



Madurai Symposium 2011

Advancing Development

towards Sustainable Livelihoods

14-18 September 2011



Bulletin

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Knowledge Brief

The Madurai Symposium is designed to be a platform through which different development stakeholders including community institutions, non-government organizations, civil societies, the Government, financial institutions, and academia convene to share their knowledge and experiences with the purpose of advancing development practice. The following brief highlights some of the key lessons learned during the fourth day of Madurai Symposium 2011.

Coastal livelihoods

Proliferation of mechanized fibre boats and trawlers has created excessive pressure on fishery resources. Fast paced depletion of fishery resources due to unscrupulous fishing methods followed by the trawlers and big fishers, and dumping of industrial wastes and pollutants by the industries has jeopardized the livelihoods of marginal fishers and fringe communities, which needs to be checked by the Government. The alternatives available for the marginal fishing communities are crab fattening, ornamental fish culture, and sea algae cultivation. All these activities need credit facility from banks at affordable rates and adequate quantum. Rising temperature, sea water intrusion, and pollution of coasts and water bodies are some of the threats caused by the climate change, which will make the coastal communities more vulnerable. It necessitates proactive measures by the State to build resilience among the marginal fishers.

Coastal agriculture is peculiar with its traditional crop varieties and agronomic practices to cope with the soil salinity and climatic aberrations. It is highly dependent on surface water bodies, and is integrated with livestock. Coastal agriculture faces the challenges of rising salinity of underground water due to erection of bore wells, loss of soil health due to shrimp farming, rapid and large scale conversion of coastal lands for non-agricultural use. Poor upkeep of back water channels results in inundation of sea water into fertile lands. The biodiversity in coastal zones has undergone a rapid deterioration, owing to the thermal and atomic power plants, industrializing coastal stripes, and expansion of roads. Amidst all these challenges, there is a ray of hope for coastal agriculture as the farmers have come forward to repair and keep up water bodies and create farm ponds. They are showing more interest to take

Events

- ✕ People Convention on "Sharing Best Practices of Financing Livelihoods" / Annual General Body Meeting of KDFS (Forenoon)
- ✕ People Convention on "Sharing Best Practices of Social Security Programmes / Annual General Body Meeting of People Mutuals (Afternoon)
- ✕ People Convention on "Coastal Livelihoods: Challenges and Opportunities"
- ✕ People Convention on "ICT and Livelihoods"
- ✕ Workshop on "Micro justice & Livelihoods"
- ✕ Dissemination Workshop on "Water and Livelihood Security: Learning from IWMI's Field Research"
- ✕ Greening Urban Development and Livelihoods
- ✕ Workshop on "Youth and Livelihoods"

up animal husbandry. What they needed now is enforcement of relevant acts and rules to curb abuse of coastal lands in many forms such as shrimp farming and destruction of sand dunes.

Emerging technologies for water management

The IWMI-TATA Water Policy Research Programme (ITP)'s field based action research studies in north Gujarat, central India states, Tamil Nadu and Uttarkhand are aimed at finding solutions for problems of water scarcity. The results of the action research on the technologies introduced through ITP field interventions were shared. The different technologies introduced include micro-irrigation methods, 5% land model of creating farm ponds, 30'x40' land model of insitu-soil and water conservation, drip irrigation systems, tank silt application practices, and treatment of tank catchment to avoid heavy siltation. Increasing the yield of agricultural crops by using new technologies is important.

The main lessons learnt include: to sustain any proven technology in field, the technology taken for research and practice should be affordable and acceptable; the technology needs to be combined with sufficient capacity building; the mismatch between the technology and available water resources should be studied thoroughly to maximise the usage of technology by people for maximising their income.

Technology drives graduation in livelihoods by helping people to move from one stage to another stage thereby reducing monthly income fluctuations and increasing the overall annual income. Farm pond as a technology in rainfed areas helps in addressing the risks and vulnerabilities and in securing the livelihood income.

The gap in technology transfer, particularly in capacity-building, needs to be addressed. The technology transfer and the on-farm training need to be focussed simultaneously with equal importance. The performance efficiency can be achieved by improving the existing resources which results in low costs and high benefits. Introducing diversified crops will help in maximising water usage. Also, it was declared that the farmers going for new well construction must adopt micro-irrigation systems.

