



# TAMIL NADU WATER WEEK 2024

WATER FOR PEACE : UNITE AROUND WATER

18 - 22 MARCH, 2024



DHAN Foundation is hosting Tamil Nadu Water Week from March 18 – 22, 2024 at Madurai on the theme of World Water Day 2024 called 'Water for Peace'. This is the fourth edition which focuses on demand management of water resources and sustainable solutions to address contemporary challenges in water and agriculture. The first edition of Tamil Nadu Water Week was held in the year 2013 at TNAU, Coimbatore and the subsequent editions were held at Madurai. The events aim to promote collective actions from various stakeholders working on the water resources of the State for addressing the future challenges of Water Scarcity and its implication on food production and food security in Tamil Nadu. It also envisages to provide space for the primary stakeholders especially the farming communities to share their experiences of collective action at various regions on water resources management towards food security.

## Tamil Nadu Water Week Advocates Collaborative Solutions for Sustainable Future



Tamil Nadu Water Week, which commenced with a reverent prayer, set the stage for a crucial dialogue on effective water resource management. Dignitaries, including chief guests, representatives from Dhan Vayalagam Tank Foundation, Panchayat presidents, and community leaders, gathered to address the pressing need for conservation and sustainability in water management practices.

In his poignant welcome address, Mr. V. Venkatesan, CEO of Dhan Vayalagam Tank Foundation, highlighted the invaluable traditional water management methods passed down by our ancestors. He stressed the urgency for the present generation to uphold and enhance these practices, welcoming esteemed guests and emphasizing their pivotal role in the event.

Following Mr. Venkatesan's remarks, Mr. Dixit, an advisor, delved into technical aspects, outlining four critical points for effective water resource management.

These included the imperative need for enhanced community participation, adoption of innovative agricultural technologies, and fostering collaborations among various stakeholders for sustainable water management practices.

Addressing the virtual audience, Mrs. Madhavi Ganesh, Director of the Water Resources Centre, lauded the efforts of the Dhan Foundation in promoting community-driven water management initiatives. She underscored the necessity of revitalizing water associations and urged proactive measures to combat water scarcity, drawing insights from successful water management models in countries like Israel.

Mr. Sourabh Kumar, a former UN official, emphasized the global significance of water management, highlighting the challenges posed by uneven water distribution and the imperative need for community compliance with governmental initiatives such as Jal Jeevan Mission and Swachh Bharat Mission.





Following his address, Mr. Elamuhil facilitated the book reveal session for "Maram Arivom," authored by Professor Stephen. The book was unveiled by Mr. Shanthnu Basu of HCL. With the support of HCL funds, a forest spanning 25 acres was established in Madurai, creating a forest ecosystem in the area.

Dr. Geetha Lakshmi, Vice Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, stressed the multifaceted benefits of water conservation, emphasizing its pivotal role in economic development, ecosystem preservation, and community welfare. She advocated for the adoption of cost-effective and sustainable farming practices, including drip irrigation systems.

Further insights were provided by Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Former NABARD General Manager, who underscored the importance of financial prudence in water management projects and urged for policy seminars and grassroots movements to drive change.

Concluding the event, Mr. M.P. Vasimalai, Founder of DHAN Foundation, outlined actionable plans for urban wastewater management, sustainable water usage, and educational initiatives. A vote of thanks by Mr. J. Mohan concluded the inaugural event, marking a step forward in collaborative efforts towards sustainable water management practices.

The event adjourned at 1:30 PM, leaving attendees inspired and motivated to implement the discussed strategies for a water-secure future.

### **Convention on Water for Peace Advances Collective Governance for Sustainable Water Resources**

The event witnessed the participation of key stakeholders, including Vayalagam CEO Mr. V. Venkatesan, esteemed guests, and representatives from various water conservation programs.

Mr. Venkatesan extended a warm welcome to all attendees, emphasizing the unity and strength of Vayalagam ayacut farmers. A video presentation showcased the impactful initiatives undertaken in the Ramanathapuram Kadaladi Vayalagam.

Mr. Nagoor Ali Jinna shed light on significant water conservation missions across different regions, including Kakathiya in Telangana and Sauni in Gujarat. He highlighted the success stories of water-related projects, emphasizing the need for collective efforts in addressing the global water crisis.

Mr. Santhanu Basu from HCL Foundation discussed the current water situation, stressing the critical groundwater levels in 60% of Indian districts. He underscored HCL's CSR initiatives, including tree plantation and waterbody renovation projects in collaboration with DHAN Foundation.

