

Water Matters



Theme : Working with Panchayats

Annual Report 2017

DHAN Foundation

Water Matters



Annual Report 2017

DHAN Foundation



Working with Panchayats

DHAN has launched Working with Panchayats Programme in 2003 and it was piloted in five different contexts. In each context, five Panchayats were identified for piloting, wherein select democratic tools and practices were experimented in the village Panchayats. After 10 years of implementation, the programme was expanded to a larger number of Panchayats in 2012 in the same working districts of Tamil Nadu, with an exclusive focus on women presidents and ward members. During this phase, the programme was able to focus on mass scale training programmes for SHG community and elected women representatives. A comprehensive manual on Panchayat Administration was published and policy workshops were conducted at the state level. Now, the programme is being scaled up in five states in India including Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Odisha.

UNDEF Sponsored EMPOWER Programme

During this year, focus of the programme was mainly on implementing the United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) supported project in five locations such as Alanganallur in Tamil Nadu, Bannur in Karnataka, Koraput in Odisha, Pipiloda

in Madhya Pradesh and Bagidora in Rajasthan. The project covered SHG women, youth, students, and local panchayat institutions.

Organising Youth: Youth associations were promoted in all five locations consisting of 40 youth in each association, which were involved in running tuition centres, conducting legal-aid clinics, conducting village cleaning camps, initiatives for reducing open defecations, and conducting awareness creation campaigns. Besides, the youth played an active role in participating in the gramasabha meetings and motivating others to participate in those meetings. They were also involved in voter list updation.



Creating Awareness on RTI: Campaigns on the Right to Information Act were organised in all five locations, reaching more than 10,000 people in each location. SHG meetings, Mahasabhas and AGBMs were used as platforms for awareness building. In addition, folklore teams were deployed to organise street theatres on this theme. Handbills, banners and posters were prepared and used for this campaign organised in 175 places. As a result, about 112 applications were sent by the public seeking information through RTI.

Educating Students on Panchayat: The programme continued to offer Diploma in Panchayat Management Programme in association with DHAN People Academy. This year, a certificate course in Panchayat education for school students was initiated and around 1000 students were enrolled, of which 983 students attended the examination and received certificates.

Promoting Legal aid clinics: Ten legal aid centres in each location were initiated by involving over 200 volunteers. These legal aid centres started functioning in all five locations and people have benefitted from it. So far, 741 applications seeking legal services have been submitted and around 58 cases have been resolved this year.

Strengthening of Women's Empowerment through Election Processes

With the support of The Hunger Project – New Delhi to enable rural women to actively take part in the election process, the programme took up this project in Vathalagundu, Nilakottai and Athoor blocks in Dindigul district and Bodi block in Theni District. This six-month project envisaged basic training for SHG members, awareness creation among the community on importance of active participation of women in the local body elections, identification of potential women for contesting in the elections and motivating them to contest in the local body elections. Under this project, 77 village level meetings were arranged with 5868 SHG women. Folklore campaigns and wall paintings were organised to encourage voters' literacy for ensuring 100% polling in the local body election. After the training programme, 432 potential women members were identified for contesting the local body election to the posts of ward members, Panchayat Presidents and union councillors. Unfortunately, the local body election supposed to be held in October 2017 was withheld for various reasons.



Promotion of Model village Panchayats

In order to enhance the people's stake in decision-making process, ensure continuity to the village level administration and strengthen the democratic practices through various tools, the model Panchayat concept was evolved. Three village Panchayats in Alanganallur block of Madurai district such as 15B Mettupatti, Rajakkalpatti and Vellayampatti were shortlisted for this demonstration. Based on interaction with SHG members, youth, farmers, village leaders and elected representatives, youth associations have been promoted in these Panchayats to involve them in village development activities. Steps were undertaken for giving clarity on the concept of Model Panchayat.

Panchayat linkages initiatives for SHGs

SHGs are encouraged to work with the respective village Panchayat system in 60 Panchayats. The SHG members started attending the gramasabha meetings and the Panchayats provided space for them to actively participate in the meetings. The village level issues are easily resolved by the SHG people with the support of their Panchayats, especially the drinking water problems, sanitation and drainage problems. Schemes such as NREGP, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, and greenhouse programme are implemented with the support of SHGs.

Facilitating legal aid clinics



The legal aid clinics are promoted in the Kalanjiam locations with the facilitation of Panchayat programme. The district legal aid service authority in the working districts of Madurai, Dindigul, Theni, Cuddalore and Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu were approached for promoting such centres. Around 40 legal aid centres have been promoted and are functioning with the active facilitation of respective Kalanjiam federations and directly by the district legal aid service authority. In all five locations, around 402 grievances have been resolved.

Panchayat Education Programme



So far, 11 batches have undergone DPM course and more than 3800 students have completed the course and received diplomas. During this year, 520 students were enrolled in the diploma course. The results were declared and the diplomas were distributed for the 11th batch students in the fourth convocation programme at Madurai.

Promotion of Panchayat Development Foundation

Over these years, the programme could evolve components and activities and implement them in different contexts. With a lot of experiences gained so far, the programme took shape of a thematic institution during this year. It is an important milestone for the programme.

Water is Elixir of Life !



DHAN Foundation

1A, Vaidyanathapuram East, Kennet Cross Road
Madurai 625 016, Tamil Nadu, INDIA

Tel: +91 452 2302500 Fax: 2602247

Email: ghanfoundation@ghan.org; Website: <http://www.ghan.org>

