

Advancing Development : New Social Order



Pune Symposium 2024

Fostering Development Knowledge

2nd and 3rd February, 2024

Venue : Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, BMCC Road, Deccan Gymkhana
Pune – 411004, Maharashtra.

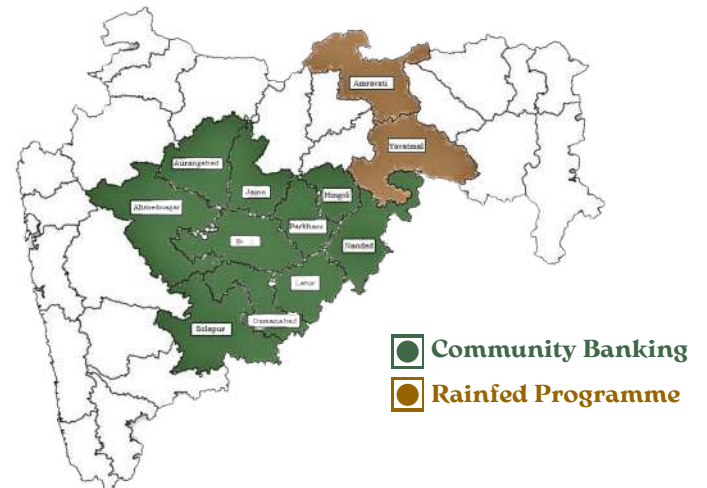
*You must not lose faith in humanity.
Humanity is an ocean; if a few drops of the
ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.*
– Mahatma Gandhi

DHAN Foundation as a development institution with its strong belief system in collaborative work has been engaging with all development stakeholders with particular emphasis on communities across contexts and States to advance the development, to impact and reduce poverty and its various manifestations. Among many ways of engaging with stakeholders, DHAN has been instrumental in facilitating the organization of a unique knowledge consortium as a biennial event since 2003 in Madurai called Madurai Symposium. Given the Pan India presence of DHAN and the need to engage with stakeholders in various States, regional symposiums have been organised since 2022 as a biennial event in the selected cities of India. The one we organised in the year 2022 under the banner “Pune Symposium” was first of its kind in Maharashtra and has witnessed more than 300 community participants across ten districts of Maharashtra that attracts various stakeholders that include NABARD, Bank of Maharashtra, MSRLM, MAVIM, Agricultural Institutions, Skill Institutes, Academic institutions, HDFC Bank, TATA AIA etc. that serves as a knowledge platform to share and learn from each other's experiences and practices to serve the underprivileged and deprived communities.

DHANs presence in Maharashtra

DHAN Foundation through its Kalanjiam Community Banking Programme has initiated its scaling-up process in Maharashtra with the funding support of Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT) in Solapur district in the year 2004.

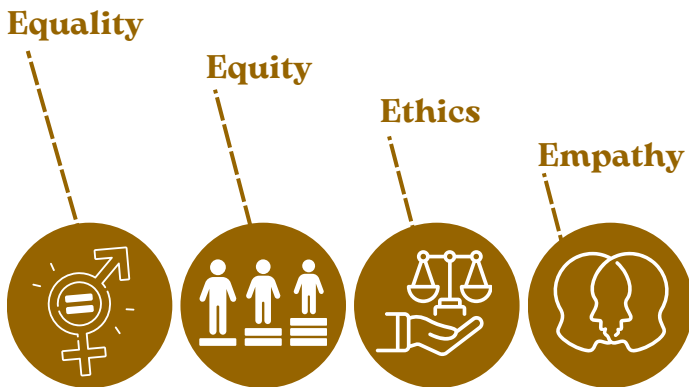
Inspired by the DHAN's model of Kalanjiam Community Banking Programme, the Maharashtra Vikas Mahamandal (MAVIM) – Women Development Corporation of Maharashtra State government collaboration with DHAN for its resource support and as a result of that DHANs programme has been expanded to the entire Marathwada region thus covering ten more districts. Presently, DHAN has its presence in 8 districts of Maharashtra through its Community Banking Programme (Aurangabad, Beed, Hingoli, Latur, Nanded, Osmanabad, Parbhani and Solapur and Rain-fed programme in Amaravati and Yavatmal districts and Financial Inclusion programmes sponsored by RBI and Axis Bank Ltd in all the above mentioned districts apart from Ahmednagar and Jalna thereby serving more than 50000 poor families. Our more than a decade of work in the State of Maharashtra has a multi-dimensional development focus and our flagship community banking programme and rainfed programme under the Self-Help Groups' and FPOs' approach has empowered – socially, financially and economically thousands of poor women and marginalised farming community.



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 development to many, tarnishing their deserved quality of life. To reshape society, we must infuse the four 'Es': Equality, Equity, Ethics, and Empathy.



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 Buddha, Gandhiji and Vinobha Bhave. 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 Buddha, Gandhiji and VINO bhavé, 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. VINO bhavé's fivefold approach which includes non-violence, truth, non-possession, non-attachment and brahmacharya (control over senses) expresses the desirable traits for the new social order.

