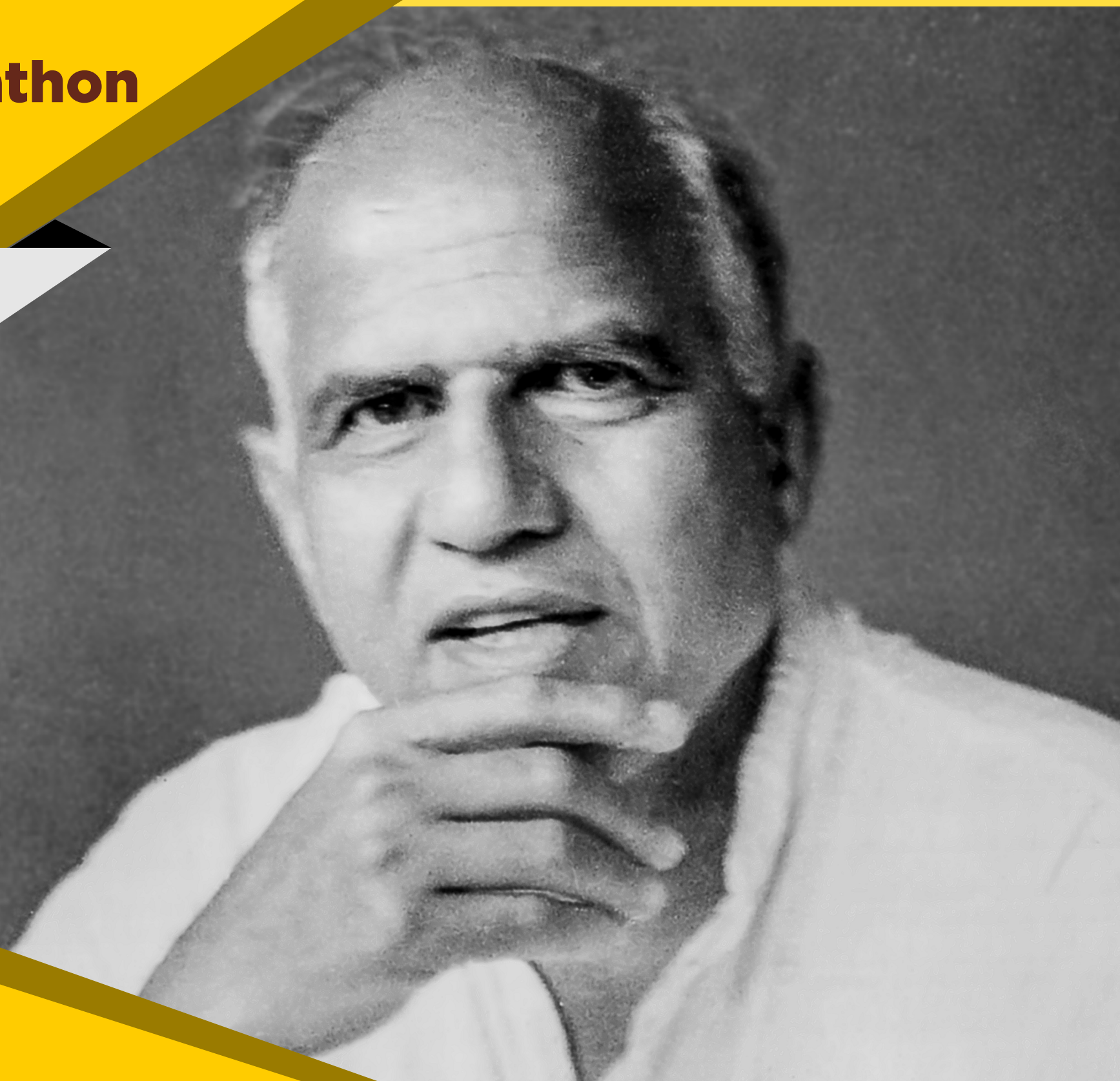


Dharampal Centenary Webathon

(July 2021–June 2022)

**Revitalizing India:
Celebrating the Birth Centenary of
Shri Dharampal (1922-2006)**



Session 3,
25th September 2021,
AT 3:30 – 5:30 pm

**Revitalizing Indigenous Knowledge and
Production: Towards Atma Nirbhar Bharat?**

Building on **Traditional Knowledge and Resources For Sustainable Agriculture**



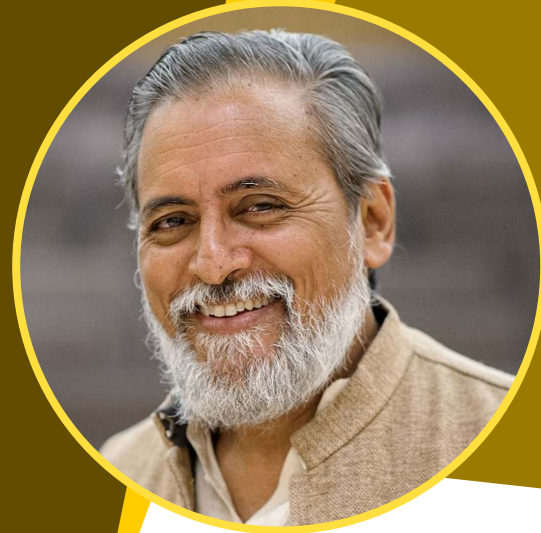
By

Dr. Vijayalakshmi Kalyasundaram

- ▶ Research Director, Centre for Indian Knowledge Systems [CIKS], Chennai
- ▶ Former Member of International Task Force on Rewriting Principles of Organic Farming of the International Federation on Organic Agriculture Movements [IFOAM]

