

**Global Fraternity of Peoples'
Knowledge Movements**

**World Social Forum
Tunis**

24-28 March 2015

**Vidya Ashram
Sarnath, Varanasi, India**

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Expected Contribution : Rs. 25/- or US\$1 (or more)

Published by :

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Printed at :

Sattanam Printers, Pandeypur, Varanasi

Call for a Peoples' Knowledge Fraternity

In recent times the world has been witnessing new types of social and political movements, movements of ordinary people led by their own ideas, ways of thinking and practices. It is barely 10 years since world's attention has been drawn by some of these movements which have been laying the foundation of a new political imagination which is neither led, nor nurtured, nor assisted by ideas that have their source in Europe. Those living today are not familiar with public debates and politics of change which do not derive their basics from European philosophy. Our parents had known such phenomena practically everywhere in South. The outstanding case is that of Gandhi in India. After the Second European War that all of us had to fight, thought across the Globe took a nose dive everywhere and it is only now that these new movements are bringing life back to human thought. These are movements of indigenous peoples and farmers in great many parts of the South.

We mention here five instances to focus our attention on what kind of thing has started happening. Bolivian people have risen with their ideas around their concept of *Pachamama*, roughly referring to their traditional understanding of organization of life on

Mother Earth. Ecuador has given itself a new constitution built around the idea of *Buen Vivir*, roughly meaning good living, in which there is a central place for Rights of Nature. India has been witnessing a large Farmers' Movement with the lead idea of *Bharat-India* divide with a *Lokavidya* knowledge movement insisting on re-legitimization and reinvigoration of knowledge in society, that is knowledge with the people outside the university. Then there is also a *Jal-Jangal-Zameen* (water-forest-land) movement for people's control of natural resources. An international farmer's movement, *La Via Campesina* spread across several nations has come up with the idea of *Food Sovereignty* - supply of food to the population being an inalienable right of the local agricultural communities and their need to have control of local resources towards this end. The European student's movement against corporatization of education spread also in US and Canada has been theorized with a new concept of *Cognitive Capitalism* pointing out that the struggle in the factories of the previous era has re-appeared in a new location, namely the university.

These movements are confronting the university as an uncontested and sole location of knowledge. They are challenging as never before the injustices committed in the name of democracy, development, and science. It is the fraternity of these movements that holds the new promise, the promise of their own new world.

Vidya Ashram, Varanasi

Our Knowledge Intervention in WSF

WSF conferences in Mumbai (January 2004), Karachi (March 2006), Delhi ISF (November 2006) and Nairobi (January 2007) provided us with opportunities to organize workshops for debating the new knowledge question, as it were. Our workshops were called 'Dialogues on Knowledge in Society'. They discussed the storm in the world of knowledge created primarily by the emergence of the new information technologies and the new connectivity owing to the internet. We formulated and discussed the new shift in what constituted the criteria of legitimate knowledge. The thesis was, and is, that scientific method has given way to the principle of organizability for anything to be considered legitimate knowledge. The new world had stopped bothering about where the knowledge emanated from and how it was produced or acquired and was only interested in seeing whether it was organizable by the new technology, that is whether it was softwareable. This and the accompanying phenomena had taken the world of knowledge by a storm. Received principles including the commanding place of Science started going overboard one by one and the university's preeminent and commanding place in the world of knowledge stood challenged and even threatened.

