

Advancing Development: New Social Order



Madurai Symposium 2023
Fostering Inclusive Development

September 23-27, 2023

You must not lose faith in humanity.
Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the
ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.

– Mahatma Gandhi

The DHAN Foundation embraces a profound belief that development is a harmonious endeavour involving the collaboration of diverse stakeholders. This principle of collaboration is deeply ingrained in DHAN's philosophy, and the organization has consistently worked alongside various actors in the development landscape, with a special focus on empowering communities across different contexts and regions. The city of Madurai extends a warm invitation to all those who share an interest in development and to those who champion its causes. An exceptional event, the "Madurai Symposium," is set to take place from September 23-27, 2023. This upcoming gathering marks the eleventh edition of this biennial symposium, meticulously conducted by The DHAN Academy (TDA), a repository of developmental wisdom.

During this symposium, a multitude of stakeholders, each contributing unique perspectives on development, will converge. Among these diverse participants are Community Organizations, Civil Societies/NGOs, Government Representatives, Banking and Insurance Professionals, CSR Foundations, Donors, Philanthropists, and Academics. The symposium's focal point revolves around the exchange of insights and the sharing of lessons derived from hands-on experiences. These shared experiences pave the way for a more comprehensive understanding of effective strategies to uplift underprivileged and marginalized communities.

Reflecting on the previous edition of this symposium held in 2021, we witnessed the remarkable engagement of

numerous stakeholders who generously shared their insights into nurturing community self-governance ("swaraj") and the methods of fortifying this self-governance to steer development along a sustainable trajectory. Indeed, the symposium provides a unique platform to recognize that when communities take ownership of development initiatives and actively participate, the outcomes ripple with profound and meaningful impacts, creating a tapestry of holistic progress that benefits all.

Call for New Social Order

Amidst lingering inequality, we confront a pivotal juncture for transformation. Mahatma Gandhi's wisdom resonates: "Poverty is the worst form of violence." Our quest for development must be all-encompassing, realizing inclusive growth for every individual. The ideals of Antyodaya and Sarvodaya are central to this vision.

While progress has occurred, it hasn't reached all. Inequalities persist due to a lack of equality, equity,

ethics, and empathy. This moral dilemma stems from denying essential resources and services to many, tarnishing their deserved quality of life.

To reshape society, we must infuse the four 'Es': Equality, Equity, Ethics, and Empathy. Amid rampant inequality, true

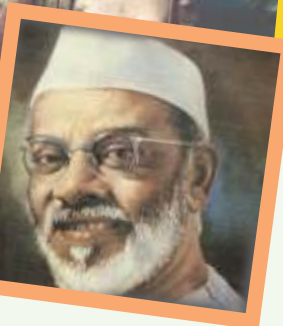
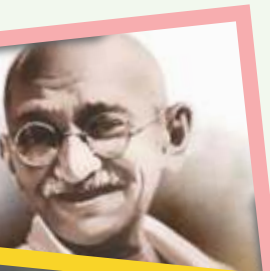


development eludes us. By weaving inclusivity into our initiatives, we can ensure everyone is invested in collective growth.

Aiming for a society where every voice counts, guided by non-violence and non-exploitation, demands nurturing an inclusive culture valuing every life and aspiration. We must break down barriers and embrace unbiased equality.

Together, we sow the seeds of change, fostering values of empathy, compassion, and unity. Inclusive development surpasses policy; it's a commitment to extend progress to all.

Perspectives for the New Social Order (NSO)



The New Social Order (NSO) has an ambitious vision of societal transformation, drawing inspiration from the teachings of iconic figures like Gandhi, Buddha, and Kumarappa. This vision is deeply rooted in principles of justice, equity, self-sufficiency, decentralization, and sustainability. The NSO places a strong emphasis on resurrecting traditional customs to foster unity and harmony within society, guided by fundamental values such as equity, sustainability, resilience, democracy, and inclusivity. Central to its core is the promotion of justice, equal rights, and compassion to bridge the divides and cultivate mutual understanding among diverse groups. Sustainability is paramount, aligning ecological, social, and economic dimensions, while local

wisdom enriches contemporary strategies with heritage. Collective collaboration is seen as the key to driving transformative change, with a central mission of empowering marginalized communities, facilitated by education's role as a catalyst for critical thinking. Ensuring digital equity and establishing robust social safety nets are deemed essential for risk management and disaster preparedness.

This envisioned new social order finds its philosophical grounding in the teachings of Gandhi, Buddha, and Kumarappa, which stress the importance of justice, equity, self-sufficiency, decentralization, and sustainability. Drawing from the Four Noble Truths of Buddhism, the NSO acknowledges the root of suffering in human desires and seeks liberation through ethical living and mental cultivation. The Eightfold Path serves as a guiding moral framework, seamlessly integrating wisdom, ethics, and mindfulness into daily life. Wealth accumulation is pursued through honest labor, personal pleasure is sought with ethical considerations, knowledge acquisition is coupled with moral character, and commerce is guided by ethical principles. Science is harnessed for universal welfare, religion emphasizes compassion and sacrifice, and politics upholds ethical values. Parasitic and predatory economic models are replaced by productive, community-centered, and service-oriented alternatives.

