

The Honey Bee Network: Grassroots Creativity and Innovation.

Honey Bees are often used as a symbol of hard work and co-operation, Bees harvest pollen whilst connecting, flower to flower. These qualities make the Honey Bee the perfect symbol for the Indian Network that bears the name.

The Honey Bee Network has collected and publishes an online a database of 10,000 grassroots innovations which are conserving biodiversity and developing sustainable solutions to local problems. The database identifies innovations related to agriculture, livestock health and management, farm tools and machinery, poultry keeping, leather tanning and many more, both from within India and from the rest of the world. The database includes social innovations, as well as traditional practices and has collated outstanding examples of contemporary local knowledge.

Local Knowledge

The aim is to collect knowledge from local people and disseminate the learning whilst ensuring they don't become poorer as a result of sharing their insights. The network also connects innovators with each other through feed back, communication and networking in local languages. Any income earned from consultancy or writing about local innovation is shared with the originators.

The Honey Bee Network believes that people often remain in poverty not because they lack skills or abilities, but because their ideas and initiatives are not shared and widely implemented. So an essential part of the networking project is to connect entrepreneurs, scientists, technologists and manufacturers with grass-roots innovators who have found a creative way to resolve a difficult issue. A skill and resource bank has been established, accessible to knowledge-rich but economically-poor farmers, artisans, or urban poor who have creative ideas or prototype of new products or services.

The aim is to enable entrepreneurs to scale-up an innovation; to help policy-makers demonstrate effective practice or assist educators in persuading students to implement grassroots innovations.

The Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Institutions (SRISTI) is the voluntary organisation, set up to strengthen the Honey Bee Network. They document, analyse and disseminate technological as well as institutional innovations developed by local people.

Research and Evaluation

As well as sharing the local knowledge SRISTI also provide research and evaluation of local innovation and protect the intellectual property rights of grass-roots innovators, ensuring they are fairly rewarded for their creativity.

Alongside making introductions to entrepreneurs SRISTI also provide a small amount of venture support to grassroots innovators to scale up their own products and services through commercial or non-commercial channels.

The Honey Bee Network provides a central resource which pools solutions developed by people across the world in different sectors and links, not just the innovators, but also scientists, policy makers, green entrepreneurs and educationalists.

Values

Honey Bee operates within a clearly defined set of values framed by the six E's (Ethics, Excellence, Equity, Efficiency, Environment and Education).

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