Our workshops discussed the idea of virtuality, the changing scene around radical politics and possible new political imaginations. These workshops brought into focus the changing relationships between science-internet-*lokavidya* and with this the new spaces that were opening for people's intervention in the world of knowledge. They discussed the idea of resistance in the world of knowledge, Knowledge Satyagraha. Ideas like

people's knowledge politics and people's knowledge movements occupied the discussions. On the occasion of each one of these workshops a bulletin was published with a number of contributors. These bulletins are all available on the Vidya Ashram website www.vidyaashram.org

The thread around which the entire discourse and dialogue was woven was the idea of *lokavidya*, that is knowledge in society, knowledge with the people, knowledge outside the university. It is here that we saw the location of people's way of thinking, imagination, art, organization, logic and values. It was from here that their genius created and re-created life for them in the contemporary world. Here lay the ultimate source of strength of the people. The historic destabilization of the world of knowledge created great spaces for *lokavidya* to assert in the public domain. It is this assertion that we have been seeing in Bolivia, Ecuador, India and in La Via Compesina and in a strand of European Student Movement. The workshop and the conference proposed by us for the Tunis WSF attempt to focus on this new moment and pose for debate the idea of a Global Fraternity of People's Knowledge Movements.

We are not able to be present in Tunis during this WSF. Some friends have agreed to take this bulletin to Tunis and reach it out to the participants there. It happened so in the case of the Nairobi WSF also. We were unable to go there and friends had taken our bulletin there which had resulted in new contacts and challenging dialogues. We hope to expand this discussion this time too through the WSF gathering.



Towards a Global Fraternity of Peoples' Knowledge Movements

The Global Peoples' Knowledge Movement

We, the people of the Global South, are facing a new world-in-the-making that is uprooting and displacing us afresh from the activities and resources with which we live. Philosophy, Science and Politics of the past two centuries no more come to our rescue. This has been a great opportunity for activist-thinkers of our societies, the former colonies, to intervene in the ideological world with knowledge perspectives of our own people.

Social and political movements of the 19th and 20th centuries (except may be some like Gandhi in India) challenged every oppressive structure except one: the hegemony of modern science and modern knowledge over other traditions of knowledge. In particular, knowledge traditions of the 'uneducated majority' all over the world were considered inferior. The result was that even when people participated in these movements in large numbers, they only constituted the mass-base, never the intellectual command. And often they ended up fighting someone else's battle; a just world remained elusive.

After centuries of denigration and defeat, peoples' modes of expression and action are asserting themselves. Everywhere in Latin America, Africa, and Asia, and even in Europe, *knowledge movements* are taking shape. Some have explicitly taken up the issue of 'cognitive capitalism' and living versus dead knowledge, others are challenging the Euro-American vision

of ‘development’ and ‘progress’ by putting forward and implementing their own visions. The European student movements, the new indigenous movements in Bolivia and Ecuador, the *lokavidya* movement in India, the international peasant movement- Via Campesina, these and many more we have yet to hear from, create a global fraternity of knowledge movements. These movements bring to us ideas such as living knowledge and Rights of Nature that need not make sense in received paradigms from Europe. Their histories, their memories, their heroes, their visions of the future do not refer to the European experience. These movements are inaugurating a new philosophy and a new political imagination that seeks its criteria in the knowledges, initiatives, and well-being of the majority world.

This new consciousness is *contemporary* and *political* because it emerges from the popular struggles against imperialism occurring today. Everywhere we look, the ‘uneducated’ and the ‘ignorant’ are a political force in their own right and are in the mood to reveal who is truly ignorant and who is wise. No longer content with paradigms of thought and modes of struggle familiar from the European experience these struggles and movements are constructing new epistemic foundations. They are carrying the battle to the knowledge plane and asserting that ordinary people the world over are knowledgeable. *And that they know it to be so.* That they can construct a new world based on their knowledge is the claim of the global peoples’ knowledge movement.

Our Tasks

These movements are explicitly confronting injustices committed in the name of democracy, development, and science, the unholy trinity of the modern age. Those who have built and

nurtured a world where less than a hundred individuals own more wealth than half of humanity, where three-fourths of the world's people are told they need to be educated in order to have the right to speak, now stand challenged like never before.

