

Transcript of Zoom Meeting at 5.00 pm on Wednesday, June 18, 2025

This transcript is edited for corrections, which is to say that some machine-made mistakes are uncorrected.

Thanks to Avinash and Krish for correcting their parts.

- Girish

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Okay, I think we can start the there is. There are 2, 3 things. One is that there is a modified proposal with some additions. You would have all seen that ... There was a suggestion made about the 3rd day. But now that has been made explicitly in the new. This thing also there is some restructuring of the 2 days. What I noticed was that the second and the 3rd point have been combined into philosophical thought of Bahujan, so ... Nyaya, Tyaga, Bhaichara, and the new point on reservations and empowerment has been added. On day 2, there is, in place of political traditions, governance traditions rather, of Bahujan Samaj ... we have a question on Bahujan consciousness ... is it Swaraj consciousness? So those are the basically the 2 things ... 2, 3 things I noticed here on day 1, and 2, and there is an explicit suggestion of ... for 3rd day to seek a closure for this type of meeting in terms of a statement and definite decisions. So that is that. And then we have, of course. Suresh's note and GSRK's note. And as far as I can see, they basically center around how to go about understanding Bahujan and Bahujan consciousness specifically. So, I don't know ... we can start with either of Suresh or GSRK ... with, maybe after that we can also have some kind of a background for the restructuring of some of these proposal points, because they have come after a meeting in the Ashram. So one would like to know. Or we can start with that ... Any of the two ... Because, as far as I can comment, this question of Bahujan was raised even much before. And, in fact, when this proposal was being forwarded 1st time, it was sort of mentioned also that this Bahujan word needs to be discussed and approved ... sort of ... before this proposal becomes approved, in the sense that we have some kind of a common understanding of the word if we are going to use that. When we were discussing the the Shodh Prastav, which I thought specifically addresses precisely the concerns which have been raised by Suresh and GSRK much more coherently, I thought, this time and the concerns, which were also sort of background, as far as I can see, of the proposals which ... proposal which they were making at that time. So we seem to be moving in some kind of a coherent direction overall, at least from that point. The Shodh Prastav has been made from both Bangalore as well as Varanasi. and after that this convention on Dialogues ... And now this proposal so I don't know. We can start with the background also of the meeting, if that looks correct, or we can start with Suresh or GSRK.

ಡಾ|| ಜಕ ಸುರೇಶ್ :

Come in later. Not now. I'm moving a little.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Okay. then maybe we can start with Varanasi. Why that restructuring was done? Because it looks to me significant. In some sense both the reservations point as far as ... and the point on Bahujan consciousness being Swaraj consciousness. So I think maybe we can start with statement from Sunil or Chitraji on the meeting.

Sunil Sahasrabudhey:

You see one thing, what ... what now appears in the beginning as as the context in which the meeting is taking place, the global and the national situation National situation not much on national situation, mainly on the global situation ... That was already there on the 3rd day in the earlier mode. only that it has been moved to the beginning. such that it provides the context. For “Why a discussion on Swaraj now?”. Not ... not just that. But “Why a discussion on Swaraj?”, I mean, there is an opportune moment for that. The point is this, that there is a debate about the nature of nations, and states that well, that are the right thing for humanity to have. And there is a debate on this for last 20 years or so. I mean, different points have come in at different times.

