroots democracy in Panchayat raj institutions for development of poor and weaker section, ensuring social justice, attaining direct democracy in Panchayat Raj System and making economically self sustainable panchayats. To ensure the above activities like strengthening the panchayat forum meetings, capacity building to elected representatives of local governance, microplanning and implementation, panchayat education program through the course Diploma in panchayat management, updating voter list, facilitating microjustice through panchayats and policy advocacy were done through the program.

Recently the project “Mainstreaming Gender Rights in Leadership at Panchayat Raj Institutions (M-GRIP)” has been implemented with support of European Union (EU). The over-all objective was “To ensure rights of women leaders in village Panchayat in practice and enable women leaders to perform and fight for gender equality”.

Specific objectives of the project:

- To build specific skill sets to women leaders in village Panchayats to perform on their own and execute their rights.
- To create gender responsive environment at Panchayat level, at block level and District administration level to address issues related to women rights.
- To build network of women leaders at block and district level to sustain gender equity and work on women rights.

You have pursued your carrier in Development Sector? What motivated you towards this sector?

My entry into development sector was accidental, and not out of passion. I entered the sector out of necessity on my look for a job, and landed in Association of Sarva Seva Farms (ASSEFA), an organization rooted in Gandhian principles. My attitude and character got shaped during a year long training period there. Though I got a very mean salary of ₹ 300/month on my fist job, I derived immense satisfaction while working with the grassroots community. Later I joined DHAN

Foundation, which provided me a greater platform to work for the deprived and gradually I developed a passion for the job. The opportunity to work closely with grassroots people to enable, empower and relieve them from clutches of poverty, the scope for freedom, experimentation and exploration the development work offers and the enabling institutional environment which made me lead a dignified life are the factors which still remain as a source of motivation. I personally feel that I am leading a meaningful, content and happy life

1. You are with DHAN Foundation from its early years? What you feel is the strength of the organization? What made it grow leaps and bounds?

Being in this field for more than thirty decades, I have personal knowledge about more than fifty and more developmental organizations in this country. Majority of those developmental organizations are family oriented, having their own family members in their board and acting with vested interest. DHAN, stands apart from them in having many desirable traits. Strong grassroots field work, respecting the professionals and nurturing them, recognition to hard work and talent, relatively non-hierarchical situation in the organization, committed human resource and above all leadership style with long term vision and clarity are the strengths of DHAN. Collective leadership functioning in the organization has enabled grooming of many leaders in the organization and as well as in the people institutions promoted by it. DHAN is wholly committed for the community and society and it is this commitment that made it grow leaps and bounds.

2. What is your opinion on the functioning of the Panchayat system in India?

To be frank, the experience has been very bitter. The panchayat system was perceived to function as the third layer of government at grassroots level, apart from the state and central government and the 73rd constitutional amendment paved way for it. The then prime minister Honorable Mr.Rajiv Gandhi was very keen in implementing this. Ironically apart from states like Kerala, West Bengal, Madhyapradesh and to some extent Karnataka, this third layer of government is either dysfunctional or non functional. Since it was mandated by the constitution, it's operated for namesake. But India

is the soil of grassroots democracy and this panchayat system of governance existed from time immemorial informally. But their role got reduced gradually. After the 73rd amendment of the constitution state governments were forced to formulate a Panchayat act based on the recommendations and a year time was given for the same. But the Tamil Nadu government did not take any steps and only during the last minute framed the 'The Tamil Nadu Panchayat act' 93-94 making minor changes to the already existing Panchayat act of 1958. Ironically the act did not serve the purpose since it got do away with many important rules that was in the earlier act. In nutshell the Panchayat act 93 was no better than the earlier act. No state governments were interested in decentralizing the powers except for the communist ruled states. The panchayats which should function as third layer of government is hence considered only as an extended arm of the state government. The purpose of the 73rd amendment was yet to be realized even after two decades.

3. What's your suggestion for redefining the panchayat system?

I will list out the suggestions

- a) In the 11th Schedule of the constitution under the 'Directive principles of the state policy' (section 4 of the constitution) many guidelines were given as suggestion and not enforced, which included allocation of 29 responsibilities for the panchayat right from agricultural development to industrial development. Also devolution of powers for funds, functions and functionaries was suggested. No state government is interested to implement them, but claiming that they are giving powers to panchayats. For e.g., only 10 % of the revenue is given to local bodies is given to local bodies which is not at all sufficient. More power should be vested on panchayats to enable them to function effectively. There is a misconception that the local bodies will misuse the fund, if powers are given. The state government should trust the local bodies, and even if such misuse occurs, they are answerable to the community who can question them directly.
- b) Grama sabha system is an effective tool, which can streamline the way in which panchayat functions. But they are not conducted in an effective way, but

as an formality. Government should take steps to improve its functioning.

- c) There are more than 33,00,000 local body members across the country (ward member, ward counselor, President, District counselor etc.,)and 1,10,000 in the state of Tamil Nadu. Many of them do not know their roles and responsibilities and continue in office for a period of five years. Without proper knowledge of their functions, the execution of any activity will be far from perfection or liable to fail. Intensive capacity building of the elected representatives of panchayats, for a period of six months initially will enable them to execute their duty well.
- d) India is the biggest democracy and orientation to its citizens on the third layer of governance and their role and responsibility as a citizen in the local body should be given. The people have opportunity to participate in Grama Sabha and raise their voice.

4. Do women have a say in local governance? Does 33 % allocation for women in Panchayat do make a difference?

It is not 33 % and the law says it should be above 33 %. As a result there are more than 11,00,000 women representatives in the local bodies, which itself is a tremendous achievement, in the sense that women are always considered as secondary citizens in our country . But we should not get bogged down by numbers. In a patriarchic society, in many a case, the women representatives remain as a shadow of their spouse. The decisions were taken by men on behalf of his counterpart who has been elected as a representative. It doesn't mean that women are not capable. In my observation women are much capable and much committed in their work than the men. They are much potential to lead. Only the social set up is preventing them from executing their powers in the proper way. If these women representatives are trained and groomed well, they can be a transforming force in the country. Though they are not able to function with full powers, still they have the pride of being the elected representative in their face. Another problem I perceive is the treatment of scheduled caste representatives by the elected representative from other caste. Even if a scheduled caste person got elected as a President, he has an apprehension/restriction to even sit before the other caste person who was elected as the vice president. Such situation should be done away with.