Of course, the idea has been around for a while that European and American visions of civilization are bankrupt and no longer serve all of humanity, if they ever did. It is becoming part of common wisdom now that the same knowledge tradition that created the multiple social, economic, and ecological crises we face, cannot be expected to transcend these crises. Scholars, even Euro-American ones, have come to the understanding that the hegemony of their knowledge traditions has meant the denigration of other ways of seeing, knowing, and doing that belong to the ordinary people in the colonized countries, with catastrophic consequences for most of humanity. But we have known this all along. Our task has been to convert this wisdom into action and in recent years a start has been made.

The knowledge movement recognizes that the cognitive foundation of peoples' strength, our strength, lies in the knowledge we possess to organize our lives, to understand the world, to resist the oppressor. This is knowledge produced in ordinary life from which all knowledge (including science) originates and to which, in a just society, all knowledge must return. The movement comes with the understanding that until the struggle against imperialism is carried to the knowledge plane, counter-revolutions will be inevitable. Unless the University is challenged alongside the State and Capital, restorations will recur. Our struggles will not move in our favor if they are waged on a foundation that is not ours and that we do not understand.

The task is not easy. The hegemony of the enemy is manifested concretely in 'common sense.' That the educated

know more or know better than the uneducated, that the present is an improvement over the past, that *their* present is *our* future, that liberal democracy is the best of all political systems, that Science is always the best way to do things, the list can go on. The knowledge movement is challenging such 'common sense.' Nothing, not democracy, not Science, not the university, will remain unquestioned. Nothing will be taken for granted.

The struggles and movements that form the global fraternity of knowledge movements are in continuity with countless popular revolts throughout history; struggles of indigenous peoples, anti-colonial and decolonization struggles, religious movements against oppression and injustice. Frantz Fanon, Patrice Lumumba, Mahatma Gandhi, Toussaint L'Ouverture, Bartolina Sisa, Tania Bhil, Rosa Parks, Birsa Munda, Shankar Guha Niyogi, these are the leaders of past knowledge movements. And many more will be claimed as the movement builds. The movements they led were not only about control over resources or dignity and freedom. Rooted as they were in popular perspectives and to the extent they took their cue from popular visions of a just society, they were also knowledge movements. We proudly inherit these and countless other anti-imperial and decolonization struggles across the world.

We also learn from their failures. Unfazed by the charges that will inevitably come, of nativism, of obscurantism, of rolling back progress, and many such others, we must construct a new politics. The moment is ripe.

An Opening

The moment is ripe because we are living through a period of momentous changes in the world of knowledge. The old order is collapsing around us. The new order is known by many

names: Globalization, Neoliberalism, Cognitive Capitalism, Information Society, Network Society, Knowledge Age. An entirely new vocabulary is coming into existence: knowledge management, knowledge worker, knowledge economy, knowledge parks, knowledge divide, the list goes on. The creation of this new world order has been made possible by the Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) and the new connectivity achieved by the Internet. The global peoples' knowledge movement takes seriously the claim that we have entered a Knowledge Age that is qualitatively different from the earlier Industrial Age. This does not mean that the earlier age is irrelevant. The network society needs industrial society in order to exist in the same way that industrial society needs agricultural societies to flourish and exploit.

We see that humanity's view of itself is changing. There is a tendency developing to see human history in terms of the development of methods of communication and not technologies of production. Biologists now see cellular processes as information processes, materially realized by chemical and physical processes and not the other way round. Engineers have to take a back seat to designers. These are big changes. They make the science and society we have been familiar with, stand on its head. We have known the science of things and forces but the new understanding sees the world as representation and communication, meaning and syntax. Information and knowledge are in command.

On the 'northern' side of the digital divide the new political movements of this century such as Arab Spring as well as the Occupy movements have made extensive use of the possibilities afforded by the new technologies. On the same side of the divide, anti-corruption movements in South and South East Asia

are being seen as giving birth to a new politics of the classes that have come into existence with the new order or very soon hope to be integrated to it.

What are the new movements of those on our side of this divide? From our perspective the paradigm shift from the Industrial Age to the Knowledge Age has brought unprecedented dispossession, loss of livelihood, and an absolute impoverishment in the material standard of living. But at the same time it has opened up possibilities for a new type of politics.