A critical aspect of the NSO is its recognition of the vital need for humanity to harmonize with the natural world, prompting a re-evaluation 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. SDGs 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 5, Gender Equality, empowers women, promoting social equity. SDGs 2 and 12, Zero Hunger and Responsible Consumption, connect to local food systems, ensuring food security and sustainability. By embracing these goals, we achieve a holistic, equitable, and sustainable future for all.



Health for all – Access to quality Health care :

Despite the increase in life span, alarming trends of morbidity in Indian society are one of the important grave concerns. The Indian healthcare system is marked by inequality in terms of access by the poor, availability of healthcare services and what is more, they are not able to afford quality care. The alternative systems of health care are yet untapped and have the potential for a healthy way of life. Despite the National Rural Health Mission and Jan Arogya Scheme, the entitlements for the poor under them are quite elusive to reach by vast majority of the poor and low-income families due to a lack of awareness.

There is a need to address 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 healthcare system including alternative healthcare system which are easily accessible and affordable for all. The symposium will deliberate and bring to the fore what makes these systems quite effective in reaching all segments of the 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 the poor face attitudinal issues at financial institutions and knowledge barriers. Large segments of poor people are still excluded and the ease of banking is quite uneven across the regions. The poor become the victim of the usurious lending practices of formal and informal institutions without being aware of the right choices. The knowledge events convened as part of the New Social Order would debate the ways and means of ascertaining the financial inclusion of 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. To realise that dream, Axis Bank Ltd have awarded DHAN to implement the Community Financial Literacy Cells (CFLCs) in nine districts of Maharashtra predominantly in Marathwada region to reach out the poor members accessing towards financial literacy. Also, DHAN has been awarded with RBI's Scaling Up Financial Literacy Project that aims to reach out 10 lakh individuals in next three years in ten districts of Maharashtra again largely in Marathwada region.

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



their way to meeting sustainable farming livelihoods. Maharashtra Symposium would highlight the success stories, showcase the case studies from the grassroots and evolve strategies and new social order for advancing the small farming ecosystems.

Promoting Local Food Systems with focus on Small Millets

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



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.

Workshops

Pune Symposium 2024 will be a festival celebrating of the community-led development process and the larger impact on the life of communities. The primary stakeholders of development, being communities, would take center stage in the Symposium and it would be an exhibition of the power of communities in all the events. Notable among the achievements are the self-help groups and their federations as the fulcrum of development across India for addressing deprivations of women, their empowerment, and the vast social capital. Community work in water conservation and judicious use of water – the revival of water bodies and thereby the ecosystems have been an exemplary model of sustainable development impact. There are many unique community-led health programmes across the country influencing the mainstream for a larger impact. So also, in several other development themes.

The symposium will have six workshops in total for the two days to provide a platform for the community as the

primary stakeholders (demand stream) and the other stakeholders comprising of supply and enabling stream to share their work and the impact on communities from the perspectives of institution building by the communities, community governance, and leadership, community contributions towards appropriate policies by the Government. The successful experience of collaboration and long-term partnership by the mainstream institutions with communities would be deliberated and knowledge exchanged for wider adoption. Needless to say, these knowledge events would provide a stage to facilitate cross-learning through best practices in the process of community-led development.

People Conventions

The Symposium will have two people conventions in two days. People conventions would be the signature events of the symposium as the focus is on “New Social Order” in the development process. The conventions would provide great opportunities for the communities and leaders to share their success stories focusing on the participatory and inclusive process in steering the development programmes through their institutions, unique methods, including self-regulation practices, and also future pathways whereby communities can take charge of the development programmes from the designing stage itself. The conventions would be inspiring communities at large, the stakeholders in the supply stream of mainstream institutions, and the enabling stream of civil societies/NGOs and other development foundations in the focus areas of the themes mentioned above. The conventions aim to elicit the experiences of these community stakeholders through dialogues, round-tables and focus group discussions which ultimately result in greater learning that has to be taken out of those experiences for advancing community empowerment.

Nominations for Events

The Facilitation Committee of the Development Symposium, 2024 invites NGOs, academic and research institutions, Government Organizations, industries, banks, donor organizations, entrepreneurs, producer companies, and cooperatives to host conventions, seminars, workshops, and conferences on topics relevant to the theme of the Symposium. The Committee would facilitate logistics and other needed support for the events organized by the host organizations.

Program Schedule

Day 1 (02nd February, 2024)

A. People Convention

Showcasing the best practices of New Social Order in People Institutions – Kalanjiam Way

B. Seminars/Workshops

1. Workshop on “Institutionalized practices of New Social Order by Kalanjiam women members and their family of MOP declared members”
2. Showcasing the impact of SHG-Bank linkage of a branch on the economic empowerment of women
3. Fostering New Social Order in Building Community Resilience – DHAN’s way

Day 2 (03rd February, 2024)

A. People Convention

New Social Order in Agricultural Productivity Enhancement – Perspectives, Practices, Challenges and Way Forward.

B. Seminars/Workshops

1. Advancing Financial Inclusion for New Social Order through community-led financial literacy initiatives.
2. SUHAM Federations: New Social Order for Community Owned Healthcare System.
3. Role of CSR in promoting and sustaining the Community-led institutions: New Social Order

“ It is only when our life proceeds within bounds and in an accepted, disciplined way, that the mind can be free ”

- Vinoba Bhave



Glimpses of Pune Symposium 2022



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