5. Can you brief about the EU project implemented by Panchayat program?

The project 'Mainstreaming Gender Rights in Leadership at Panchayat raj institutions' (M-GRIP), aims at empowering the women representatives of local bodies in Madurai, Dindukal, Theni, Cuddalore and Nagaipattinum districts. There are 650 women headed panchayats in the above five districts. The overall objective of the project is "to ensure rights of women leaders in village panchayat and enable women leaders to perform and fight for gender equality. The project focuses to build specific skill sets to women leaders in village panchayats to perform their duty and execute their rights, to create gender responsive environment at panchayat, block and district level to address issues related to women rights and to build network of women leaders at block and district level to sustain gender equity and work on women rights.

Apart from this the project helps to identify prospective women leaders at panchayat level and setting up of legal aid services at panchayat level and other developmental experimentation at panchayat level.

6. Can you share the progress and impact made by the project so far?

The elected women representatives were given two sets of training so far, to enable them to execute their role properly. Exposure visits were arranged to good performing panchayats especially to Kerala. The women members were astonished by the way the panchayats functions there and got motivated. Because of these efforts more than 150 women members now could effectively perform their administrative roles and got transformed as good leaders. 1600 ward member, 600 presidents and 6000 SHG women members were trained so far. Apart from this 16 block level networks and four district level networks of women elected panchayat representatives were formed. To ensure justice at micro level legal aid services were provided through 17 micro justice centres established at panchayat level. The project also extended social security by way of insuring 10000 persons in 35 panchayats. Efforts are also taken to strengthen the Grama sabha meetings because of this the effectiveness of Grama sabha meetings got enhanced in 25 % of our project area. The panchayat parliament

system was also introduced on trial basis and we are planning to increase it in 50 more panchayats.

7. What is the learning from the project and possible scope of expansion

The project revealed that women have excellent leadership skills and also more committed in executing their work. The patriarchal environment and lack of knowledge of their powers and responsibilities are the major limiting factors. If these limitations are overcome, the women elected representatives of the local bodies can be a change agent and executioner of the direct democracy in the country. We are operating currently only in five districts in Tamil Nadu and there is ample scope for expanding this project to other districts and states. The learning's and the insights from the project can be better used while expanding this project to new areas

8. Which contemporary developmental issues are plaguing the country, according to your perception?

Alcoholism is on increasing trend and no more seen as a taboo, sometimes even encouraged by the government. It is affecting all sections of the society and particularly youth are more vulnerable and remain easy target. The government, both the state and the central should enforce stringent measures to control this growing social evil. The free-bees extended by the government, both the state and central government damage the people attitude, culture and pose a direct threat to democracy. Commercialization of education is so rampant, like never before in history and this will put nation's development in back foot. Quality education is still out of reach of millions. Corruption is seen at all level right from the bottom to top, spoiling the name of the country across the globe. Above all, agriculture which remained as the back bone of the country is set to back foot, because of importance given to industries and service sector. A bitter experience is waiting for the country, if no appropriate decision is taken to prevent agriculture from declining. Natural resources like water bodies are exploited and not properly maintained, posing a threat to the survival of the future generations. Solution must be made to the above problems to make our country prosper.

DHANA Project shows the way

Experiences of DHANA Project in Pambar Basin of Tamil Nadu

Venkatesan.N & Mohan.J*

The DHANA project is one of the significant initiatives of DHAN Foundation and Axis Bank Foundation to enhance the livelihoods of the 60000 families, in the project area through efficient use of the tank and ground water. Tank and pond renovation works were done in four blocks Natham in Dindigul, Kottampatti in Madurai, S.Pudhur in Sivagangai and Ponnamaravathi in Pudhukottai all which falls under Pambar river basin. The farmers in the project area are mostly small and marginal farmer who depend on tankfed agriculture for their livelihood. There are 2395 tanks in the four blocks and the article shares about the conjunctive use of tank and ground water for agriculture and the augmentation of ground water because of extensive tank renovation works done in the region. Four case studies are presented in the article which highlights the significant impact of the renovation works done in Pambar River Basin

Background

AXIS Bank Foundation (ABF) has committed itself to supporting various developmental organizations engaged in socially relevant endeavours viz., education for the underprivileged/special child, public health, highway trauma care and in providing sustainable livelihoods. ABF's new area of focus is providing sustainable livelihoods to one million poor, ensuring that at least 50% of the beneficiaries are women.



The DHANA project (DHAN-Axis Bank) is one such project aimed at developing sustainable livelihoods for farmers in four drought prone block of Tamil Nadu through revival of 750 tanks in Kottampatti (Madurai District) , Natham (Dindigul District), S.Pudhur (Sivagangai District) and Ponnamaravathi (Pudhukottai District) blocks in Tamil Nadu. Among the 750 tanks 625 tanks will be used for irrigating crop fields and another 125 tanks to address the problem of drinking water shortage in the villages.

The project commenced in March 2011 and is very close to completing three years. The following were agreed as the deliverable impacts of the project by DHAN Vayalagam (Tank) Foundation – DV(T)F

- Promotion of 750 tank based people' institutions and around 80 tank cascades in the project area
- Assured irrigation to 10,100 hectares of agriculture land by rehabilitating 625 tanks.
- The tank rehabilitation Program will also ensure the recharging of an additional 4,750 ground water wells on account of improved water storage.
- Improved living standards of 30,000 mainly small and marginal farming families in the area on account of increase in the agricultural productivity(direct beneficiaries)
- More than 30,000 landless families will also be benefited by assured daily wages through the stabilized agricultural activity(indirect beneficiaries)
- Through the agriculture interventions, the productivity at each farming household level would be increased by 5 to 10 bags per season through the integrated interventions.

Through these interventions, ABF expects to bring about at least a 40% increase in the family income of the direct beneficiaries and at least a 20% increase in the family income of the indirect beneficiaries.