Livelihoods in greening urban areas

Urban areas do have a green cover though not to the extent of green cover in villages. The tree cover in urban areas does provide employment opportunities for the poor people. However, the status of livelihoods development in urban greening is not known and studies need to be done for future planning and action. It is generally observed that garden establishment, garden maintenance and landscaping involves contractors belonging to middle or upper middle class.

Despite the firms and corporations showing interest to engage poor and self-help group members in the activities mentioned, there is a gap in existing skill with the poor and SHG members. This gap can be addressed by providing exclusive training in building specific skills so that the scope for promoting this as a livelihood opportunity and as an enterprise gets widened.

At present, fruit bearing trees are available in few numbers in residential areas. But the fruits of these trees are not fetching an income to anyone. There exists a potential for creating this as a viable activity, provided there is a nexus between the house owners for promoting a seasonal livelihood activity for interested individuals.

ICT and livelihoods

The experience of DHAN's ICT for Poor programme shows a high relevance in livelihoods promotion and sustainability. The benefits realized from the members revealed that ICT with respect to livelihoods can be classified into two major types - ICT based livelihoods and ICT for livelihoods. ICT based livelihoods refers to the employment or income generated directly from the use of ICT tools, for example, computer training centres and village information centres, which help people to get employment. ICT for livelihoods refers to application of ICT tools in enhancing existing livelihoods, for example, VICs facilitating videoconferencing for linking people and the experts for knowledge to increase agriculture.

The benefits of ICT for livelihoods include creating employment opportunities, creating awareness, increasing yield and revenue, changing working style, reducing cost and time. In agriculture extension systems, ICT plays a significant role in transferring knowledge, facilitating integration of people and experts, and linking farmers with the market and other mainstream institutions that has the potential to raise the income of the farmers. Also, the ICT needs of farmers, women and youth brought out vividly that needs of different target groups vary widely which needs to be understood when defining the ICT services.

Youth and livelihoods

The human resource of the youth population has not been adequately tapped for enhancing livelihoods. Youth in urban areas have more access to livelihood opportunities than youth in other contexts. Youths have the potential to grab any new opportunity, in any sector, provided they are enabled with relevant knowledge and skill.

Involvement of youth in farming is a concern for everyone. Keeping farming as a tradition and retaining youth in farming are the major challenges to meet the future food security of the entire population. Making farming as an attractive and profitable enterprise can only be an answer for this issue. Advancement in agricultural technology, flow of financial capital for farming from banks, social recognition for farming youth, and fair trade and market opportunities are some of the prerequisites for youth to take up farming.

Education plays a major role in motivating youth to take up a particular livelihood. They need guidance to choose a meaningful career in relation to their skill set. Both the ICT and media connect the youth with the livelihood opportunities. Both the Government and NGOs can play a major role in it.

Micro justice and livelihoods

Micro justice is a mechanism for the poor, especially women, to make justice accessible and affordable against domestic violence, disputes relating to property and labour, and against social issues pertaining to them. It aims to get the justice timely, near their living place, enabling them to generate livelihood opportunities suiting to their knowledge and skills. Litigations are the major form of income drain among the poor families, as they spend money and time, lose their employment and undergo depression. Micro justice can be a solution to solve such disputes amicably; in some cases they need legal guidance to approach appropriate forums; in others, they need legal literacy to create awareness on different laws, acts and rules that affect the livelihoods of the poor. Laws related to labour issues, workplace legal immunities, and legal entitlements meant for employees' benefits are some of the critical areas which will have direct impact on one's livelihood.

REFLECTIONS

It is good that the Madurai Symposium has focused on the different dimensions of livelihood sustainability. It is evident from its various seminars, workshops and conventions. The unique feature of the symposium is that it fosters the people initiatives and their best practices. It indicates that the Symposium is going in right direction. Sustainability is the main issue. It would be, however, desirable to ensure the people sponsored and managed symposium for its ripple effect. Additionally, this biennial Symposium could be organised in places like Bhubaneswar in Orissa, Ranchi in Jharkhand, and in North-Eastern states of India.

