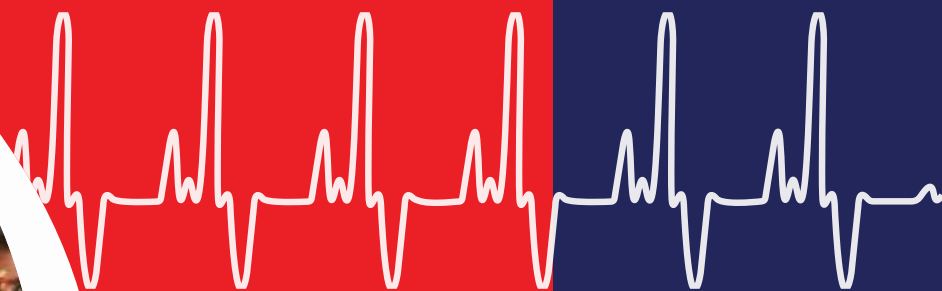


Community Health Matters



Theme :

Working with Panchayats

Annual Report 2016

DHAN Foundation

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Working with Panchayats

DHAN Foundation has launched a programme 'Working with Panchayats' to promote and strengthen the informal functional groups in the village to get involved in the Panchayat affairs. The programme integrates the existing traditional systems with the Panchayats to enhance the participation of the people and achieve synergy. Presently, the programme is in the process of scaling-up and it is implemented in five states in India including Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Odisha.

Though the Panchayat Programme was initiated as a thematic programme, it has evolved as a cross-cutting theme to go with other themes of DHAN

Collective such as Kalanjiam, Vayalagam and Rainfed programmes. Since the people's institutions which DHAN has promoted for the poor are closely operating with the local Panchayats, there is vast scope for drawing strength from local Panchayats and the Panchayats can also get more support from the SHGs which are functioning in their Panchayats. During the year, more focus was given for facilitating Panchayat linkage programmes with the existing people's institutions.

Strengthening Democratic Practices

Panchayat programme works with 700 Panchayats in Tamil Nadu and 64 Panchayats in other states, through which 1,52,800 families have been reached with different types of services in 2387 hamlets. These families are facilitated for accessing drinking water facilities, sanitation facilities, PDS system, and securing employment for 100 days in a year through NREGP. Participation of these families in the Gramasabha meetings is ensured.

Panchayat Programme was able to introduce various democratic initiatives which could enhance the democratic practices and people's participation at panchayat level. Some of the innovations tried





out by the programme at the ground level were Panchayat Parliament, Social audit, Micro-planning, and Panchayat linkages with SHGs.

Ensuring Entitlements

The Panchayat Programme works with the target families intensively to claim their entitlements from the mainstream institutions mainly livelihood programmes through NRLM, enrolment of eligible members in NREGP, facilitating old age pension for the aged, widows and destitutes, ensuring proper functioning of fair price shops and regular supply of free rice.

Empowering Women Panchayat Presidents

The three-year European Union Project implemented by DHAN Panchayat Programme was completed in July 2015. It has helped build capacity of 650 women presidents, 2,000 women ward members, 15,000 SHG members. This initiative was helpful for the programme to reach more number of Panchayats and women elected representatives. A comprehensive Panchayat Manual was published as a result of this project and it was made available to more than 650 Panchayats. It has provided opportunity for providing Panchayat education to more than 1,000 persons. All the initiatives taken through this project are being followed up in all five locations.

Partnership with United Nations Democracy Fund

United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) Project was initiated in five states including Tamil Nadu in June 2015. It has helped the programme to work in new states. Through this project, training

materials were prepared for SHG members and 310 programmes were conducted for benefiting 7,663 women SHG members. Similarly, training materials were prepared for youth and 95 training programme were arranged for five days and 950 youth trained in functioning of Panchayats. One-week election campaign was conducted during the last assembly election in Tamil Nadu imparting electoral awareness to around 10,000 people. It was fully undertaken by the trained youth in the Alanganallur block. As a result of this project, 1,000 students in all five locations have been identified and enrolled in a certificate course.

Collaboration with the Hunger Project

The Panchayat Programme collaborated with the Tamil Nadu Unit of the Hunger Project (THP) for implementing “Strengthening Women’s Empowerment through Electoral Process” (SWEET) Project in Batlagundu, Athoor and Nilakottai blocks in Dindigul District and Bodi Block in Theni District. The main objective of this project is to create awareness among the villagers on the local body election and prepare potential women candidates for contesting in the forthcoming local body election.

Building and Dissemination of Knowledge

The village Panchayat women leaders met at the district level as a networking strategy for sharing of field experiences and operational issues for policy changes. Such events were organised in five districts. These issues were presented at the forum of state-level consultation workshop presided over by the respective ministers and secretaries. The women presidents also met at the Madurai Symposium and conducted a people’s convention to exchange their experiences and operational issues.

The programme organised a policy workshop at Chennai on the issue of “Encroachment”. All the field experiences of the Panchayats were documented as a short film and screened in the workshop. The second edition of the same was brought out during the year. It was a major contribution of DHAN Panchayat Programme for this sector. We could bring out case studies on 50 women panchayat leaders narrating their success stories and two short films on the performance of the women presidents.



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