* Mr.Venkatesan.N, Programme Leader and Mr.Mohan.J, Team Leader, DHAN Foundation

Tanks as sources of ground water recharge:

DHAN Foundation's experiences on Ground water related interventions:

In the last two decades its tank rehabilitation and water shed development works, DHAN Foundation has gained adequate knowledge on measures that will improve ground water recharge through tanks. Our works in varied agro-climatic, hydro-geologic localities have provided an in-depth understanding on the use of tanks for ground water recharges. The professional team of the foundation has completed around 2000 more tank rehabilitation works which resulted in recharging and rejuvenation of numerous wells. Our works in the district of Theni is solely aimed at ground water recharging through the dead tanks. A full team of professionals experienced in Tank works and Ground water issues work in this district. A farmers federation has been promoted by DHAN Foundation with more than 35 Tank Farmers Association as members at the village level. Nearly around 400 wells have got benefited by the influence of around 20 revived tanks. The proposal based on the above successful experience and confidence in executing tank rehabilitation through farmers' participation has been sent to CGWB also during the year 1999.

Ground Water Recharge through tanks- What the studies reveal

The impact of ground water recharge through the ponds has been reviewed by Dr. R.Sakthivadivel and Thiruvenkatasamy of Centre for Water Resources, Anna University, Chennai . The summary of these findings are given below:



1. The Department of Agricultural Engineering has observed that the irrigated area increases due to construction of pond from 44 to 77% of its cultivated area.
2. The Institute of Hydraulics and Hydrology, Poondi had investigated the behavior of flow and the quantum of recharge due to construction of percolation ponds under different geological formations i.e., alluvial and hard rock areas in Chengalpattu and Coimbatore districts.

It had concluded that:

When the aquifer is under fully saturated condition, no substantial change in water level in the wells is caused by the percolation ponds.

The water level in the wells reduces rapidly when the percolation ponds get dried up.

The average rate of rise in groundwater level is reported to be 5 cm per cm of rainfall under fully saturated condition of the aquifer.

In hard rock areas, the wells located nearer to the pond are more influenced by the presence of pond. The influence of enhanced recharge of groundwater is felt only up to a certain distance. The water level in the well is influenced very much when the water level in the pond is near maximum.

3. The Director of Evaluation and Applied Research Department, Government of Tamilnadu had assessed that the average net irrigated area has increased by 82% from the pre pond situation. Construction of pond enables better and cheaper maintenance of wells and prevents soil erosion and acts as security against drought.
4. The Directorate of Ground Water, Government of Tamilnadu had conducted studies on the rate of evaporation and seepage from percolation ponds. It had found that the evaporation is 7.4% of the volume of water stored during 1984, 11.3% during 1985 and 19.3% during 1986 and percolation varies from 87.32% to 89% during the above years for the ponds constructed at Chettupattu village of Sriperumpudur Taluk in Chengalpattu district. It has been reported that there is positive evidence of increase in the level of water in the wells below the percolation pond.
5. The experiments conducted in Chinnapallikuppam village of Madanur block in North Arcot District had

clearly indicated that the area additionally brought under irrigation after construction of pond during 1986 - 87 was on an average 32% more compared to the situation without percolation pond.

6. Natarajan (1977) reported that percolation ponds enable reclamation of uncultivated and fallow lands to be put under plough, stabilise the existing area of cultivation and help increase the intensity of cropping besides diversification of crops. He further reported about accrual of direct and indirect benefits. The direct benefits are manifested in the increased agricultural production and the indirect benefits through higher income, additional purchasing power of farmers, improved processing, storage, transport, distribution and employment generation.
7. Thiruvencatasamy (1972) conducted experiments in Madurai district to evaluate the effectiveness of increased rain water infiltration due to contour bunding. It has been reported that contour bunding offers greater time opportunity for the rain water to infiltrate into the soil. This helps recharge of ground water on a large measure. The average increase in yield of wells in the micro watersheds covered with contour bunding works out to 12.8 percent over and above the wells situated in the adjacent micro watersheds where contour bunding has not been carried out.
8. The effect of percolation due to increase in water level in two ponds i.e., Puligunta and Chettyhalli in Dharmapuri District was studied systematically during 1979, 80, 81 and 82. Even when the rainfall was deficient by 41.2% from the normal, the net yield of well increased by 4%. The intensity of cropping has increased substantially after construction of pond and it has been possible to continue cultivation throughout the year in the zone of influence of the percolation pond whereas, it was not possible to raise any crop during the summer without percolation pond.
9. Similarly, in another case study in Puligunta of the same district, it has been found that the increase in yield of water is significant throughout the year compared to that when there was no pond in that area.

The recent studies on impact of recharge carried out by Dr. Sakthivadivel et al, Centre for Water Resources, Anna University (1989):

Experiments conducted in Annasagaram and Errahalli in Dharmapuri district for two years without pond and three years with pond on the yield of wells. It has been found that there is sustained increase in yield in the post pond construction situation continuously for the period of observation i.e., 3 years from 1980 - 81 to 82 - 83. It has been positively proved that the water level increases due to percolation pond.

The results of studies conducted in Dharmapuri and Madurai districts in 6 ponds with reference to the zone of influence indicate the following:

In Dharmapuri district, the zone of influence extends upto a distance of 1.3 kilometer when the slope of the water spread area is 1 percent and in Madurai district, the zone of influence extends upto 1.0 Km when the slope of the water spread area is 1 percent.

It has been found that the quantum of evaporation from the tank is proportional to the water spread area. When the depth of storage is increased per unit volume of storage, evaporation from the pond is reduced. It is observed that the volume of storage has little influence on the evaporation. The slope of the water spread area influences the depth of storage and consequently it affects the evaporation. The higher the depth of storage, the greater is the rate of percolation of water.

Success stories of Ground water recharge and its contribution for stabilizing the tankfed agriculture as conjunctive use of Tank and Ground water in the DHANA Project implemented at Pambar basin, Tamil Nadu:

We here with share the some of the cases of the evaluation study conducted at the DHANA Project for the significant impact of the ground water recharge and conjunctive use of ground water for the agriculture intervention and incremental yield for the farming community.