- Dr Paran Gowda, Consultant, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, New Delhi

Sharing Best Practices of Financing Livelihoods



During the tenth Annual General Body Meeting of Kalanjiam Development Financial Services (KDFS), a session was held to share the best practices of financing livelihoods by KDFS. During the session, there was sharing by members about the impact of KDFS linkage, discussions for evolving new loan products, and sharing of the progress and achievements made by KDFS during the last year.

Ms V K Padmavathy, Chairperson, KDFS, shared the role that KDFS plays in mainstreaming credit linkages for its members, and described the good response from the members towards ROC type of linkage. She also spoke about the new apex banks which have come forward with special types of products and loans such as UPNRM and education. Moreover, she shared that the linkage between KDFS and NGOs in Rajasthan is appreciable.

From the Board of Director's report, Mr Joseph Raj, CEO, KDFS, shared the progress made during the last year, other achievements, and the plans for KDFS. He appreciated the programme and its staff for their professional work on these matters.

Members appreciated KDFS because of timely linkage. Most of them shared that because of delays by banks,

they were initially reluctant to link with them. However, through the credit linkage activities of KDFS, there has been a good impact at the bankers' level. Now, many bankers come forward for credit linkage only because of KDFS's intervention.

Sharing Best Practices of Social Security Programmes

People Mutuals is the insurance initiative of DHAN Foundation, which works for safeguarding the poor from risks and vulnerabilities. Self-help group federations of DHAN Foundation are the members of People Mutuals. During the eighth Annual General Body Meeting, attended by 252 participants, best practices in social security initiatives of DHAN Foundation were shared. People Mutuals, with its insurance experience and practice knowledge would initiate policy advocacy efforts with the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority and the Government for ensuring proper insurance programme systems and processes.

Mr S Balasubramanian, CEO, People Mutuals, presented the annual progress of 2010-11 and the annual plan of 2011-12. People Mutuals covered 10.76 lakh poor under life, health, livestock, micropension and crop insurances. During 2010-11, the members paid Rs 7.24 crore for the total coverage of Rs 3,331 crores. Considering the gaps in the mainstream insurance with insurance companies, People Mutuals facilitated the implementation of mutual insurance in SHG federations.

The coverage of people under all insurances amounted to 16 percent. People Mutuals, along with the Advanced Centre for Skill and Knowledge on Mutual Insurance (ASKMI) of Tata-Dhan Academy as a resource centre, conducted workshops, seminars, and two studies. It received Rs 2.38 crores of educational scholarship, which it expects to raise to Rs 3 crores to facilitate the provision of education to children of poor families. People Mutuals also mobilised financial resources of Rs 266 lakh from different international organisations.

People Mutuals has planned to reach 14 lakh people by March 2012 under all insurances. People would pay the



premium of Rs 10 crores for the insurance coverage of Rs 4500 crores. Micropension will be initiated in October 2011. It continues its efforts on policy advocacy and capacity building.

Mr Nadanagopal, Auditor of People Mutuals, presented the financial progress of People Mutuals, which he shared is more remarkable than last year. It has grown from Rs 8 lakhs to Rs 15 lakhs and has a surplus of Rs 1.04 lakhs. The future investment corpus has grown from Rs 26 lakhs to Rs 45 lakhs. Loan liabilities amount to Rs 2 lakhs, while the cash at bank is Rs 1.08 lakhs.

Outgoing trustees stressed the importance of insurance for the poor and advocated the federations for taking it up. Two members shared about the claim utilisation of life insurances for member children's education and house-leasing, and also hospitalisation benefit in health insurance. The education scholarship for their children provided sufficient cushioning to allow them to better manage their earnings without going into debt.

Mr M P Vasimalai, Chairman, People Mutuals, wished the growth rate of People Mutuals to the tune of 2 to 3 times. We should explore the insurance programmes based on the risks of the family and strengthen collaboration with the Government. Ways and means should be analysed for making People Mutuals into an insurance company.

