

**Innovation, Sustainability, Development: A New Manifesto
Roundtable Report Marathmoli 1 - Sangamner near Nasik**

Roundtable Details

Convenor Name: Marathmoli

Contact Email: asmitamj@yahoo.com

Participants (name and any organisational affiliation)

Lok Panchayat

Sarang Pande, Director

Ganga Charude, Aparna Gadakh, Maya Kurkute, Savita Jadhav, Shalan Shelke,

Hanumant Ubale, Navnath Jadhav, Surekha Ubale,

Yuva Mitra

Manisha Malpathak, Director,

Nisha Tambe, Shital Dange and Santosh Pote

Venue Name:

Lok Panchayat Office

Village- Zol

Taluka -Sangamner

District-Ahmednagar

State- Maharashtra

Duration of meeting: 5 hours

What is the focus (e.g. sector/geographical area) of your discussion (if applicable)?

Women and Science and Technology

Sector

Water

Agriculture

Health

Energy

Region: South Asia

Country: India

1. Local and global sustainability and development objectives and associated favoured “directions” for innovation/development (Note: this does not need to be an exhaustive list, rather you might choose to focus on just a few)

- To change the focus and direction of reproductive technology research
- Monitoring and Judicious use of reproductive technologies such as sex determination
- Policy for use and management of drinking water resources to save time and energy of women
- Promotion of bio-gas as cooking fuel with subsidy for plant installation
- Every village should have science lab
- Emphasis on reuse of wasted/disposed material i.e. plastic, chemical waste
- Promotion of organic waste as manure for farming
- Technological innovation to promote diversification of energy sources
- Institutional support to promote experimentation and exploration
- Questioning division of labour so that space for innovations is shared by men, women, elderly and young children

2. Forms of innovation or initiatives those are relevant to meeting these particular sustainability objectives

Use of weeding appliances for weeding with application of belt method for cultivation of crops

Awareness building regarding efficient use of energy - fuel wood & improved stoves
Promotion of solar energy and other alternative energy sources to respond to women's daily needs

3. How these do or do not reflect the emerging 3D agenda and other aspects of the New Manifesto draft

Most of them are questioning the present agenda and also while questioning the present use talking about long term directional change.

In terms of directionality, our experience (at pre Roundtable events and Roundtable) shows that women are questioning the neglect of their needs in science and technology innovation. They have assertively presented their agenda for a directionality that responds to their needs to reduce the drudgery and severity of their labour, thus freeing up time for enhancing their learning, creative and intellectual abilities and increasing their participation in public life.

In the context of distribution, participants were emphatic that historically science and technology innovation in the domain of reproductive health had transferred risk to women while denying them benefits.

Participants were very proactive in demanding science and technology innovation policies to generate alternative and diverse energy sources and energy use practices to promote sustainability.

4. Principal constraints to these and/or related sustainable innovations

Participants demanded a supportive policy environment that would provide the necessary resources for enabling the excluded sections of society, especially women, from full and constructive participation in science and technology innovation.

They also highlighted the need to challenge gendered division of labour that excluded women from accessing innovations while at the same time devaluing their knowledge and expertise in execution of their assigned tasks through innovation.

5. Alternative policies, institutions or governance arrangements that could promote innovation in more sustainable directions or better support existing practices/knowledge that help meet sustainability objectives

- Community based governance for use and management of water for drinking purposes and agricultural use
- Local governance through leadership of women's collectives
- Validating, encouraging and supporting local innovations and promoting sharing of innovation experiences to nurture plurality
- Public/private participation for sustainable development models for efficient, effective, affordable and sustainable energy generation and use
- Policy directives for compulsory use of protective gear, appliances and precautionary methods for agricultural labour involved in pesticide spraying
- Promotion of organic agriculture
- Village level bio-diversity committee, with 50% reservation for women to encourage participation and overcome social exclusion and silencing
- Reservation of 50% of seats for women in engineering and science related education disciplines
- Pricing of home appliances to ensure maximum number of women can benefit from it and escape drudgery of household labour, thus freeing time for self development activities
- Institutionalised awareness raising of science and technology innovation and access to its benefits for women
- Special incentives to SHGs and women's groups to promote innovation in energy generation
- Policy to promote alternative renewable energy through purchase of capital intensive renewable appliances by Gram Panchayat to be rented out to community
- Promotion of e-governance to catalyse effective delivery of services

6. Evidence (if any) for the effectiveness of these alternatives and remaining research needs for better understanding their effectiveness

Participants are promoting the use of alternatives and documenting local science and technology innovation in their work.

Lok Panchayat shared their experience of building a water treatment plant with local household investment. This has helped to maintain and sustain the activity. They want to replicate this model for access to drip irrigation and pest control technology with the support of the Gram Panchayat which would maintain the accounts and supply of these equipments on rental basis. Lok Panchayat is also involved in documentation and promotion of cultivation of traditional crops and marketing of the same. They are also conducting research on the issue of decline of traditional breeds of high quality cattle and goats.

Participants expressed the need for further specialised research to enhance understanding and raise awareness of the relationship between experiential knowledge and science and technology innovation. They also recognise the importance of sharing such innovation and are keen to learn from others.

Feedback

Please share your feedback on the Roundtable process and content.

The Roundtable process, including the capacity building workshops, have been a very energising and enriching experience for us at Marathmoli. It has helped us lay the ground work for our future field based programming by introducing us to organisations working on issues of science and technology innovation in the field. It was very satisfying to feel the energy and the passion of the activists in wanting to take this conversation on women's experiential knowledge, science and technology innovation and knowledge politics to the community women.

In both the events, participants shared that the engagement with this project had led to a change in their perception of women's experiential knowledge and science and technology innovation, added value to their work and made them look at their work in new light. It opened up their minds to the realities of women's routine lives and its interconnectedness to science and technology. The awareness of the participants on issues which shape science and its direction was the most important aspect of this discussion. They also expressed a desire to take this engagement ahead through field level programs.

We strongly feel the need for a systematic program to build capacity of the participants to reflect, articulate, conceptualise and implement the awareness and understanding of knowledge politics, especially in the context of women from marginalised communities, through practice in partnership with the community.