A critical aspect of the NSO is its recognition of the vital need for humanity to harmonize with the natural world, prompting a reevaluation of our relationship with the environment. The NSO underscores the foundational principles of ethics and morality, promoting non-violence, non-exploitation, and impartial equality as guiding tenets

for all actions. The NSO envisions a shift towards decentralized societies that value individual choice, interconnectedness, and a lifelong commitment to learning. Its ultimate goal is to elevate the quality of life for all, underpinned by a steadfast focus on principles of equity, compassion, and sustainability. In sum, the NSO presents a multifaceted framework that invites collective action to reshape the world into a more harmonious and inclusive society.

Call of Sustainable Development Goals



Promoting SDG goals is crucial for a better world. SDG 3, Health for all, ensures universal well-being, focusing on accessible and quality healthcare. SDG 1 and 10, No Poverty and Reduced Inequality, tie into financial inclusion, empowering households through access to financial services for economic stability. SDG 6, Clean Water and Sanitation, improves WASH access, reducing

diseases. SDG 8 and 13, Decent Work and Economic Growth, and Climate Action, respectively, support sustainable livelihoods and tackle climate change. SDG 5, Gender Equality, empowers women, promoting social equity. SDG 2 and 12, Zero Hunger and Responsible Consumption, connect to local food systems, ensuring food

security and sustainability. SDG 4, Quality Education, equips individuals for meaningful contributions. By embracing these goals, we achieve a holistic, equitable, and sustainable future for all.

Health for all – Access to quality Health care:

Despite increase in life span, alarming trends of morbidity in the Indian society is one of the important grave concerns. The Indian health care system is marked by inequality in terms of access by poor, availability of health care services and what is more they are not able to afford quality care. The alternative systems of health care is yet untapped which have potential for healthy way of life. Despite the National Rural Health Mission and Jan Arogya Scheme, the entitlements for poor under them are quite elusive to reach by vast majority of the poor and low income families due to lack of awareness. There is a need for addressing the gap by ensuring the reach of entitlements to the needy. Civil societies including Federations of self-help groups, some governmental schemes and programmes successfully demonstrated the models of effective health care system including alternative health care system which are easily accessible and affordable for all. The symposium will deliberate and bring to fore what makes these systems quite effective in reaching all segments of population and provide replicable models.

Financial Inclusion of all Households - Access to financial Services

Access to basic financial services, Savings, Credit, Remittance/payments, Investment/Insurance, Pension and Transaction including digital (SCRIPT) through formal financial institutions particularly banks remain a big

challenge despite several initiatives such as Jan Dhan, social security schemes, etc. Besides the physical barriers people particularly poor face attitudinal issues at the financial institutions and the knowledge barriers. Large segments of poor people still excluded and the ease of banking is quite uneven across the regions. The poor become the victim to the usurious lending practices of formal and informal institutions without being aware about the right choices. The knowledge events convened as part of New Social Order would debate the ways and means of ascertaining the financial inclusion to all households such as establishing financial counseling centres by the civil societies, CSR Foundations in their respective operational areas in order to educate the poor on expenditure minimalism. The events would showcase many best practices from the traditions and culture of the community institutions.

Access to WASH

The right to access to safe water, sanitation and improved hygiene is still remain an unfulfilled agenda as the basic rights denied for many people living in water stressed regions. The passive on-looking by the community on decimating surface water bodies including water pollution in the name of development s continuously on the rise. Despite many planners have suggested the basic water rights for all in getting adequate quantity and quality of water, improved sanitation and hygiene from individual households to village to district to state, a strong need of transformative/sustainable behavioral change practices by the community on effective water harvesting, storage usage with conservation and development approach is essential. The Symposium would enlist the new social order for the theme on WASH from the experiences of communities and other relevant stakeholders.

Ability to pursue Sustainable Livelihoods

A new social order centered on sustainable livelihoods prioritizes the well-being of people and the planet. In general, and more particularly the poor and the marginalized small farmers encounter challenges in meeting their livelihoods needs with dignity and sustainability. The multitude challenges including dominating market forces in ensuring genuine price to the producers/products in order to ensure livelihoods for all elude the practice of New Social Order. It is, therefore, an effort to organize the farmers and other producers under the umbrella of FPOs/producer companies to show them way in meeting the sustainable farming livelihoods. Madurai Symposium would highlight the success stories, show case the case studies from the grassroots and evolve strategies and new social order for advancing the small farming eco systems.

Gender at the heart of development:

Gender is one of the vital development concepts ever since the women empowerment is seen as an important agenda to fulfill. A new social order that prioritizes women's empowerment could lead to significant improvements in gender equality, economic growth, and social justice. This could involve measures such as equal access to education and job opportunities, protection from gender-based violence, and leadership roles in decision-making processes. By empowering women, we can create a more inclusive society. The symposium at Madurai would deliberate the gender mainstreaming challenges at households, community, Institution and State level. The participants and the conveners of the Knowledge mart would come out with making Gender and SDG get realized by all the stakeholders with concrete actions.