Case study 1:

Name / Location of Tank	: Vandagacholan Tank in Kottampatti Block, Madurai district
Date of Visit	: Tank, Command and Catchment Area Visited on: 22nd February 2013
Members of Vayalagam	: 68
Benefiting Farmers	: Direct 68 Members with 63 acres in the tank command;
Works undertaken between	: between June 2011 and August 2011; sluice Gate reconstruction + leading channel in command area (15 metres) and fish pond
Renovation Cost	: Rs. 184,000/-

The tank has 36 wells in the command area. Paddy was sown in the entire command area of 63 acres in September 2011 and harvested in January 2012. Second crop of Paddy was also taken between January 2012 and March / April 2012. Due to failure of rains, in September 2012 only 50 % area was sown with paddy and harvested in January 2013. Fish rearing has been an integral part of the tank and water stored for fish rearing resulted in recharging the wells, which enabled raising of second crop of paddy in about 35 acres. Due to failure of rain in 2012, there was no fish rearing activity. During September 2011 and mid 2012, two harvests of fish resulted in an income of ₹ 100,000/- and ₹ 50,000/- each, against costs of ₹ 40,000/- each time; the real benefit was in terms of recharge of wells in the command area that enabled cultivation of second crop of paddy from 35 acres approximately.

Income: Before renovation the paddy yield was about 20 bags /acre; after renovation stated yield was 25 bags/acre (75 kg/bag). Two farmers present at the meeting claimed that they got a yield of 30 and 35 bags / acre. During interaction following picture emerged: Both have wells in the command and both used a better variety of seed.

Farmer Chinathan: yield/acre: 30 bags/acre, 45 bags from 1.5 acres in January 2012, due to change in variety of paddy seeds.

Farmer Manimuthu: yield/acre: 35 bags/acre, 70 bags from 2 acres in January 2012, due to change in variety of paddy seeds and application of goat manure.

From the above example it is logical to conclude that the Agriculture demonstrations and guidance to farmers on an regular basis under the DHANA program has a vast potential in helping farmers improve their livelihoods.

Case study 2:

Name / Location of Tank	: Sunnambu Kanmoi Vayalagam, S.Uttampatti, S. Pudur Block, Sivagangai District
Date of Visit	: Tank, Command and Catchment Area Visited on: 20th February 2013 with President of Panchayat, Mr.Kenvetti;
Members of Vayalagam	: 25, command area 20 acres; Vayalagam has been established in June 2011;
Benefiting Farmers	: Direct 25 Members with 20 acres in the tank command;
Works undertaken	: between July and September 2011;
Renovation Cost	: Rs. 150,000/-; ABF: ₹ 120,000/-; Members: ₹ 30,000/-

This was the first tank renovation in the Block. Building social capital (Vayalagam) took time.

This tank has a sacred groove maintained by the community on the tank bunds and no tree or not even a twig or plants is removed. Also no one is allowed to walk with foot wear in the tank.

Before rehabilitation five out of 20 acres of command area was infested with weeds (Prosopis jungle). After rehabilitation all 20 acres with 15 wells in the command area were brought under cultivation in December 2011, and 25 wells belonging to farmers in the catchment area also benefitted.

Income: Crop yield (paddy) increased from 20-25 bags to 35-40 bags/acre with 76 kg/bag during the year 2011-2012, an increase of 60 to 75 % in yield. The ground water level has improved, rising up by 11 feet after the rehabilitation and that is why a large number of farmers (31), including women, direct (12) and indirect (19) beneficiaries were present at the meeting on the day. Information of Individual farmers (9) was collected from direct (6) and indirect (3) farmers for analysing increase in income by comparing with the baseline information.

Case study 3:

Name / Location of Tank	: Maniyagoundan Kanmoi, Natham Block, Dindigul District
Date of Visit	: Tank and Catchment Visited on 23rd February 2013
Members of Vayalagam	: 32; Indirect Beneficiaries: 15 farmers
Benefiting Farmers	: Direct 32 Members with 25 acres in the tank command;
Works undertaken	: before Monsoon of 2011:
Renovation Cost	: 1. Cleaning/restoration of supply channel; 2. Tank Deepening: Application of silt on Tank bund and fields of 10 Members; 3. Total Cost: Supply Channel: ₹ 35,000/-; Members contribution: ₹ 17,000/- 4. Tank Deepening & Silt Application: ₹ 2,14,000/- ; Members contribution: ₹ 42,800/-.

Most members of Vayalagam have open wells in the command area; with 25 wells providing water to their coconut orchards. Members have taken to orchard farming some ten years ago owing to growing labour shortage and small land holdings. They no more produced their own rice for consumption and hence forced to purchase everything from market or through ration shops.

Prior to tank renovation work (repair of supply channel), there was no storage of water in the tank. Availability of water from the wells was rapidly declining. With the repair of supply channel and tank deepening groundwater recharge of the wells in the command area occurred and most of the wells had water level rising to the brim (overflowing wells). This year, 2012 -13, failure of rain had limited or negligible effect, since there is sufficient water in the wells. If rains fail next year, 2013-14, there will be some effect. Full tank in one year can take care of groundwater availability for two to three years.

Income: Members income has increased from ₹ 25,000/acre to ₹ 35,000/acre, an increase of 40%. Farmers claim that there is visible improvement in the quality of coconut trees due to assured water supply and in some cases the application of silt from the tank deepening. Members expect further improvement in the level of income particularly the benefits out of silt application take time to show up.

Case study 4:

Name / Location of Tank	: Arikanmoi, Boothemangalam, Kottampatti, Madurai District
Date of Visit	: Tank, Command and Catchment Area Visited on: 22nd February 2013
Members of Vayalagam	: 170 members; Command area 240 acres benefiting 5 villages; Vayalagam established in July 2011
Benefiting Farmers	: Direct 170 Members with 240 acres in the tank command;
Works undertaken	: Deepening of tank in 2011 before the rains; 6698 cum additional storage created.
Renovation Cost	: ₹ 297,000/-; ABF: ₹ 2 37,000/-; Members: ₹ 59,460/-

This is a PWD tank (above 100 acres) with a bund length of 1.6 km and 6 sluices (outlets). The renovation works were undertaken between July and September 2011. Number of open wells in the command area is 22 and the major benefit of the renovation works is the groundwater recharge. In one place, with the deepening of the tank a spring has emerged. The spring water alone has provided life saving irrigation to 15 acres.

Silt from tank bed (6700 cum) is applied to 30 acres of agricultural land in the command area and 50 acres in the catchment area (dry land) for improving productivity of land. Some silt was also used for strengthening downstream of the tank bund by creating a bund on the other side as well, since water from tank used to drain out in the channel feeding another tank.

