

# **Annual Report 2004**

**Theme : Working with Panchayats**



**DHAN Foundation**  
**Madurai**

## Working with Panchayats

DHAN Foundation initiated the new theme on “Democratising the Panchayat” the year 2003. Though the 73<sup>rd</sup> constitutional amendment focused on promotion and active functioning of the Panchayat Raj Institutions as a third layer of government, Panchayats have till now, failed to emerge as a third layer of government not even up to the minimum expected level. The first year of experimentation was in 12 Panchayats in three districts. The main objectives of the new theme in the experimentation phase are i) Promoting and strengthening of village level institutions as functional groups in the Panchayat to ensure people’s participation ii) Sustaining the Panchayat institutions to access resources and reduce its dependence on the State and iii) Integrating the existing traditional systems with the Panchayats to enhance the participation of the people and achieve synergy.

### Progress

The Panchayat experimentation covers 12 Panchayats in three blocks of three Districts. These Panchayats have 60 hamlets, of which, 53 hamlets were covered during the year. Various functional groups have been promoted in these hamlets covering nearly 7,000 families with a population of 45,546.

The main focus of the new theme during the year was on promotion of functional groups. So far 133 functional groups have been promoted. In addition, 189 Kalanjiam SHGs are functioning already in these Panchayats. These SHGs are also treated as functional groups for the Panchayat programme.

Small activities such as establishing village library, livestock programme, providing games / sports materials, and agriculture implements was introduced in 92 functional groups to make them vibrant and active. The formation of working groups at hamlet level was also taken up simultaneously. So far, 10 working groups have been promoted. These working groups are formed with the office bearers of the functional groups at hamlet level. These working groups work for the development of the village and they conduct the village level Gramasabha meetings.

Entry programmes were implemented in most of



the hamlets. These activities were instrumental in helping the programme team in building trust among the people in the selected Panchayats. The majority of the activities undertaken related to the immediate needs of the members such as creation of common infrastructure, sanitation facilities and access to water.

Capacity building efforts were taken up in an intensive manner for different categories of village people such as household members, ward members, functional group office bearers, Panchayat Presidents etc. The exposure visits for the Panchayat Presidents to well performing Panchayats was very effective in motivating them to develop their own Panchayats in a better way. The State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Tamilnadu, has identified the Panchayat Programme team of DHAN Foundation as one of the resource centres for conducting off campus training programmes. The team organized a three-day programme in collaboration with them for SC/ST women District Councilors, which was well received by them.

The local resource mobilization for implementation of development programmes was taken up in all the Panchayats. More than Rs 55 lakhs was mobilized during this year to implement development programmes in these 12 panchayats through various government sponsored programmes. The people contributed Rs. 1.36 lakhs for the work. The team took steps to ensure that the Gramsabha meetings were organized regularly in these twelve Panchayats. The participation of the people increased and improvements could be seen in the conduct of the meeting. All the functional group members were motivated to actively participate in the meetings.

As a new theme, Panchayat programme has taken off well towards creating its’ own identity, building relationship with District administrations, building rapport with other institutions which are working in Panchayat and creating wide range of awareness and motivation on panchayat functions among the public. Secondly, Panchayat theme has been able to create adequate interface mechanism with advanced programmes like

Kalanjiam Community Banking Programme. It leads to convergence of people’s strength towards specific objectives.





**DHAN Foundation**

(Development of Humane Action)

18, Pillaiyar Koil Street, S.S. Colony, Madurai - 625 016. Tamil Nadu, INDIA.

Tel.: + 91 - 452 - 2610794, 2610805, Fax: + 91 - 452 - 2602247

Email: [ghan@md3.vsnl.net.in](mailto:ghan@md3.vsnl.net.in), Website: <http://www.dhan.org>