Why is this so? The emergence of the new technologies of communication has destabilized the world of knowledge by knocking Science off the pedestal. It no longer occupies the commanding heights. Other knowledges from other places are gaining prominence they never had before in the modern period. Even as scholars debate endlessly whether 'traditional knowledge' is 'scientific' or not, Capital is already preying upon every type of knowledge, traditional, indigenous, artisanal, folk, local, in its unending quest for value and profit. Our knowledge traditions are already being used against us. Development experts wish to integrate these knowledges into their projects. Sustainable development, biodiversity management, digital databases, handicraft expos, all such processes and ideas seek to tame the potential that these knowledge traditions have to bring forth new civilizational imaginations.

In this period of destabilization it behooves us to take advantage of the uncertainty and mount a new challenge. Being first and foremost a political movement and not an intellectual one, the knowledge movement is contemporary by its nature. It is built on people's contemporary knowledge. It does not speak of 'traditional knowledge' and 'craft production'. And it rejects

all efforts to ‘preserve’ or ‘protect’ the knowledge that resides with the world’s peasants, artisans, and indigenous peoples.

Struggles and Movements

Displacement and Dispossession

In all our societies millions of families of farmers, indigenous peoples, artisans and other small producers, shopkeepers are finding that life is becoming more and more difficult. In an unbroken continuity with the colonial period our people have been displaced and dispossessed from their lands and livelihoods for roads, dams, parks, railways, power plants, military bases, shopping malls, factories, and residential colonies in what is cynically referred to as the ‘greater common good.’ What has come about is neither greater, nor common, nor good. The relentless search for minerals, water, forests, and land across all continents is fueled by profit, justified by Science that speaks of an ‘efficient’ use of ‘natural resources.’ Generations to come will wonder and ask: how was it possible that a system so destructive of humanity and of nature could claim itself to be ‘efficient?’ The answer does not lie merely in the power of money to distort the truth. Some of us were willing to be deceived. It is possible to wake a man who is asleep but not a man who is pretending to sleep.

The global peoples’ knowledge movement calls upon the vast number of popular struggles against displacement and dispossession, inequality and imperialism across the world to see themselves as knowledge struggles, struggles for restoring legitimacy to people’s knowledge. And thus to acquire a new civilizational significance as well as a sense of solidarity with each other. In India we call this *Lokavidya Jan Andolan* (a peoples’ movement for peoples’ knowledge). But each culture

and each society has its own name for it and they will immediately understand what we mean.

The *lokavidya* standpoint is that popular struggles which are waged daily, in organized and unorganized fashion, will be sharpened if we stake the claim that our knowledge, *lokavidya*, is not inferior to any other knowledge tradition. Until this claim is staked in the public domain, struggles against displacement will appear to be merely a defense of meager livelihoods. They will appear ‘anti-development’ and ‘anti-progress.’ But seen from a knowledge perspective, movements for peoples’ control of water, forest and land, as well as movements against displacement from land and forest are about creating a future, not preserving the past.

Struggles for Equal Wages and Equal Access to Resources

‘The market’ does not give us a just price for our knowledge, goods, services, or labour. We are routinely labeled ‘unskilled.’ Our knowledge, our years spent in training and learning count for very little. The so-called ‘playing field’ that rather should be described as a battlefield is always tilted against us. While governments get busy guaranteeing the profits of the corporate sector, we are forced to sell our skills in vast ‘informal sector’ where nothing is guaranteed except exploitation. And in a final cruel twist of logic, our low wages are used to justify the ‘unskilled’ nature of our work. The corporate sector along with its ally, the so-called middle classes who dominate the media, the policy-making institutions, and politics, create the illusion of the ‘self-governing’ and ‘free’ market that objectively delivers returns according to each person’s ability. The reality is well known to everyone: the market is carefully governed in the interests of the corporate sector.

