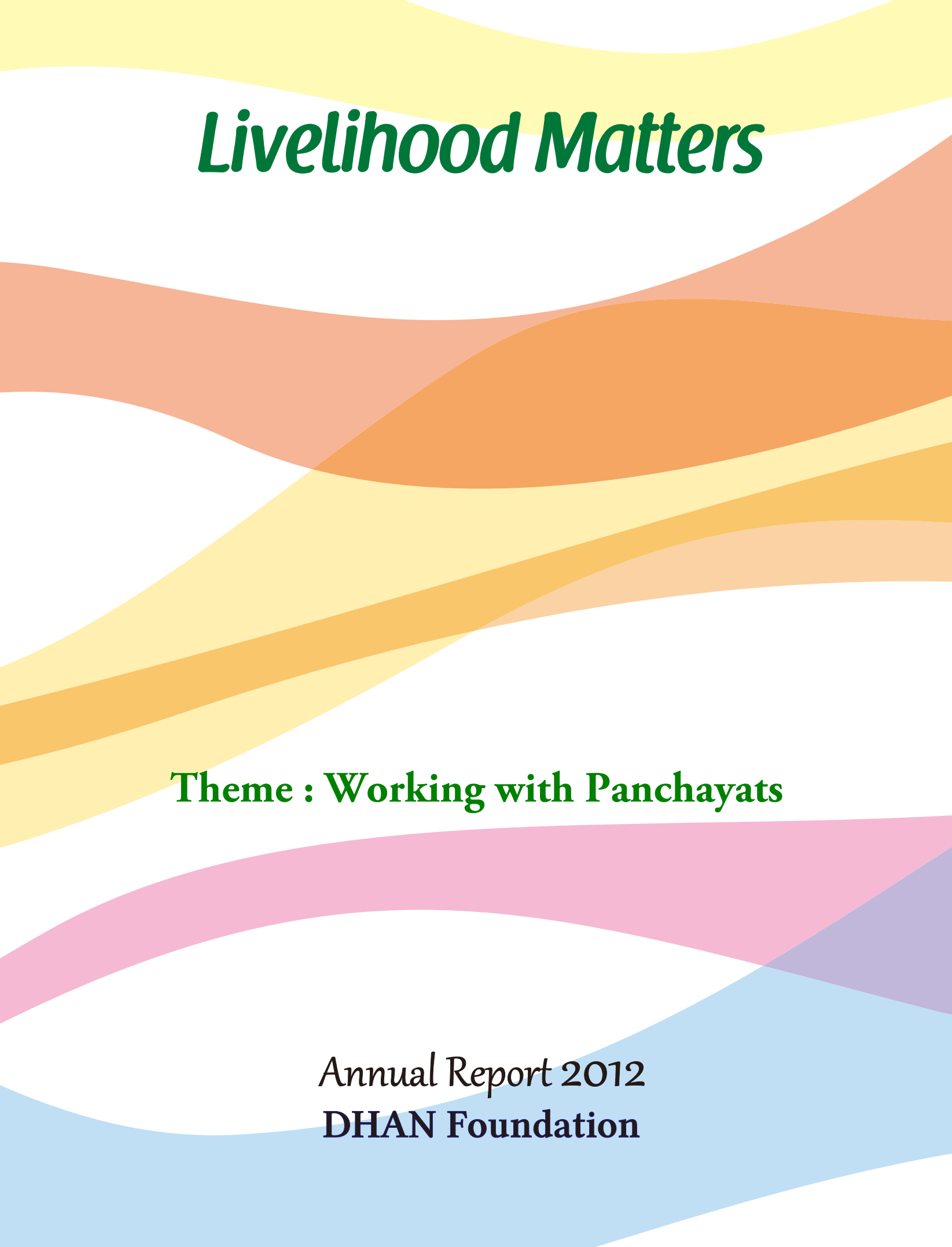


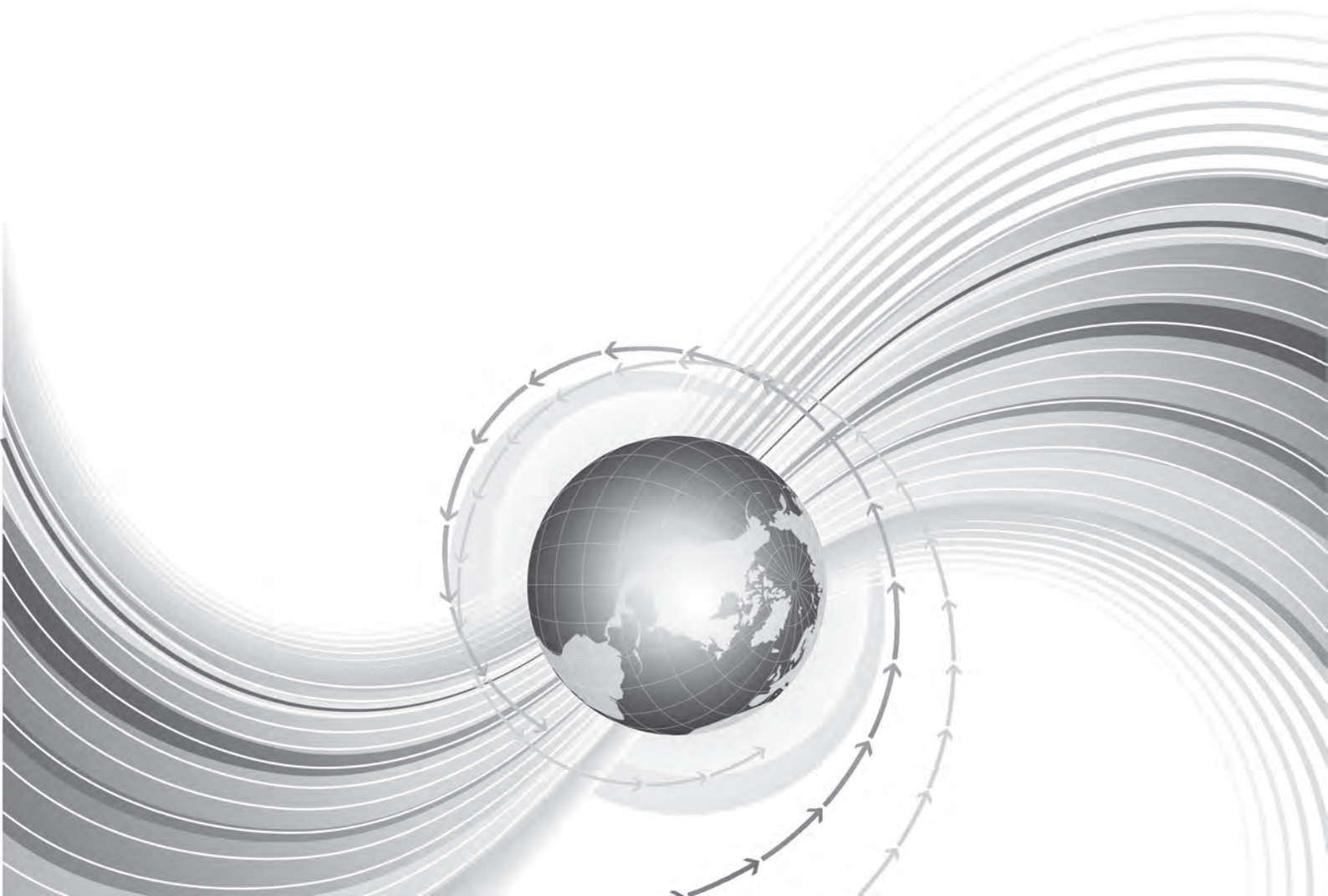


Livelihood Matters

Theme : Working with Panchayats

Annual Report 2012
DHAN Foundation

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Working with Panchayats Programme



The history of the village-level Panchayat institutions in India goes back hundreds of years. After independence, the Panchayat system was neglected. DHAN Foundation has realised that these institutions need to be vibrant and responsive to the needs of the people to bring about lasting progress, benefiting all. DHAN Foundation has launched a programme “Working with Panchayats” to promote and strengthen the informal functional groups in the village to get involved in Panchayat affairs. The programme integrates the existing traditional systems with Panchayats to enhance the participation of people and achieve synergy by adopting the following strategies:

- ✍ Promoting functional groups and village development forums, strengthening and guiding working committees to integrate with the Panchayat system.
- ✍ Facilitating preparation of multiyear micro planning for Panchayat development by the community and make the working committees responsible for executing those plans.
- ✍ Advocating for enabling policies for effective decentralization through studies and publications, seminars and workshops.
- ✍ Promoting a network of Panchayat Raj representatives at the block and district level, and building their capacity in good governance.

