

## Discussion Points on the Alternatives Framework Note

- Food choices have largely been local for the Sangam. This Sangam had local food from Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh. In Ladakh Sangam, also local recipes had been used.
- Vikalp Sangam started in 2014 at Timbaktu. The objective has been not only to share experiences but also to understand alternative and envision an alternative reality for the country and the world. A note was created in the Sangam. That note has been revised in the subsequent Sangams. The note has kept evolving. It has been emailed to the participants. This will be discussed in this session.
- Key words noticed in the sessions across two days - eldership authority - coming in the sphere of politics , Economics sphere, ecology sphere, Culture - celebrating guests, relating with pets, Social sphere - patriarchy, social relations
- In addition, at the core of the five spheres are some values. The five spheres also overlap.
- What is this framework for? At this moment the framework is to figure out an alternative to the current dominant system.
- What do you all think is an alternative to the existing system?
- Sometimes we go back to old solutions and call them as alternatives - like millets. There is confusion in the word alternative.
- Co-existence is a value, which is coming across in your response. Revival of traditional solutions is also a principle and value.
- Some of the traditions we are going back to, but we may also be coming up with new things and rejecting some old things. Therefore, some of the alternatives may be new but some may be traditional.
- We are proud to be members of the largest democracy in the world. However, the rights of the minorities have been neglected. For example, in the committee drafting rights of disabled there were only three members disabled out of 27 committee members. Therefore, the impacted people are not taking the decisions
- The Gram Sabha in Medha Lekha follows true participatory decision-making. They had a debate on forest fires around their villages. They engaged researchers to understand the technical aspects of the decision. The researchers also conducted a study.
- Sometimes it may be easier to sell an idea if it is portrayed as futuristic.
- We also have to be careful about the holistic nature of an alternative solution. Will making the entire world run on solar energy be a sustainable solution in the context of all the spheres
- There is also a need to figure out what are the justified needs of humans, whether we are eating up the resources of the next generations.

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- At the individual level and at the work level how we can work for these alternatives? How do we take it to forward to the masses?
- What is the vision behind the Vikalp? Is there a rejection of the existing system or do we want to engage in reform?
- Some solutions like Green Revolution may have been good solutions in the context of that time. It is difficult to project the future, but we can constantly try to come up with the best solution.
- Alternatives is a beautiful framework to think about the gaps, and making solutions holistic.
- As long as the reform is improving the system like RTI, then we are agreeing with it. However, examples like the Fertilizer Act only reinforce the system. This has been also discussed in previous Sangams.
- For example, food programmes offering subsidized wheat and rice reduce the ability of people to produce their own grains
- The framework has five spheres, but each affects the other and they are closely inter-related. The separate spheres just offer some more clarity and it may be that issues like equal animal rights under ecology may not be considered a social justice issue.
- Social Justice can also be construed as a core value and come at the centre. It is a point for further reflection.
- For each person the issues what they are working on will be most important. The Sangam aims to bring together converging views. A discussion on the critical issues that will influence the alternatives
- The more we talk about it, the more we realize the centrality of values. We need to re-evaluate how we conduct valuation of the work and activities. For example, women's household work is not valued at any equal level because of the focus on money.
- Who has made this framework and who has been involved, were there any school kids and youth involved?
- This is the ninth Sangam, it has been evolving document based on the previous discussions. Young people have not been involved to the desired level. We are constantly working on improving the framework.
- The values affect the spheres and vice versa. Who decides and defines the values? Will the values be constant or change over time? How and where do we place ourselves in the mainstream system. We have also not talked about technology until now.
- We have made a tree, where we see the values as roots. There is obvious impact of the values on the spheres. The leaves and fruits will in turn affect the roots. The discussion on values is most important.
- Tomorrow we have two unstructured hours, we can take up these discussions also there. How do we plan to engage with the Sangam note, etc?

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- We will break into smaller groups and discuss the issues. It is also important to question and challenge each other's ideas. Let us not restrict our visions into what is practical.
- You can judge your performance on Social, Ecological, Political, Cultural, and Economic. Then join the group that you think aligns with the direction you want to proceed in.
- The purpose of the group exercise is to use the framework to reflect on the work we are doing, realize where we are strong and where we are weak. Participants may take up the areas of improvement in collaboration with others. We can also reflect on whether the framework needs to be re-drafted considering the youth lens.
- In Kapvriksha we realized that our work in ecology/wildlife conservation also affects others in the community, for example villages were victims of a shootout by the police in the Bharatpur sanctuary.