Coastal Livelihoods: Challenges and Opportunities

"Water and sand are the key components of the coastal ecosystem," said Dr Baskar, Professor and Head, Soil Science, during the introduction of the convention on coastal livelihoods. "The coastal ecosystem is diverse, and includes sand dunes, estuaries, and mangroves, but the region is facing diverse climatic changes." Relating to livelihoods, he shared that "When the activities of humans are not against the ecosystem created by nature, we will have a positive environment for sustainable livelihoods. However, when the ecosystem is disturbed and destroyed, it will result in various disasters which will affect not just livelihoods, but also our lives."



The purpose of convention is to get a common understanding on the current status of the coastal livelihoods and to evolve its challenges and opportunities of coastal livelihoods, focusing, in particular, on fisheries, coastal agriculture, and animal husbandry. The convention also focused on identifying the livelihoods-related challenges in each sector and sub-sector, and brainstorm on how to solve these issues; the roles of each stakeholder were also discussed.

Mr P Lakshmanan, Regional Coordinator, Cuddalore, DHAN Foundation, said that animal husbandry is mainly seen as an alternative livelihood for the coastal community. It is mainly seen as an additional income-generating activity for small farmers and labourers, and for the landless people involved in coastal agriculture. The issues identified were related to marketing, cattle care, insurance, and fodder. For addressing some of these, opportunities are available when people are organized into groups, for example, primary producer groups or cooperatives. With such structures, they have improved sources of finance and better direct marketing opportunities; they can develop fodder in common places and promote animal health through common veterinary group services. Graduation of groups will bring sustainability in livelihoods.

Mr Rajan, Regional Coordinator, Ramnad, DHAN Foundation, said that fisheries livelihood has a very diversified ecosystem which is highly important and sensible towards the livelihoods. The ecosystem has a very wavering climate, which results in dramatic changes even in short time periods. Disturbing such ecosystems, even in the short term, will definitely have long-term adverse effects on livelihoods.

He identified many challenging factors in coastal areas including increasing the enrolment of members in fishery livelihoods, the high use of mechanized boats or banned nets, significant declines in the fish stock, and the destruction of mangroves and sand dunes; all of these undesirable activities will definitely put fishery livelihoods at risk. He also shared some opportunities, such as crab fattening and seaweed cultivation. He suggested that there should be an enabling policy with the participation of all stakeholders and the community; the implementation of favourable policies will help to stabilize and even enhance the livelihoods.

REFLECTIONS

The Madurai Symposium is a very good exposure to different development stakeholders including government officials and civil society members. The deliberations in the events are, in fact, rich in content and useful to understand and address the emerging dimensions of livelihood issues. It is very important to follow up on the resolutions of the events, not only by the government, but also by the other stakeholders including the civil society members.

- Mr K Jawahar, District Coordinator for Youth,
Nehru Yuva Kendra, Madurai

REFLECTIONS

It is a delight to be a part of the Madurai Symposium 2011. To me, it is a grand symposium dealing with various aspects of livelihoods. I feel that such a symposium would not only serve the community by addressing many operational livelihood issues, but also help in taking some policy decisions.

- Dr A Baskar, Professor and Head,
Department of Soil Science, PAJANCOA & RI, Karaikal

Mr Adhinarayanan, Faculty, Tata-Dhan Academy, shared that coastal agriculture is unique in its system and practices; according to its context, located at low lying areas. Coastal agriculture plays a major role in food production. Water infrastructure development is required for increasing the effectiveness of coastal agriculture. Some of the challenges he identified included increasing commercialization of fishery activity, the industrialization process, seawater intrusion, encroachment of water structures, destruction of coastal ecosystems, and disasters. He suggested strengthening conservation practices, and promoting alternative crops to create opportunities in coastal areas.

ICT and Livelihoods

The purpose of the convention on information and communications technology (ICT) and livelihoods was to sensitize participants on the usage of different ICT services for livelihoods and to assess the new ICT services needs of farmers, women, and youth. There were 185 participants, primarily from village information centres (VIC) who came to share how VIC were being used in their areas. The chief guests included Shri Vijoy Kumar Rai, Regional Representative Member Convener, CAPART, Hyderabad, and Dr Paran Gowda, Consultant, Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi.

In the lead paper presented by Mr R Senramar, Team Leader, ICT for Poor, DHAN Foundation, advantages and disadvantages of different ICT tools like newspapers, radio, television, mobile phones, computers, and the internet were shared. He also specified how ICT tools can benefit



livelihoods, particularly through generating awareness, reducing time and cost investments, creating employment opportunities, adding value to existing livelihoods, and influencing behavioural change.