Dr. Selvi Ramesh shared valuable insights into rainfall patterns, water usage, and innovative agricultural practices. Mrs. Madhavi Ganesh elaborated on irrigation schemes, farming techniques, and government initiatives aimed at enhancing water sustainability.



The convention concluded with actionable steps to promote sustainable water management:

- Establish sustainable people's institutions for all tanks.
- Evict encroachments in waterbodies with the support of ayacut farmers.
- Conduct annual shramadhanam for tank maintenance.
- Raise awareness about water usage reduction for domestic and irrigation purposes.
- Create MOU agreements between Vayalagam and Panchayats.
- Implement modern agricultural techniques and collaborate with government schemes like MGNREGS for Vayalagam sustainability.

The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr. Durairaj, President of the Vayalagam program, expressing gratitude to all participants and guests for their valuable contributions.

### **Seminar Showcasing the Role of Women SHGs in Efficient Water Management**

A seminar highlighting the pivotal role of women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in the efficient management of water commons, showcasing the experiences of Kalanjiam women groups, was held at DHAN Foundation on March 20, 2024. Coordinated by K. Rajalakshmi and M. Vidhya, the event witnessed the participation of 45 members, leaders, and staff from regions including Kalakurichi, Theni, and Madurai urban.



The seminar commenced with the lighting of the lamp by esteemed guests, community leaders, and staff. Ms. M. Vidhya, Regional Coordinator, delivered the welcome address, followed by insights shared by Ms. A. Natchiyar Ammal, Deputy Director of Agriculture, on the changing trends in water consumption and the importance of efficient water usage. She emphasized the significance of water saving practices, traditional food systems, and the role of mothers in instilling water conservation values in the younger generation.

Ms. Vidhya presented a PowerPoint on the role of women SHGs in water management, highlighting challenges faced by women in water management and their contributions to water conservation efforts. She emphasized women's involvement in renovation activities, community meetings, and decision-making processes related to agriculture water requirements.

Ms. Rajalakshmi outlined the Proposed Theory of Change for women SHGs in water management, focusing on financial services, technical expertise, and social capital. She detailed the achievements of Kalanjiam Foundation in water conservation and outlined the five-year plan for further initiatives.

#### **Subsequent group discussions led to actionable insights:**

**Role of SHGs in Mainstreaming Water:** Discussions focused on practical actions like renovating tanks, ooranies, and ponds to optimize water storage, addressing borewell-related community needs, and ensuring regular tank maintenance.

Initiatives such as planting tree saplings in tank bunds and constructing rainwater harvesting structures in member households were emphasized, along with promoting water literacy and forming tank associations.



**Mobilization of Funds from Panchayat and Local Donors:** Efforts were made to mobilize funds with Panchayat authorities and local donors. Community members can contribute through labor work, demonstrating their commitment. Funds are allocated at the Kalanjiam level to ensure project sustainability. Leveraging government schemes like the 100 days' work program for tank renovation will further facilitate resource allocation.

**Role of Women in Water Conservation:** Women play a pivotal role in conserving water through efficient usage and maintenance of water structures, contributing significantly by recycling water for agriculture and household management. They actively engage in cleaning and maintaining water structures, ensuring cleanliness and proper functioning, and nurturing tree saplings to promote greenery.

**Policy for Water Conservation in Women SHGs:** Water conservation plans are integrated into annual and people planning exercises, focusing on greening initiatives achieved through effective water recycling, emphasizing sustainability within women SHGs.



The seminar concluded with a vote of thanks by Ms. Rajalakshmi, acknowledging the valuable insights shared and the commitment towards effective water management by women SHGs.

## Empowering Village Panchayats: Workshop on Mainstreaming Water Policy

The workshop, focused on various aspects related to water policy at the Village Panchayat level. Discussions centred around the role of Panchayats in water management, the design of water policies, and their operational aspects, with participation from 42 individuals including Village Panchayat Presidents, ward members, Sangamam leaders, and staff.



During the event, Shri. Saurabh Kumar, IFS (Retd), Adjunct Professor at the National Institute of Advanced Studies, Indian Institute of Science Campus, Bangalore, delivered a special address on water policy at the Village Panchayat level. He emphasized the crucial role of Panchayats in designing inclusive water policies that consider the inputs of all families within their jurisdiction.