We assert that no work is unskilled work. We reject all talk of subsidies that seeks to rob us of our dignity. We demand instead equal access to all national resources, not only natural resources, but national resources: public finance, electricity, irrigation, public space. Indeed we have already built movements to achieve this. Slum-dwellers movements for rights to the city, farmers movements for electricity and fair prices, organizations of informal sector workers that fight for wages equal to formal sector employees, the global peoples' knowledge movement calls on all these struggles to also speak the language of knowledge. We claim only what is rightfully ours because our knowledges will construct tomorrow's worlds.

The University

The university is the most prized product of the modern age. It is sometimes thought to represent the highest achievements of modern culture and to provide the intellectual atmosphere necessary for the preservation of society via a mixture of consent and dissent. As California's militant student movement puts it, the [modern] university's history is the history of capital itself. Not surprising then that the fortunes of the university are tied to the fortunes of capital. The cry 'We Won't Pay for Your Crisis,' originally the slogan of the Italian 'Anomalous Wave,' has resounded in student movements everywhere. Many of these movement display little nostalgia for the way knowledge was produced and distributed in the past. They speak of a new type of university that produces 'living knowledge' instead of teaching abstract, dead knowledge. They dream of a fundamental change in the modern university in such a way that it no longer serves as the pillar of an exploitative society.

For far too long our educational systems have trained recruits to see ordinary people, those who have not gone to

school, as ignorant; to see them as doing what they do, in the way they do it, because modern knowledge and facilities have not reached them yet. We are used to thinking of the university as a place of learning and knowledge in a sea of ignorance. Walled campuses have been as far away from the people epistemically as the walled palaces of kings used to be from their subjects socially and economically.

The large-scale tendency to call people ignorant will not break until the walls of the University fall. It is the task of the knowledge movement to rebuild the university as a place of organized knowledge activity located in a sea of knowledge. What knowledge? The knowledge possessed by the peasants, artisans, and variety of others, common people who carry out their daily and specialized activity without the benefit of a university experience. The university should be a place of knowledge activity guided by the genius of the people, activity arising from the epistemic wealth of technical experts, communication experts, artists, and spiritual men and women of the region.

The question of the university is closely linked to the question of the public sphere. The University has created modes of discourse within which people are not able to express themselves fully. The knowledge movement recognizes the urgency of changing the nature of the public domain. The lokavidya movement in India has attempted to create new institutions and spaces where participation, opinions and initiatives of the common people on the question of knowledge become part of the public realm. One such initiative is the "Gyan Panchayat" (Public Hearing on Knowledge). The uneducated will no longer accept being shut out of national debates and the media. The days when a debate can be carried out on agriculture

on television or in the newspapers without a single farmer present are numbered.

What Unites Us?

We are aware of the many weapons that have been created to divide us and keep us divided. They take different forms in different societies: race, ethnicity, religion, caste, gender, all have been used against us. Labeled as "traditional communities" we are not seen to be capable of generating our own struggles against our own evils. The oppression is ours, the solution to it, theirs.

But we know only too well the importance of walking together, or supporting each other, and of discovering new resonances. The global fraternity of knowledge movements emerges as we recognize new solidarities. The knowledge perspective shows us on one side the majority, those ninety per cent whose worldview has not been shaped by the modern university, whose skills have not been acquired in colleges, who do not see the answer to every question in Europe or in modern education walk together. These are people whose success in life and progress in the world are measured by the extent to which they give up their own ways of thinking, knowing, seeing, and doing. The small minority who is in command of the public sphere, the State, the media, the corporate sector, appears on the other side. This minority considers itself to be the vanguard, and has given to itself the ultimate power: the power of imagining our futures.

But our struggles and movements are living proof that we have not ceded the power to imagine. We may be united in our experience of being called backward, in being seen as objects of 'development' or 'local participants' in various 'projects.'

