

Lokavidya Samvad

Lokavidya Samvad is an investigation of the sources of strength in society. Translated into English it reads something like Dialogues on Peoples Knowledge Systems, or Dialogue on Knowledge in Society. The publication was started in 1998 during the preparation for Lokavidya Mahadhiveshan, the Third Congress on Traditional Sciences and Technologies of India, at Varanasi.

The concept of lokavidya as a central concept around which emancipatory thinking and programs of social transformation need to be organized took shape in 1995. It owes its development to the thought and work of three organizations in the preceding period. These are Mazdoor Kisaan Neeti (Kanpur), PPST Foundation (Madras) and Nari Hastakala Udyog Samiti (Varanasi). Since the development of this thought and the present publication, a set of associated concepts is developing as the basis for understanding and action. These are ordinary life, swadeshi samaj, local market, non-political power (ontology), lokasmriti, bhaichara vidyalaya, social justice, human activity etc.

For the required clarity it must be mentioned that lokavidya does not refer merely to the *store* of information with, and practices of, the people. It refers to their knowledge systems which include logic, values, thinking on organization, methods of organization and communication of knowledge and, of course, the knowledge-store too. Lokavidya has served the people in their survival strategies through colonialism and imperialism. The present transformation into building of a new empire is steadily pushing the knowledge issue to the centre stage. Now is the time for lokavidya to assume the role of contention and challenge. When we see lokavidya conceived as above, we notice that it is not something which is privatizing, fragmenting or disappearing. On the contrary, it is something that peasants and workers, artisans and women, recreate daily and develop according to their genius, needs and experiences. Lokavidya Samvad wishes to serve lokavidya in this transformation from helping to survive to strengthening to challenge.