Key points discussed during the meeting included the imperative for Village Panchayats, as the third tier of democratic governance, to take bold steps in formulating water policies that prioritize water as a common resource for all. The workshop highlighted the importance of engaging local institutions and traditional knowledge in crafting these policies, as well as addressing water conservation activities in alignment with climate change factors.

To facilitate the development of water policies, it was suggested to collect relevant data with community consultation. This includes demographic details of the Panchayat, landscape mapping of biodiversity, livestock population assessments, documentation of existing water resource structures, and analysis of water availability at the Panchayat level.

Several resolutions were proposed regarding the formulation of water policies at the Panchayat level. These resolutions encompassed various areas,

- Policy for Governing Existing Water Resources
- Policy for Creating New Water Sources and Renovation
- Policy for Water Conservation and Management
- Policy for Collection of Community Contribution for Water Services
- Policy for Collaboration with Line Departments for Convergence of Water Conservation Activities among Stakeholders
- Rain and Roof Water Harvesting Policy for Individual Houses and Common Buildings of the Panchayat
- Policy for Community Management of Common Water Body Resources
- Policy for Integrating Social Capitals for Effective Water Governance
- Policy for CSR and Mainstream Resource

The way forward involves conducting a series of consultative events at the Panchayat level to finalize the water policy document. This document will then be presented at Gram Sabha events to gather opinions and seek approval from the community members.



## Workshop on "Water and Agricultural productivity enhancement through technological solutions"

At Vellore Institute of Technology (VIT) on the eve of TNWW 2024 organizing by DHAN and DVTF as a week long celebration. The workshop has been successfully completed with totally 45 participants. The participants were from our RFDP farmers, VIT contact farmers, VIT students, Water scientists and professors.

Mr.U.Vellaiappan and Mr. N. Venkatesan have facilitated the workshop along with VIT professor and gave lead and technical presentations respectively to the workshop.

Mrs. Anne Jennifer, Water scientists has presented that importance of water and it's availability from different sources for different usages. She also highlighted that water utilization in different purposes shall be budgeted annually by the village community. Water budgeting could be pattern and culture in farming community as like expenditure being made by the family against their income annually.

Followed that Mrs. Nisha, Professor has presented about the comparative impact on Drip irrigation based crop productivity and non drip irrigation based crop productivity through experimental learning in local farmers under PMKSY Scheme. She also emphasized that all possible field with farmers shall be followed micro irrigation techniques.

She also shown the different crops (Sugarcane, Banana, Paddy and cotton) yield as trailed conducted by using drip system at different farmers fields.



Mr. Paul Man singh, Agriculture economist as expressed that present challenges in conserving water sources and overcome practices through different development program offered by the government. The community can be empowered and involves in development projects by engaging themselves in planning and execution along with local governance system .

After lunch,the session was mainly focused to have group discussion and facilitated by VIT water and Agriculture experts. The Student and farmer community have raised valueable questions related to water and agriculture productivity enhancement and got clarified well through experts.The professors of VIT and water scientists have appreciated DHAN works in water sector and had a good workshop with lot of deliberations.They also committed us to make joint work with DHAN Program here on water and agriculture in possible ventures in future.

### **The following are the way forward as declarations from the workshop**

1.The forum declared that the importance of water management through micro irrigation system such as drip, sprinkler and Rain gun etc can be shared to all farmers through the social capital created by the NGOs. The VIT can extend support to the NGOs working in Vellore district.

2.The forum recognized that the creation of farm ponds as one of the suitable technology for drought prone district in TamilNadu based on the experience realized from the Ramnad district.

3.The VIT's Agriculture college and agri clinic has committed to extend its cooperation to have partnership with DHAN Foundation for water and agri related discussion and advancement in future.

4.The VIT's student community have expressed their research interest on Agriculture and livestock development.

5.Land based Water harvesting structure shall be facilitated by academic and NGO sectors through Government program.

6.Evaporation and percolation loss study shall be done by VIT like academic institutions while using farm pond irrigation source to the crops.

7.VIT's acknowledged that exploring suitable partners for implementing tank modernization as pilot in tank system and finds the suitable production technique in command area agriculture.

8.Integrated Farming system and it's knowledge can be disseminated with community for doubling the productivity

9.Preservation of traditional seeds and dissemination of organic agriculture concept for ensuring the sustainable and climate smart agriculture

10.Soil and water quality shall be tested in farmlands and decides the agriculture crop plan based on the soil nutrient and water quality testing.