Climate Change

Climate Change is the major threat to the society with unprecedented risks and vulnerabilities that emerge out of floods, cyclones and droughts. Prioritizing sustainable and renewable energy sources, investing in blue-green infrastructure, and promoting eco-friendly transportation and consumption practices are very much imperative. The poor are susceptible to effect of Climate change and its negative impact. The new social order on protecting the individuals, society and the nation from the ill effects of Climate change would be major part of deliberations in the symposium.

Promoting Local Food Systems with focus on Small Millets:



The current year 2023 being dedicated as International Year of Small Millets, there exists an important need to promote and encourage local food system among the individuals and different sections of the society. Shift from junk foods, unhealthy foods to nutrition secure local food system, community-based agriculture and food distribution, prioritizing sustainability and equity is seen important to advance the development on new social order.

Education with creative and original thinking, Skill building and Digital Inclusion:

The present education system ought to develop vernacular based curricula and education materials to facilitate critical thinking, creativity and problem solving. The deviation from the commercial education system to education as a right to all with sound understanding on Indian tradition, culture, virtues etc to be instilled in the young minds will bring the fruits of well-rounded, empathetic, and socially responsible individuals who can contribute to a more equitable and sustainable society. A new social order in the seminar would deliberate on education for sustainable development. The modern society needs to get relevant and context-specific skill sets with access to digital services will ensure the achievement of SDGs.

Moving towards New Social Order

We invite participants to engage in a profound deliberation on shaping a new social order rooted in vital themes: health, gender, livelihoods, education, financial inclusion, and conservation. This collective discourse, encompassing self, family, institutions, and society, holds the potential to redefine our shared future. This discourse is an opportunity to collectively envision a world where health, gender, livelihoods, education, financial inclusion, and conservation converge harmoniously, fostering a new social order that transcends boundaries, empowers all, and ensures a brighter, more sustainable future.

Conferences, Seminars, and Workshops

The highlighted sections above emphasize several areas where stakeholders are engaging in the development of essential new practices towards a new social order.

The Madurai Symposium 2023 will provide significant opportunities for development stakeholders to deliberate on the issues of fostering a new social order across all sections of society. This will be achieved through a series of conferences, seminars, and workshops. These knowledge-sharing events are poised to serve as a platform for cross-learning by showcasing best practices in New Social Order.

People Conventions

Given the multifaceted and context-specific challenges of the society, the organizers of the Symposium aim to engage major stakeholders in sharing successful practices and processes. Various social groups such as women's self-help groups, small and marginal farmers representing diverse natural ecosystems, fisherfolk, and landless individuals will be part of these conventions. The objective is to extract the experiences of these community stakeholders through dialogues, round-table discussions, and focus groups. This interactive approach will ultimately contribute to a deeper understanding that can drive fostering New Social Order.

Public Events

Cultural Evenings: The revival and preservation of traditional folk arts is a pressing need that retains relevance today. The Symposium will provide a platform for folk and traditional artists to showcase a range of cultural programs related to traditions and local culture. Issues and women's empowerment. This initiative will enable development stakeholders to promote and safeguard traditional folk arts, which are integral symbols of ancient Indian culture.

Exhibition: Raising public awareness on responsibilities in fostering New Social Order. In various developmental sectors. The entrepreneurs will display and exhibits their business products, paintings, and skills, showcasing the processes and pathways of building New Social Order. Symposium 2023 will draw city residents to witness the talents and creativity of underprivileged individuals and communities through the exhibition of crafts and wares.

Development Films: Screenings of development films for development stakeholders, including the general public, form a vital component of the Symposium. These films will present compelling experiences of diverse development interventions, aiming to sensitize stakeholders, communities, and the public at large about various development initiatives. Notably exceptional films will receive recognition and appropriate awards.

Date: September 23-27, 2023

Venue: Madurai

Nominations for Events

The Facilitation Committee of Madurai Symposium 2023 extends an invitation to NGOs, academic and research institutions, government organizations, industries, banks, donor organizations, entrepreneurs, producer companies, and cooperatives to host conventions, seminars, workshops, and conferences aligned with the Symposium's theme. The Committee is committed to offering logistical support and other necessary assistance for events organized by these host organizations.

Madurai Symposium so far

- 2003 - Advancing Development
- 2005 - Advancing Development
- 2007 - Advancing Development towards Building Alliances
- 2009 - Advancing Development towards Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
- 2011 - Advancing Development towards Sustainable Livelihoods
- 2013 - Governance for Advancing Development
- 2015 - Localizing Sustainable Development Goals
- 2017 - Building Resilience for Sustaining Development
- 2019 - Women Empowerment for Sustaining Development
- 2021 - Advancing Development: Community Swaraj



**Facilitation Committee of
Madurai Symposium 2023**

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