He shared a case on how livelihoods were supported by a VIC in V Pudur village. Out of the students who completed computer course offered through the VIC, six have received employment opportunities, and almost 20 have now enrolled in higher studies, which will provide better employment opportunities later. Specifically, they shared that it was a great opportunity to get valuable computer operating skills without having to invest too much in that training, and 15 students gave the feedback that the course has created computer awareness in the villages. A sample survey and a series of 19 video conferences provided the feedback that agriculture-related video conferencing leads to increased yield and revenue.

Shri Vijoy Kumar Rai shared that the strength of this conference shows that ICT is helping to improve the livelihoods of villagers. He also remarked that this is a unique event in that all development stakeholders, for instance the community, NGOs, and the Government, are collaborating for holistic development. He was happy and proud to see that CAPART is also supporting the village knowledge centre project, and, in that manner, supporting the livelihoods of the rural poor.

Dr Paran Gowda asked the participants about the usage of laptops given by government for farmers. He remarked that the expert centres and village knowledge centres will definitely influence the livelihoods of poor villagers.

The conference included reflections from several community members, a few of which are highlighted following.

Indira, from Kalapur village, spoke of the impact of ICT on agriculture. She shared her experience of attending a video conference with an agriculture officer for addressing a paddy disease. The agriculture officer was able to suggest a treatment, which her husband was able to procure, and the crop problem was quickly solved. She shared that "This is the first time that I have participated in a video conference. It was really useful, and I think this will help make the information resulting from research reach out to more people."

Ms Bhoopathy from Ethnangalam explained how ICT can be used to enhance existing livelihoods. As a government primary health care nurse, one of her roles is to upload a daily report of her primary health care centre's activities to the central server. She did not have any computer knowledge, so she joined a short term course at Ethnangalam VIC and learned how to use a computer. She has now bought a system and is happy to share that she is able to do all of the reporting by herself.

Workshop on Micro Justice and Livelihoods



DHAN Foundation's Kalanjiam programme has led to significant improvements in the lives of its members. However, structures for availing legal support are currently in the early stages of development. The purpose of this workshop was to share the concept of micro justice—a term that encompasses the concept of helping people meet their basic needs and fully avail their rights—and explain how legal support through microfinance can help to rid members of the issues they may face in the workplace or home. The workshop included participants from the District Legal Aid Authority, CEWAS, Kalanjiam Mutual Movement, Madras High Court, federation leaders, and members and leaders from law and social studies colleges.

Ms Anusha, Legal Consultant, DHAN Foundation, explained the concept of micro justice. Micro justice is an umbrella term for a variety of initiatives that provide legal service to the poorest people. The poor face several issues in the workplace and in their households, many of which may negatively affect their livelihoods. Some of these issues include sexual harassment, usurious money lending, and kandhu vatty and meter vatty traps. The focus of this workshop was to raise awareness about the different rights, and explain how to get justice in cases of domestic violence, usury, and similar problems. It also explained strategies to acquire micro justice, including organizing committees at different levels in the federation.

Mr Vallinayagam, Consultant, Working with Panchayat programme of DHAN Foundation, described the judgement practices prevalent in villages in earlier times.

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I believe the Madurai Symposium 2011 has fulfilled its core objective of advancing development for sustainable livelihoods. It is incredible for its unique platform of various stakeholders, particularly of the active community participation.

- Dr P Nasurudeen, Professor and Head, Department of Agricultural Economics, PAJANCOA & RI, Karaikal

The members involved in a dispute (whether between individuals or communities) would meet with the village chief who would be able to sort out the issues without resorting to punishment. Such traditional practices are being rejuvenated at present through the micro justice efforts in DHAN Foundation.

Mr N Sami Durai, Advocate, Madurai Bench, Madras High Court, Madurai, talked about the different Acts supporting women, particularly those for the poor. Everyone has the freedom to access their legal rights. Mediation centres are there to address the issues between spouses. He requested DHAN Foundation to establish mediation centres for the legal benefit of the members of its people institutions. If the services offered by mediation centres are properly utilized, he said, the effectiveness of micro justice and stability in livelihoods will automatically improve.

