

Advancing Development : New Social Order



Vizag Symposium 2024

Fostering Development Knowledge

29th and 30th January, 2024

Venue : Alluri Sitaramaraju Vignana Kendram,
D.No.29-13-13, Lalita Colony,
Visakhapatnam- 530020

“The Swaraj of my dream is the poor man’s Swaraj. What we mean and want through Poorna Swaraj is an awakening among the masses, a knowledge among them of their true interest and ability to serve that interest against the whole world, ...harmony, freedom from aggression from within or without, and a progressive improvement in the economic condition of the masses...”

- Mahatma Gandhi

Introduction

DHAN believes “Community Swaraj” is the key to sustainable development. DHAN’s understanding of community swaraj is centered on promotion and mentoring of democratic, self-governed people institutions operating on universal ethics and values towards enhancing quality of life and freedom of choices for the deprived. DHAN pioneers in institution building for poverty alleviation with people governance and management. It wants to achieve freedom of choice to the poor and marginalized communities by enabling them to determine and develop the meaning of their lives, their identities and their quality of life. DHAN strongly considers Poverty Reduction and Grassroots Democracy as two eyes of Development. DHAN has help supported in promotion of more than 300 self-managed democratic community-based organizations across various states and themes.

DHAN Foundation as a development institution with its strong belief 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 mart 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 were organised since 2022 as a biennial event in the select cities of India.

Vizag Symposium

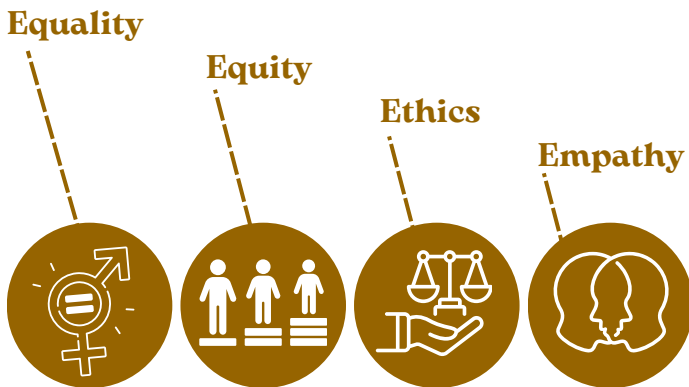
More than two decades of DHAN’s work in Vizag with several development programmes. Keeping community banking programme as a core and spreading its reach by way of various other interventions namely livelihoods development, healthcare advancement, mutual services for risk mitigation, access to entitlement to our member families and development of urban water resources are significant in helping nearly 35,000 poor families to come out of poverty in this region. Out of 98 Corporation wards, DHAN is working with poor families in 52 wards of Grater Vizag Municipal Corporation.

The local people institutions of DHAN Collective have organised Vizag Symposium in the year 2022 which witnessed more than 300 community leaders, government officials, CSR partners and other stakeholders have come together from the various parts of Andra Pradesh and Telangana. The Vizag Symposium serves as a knowledge platform to share and learn from each other’s experiences and practices to serve the underprivileged and deprived communities.

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.



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, Gandhi 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.

Contributing towards Sustainable Development Goals

DHAN's work in Vizag are contributing for achieving the SDGs as well. The USP of DHAN's approach is localizing the SDGs to suit with Vizag needs and make the activities are relevant, effective and outcome driven towards localized SDGs. The local people institutions are working in all the goals working along with other development stakeholders and it has contributed to SDGs related to end poverty, ensure nutrition, health for all, clean water and sanitation, livelihoods promotion, education development and gender equality. By embracing these goals, we achieve a holistic, equitable, and sustainable future for all.



Financial Inclusion of all Households – By enabling Financial Literacy in Urban contexts

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 access to financial services through formal system. Enabling financial literacy to poor in all the contexts including urban pave way for the sustained growth.

In Vizag, DHAN has 2200 Kalanjiam SHGs with the membership of 32,000 families. They have their own savings of Rs.70 Cr. and have about Rs.145 Cr. as loan outstanding. Also, these SHGs are providing Insurance and pensions services to the tune of 50,000 products. All the members are having bank account, and the transactions are mainly channelled thru Banking system.