First year after renovation, paddy was cultivated in 240 acres, the entire command area of the tank. Before renovation cultivation happened only in three fourth of the area (160 acres), though rainfall was good that year too. In 2012, due to failure of rains, only 30 acres was under paddy cultivation falling under sluice number 2 & 3 out of 6 sluices in the command. Cultivation was possible due to presence of wells in the area. Out of 20 irrigations required, tank water provided 10 irrigations, including 3 irrigations supported by the spring that emerged during deepening of the tank and 10 irrigations were supported by the wells.

The major observation of the evaluator Mr,Vijayasaradan consultant from Delhi was that Renovation of tanks has resulted in substantial recharge of wells in the command area of the tanks. Farmers with wells in the command area of the tank derive substantial benefits in relation to the farmers who totally depend on the tank water. There is a need for examining feasibility of a community well in the command for providing critical irrigations during failure of rains.

Way forward and recommendations:

The significant experiences of the impact narrated in the paper reveals that the tanks and village ponds rehabilitated through the DHANA project in collaboration with the Axis Bank Foundation is the scalable model for the successful demonstration of ground water recharge and conjunctive use of ground and tank water, This experiences can be replicated to elsewhere in the country where the tanks and village ponds are significant numbers.

Sailing against the wind

There are many leaders, who work silently for upliftment of the life of poor and deprived. DHAN Foundation wish to recognize such leaders and their works to motivate them to reach more people. Shri.Arulanandham is one such leader recognized by DHAN Neithal Movement for his outstanding contribution and struggle to up lift the livelihood of coastal communities. He was felicitated with a award for the same during DHAN Foundation day celebration on 2nd Oct, 2013. His effort to support release of innocent fishermen of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka from jails, without country barrier is worth mentioning. Read and get inspired by the efforts of a common man who throughout his life is fighting for the well being of fishermen.

Background

Fishermen venturing into sea, to source their income living live a life of uncertainty, they return back alive being a gamble. This game of life and death, worsened for fishermen of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka due to political conflicts, and Shri.Arulanandham now being looked upon by these fishermen as a savior due to his constant effort and struggle to fight for their wellbeing and rights.

The fish folks of India and Sri Lanka used to wander like a sea gull across Palk strait to Gulf of Mannar, Dhanushkodi to Kodiyakarai, Thalaimannar to Colombo, Pamban to Thoothukudi, presently is encompassed by a cloud of fear. The country barriers did not curtail their brotherly attitude towards each other, since all of them plunge into vast sea to catch fish and earn their livelihood. The Indian fishermen are now being welcomed by bullets by Sri Lankan coast guards, attacked, harassed and get locked behind the bars of Sri



Lankan jails being accused of crossing International Maritime boundary line. The Sri Lankan fishermen too, suffer at the hands of Indian coast guards, get arrested and lodged in Indian jails. The problem of fishermen cannot be seen as a problem of Indian Fishermen or Sri Lankan Fishermen, but as a problem to the fish folk as such which depend on the Indian Ocean for their living.

Shri.Arulanadham strived to safeguard the interests of innocent fishermen getting shot, attacked and lodged in jails, initiated the Innocent Fishermen Association in 1997, and hence looked as a humanitarian and as a man who gives hope, not only by the fishermen of Tamil Nadu, but also of Sri Lanka.

Shri.Arulanandham was known for his selflessness and interest in protecting the welfare of fishermen even in his teens, when he started the 'Thangachimadam Fishermen Association'. The seed that was sown then has now grown into a magnanimous tree, through the numerous initiatives and protests organized under his leadership.

His roots

Collective leadership is observed among the fishermen community traditionally which is even mentioned in the ancient Tamil literature 'Tholkaapium', which speaks of their long term vision, leadership qualities and hard work, despite many social hardships they faced. Five types of collective leadership was observed viz., Seethavi(சீதாவி), Niyayakaarar (நியாயக்காரர்), Adappa (அடப்பா), Moduthalam(மொடூதலம்) and Thandal (தண்டல்). Among these Moduthalam community is known for their service mind and Shri.Arulanandham hails from such discipline. His father, Shri. Yuvani Moduthalam sold dry fish for family earning and his mother Shri. Michael ammal used to support him. His dad also formed and headed a fishermen association during his time.

The modern motorized ferry were unknown a centenary ago and fishermen used locally made boats that sail along with the wind for fishing. Hence his father used to fish in Thangachimadam and Pamban during South West monsoon (April to Sept) and fish in Mookaiyur, his native village during North east Monsoon. Life was hectic has fishermen has to migrate with the flow of the wind. Later when Catamarans and motor boats came into use, people could able to traverse across even

heavy winds which gave a sort of relief to them. Shri. Yuvani thus got settled in Thangachimadam, a fishing hamlet in Kanyakumari District. His family life led to birth of nine children, six male and three female and Shri.Arulanandham was born as a fifth child in the family on 11th November, 1947, in the year when India got Independence. Shri.Arulaandham's father died of health ailment at the age of forty. Shri.Arulanandham was hardly thirteen years then. Presently he is 67 years old and his wife Shri.Thargees is running sixty-two and they do not have any children.

Youth life and education

Shri. Arulanandham though very active at tender age, remained as an introvert. He studied only up to fifth standard since his dad has to migrate from one place to another during different seasons for fishing. Also in those days there were no adequate facilities for education beyond fifth standard in many of the fishing villages. He had his primary education at St.James Primary School, Mookaiyur, Theresa convent at Thangachimadam and at a local fishermen school, which used to be held beneath a tree.

Not having the opportunity of getting educated, Shri. Arulanandham helped other family members in their day to day fishing activity and learned the art of making dry fish by the age of fourteen years. He was known for his helping tendency, moving closely with everyone without any discrimination and creating rapport.