Mr Maha Prabhu, CEWAS, described the types of activities done at CEWAS, which includes bringing justice on all issues for women from all socio-economic levels and providing livelihood support for the victims.

The leaders of the micro justice committee at the federation level expressed their experiences in getting legal support to rectify the indebtedness among a few of the members by interactions and sharing by the concerned parties for the resolution of the problem.

IWMI-TATA Water Policy Research Programme - 'Technologies Tested and Promoted in Project Areas'

To review a decade's experience of water management and policy research, a workshop was conducted by the IWMI-TATA Water Policy Research Programme (ITP) and included 35 participants from the Agricultural College and Research Institute (AC&RI), DHAN Foundation, Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage Board (TWAD), Malar Trust, the Agricultural Engineering Department, and Eureka/Achmea, the Netherlands.



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The Madurai Symposium 2011 was an eye opening experience for me. As an agriculture graduate, I came to know how technical intervention is possible for small and marginal farmers. Our village youth also have so much untapped potential, so DHAN Foundation's initiatives should be used as a milestone for other stakeholders. To me, the best lesson was how to identify different agricultural interventions that can generate better employment opportunities.

- Amitha, Student, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University

During the workshop, experiences were shared, the research findings were disseminated, and technologies for water conservation and for income generation from agriculture were described; specifically, information was shared about successful implementation of technologies in micro-irrigation, soil conservation, and labour management for improving the farming community.

"Capacity-building to farmers is the key factor for the success of technologies in agriculture" said Dr K Palanisami, Director, International Water Management Institute (IWMI). The technologies should be appropriate as well as affordable. He described the IWMI-TATA Water Policy Research programme (ITP) experience and the Farmer's Publication Action Research Programme (FPARP). He shared that the technologies were helpful to the farmers to increase their income through reducing their expenses while simultaneously increasing their yield.

Dr Arivudai Nambi, Malar Trust, shared that farm mechanization is the best approach for managing the shortage of labour and will reduce the cost of cultivation. He stressed the importance of traditional water bodies conservation, organic agriculture, effective engagement of labour in MGNREGA, and conservation of forests as some of the major areas to be enforced for the development of agriculture.

Mr Shankar Prasad, DHAN Foundation, shared the experience of IWMI-TATA research at Magadi. The technology for cultivating carrot during the rainy season by using the ridges and furrow method was introduced. Subsequently, the income of the carrot growers was good. A low-cost vermi-compost unit was helpful for producing 1.2 tonnes of vermi-compost and vermiwash, both of which are useful for reducing pests through organic methods.

Prof. C R Shanmugham shared that many tanks have not been desilted for more than 60 years and estimated that "If we desilt them, this would be equal to the creation of 100 new dams."

Greening Urban Development and Livelihoods

How can we make Madurai "clean and green"? What are the livelihoods opportunities that can be promoted to encourage the greening of the city? These are a couple of the questions that helped frame the workshop on greening urban development. The workshop sought to identify alternative livelihoods, share experiences, and find ways of mainstreaming the concept of "environment and livelihoods". The workshop, conducted by Madurai Green, included as participants, students and faculty from Annai Theresa Training Institute, St. Joseph's ITI, and CSI Jeyaraj Annapackiam College of Nursing, and members of resident associations. Guests included Mr R K Bharathi, IFS Chief Conservator of Forest, Madurai; Mr Mura, Poet; Dr Badri Narayanan, Eye Doctor, Government Rajaji Hospital; and Mr T Jeya Rajasekar, President, Medical Management Consultant.

"There are many government programmes which support the protection of the environment," said Mr R K Bharathi, "but the general public are not aware of those schemes. Campaigns regarding those schemes need to take place." He added that farmers, institutions, and industries, especially education institutions, should take more responsibility for planting tree saplings. He shared that "About Rs 92 lakhs has been allocated for planting 2 lakhs trees in educational institutions and industries during this financial year. The tree plantation scheme in the Vaigai river basin has the scope to provide livelihoods to the poor villagers mainly in conservation and management" and explained how increasing the tree-cover in urban areas would also help reduce temperatures. However, he added that the forest department is facing human resources scarcity; supporters and volunteers from the public are required to help protect trees.