The poor become the victim to the usurious lending practices of formal and informal institutions without being aware about the right choices. The knowledge event convened as part of New Social Order would debate the ways and means of ascertaining the financial inclusion through financial literacy to all households such as establishing financial counselling 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 CURE and 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 Vaizg region. 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 behavioural change practices by the community on effective water harvesting, storage usage with conservation and development approach is essential. About 20,000 families have accessed to safe drinking water thru DHAN's services in the Vizag. 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 coastal livelihoods

Sustainable livelihoods prioritize the well-being of people and the planet. In general, and more particularly the poor and the marginalized families encounter challenges in meeting their livelihoods needs with dignity and sustainability.



In the urban context of Vizag, the multitude challenges including dominating market forces in ensuring ethical returns, fair wages and workplace safety and dignity are to be addressed. The majority of the poor families are depending on wage employment and small-scale vending activity for the livelihoods. In the Vizag coastal, the families are depending on fishing and fish processing activities. Our People institutions in the Vizag regions help support in bringing betterment of our member families thru systematic investment on livelihood skills, forward and backward integration and livelihood



financing. More than 25000 families are getting livelihood support from our interventions in the Vizag region. The Vizag 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.

Health for all – Access to quality Health care

Vizag is one of the highly polluted cities in India. As it is concentrated with several industries around the city, the Air pollution and Water contamination are affecting the local community. For the past 15 years community health care services are implemented in Vizag region to provide preventive care to our member families. It also runs Anaemia control program among adolescent girls for the past 10+ years. The 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 Federations of self-help groups have started mobile health services units, and community clinics to serve secondary care services at the affordable cost. It also integrates some of governmental schemes and programmes to maximize the benefits. The symposium will deliberate and bring to fore what makes these systems quite effective in reaching all segments of population and provide replicable models.



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.

Vizag region started promoting awareness among local community to consume small millets as part of their food habits and so far, it has supplied 4 tons of small millets at nominal cost to all member families with an idea of promoting prosumer. It will be scaled up in this year to 10 tons. This year they are going to launch community owned millet processing units and cold press-based oil extraction unit to supply quality food materials.



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.

Vizag region is involved in advancing education for the past 10 years. It runs 50+ Remedial tuition centres at the clusters level for School children. It also provides more than 1000 loans for supporting education of member's Children. The Vizag region is having an idea of promotion of Community School in the next three years for benefiting member children and to set a model of quality education with values integration. We are planning for a workshop on responsible education to deliberate on education for sustainable development in this Vizag Symposium.



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

Vizag Symposium 2024 would 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 centre 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.

The symposium will have 2 people Conventions and 4 community/stakeholders workshops 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 supply system.

The successful experience of collaboration and long-term partnership by the mainstream institutions such as GVMC, Bank of India, CMFRI, local CSRs like Coramandal, HPCL, Redington, Induja Groups, local Rotary club, Lions club and other academic institutions will be further deepened for advancing our community action in Vizag region. Needless to say, these knowledge events would provide a stage to facilitate cross learning through best practices in the process of community-led development.

As part of the Symposium DHAN is going to release a book on “Neere Aadharam”, which maps out the water bodies of Vizag and propose possible intervention to stabilize water balance in this area. Also, the Malkapuram Kalanjia Samakya will be launching its secondary care community Hospital during this event. Some other new launches and announcements will be taking place to confirm our commitment to advancing development.



Proposed Events

Day 1 (29th Jan 2024)

Convention on
Fostering New Social Order: Kalanjiam Way

Workshops:

- 1. Mainstreaming Urban Water conservation**
- 2. Advancing Responsible Education**

Day 2 (30th Jan 2024)

Convention on
Fostering Sustainable Coastal Livelihoods

Workshops:

- 1. Community based Social Security**
- 2. Enabling Financial Literacy in Urban context**



Nominations for Events

The Facilitation Committee of the Development Symposium, 2024 invites Government Organizations, industries, banks, donor organizations, academic and research institutions 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.

Dates: 29th and 30th January 2024

**Venue: Alluri Sitaramaraju Vignana Kendram
D.No.29-13-13, Lalita colony, Visakhapatnam- 530020.**

For more information, Contact us:

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“The greatness of humanity is not in being human, but in being humane”



Facilitation Committee

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