“Everything else can wait, but not agriculture,” said Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru – in 1947 – a remark that came in the context of the Bengal Famine of 1942–43 and the acute food scarcity prevailing in the country in 1947. Independent India walked the path of modernization of agriculture culminating in the Green Revolution. While the Green Revolution led to an immediate increase in productivity of agriculture, it was achieved at a heavy cost to the environment and is not a sustainable long-term strategy. It has led to declining yields and soil fertility and an increasing realization of the limitation of chemical farming. We need an alternative approach that builds on indigenous knowledge, wisdom and resources. India is endowed with a tremendous resource base consisting of land, water, sunshine and biodiversity. We also have a very rich human resource base and knowledge system that can provide the basis for a transformation (as we have learnt from Dharampalji’s pioneering research). This can provide a strong and unique starting point for an alternative strategy for the development of Indian agriculture. This presentation will highlight recent efforts undertaken to revive and strengthen Indian agriculture based on this approach.

Nourishing the Diverse Tributaries of the Indian Grassroots Knowledge River: The Honey Bee Network Experience



By

Prof. Anil K. Gupta

- ▶ CSIR Bhatnagar Fellow 2018-21
- ▶ Founder, Honey Bee Network, SRISTI, GIAN & NIF
- ▶ Visiting Faculty, IIMA & IITB and Academy Professor, ACSIR

Indian knowledge systems at the grassroots evolve in a highly diverse, decentralised, and secular context. Different communities representing different cultural consciousness blend, bundle or sometimes betray each other's assumptions and beliefs about survival under stress. Those, who solve problems through their own genius, often seem to be more collaborative and compassionate than others. Whether compassion emerges from the act of solving local problems disregarding other identities or because of the urge of the majority to open-source their ideas for wider use is a subject that needs further investigation. Many communities could cope with various risks, namely climatic, social, economic or institutional, through creative and collaborative culture. Paradoxically, it is also true that many grassroots innovators remain unknown, unacknowledged, anonymised by mainstream writers and institutions. Sometimes, even the local communities only recognise their talent after the innovators get recognised by outsiders.

The Honey Bee Network has persistently tried to persuade institutions and individuals over the last 35 years to evolve a new ethics of local/indigenous knowledge exchange and utilization. The hope is that scholars, activists and

Nourishing the Diverse Tributaries of the Indian Grassroots Knowledge River: The Honey Bee Network Experience



By

Prof. Anil K. Gupta

- ▶ CSIR Bhatnagar Fellow 2018-21
- ▶ Founder, Honey Bee Network, SRISTI, GIAN & NIF
- ▶ Visiting Faculty, IIMA & IITB and Academy Professor, ACSIR

others will realise the value of a) acknowledging knowledge providers, scouts and others who mediate the knowledge exchange; 2) sharing in local language whatever we learn from others with all knowledge providers to enrich their repertoire; 3) cross-pollinate ideas and trigger solidarity among communities; and 4) share benefits if any that accrue from the use of their knowledge back with them in a fair and just manner.

While we have come a long way from the eighties, a great deal remains to be done: we still lack many multi-media, multi-language databases to help illiterate people learn in their own mother tongue, and not just from local knowledge but also global knowledge. Gian and HBN facilitated screening of 2500 entries from 87 countries for the hbncriia@gian.org award. We will be happy to share other challenges that we face, including the integration of lessons in the textbooks about creative communities and individuals, modulating policies to provide support systems at their doorstep (as being tried by SRISTI, GIAN and IIMA, besides by NIF set up by HBN in 2000 with the

help of the Finance Ministry and the Department of Science and Technology); and blending the formal and informal STI knowledge and institutions more organically. The value chain needs to be built for traditional knowledge as well as contemporary innovations in TK and independent of it, in a decentralised manner as a major strategy of bottom-up development, in sync with the Gandhian concept of gram swaraj.

Shri Dharampalji drew the attention of scholars to the historical tradition of experimentation that Indian society has practised for millennia, particularly in the agriculture sector. I hope this tradition, though feeble, will gain strength in the years to come and creative voices will get recognition, respect and reward. A stronger urge to learn from history to carry forward the stories of grit and determination of grassroots innovators for future generations will be a befitting tribute to scholars like Shri Dharampalji.