But that is not all. We are also united in our respect for our saints and ancestors. We are united in recognizing the importance of community and of our intimacy with the non-human world around us. And most importantly, we are united in our knowledge that we can shape a far better world than this one. This solidarity is not only an idea. It is lived reality.

The task that remains is to create the processes that enable us to share our experiences and intensify our struggles. The global peoples' knowledge movement is one such process.

Reject Development

The knowledge movement rejects unconditionally all measures of development and progress foisted upon our people. We refuse to be ranked, promoted, and demoted in accordance with development goals. We reject all talk of 'policy measures' and 'target populations' and 'affected people.' We refuse to be 'participants' in someone else's agenda. We will construct our own milestones of well-being. Indeed these already exist. We offer *sumak kawsay* or *buen vivir* instead of economic growth, *pachamama* or Mother Earth in place of natural resources, food sovereignty and not food security, *lokavidya* and not Science. We will create many more.

On the heels of the colonial period, our societies have suffered from more decades of destruction under the policies of 'development' and then liberalization, privatization, and globalization. Inequality is now higher than at any other time in human history. For those who are not blinded by ideology, the 2008 economic recession that in some countries became a depression, has exposed once again the hollowness of modern economics. The world has emerged from the depression with

ever-greater global inequality having fixed none of the problems that caused it.

While economists try to escape responsibility our people are engaged in building alternatives, alternatives that may draw on ideas of justice, dignity, equality and equally on those from our worlds and our pasts. These alternatives need not follow well-worn paths nor get trapped in dilemmas of yesterday. Growth or redistribution, State or Market, hand or machine, private or public ownership, these debates over which so much ink and blood has spilled do not matter to us. Because growth has hurt us and redistribution has not helped, the State has collaborated with market forces to uproot us, the machine has displaced us while our hands are not allowed to feed us, and neither private nor public ownership has meant *our* control over *our* resources.

The World Social Forum, a decade ago boldly raised the slogan Another World is Possible. Yes other worlds are possible. But what will be the epistemic foundations of these worlds? The knowledge movement knows that humanity's understanding and experience of the world is far deeper and richer than we have been led to believe; our choices far more expansive than have been offered to us. It knows that the future is radically unknown and unknowable and hence not bound to follow anyone's predetermined path. It knows that democracy, human rights, private property, education, civil liberties, are but means and like all means have alternatives. We have seen people made poor by development, ignorant by education, enslaved by freedom and disenfranchised by democracy. And we refuse to believe that the cures for these ills are more development, more education, more freedom and more democracy.

We call out ‘poverty alleviation program’ for what they are – a cynical form of charity designed to keep us where we are. We declare ‘education’ to be fraud perpetrated upon us, made up of promises that were never meant to be kept. For too long we have accepted the paradigm of lack and deprivation. Even those among us who saw through the deception of the ‘poverty’ discourse and recognized the reality of exploitation that kept us poor, often believed in our lack of knowledge. The knowledge movement rejects all paradigms of lack, whether it is lack of values, lack of capital, or lack of knowledge. It operates instead in the paradigm of strength. Not only strength found in numbers but the strength that comes from confidence in our way of doing things. What we know we will implement, what we do not know, we will learn.

Looking Ahead

We ask those among the educated who stand in solidarity with us, fight alongside us against the destruction of our mountains, forests, rivers, and livelihoods, to speak less and listen more, to explain less and understand more. And when explaining, explain for us, not to us. If political parties come forward to carry our agenda we welcome them. If national constitutions want to enshrine our principles we support them. But the knowledge movement is larger than any political party or national constitution. It takes neither as sacred.

It is time then to stake publicly and politically the claim that other worlds are possible only if peoples’ knowledge receives the status it deserves. It is time to organize ourselves not only on the basis of the problems we face but on the basis of the solutions we offer. And it is time to forge alliances that build on our greatest strengths: our learning, our experience, our theories, our practices, and our knowledge.