- ✍ Creating awareness among the voters, youths, and students on PRI, and ensuring benefits of the development programmes to reach the poor and vulnerable communities
- ✍ Strengthening the Gram Saba and making it a forum for performing social audit, and introducing e-Panchayats for open and transparent administrative system
- ✍ Enhancing the revenue for Panchayats through building corpus and undertaking income generating activities at village level.

The Panchayat programme is working with primary level Panchayat institutions. It organises people institutions at the village level to actively participate in Panchayat activities. Secondly, it mobilises the people institutions which are already organised by NGOs for making them actively participate with Panchayat institutions. The people in the primary institutions are prepared for playing an active role in their respective Panchayats through which the local Governance is strengthened for poverty reduction. There are 346 primary groups or the kudiyaatchi kuzhukkal functioning in Panchayat programme, of which 39 groups were promoted during this year. The Programme works with 85 Panchayats covering 120 villages. So far 27,801 families have been added into the functional groups promoted in the working Panchayats.

Performance of Panchayat Institutions

All village Panchayats have mandated meetings to strengthen their functions. In all the working Panchayats, these functions have been regularized.



The Panchayat council meetings which are to be conducted every month are getting regularized in all five places. There were 288 meetings conducted. On average, more than 90 per cent of the members regularly attend the meetings. The quality of the meetings are also increased every year. The Grama Sabha meeting is considered as village parliament meeting. In many places it is a challenging task. In the working Panchayats, these Grama Sabha meetings were conducted as per standard. During this period 175 Grama Sabha meetings were conducted in 25 Panchayats.

The working committees are considered as a decentralized mechanism of administration at the Panchayat level. It was introduced recently and it is being followed in most of the Panchayats. The Panchayat Development Association or Kudiyaatchi mamandram is an informal structure promoted for organizing the people forum at Panchayat level. Presently 37 PDAs are functioning.

Strengthening Democratic Practices

As a democratic unit at the grassroots level, the village Panchayats have more scope for adopting a variety of democratic practices. Some of them are mandated functions to be adopted and others are emerged out of their own experiences. During the year, Panchayat programme focused on strengthening the following democratic practices.

- ✍ The people's voice is more important in democratic institutions. Here, the Panchayats are giving importance for peoples' voice by way of conducting the Grama Sabha meetings regularly with quality. The people's views and suggestions are respected.



- ✍ The council meetings are getting strengthened by being conducted regularly with the quorum and quality.
- ✍ The Panchayat parliament systems are introduced to strengthen the democratic principles at the Panchayat level. It was conducted in three Panchayats last year; through these, the public's views and ownership were coming out on the performance of the Panchayat.
- ✍ The social audit process was done at Palamedu location in Rajakkalpatti panchayat on MGNREGS programme. It was a two-day programme in which the public could participate and went through the process. It was an opportunity for the Panchayat to highlight the field level operational issues to the public.
- ✍ The multi-year micro plan is one of the regularized activities in all our working Panchayats. It was undertaken in all 25 Panchayats and in most of the cases, the Associates were able to facilitate the process. By this, the stake of the Panchayats are increasing year by year. All the expenditures to do this process are met by the respective Panchayats. The implementation of the plan is getting importance in all Panchayats.

Social Security Programme at Panchayat Level

The programme has promoted all the working Panchayats as nodal agencies for implementing the social security programmes. This is a new initiative for the Panchayats to get involved in mobilizing people for such social security programmes. During this period the total families covered under this programme was 6500, out of which 32 deaths occurred during this reporting period; all the 32 families received the compensation. In addition around 1012 students have benefited out of this programme during this year and received Rs. 1 million as scholarship.

