Towards a Just and Sustainable World

Ashish Kothari
Kalpavriksh
Dominant vision of ‘development’

Violence against nature, communities, and cultures … growth as cancer
Violence against each of us: our identity, our health, our well-being!

Livelihoods to Deadlihoods

Illustrator unknown

Somewhere, something went terribly wrong
Are there alternatives?
Alternatives to what?
Structural roots of unsustainability & inequity

Concentration of power
Capitalism
State-dominated regimes
Patriarchy
Caste / race / ethnicity
Anthropocentrism
....
Resistance ...
(to capitalism, state domination, patriarchy, etc)

... is part of the alternative ... other ways of being, other worldviews
Alternatives across the world

- Agroecology / permaculture
- Ubuntu / ukama / unhu
- Agaciro
- Swaraj
- Nayakrishi
- GNH
- Kyosei
- Kurdish Rojava
- Degrowth
- Transition
- Commons
- Ecofeminism
- Biocivilisation
- Buen vivir / sumaq kawsay / kametsu asaie
- Zapatista
- Eco-socialism
- Country
Deccan Development Society: conservation, equity, food sovereignty, livelihood security

- Empowering *dalit* women farmers, through collectives
- Securing women’s land rights
- Reviving traditional agricultural diversity / practices (millets)
- Creating community grain banks
Towards indigenous self-rule: Vidarbha (Maharashtra)

Mendha-Lekha: All decisions in *gram sabha* (village assembly); no activity even by government officials without sabha consent

“In our government in Mumbai and Delhi, we are the government in our village”

Informed decisions through monitoring, and regular study circles *(abhyas gat)*
Decentralised governance, Nabon, Ecuador

Mayor Magali Quezada

Mama Maria Juana Morocho Minga & Stefania Lalvai
Indigenous peoples’ and community conserved areas (ICCAs)

www.iccaconsortium.org
Producers in control of production

• Viome factory, Thessoliniki, Greece
Solidarity economy, alternative currencies, open software: options for urban youth!

Time-banking at neighbourhood school, Athens, Greece

Pagkaki coop café, Athens

Beki local currency, Biekerech, Luxembourg

In India:
- Open software / ethical hacking
- Alternative media
- Transformatory arts (e.g. ‘Justice Rocks’)
- Millet/organic food restaurants
- Non-profit shops
Right to a Sustainable City

’Homes in the City’, Bhuj (Kachchh, Gujarat)

- self-reliance in water (India’s lowest rainfall)
- solid waste management and sanitation
- re-commoning of spaces
- livelihoods for the poor
- self-built, dignified housing for poor

(Hunnarshala, Sahjeevan, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan, ACT, Setu)
Learning / education: rooted in cultures & ecologies, decolonising, encouraging creativity, combining head-heart-hand-feet ... 

• Adharshila, Jeevanshala, SECMOL, Imli-Mahua, Marudam, Bhoomi, KFI schools, Beeja (India)
• Multiversities / pluriversities (several countries)
• Zapatista autonomous schools (Mexico)
• Forest schools (Czech Republic)
and many more ...

Skhole = leisure!
Eco-swaraj: Radical ecological democracy

(Radical = going to the roots, challenging the conventional)

• achieving human well-being, through:
  – empowering all citizens & communities to participate in decision-making
  – ensuring socio-economic equity & justice
  – respecting the limits of the earth

Community (at various levels) as basic unit of organisation, not state or private corporation
5 spheres of systemic, transformative alternatives

- **Ecological resilience & wisdom**
  (rights of nature, conservation)

- **Radical democracy**
  (direct citizens’ power, accountable representative institutions, borderless world)

- **Economic democracy**
  (producer sovereignty, localised self-reliance, caring/sharing, commons)

- **Social justice & wellbeing**
  (justice, equity of genders, ethnicities, castes …)

- **Culture & knowledge diversity**
  (new learning, knowledge commons, celebrating creativity)
Values & principles of transformative alternatives ....

- Diversity and pluralism (of ideas, knowledge, ecologies, economies, ideologies, polities, cultures...)
- Self-reliance for basic needs (*swavalamban*)
- Self-governance / autonomy (*swashasan / swaraj*)
- Cooperation, collectivity, solidarity, commons
- Rights with responsibilities of meaningful participation
- Dignity & creativity of labour (*shram*)
- Qualitative pursuit of happiness
- Equity / justice / inclusion (*sarvodaya*)
- Simplicity / sufficiency / enoughness (*aparigraha*)
- Rights of nature / respect for all life forms
- Non-violence, peace, harmony (*ahimsa*)
- Subsidiarity & ecoregionalism

Worldviews that celebrate life
How to make macro-change happen?

- Resistance /subversion + construction / reconstruction
- Movements of the marginalised
- Visions of the future, building on ancient worldviews
- Critical alliances & solidarity
Vikalp Sangams (Alternatives Confluences): collaborations, cross-learning, collective visioning of future
Vikalp Sangams (regional)

Andhra Pradesh: Oct 2014
Tamil Nadu: Feb 2015
Ladakh: July 2015
Maharashtra: October 2015
Kachchh: July 2016
W. Himalaya: Aug 2016
Kerala: April 2017
Madhya Pradesh: Sept 2017

(thematic)

Energy democracy: March 2016
Food sovereignty: 2016 & 2017
Youth: Feb 2017
National: Nov 2017
Peace in conflict areas: June 2018
Health: June 2018
Coming up: Media; Economies; Arts; Well-being; Democracy/swaraj
Envisioning a just & sustainable future

40 authors, 30 themes
Global Tapestry of Alternatives

Confluences of resistance and alternatives across the world

Sharing/exchanges/collaborations

Collective visioning of a just world ... and how to get there!
For more information....

• chikikothari@gmail.com