About Vidya Ashram

Vidya Ashram is a place where politics and philosophy are not separable. Social and human concern, academy, *darshan* (philosophy) and movement merge into one. The Ashram's thinking has been shaped by continuous engagement with *lokavidya*-holders, chiefly men and women from peasant and artisan communities, and their movements. This involves attempts to develop a *lokavidya* idiom of discourse through participation in movements, pamphleteering, publishing journals and booklets, organizing conferences, workshops, dialogues and meetings. The Ashram sees itself as part of a knowledge movement of the so called uneducated people – peasants, artisans, ordinary women, adivasis and small retailers. In our view such a knowledge movement is a precondition for another world to become possible. [*Lokavidya* may be freely translated as knowledge in society, knowledge with the people and knowledge outside the university.]

A series of booklets in Hindi (some translated into Telugu, Marathi, Bangla, Urdu and English) has carried the *lokavidya* view on a variety of issues related to both the world of struggles and that of ideas. The focus is on conceptualizing the idea of people's knowledge intervention in the social, economic and political space. Two Hindi periodicals, *Lokavidya Samvad* and

Lokavidya Panchayat and a Telugu journal *Lokavidya Prapancham* have been regularly published.

The Ashram has intervened in the English-speaking world via participation in various World Social Forums as well as through engagement with the Edu-Factory network of European Knowledge Activists (www.edufactory.org). A series of workshops were organized at World Social Forums in Mumbai (2004), Karachi (2006), New Delhi (India Social Forum, 2006), and Nairobi (2007) with the theme **Dialogues on Knowledge in Society**. On each of these occasions an English bulletin was published.

The main program of the Ashram is Lokavidya Jan Andolan (LJA). As the name suggests, it is a people's knowledge movement, a knowledge movement of the majority, who have been dubbed as the ignorant masses by the science establishments, the universities and the modern state. LJA is the result of realization, that only if politics is based on the people's own knowledge can it be on their initiative, can it serve their interests. The building of this knowledge movement is reported on www.lokavidyajandolan.blogspot.com

All publications and programs of the Ashram are available on its website www.vidyaashram.org



Lokavidya Jan Andolan (LJA)

Blog : lokavidyajanandolan.blogspot.com

The global economic and ecological crises have exposed the thought and institutions that have enriched a few by making the majority starve and by bringing nature to the brink of destruction. *Lokavidya Jan Andolan* is a knowledge movement of this majority, that is of those people, who have been dubbed as the ignorant masses by the science establishments, the universities and the modern state. The idea that there is a sea of knowledge outside the university is not alien to most people in the world. Knowledge is widely spread in society and the idea that knowledge is widely spread, has a very wide spread too. That is, people know and they know that they know. And yet neither these people nor the knowledge they possess have dignity in society. Their knowledge has no economic returns, so people are poor. It has no respect in the public domain, so people are culturally marginal. It has no clear relation with peoples' organizations, therefore people are politically irrelevant. There is a need for a political movement, a space where people can mobilize on the basis of their knowledge. This movement is the *Lokavidya Jan Andolan*. There is a need to bring together the organizers of the movements of peasants and artisans, indigenous peoples and small trades-people, women and youth on a knowledge platform, which is a platform of their knowledge, *lokavidya*. It is from this platform that the claim can be staked that it is in *lokavidya* that the solution lies.

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Lokavidya Guru, speak!

Lokavidya Guru, speak!

**The knowledge of the farmer who tills the soil
The knowledge of the mother who molds the child
Of the artisan who molds the jug
And of the weaver who clothes the world.**

**Every being has knowledge.
Every being is a knowledge-bearer.
Your knowledge runs the world.
Without a degree, without a declared major.**

**When will the world know your toil?
When will your knowledge astound the academic?**

***Lokavidya Guru, speak!*
Speak to us your knowledge.
Your knowledge has paved mountains.
Count not yourself unskilled.
Your knowledge has fed the world.
Count not yourself untrained.
Your knowledge has birthed the world.
Count not yourself unwise.
Speak up for your knowledge!**