Implementation of MGNREGP

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme gives opportunity for all

to work at least for 100 days in a year. Most of the Panchayats are not properly guided for better implementation of this project. The programme has introduced a few good practices in all working Panchayats. This initiative includes enrolling all the poor, landless and weaker section and getting job card for all, ensuring weekly wage disbursement in a transparent way, covering all the enrolled people with insurance, and ensuring proper work place facilities that are convenient for women. MGNREGP was undertaken in all working Panchayats and generated employment opportunity up to 1.5 lakh human days by undertaking 19 works in this year. As a whole 3830 families benefited out of this programme and earned Rs. 13.4 million as wages for the year.

Voter List Updating

The voter list is a basic document in any democratic system to exercise the individuals voting right. Since, it is seen only during the election time, it is not properly updated everywhere. This leads to malpractice during the election and poor polling percentage. The Panchayat programme took responsibility for updating the voter list in all working Panchayats and started this process from 2010 onwards. It was possible while the cooperation of youth groups at each hamlet. Usually January is the month for updating the voter list. This year, due to the conduct of public election, August 2011 was also used to update the voter list.

Panchayat Movement

To strengthen the Panchayat concepts, the programme conceived an idea of launching a movement by enrolling members from the local body institutions. During this year the programme enrolled 1282 members in the movement; so far 5844 members have been enrolled in the movement.

Campaigning for Election 2011

The local body election 2011 was the fourth election for Tamil Nadu after the 73rd and 74th

constitutional amendments came into practice. More than four lakhs people finally contested. The programme decided to ensure quality of election in all the working Panchayats. Three slogans were designed such as “All voters must vote”, “Right persons should contest and to be elected”, and “No cash for vote”. An elaborate awareness campaign in the villages of working Panchayats was taken to promote this change. There was a door to door campaign in the working Panchayats, padayathra and cycle rally in the villages of working blocks and distribution of hand bills and posters were carried out in the villages of working districts. Totally 1.27 lakhs voters and 260 villages were covered.

Panchayat Education for Youth

The Panchayat Programme is offering a Diploma in Panchayat Management (DPM) course with the support of DHAN People Academy (DPA). The seventh batch is going on and the seminar classes were conducted twice during this year. The seminar classes were conducted in 12 places and the Panchayat team and DPA team conducted these seminar classes. Compared with the previous batches, the performance of the current batch was very good.

Workshops and Conventions for Panchayat Leaders

As part of Madurai Symposium the Panchayat programme conducted a workshop and a

presidents’ convention. The workshop was on “Micro-planning and Livelihoods in Local Governance Institutions” and the convention was on “Livelihoods through NREGP in PRI”. There were 20 participants for the workshop and nearly 200 participants for the convention. In addition, the programme displayed an exhibition focusing on local body election. It was well received by the public.

Positioning Panchayat Initiatives

A Panchayat manual for Tamil Nadu has been prepared with the support of Mr. K. Vallinayagam, Mr. Chidambaram and Mr. Subramanian, who were involved in Panchayat administration at different levels. The programme team members were also involved in all the process and gained experience. The output has come out very well and it would be soon released.

The Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission extended space for DHAN’s Panchayat programme to be an institutional member for the 12th Five Year Plan and the programme took part in the Working Committee on Decentralised District Planning.

Recently, the State Government in Tamil Nadu has constituted a special committee for exploring the possibilities for increasing the fund sources for the village Panchayats. DHAN has been accorded a position of an institutional member in this committee and the first meeting was held recently in Chennai.





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Building Sustainable Livelihoods

DHAN Foundation works to make significant changes in the livelihoods of the poor through building scalable, cost effective and sustainable development themes for self-reliance. Keeping innovation as its core value, DHAN continues to evolve and nurture new ideas in development that can impact the lives and livelihoods of the poor on a large scale. Kalanjiam model of community banking by and for the poor women, Vayalagam model of tank-fed agriculture development, rain-fed farming development, coastal conservation livelihoods, communication and information technology for development and working with Panchayats are the development themes nurtured by DHAN over the last two decades. Climate change adaptation, migration, youth and development are the new themes being piloted now. Health, education and tourism have emerged as cross-cutting themes to augment the development brought by all the existing programmes. A common thread that binds all these themes is livelihood promotion. DHAN has observed 2011-12 as 'Year of livelihoods' to look closely at the impact that it has created on the livelihoods of the one million poor households organised by it, consolidate its experiences in livelihood interventions, and initiate the process of strategizing its livelihood approach with its experience at the ground.