Formation of Fishermen Federation

Unlike other children of his age, he spent his time productively by reading books and engaging himself in the activities of the local church. He also had a deep passion burning in his heart to uplift the fishermen community, leading a very pathetic and uncertain life. He started speaking about his desire to other likeminded youths and initiated 'Thangachimadam Meenavar Sangam'. The sangam which was formed with 75 members, created a hope about their future in the minds of the fishermen. Rules and regulations were framed for the same and obliged. Each and every member made a weekly donation of one fish to the Sangam, which was pooled and sold. The amount was kept in savings of the Sangam. This money was used for emergency needs of the members and also to meet the expenses incurred by the Sangam. The members should not consume alcohol or indulge in gambling, which is very common among fishermen and drains most of the family income. The

Sangam used to meet once in a week, during which the accounts are shared and important decisions were made.

Opposition came from elders in the village for the Sangam who interfered in the ways money is spent by the Sangam. They asked a portion of the money to be donated to the local church, to which Shri. Arulanandham was against. When problems cropped up he discussed with the members and took the decision of sharing the money to the members themselves according to the contributions made by them. Shri.Arulanandham's leadership qualities came to focus by this activity.

Married life

When Shri.Arulanandham was struggling to work for his community by forming a fishermen federation, his relatives started making arrangements for his marriage. He got wedded to Shri.Thargees on 30th March, 1970, in St.Joseph church, Thangachimadam. He lived as a joint family along with his mother, brothers and sisters. Arulanandham concentrated on Dry fish marketing for his earnings. He also owned six Catamarans and small boats, for which he engaged six fishermen on wage basis. If anyone did not turn up, he himself will go for fishing.

Island Meenavar Sangam

Shri. Arulanandham, shifted his family to Pamban by 22nd September, 1972. He looked after his family, occupation and also spent most of his time in organizing fishermen for a common cause with a long term vision. In this situation a riot broke up in 1978 in Muneeswara Cinema hall, between Kadaiyar Christians and Scheduled Christians, which started spreading in fishing villages. The Scheduled Christians were branded as migrants and were asked to move out of the village by the other caste. When the situation went out of control the police opened up fire on the fishermen on 4th July, 1978 during which four fishermen from Thangachimadam & Pamban succumbed to bullet wounds.

Shri.Arulanandham got much distressed by the death of fellow fishermen and also by the growing enmity between two sections of the fish folks. He understood the need for unity, without which fishermen could not lead a peaceful living. He spoke with leaders of both the fractions and stressed the importance of living together. His effort led to formation of Island Fishermen Sangam, which got registered in his name, as per the request of his fellow fishermen. A vacant land was rented for the Sangam, in which a hut was constructed after obtaining

permission, which became the office of the Sangam. Shri. Irudhaiyam Baiva, Shri. Arulanandham and Shri. Alex Korara respectively remained as the President, Secretary and the Treasurer of the Sangam. Twenty one others remained in the executive committee. During this period the then Chief minister of Tamil Nadu announced the Protection of sea (prevention of pollution from the ship) act, 1983 which supported the use of traditional boats. Many members of the Sangam opposed the act, but Shri. Arulanandham voiced that 'traditional boat users also have right to live and it is not good to oppose them'. Owing to this difference of opinion he quitted the Sangam.

Fight for increased wages

Fishermen, who are poor, worked as laborers to boat owners. The boat owners used to give a very meager wage of ₹ 300/year, the first voice against which was raised in 1967, when they started demanding more wages. Shri.Arulanandham, Shri.Kuzhandhaisami and Shri.Jebamalai remained as a catalyst for this demand, much to the aversion of the boat owners. Because of continuous agitation and protests, the wage was increased to ₹ 300/month, which again got revised to ₹ 100-150/week and daily wage system came in later. The success of this effort highly motivated Shri. Arulanandham to fight constantly for the fishermen's right.

School for Fishermen's children

Shri. Arulanandham was also instrumental in establishing a school ' St. Yaagappa School' for fishermen's children, which also provided education to children of other communities. He also served as the correspondent of the school from 1990-1998. He ensured strict timing for the teachers, quality education and discipline among students during his period. A welcome was given in his school to our Late Prime minister Honorable Shri.Rajiv Gandhi, Smt.Sonia Gandhi, the then Tamilnadu congress President Mr.Moopanar and other in his school when they came for inaugurating the 'Indira Gandhi Pamban Bridge', the memories of which gives him great pleasure even now

Singaravelar Fishermen Federation

Shri.Arulanandham formed the Singaravelar Fishermen federation in 1990. In 1996, he engaged Ms. Mageshwari Velayaudham of the Sri Lankan Human Rights commission to fight for justice and enabled the release

of fishermen lodged in Sri Lankan jails. He furnished details of fishermen arrested through regular e-mail contacts, the facts playing a key role in their release. He was also instrumental in availing ₹ 50/day as living expenses for the family of arrested fishermen. This idea was taken up by the Tamilnadu government which presently gives ₹ 250/day for the family of fishermen held in Sri Lankan jails. He also organized the first convention of fishermen federation at Thondi which attracted many leaders and officials to the function.

Stand against gun fire

In 13th July, 1984, the Sri Lankan army opened up gun fire against Indian fishermen for the first time during which one fisherman got killed. Shri. Arulanandham who was shocked by this incident organized a three days Hunger Strikes at Rameeswaram, along with 'Vearkoodu Fishermen Sangam'. More than thousand fishermen participated in the hunger strike.

Before his wound healed, the Sri Lanka army opened fire again in 6th Jan, 1985 during which two fishermen got killed. Aruladhanam showed his protest along with 21 other fishermen, by blocked a train. Because of this protest the Indian navy, took action against a Sri Lankan Navy ship sailing and arrested twenty of its seamen.

The Personal secretary Mr.Sampath of the then Chief Minister honorable Mr.M.G.Ramachadiran, also paid a visit to Rameshwaram with discuss with representatives of Verkodu Fishermen association to resolve the issue, advised them to go for fishing without any fear and that the government would take all efforts to protect them. On 18th May, 1985, Secretary of the External affairs Mr. Shahabudheen and Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Fisheries Department Mr.Kandhasamy and Director of Fisheries Mr.Nagaraj came and spoke that the fishermen should respect the agreement between India and Sri Lanka and Indian fishing boats should not venture into Sri Lankan boundaries. The meeting did not provide solutions to the fishermen's problem.