Mr Manu shared that we need to invest on trees at least as much as we invest in our children, remarking that most trees actually give back more than what our children would give! "It is our responsibility and duty" he said "to protect the environment, birds, and other animals for the benefit of the younger generation."

Dr Badri Narayanan reflected that planting tree saplings and protecting the environment should advance like people



movements have advanced. At the same time, people need to be informed of how to properly care for trees in urban areas.

Everyone present at the workshop felt strongly about greening Madurai through the creation of sustainable livelihoods. It was also discussed that solid waste management can be implemented by NGOs as a means to provide alternative livelihoods. The Madurai Corporation can develop compulsory plans for buildings in which the floor plans exceed 1000 square feet. Participants also felt that the banks of the Vaigai river can be renovated and landscaped with useful trees. The cultivation of herbal and medicinal plants can be encouraged in suitable parts of the city, and livelihoods can be created around making herbal juices.

Many participants shared that the process of urbanization is unavoidable. Rather than lamenting on the negative aspects of urbanization, we should try to identify alternatives that can make citizens take responsibility to promote a green environment and ultimately, create a new image of what urbanization can look like.

Workshop on Youth and Livelihoods

The workshop on youth and livelihoods organized by Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development and DHAN Foundation included students and professionals from the District Employment Office, Livelihood Initiative with Functional Education (LIFE); Nehru Yuva Kendra, Shivani Institute of Technology, Shivani School of Business Management, Tata-Dhan Academy, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Gandhi Museum, and Madurai Kamaraj University. Special guests included Mr M Rajamanickam, IAS, Sub Collector and Sub Divisional Magistrate, Devikulam, Kerala, and Prof. Rangasamy, Secretary, Gandhi Museum. The purpose of the workshop was to share success stories of various development institutions in building and sustaining livelihoods for the youth section of the country.

Mr Rajamanickam remarked that "the confidence of youth is bigger than the Mount Everest" and that youth can

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The seminar on youth and livelihoods was one of the best seminars I have ever attended. I got to hear the voices of youths, experts, and practitioners, and we had many intensive discussions regarding different aspects of livelihoods. I would say that the initiative for employing youth is unique and very important. It is a challenge for the country to tackle unemployment, and if other stakeholders take initiative, as DHAN Foundation has, we can make big advancements in addressing this problem.

- Leelawati Shrinivasan, Gandhi Museum

achieve anything through hard work. He shared that while some of us may be born into poor families, if we die poor, we are the only ones to blame. Youth need to get into the practice of setting goals for themselves in order to achieve success in this world; if this is done, obstacles can easily be overcome.

Prof. Rangasamy shared that youth should decide on the right livelihoods. "Value and ethics-based livelihoods are essential for the advancement of society" he said. While there is nothing wrong with having an aim to earn money, the ways in which this money is earned should be through ethical livelihoods. Agriculture remains as a major livelihood, which can be promoted for sustainable livelihoods of youth.

Mr R Rajendran, Programme Officer, LIFE, DHAN Foundation, shared that youth should get employment opportunities in their native villages themselves; youth should take efforts to learn, practice, and protect traditional livelihoods. Labour intensive activities should be reintroduced in rural areas for sustainable livelihoods of youth.

Ms Leelavathi Sreenivasan, Catering Resource Person, shared that youth should consume healthy food and live a healthy life. Livelihoods can be sustainable if the person practicing the livelihoods is healthy. Small-scale industries can be the right livelihood for youth, and youth could also explore select self-employment opportunities.

Mr I Balu, Project Executive, DHAN Foundation, suggested that the government should implement an employment guarantee scheme for educated youth. Youth should be able to stay in their villages and undertake agriculture activities as a career. To create a youth-oriented livelihood scheme, youth should become involved in the governance process. Mr Joshua, Programme Officer, Mohammed Sadak Polytechnic College, Ramnad, said that NGOs should assist youth in getting bank support for entrepreneurial activities. He also suggested that coastal youth can be involved in fisheries activities through new technologies for sustainable livelihoods.

Participants suggested that youth can be involved in producing value added products, and that there is a good opportunity for youth to be involved in marketing small millet products.