Network of South Indian Fishermen Federation (SIFFS)

Mr.Arulanandham met Mr.Thomas Kocherri of National fishermen Federation, who came to Pamban in advent of the rally organized to close fresh water prawn breeding mushrooming along the sea coast, which threatened the life of fishermen as well as the coastal ecosystem. He mentioned to him about the innumerable problem the Sri Lankan Navy give to Indian fishermen like

- Attacking the fishermen with weapons and rifles causing injury to them
- Damaging the fishing nets and preventing them from fishing
- Opening gunfire at Indian fishermen and killing them
- Destroying their catch by dumping them back into the sea

As per his suggestion he met Mr.Vivekanandhan of South Indian Fishermen Federation, who offered him to take part in organized by the federation in 1996 at Nagarkovil. Mr.Arulanandam who took part in the meeting also handed over the list of fishermen killed, injured and went missing due to Sri Lankan army. Because of this a Truth finding committee was constituted to know the truth and the extent of problems fishermen face due. Mr.Vivekanadhan also offered support to address this issue jointly, the opportunity which Mr.Arulanandham gladly accepted and started functioning so from 27th March, 1996.

Mr.Arulanadham also sought the support of many trade unions viz., Y.M.C.A, A.I.C.T.U, C.T.U, T.R.R.M, H.R.F, C.B.T.U, H.M.S etc., He also roped in the support of SNEHA, Peoples watch and other fishermen associations. Due to this many positive actions took place. The truth finding committee also furnished a report to the Central government issue, after interacting with fishermen's family affected by Sri Lankan army.

Association for Release of Innocent Fishermen (ARIF)

With the support of Mr.Vivekanadhan of SIFFS, Mr.Arulanadham was instrumental in forming a exclusive association for release of Indian Fishermen and Sri Lankan lodged in Sri Lankan and Indian Jails respectively. The organization formed with the head office in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala on 30th September, 1997. The organization functioned without caste, creed, religion or nation boundaries. Few organizations in Sri Lanka too supported the cause viz., Mr. Herman Kumaran, Mr.Yesudhasan of National Fishermen cooperative, Mr. Justin Fernando, Mr.Maxi of Fishermen association at Neekozumbu, Vadamarachi Fishermen federation etc., They supported Mr.Arulanandham by providing foods, clothes and other necessary items for the Indian fishermen suffering in Sri Lankan jails. The Sri Lankan fishermen who got arrested by Indian navy, also were provided with necessary facilities by the Indian counterparts.

The activities of ARIF helped release of more than more than 1000 fishermen and 120 ferries held in capture by the either governments. Many suites got filed in courts which enabled the release of fishermen.

Mr.Arulanandham apart from contacting the Sri Lankan association via telephonic and electronic communication also went to Sri Lanka on 20th March, 2003 to enable release of 135 fishermen and their 27 ferries. He later become the President of ARIF and continued his efforts. In 29th Dec, 2003, 376 fishermen from Rameeswaram who went for fishing got once again arrested and got lodged in Central Prison, Columbo. Mr. Arulanandham, went and met them and also the official of Indian embassy at Sri Lanka and enabled their release. However the 66 ferries captured was not handed over back. Mr.Arulanandham filed a case in Columbo to retrieve the ferries on 5th April, 2005, with the support of the fishermen to which Sri Lanka Navy replied that those ferries got damaged in the Tsunami that occurred in Dec, 2005.

Mr. Arulanandham represented this to our state and central government, and the extent to which fishermen's livelihood was affected. This resulted in fishermen availing compensation of ₹25 lakhs for each ferry for the 66 ferries, under Rajiv Gandhi Tsunami Welfare Fund.

Meeting of Indian- Sri Lankan Fishermen

To sort the issues between the Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen, he facilitated a meeting them through ARIF in 29th April, 2004. The first round of negotiation was held at Mannar, Sri Lanka. The Bishop of Mannar and Members of Parliament from Sri Lanka Mr.Selvam, Mr. Adaikalanathan and Mr. Mageshsandhiran participated in the round of talks, apart from 21 representatives from different fishermen federations. Few resolutions were made, which however did not come into effect.

The second round of talks was initiated again, in which prescribed days in a week was allotted for Indian fishermen, during which they are permitted to fish in Sri Lankan waters. The days are

Month	Days
January	Four Wednesdays and Four Saturdays
February	Four Saturday
March	Four Wednesday's and four Saturday's
April	Two Wednesday's and Two Saturday's

May	Four Wednesday's and four Saturday's
June	Four Wednesday's and four Saturday's
July	Four Wednesday's and four Saturday's
August	Four Wednesday's and four Saturday's
October	Four Wednesday's and four Saturday's
November	Three Wednesday's and Three Saturday's
December	Two Wednesday's and Two Saturday's

More than fifty representatives from both India and Sri Lanka, participated in the meeting held at St. Thomas mount, Chennai, India.

The third round of talks which was held at Fisheries department office, Sri Lanka with only selected representatives from both countries also did not yield desired results.

Untiring Mr. Arulanandham organized a conference and tribunal on Fishermen's right to Livelihood at 11th Dec, 2009, at Thangachimadam in which families of fishermen affected by Sri Lankan army participated in large numbers. More than 30000 fishermen came from Ramnad, Tanjore, Pudhukottai, Nagaipattinam, Karaikal and Kanyakumari district which got the attraction of the government. The resolution passed in the meeting to protect the livelihood of fishermen were passed on to the State and Central government.

Other activities

Lawsuits filed

- Filed a case against fishermen of Kottaipattinam, Pudhukottai District, who prevented fishing by Rameeswaram Fishermen in their waters at Chennai High Court, which enabled fishing by 102 boats on 6th July, 2011 as per the Supreme court's order.
- The fresh water prawn making units posed a threat to livelihood of fishermen as the prawn price fell down steeply from ₹ 600/kg to ₹ 250/kg. A case was filed against the fresh water prawn units functioning at Gulf of Mannar due to which the High court of Chennai enforced some restrictions on 163 such fresh water Prawn units on 7th Nov, 1996
- More than 100 persons were engaged in usury activities, due to which many fishermen got affected against which Mr. Arulanandham filed a lawsuit in Ramnad District Court.

Revoking Ban on Fishing

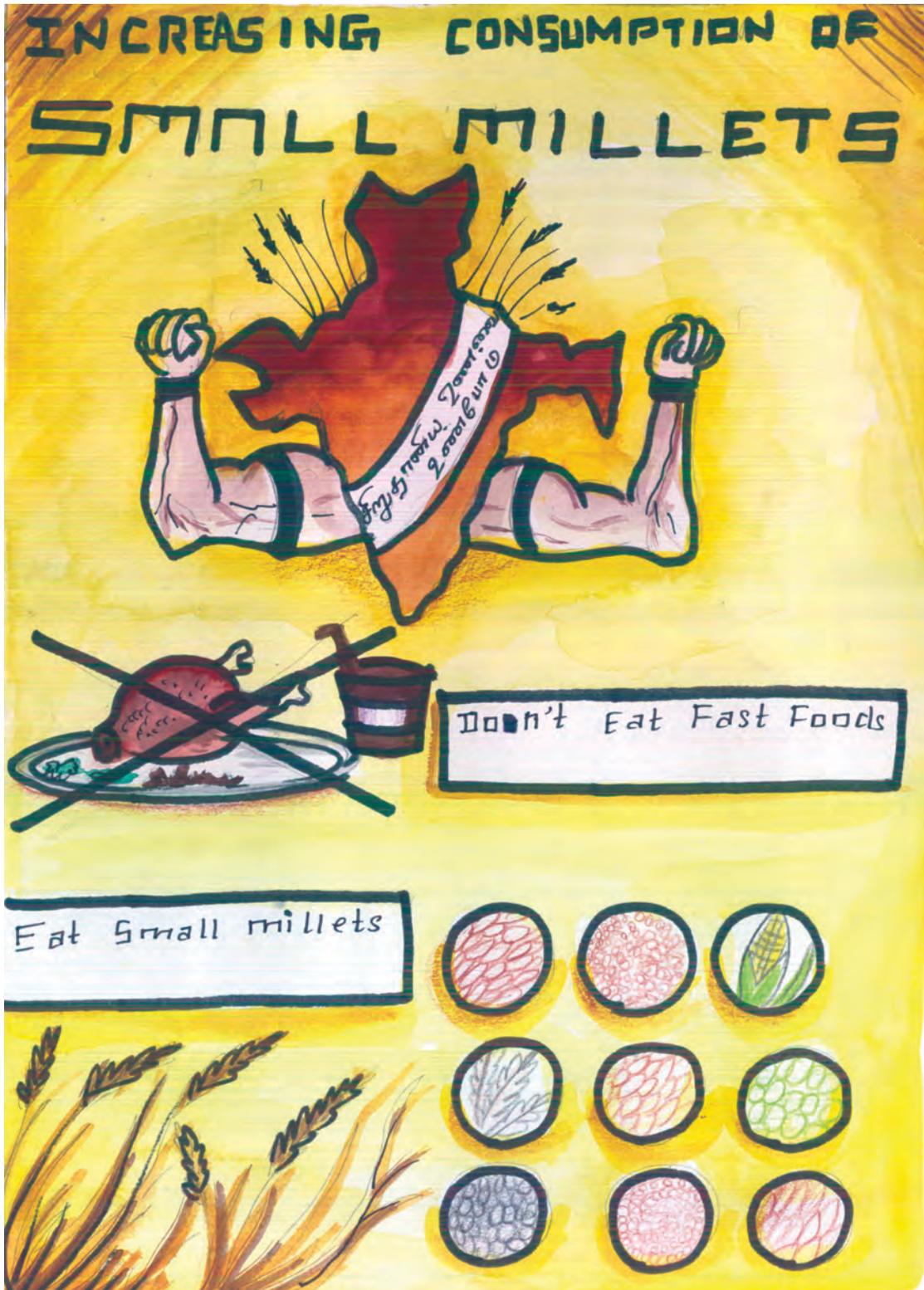
In 2001, the Central government passed a law banning fishing of 59 varieties of fish. Since this affected the livelihood of the fishermen he organized a Hunger strike which went on for eleven days at Chandernagar, New Delhi. Two organizations the South Indian Fishermen Federation Societies and Thoothur Deep Sea Fishing Society actively took part in the strike. The government which got shocked by the protest, allowed fishing of many varieties listed banning only a few fishes which are endangered

Support to claim compensation

- In an unfortunate incident the Indian Naval ship 'Midhun', met with an accident with fishing boats, claiming the life of four fishermen. Mr. Arulanandham filed a case against the Navy and stayed for twenty-one days in Visakapattinam to claim compensation for the victims. The court ordered a compensation to be paid for nine years with ₹ One lakh/fishermen/year.
- On 28th Nov, 2011, the Sri Lankan Navy arrested five fishermen on false allegations and Mr. Arulanandham fought for their release through activities ranging from hunger strike to filing case in the court. The Tamil Nadu government supported the cause by asking the District management to allot ₹ Two lakhs for proceeding ahead with the activities. Mr. Arulanandham went to Sri Lanka and fighting a legal battle with the government to get compensation. In the meantime he was successful in getting an interim relief of ₹ Two lakh / family of the affected fishermen

Going strong

Mr. Arulanandham continues to live a life of sacrifice for the wellbeing of the fishermen. His selfless attitude has bestowed him with some prestigious award from Mumbai Paravar (a association for fishermen at Mumbai), Fishermen federations at Nagercoil and Kanyakumari and a memento by the Sri Lankan Fishermen for enabling their release from the Indian jails. His struggle continues to bring a permanent solution to the problem caused to Indian fishermen by the Sri Lankan navy, apart from ensuring fishermen right and ensuring their livelihood.



Art by: N.Harikaran, IX G, Mahatma (Baba Building) Montessori Hr. Sec. School, Madurai.
Drawing competition entry - Walkathon 2014



Karaikulam tank, Narikudi

This is Karaikulam tank, near Narikudi, Virudhunagar District, Tamilnadu. Tank rehabilitation work was done in this tank after nearly two decades by DHAN Foundation with fund support from Hindustan Unilever limited. An amount of ₹ 4,69,000 which included local people contribution of ₹ 91,900 was spent for de-silting, strengthening of the bunds, construction of sluices and surplus weirs. The result the tank was brimming with water after subsequent rains, enabling cultivation of paddy in about 300 acres. The farmers, who used to have sleepless nights owing to fear of breach of bunds, now have a peaceful life. Not only that they are confident that the water will last long, which will enable them to raise the second crop cotton after many long years.



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