What we have not been factor ... been able to factor in properly ... which one of you can do is climate justice, or the environmental question. It looms very large. In the context, but we have not been able to wed it with the with the nature of the debate on the State. There is no explicit connection of the environmental or the climate justice question with the nature of the State. No statements have been made. But somewhere the movement in the ... in the Latin America, in South America holds them ... holds itself to the climate question seriously. It so appears from the debates that I see read at different places. So I don't know if that connection can be made or should be made. Someone has to think more seriously about it. We have not been on the environment track for long enough ... we have never been on that track, and, therefore, it doesn't come naturally to us very often. So that is one thing that a lacuna, a gap, may appear to many people in this write up whether, just as the question is in the on the second day, just as it is asked whether social justice movement can have a the movement for social justice can have its as its goal. Swaraj. Similarly, one can frame how and why or whether the environmental movement must finally have it same as Swaraj, for there is no other way of satisfying the environmental question. I mean all kinds of things Now, what is that called? ... what rebellion extinction, rebellion. They have gone to that extent talking about the extinction, rebellion, and all that. But this is all only in terms of criticizing the present. or saying that the that there is no way forward. We in the way one is going in but some geopolitical suggestions, some what is it called? Geoethnography ... What is it called? No. Geo... Something science, or something in which they they try to find the answers. But anyway, the environmental question in some way needs to be woven. Perhaps in the larger context, I don't know if it is possible, if it is not possible we may not do that. and and maybe include it only as a single question. In one of the points in Swaraj ... justice, social justice is there, whether environmental justice must have as its goal as Swaraj like organization of the State. Some such thing? Yes, I'm now.

The other thing that you are saying I don't very clearly relate ... recollect the thought process. But this, about reservation one has to talk. There is no option I think so when one is talking about Bahujan, and it's what is it called empowerment of the Bahujan or fighting the social hierarchy, and so on. Alright. Reservations has been the biggest expression of social justice movement in India. So that must be in the context of whether how it needs to be further formulated is open, but that needs to be included.

Secondly, we have added this about about Bahujan Chetana. Bahujan Chetana is to be understood in some sense in contrast to the consciousness that originates in the professional part

of the world, politics included, political and economic professionalism or other social professionalism ... that there is a certain kind of consciousness, in which, for example, people who would easily use the word superstition, that these practices are superstition has been very strong in this country or some such thing. So it's a it's a take of the professional class of this country to very easily use the word superstition. We can find many more words which are very easily used by the professional classes, but are never used practically by the Bahujan in their internal discourses. In their intra discourse they don't use these terms at all, so their worldview does not kind of find a place for them. That means their consciousness does not have a place for them. Consciousness, particularly, has been used because the change agents are used to of using a consciousness language.

There may be different ways of saying the same thing. I would recall. you see, it was sent on this ... There was a meeting in Banaras later, but before that one outcome of a large meeting that has taken place here some 3 years ... in 22, or 23, sometime Nov 22, I think, of the Sanghrsha Vahini, and others that Akhilendra of Allahabad had got in touch, and he wanted me to write an initial note, which, of course, he didn't like, and we couldn't pursue together anything further. I had written a note on Swaraj Chetana, or Swaraj Panchayat. I think this is dated September 2023. I can resend that. We have that it talks about 2, 3 types of consciousness in the, in the real context of the Indian situation. a moral consciousness, a knowledge related consciousness, a political consciousness, a social consciousness. That political consciousness does not capture these other types of consciousness as it does very often in the political societies or in class societies. The moral and the political, the constitutional, and the moral may not remain very different in in class societies of Europe today, but they're very different in in the Indian society of today. One can take some examples like, you know, I had taken some example there that when when one says that stealing is bad, it is the moral consciousness; when so, when when you say that stealing is punishable by law, by whatever by criminal justice this thing procedures, then it is some kind of political consciousness. If you say that if stealing affects the social fiber of society. you are exhibiting some kind of a social consciousness. It's very simple. One can do it in other things. Also, if one sits down to do this. If one says that we know that peasants always knew that Urea is going to affect the nature of the soil, this is knowledge consciousness of the peasant. So Bahujan Samaj, by and large, that is, the Lokavidya Samaj of our description by and large, has these different types of consciousness not expressed in a combined way in their political consciousness. and therefore the nature of the voting behavior, which seems so stupid to most of the professional classes that when women responded, saying that because of the 5 kg given every time and and a small purva of salt included there, which was a trickery, I mean. The government, of course, was bent upon fooling the people, but that the point is not that people were fooled. The point is that they act also according to their moral consciousness.

Political consciousness does not subsume all these departments of human life and consciousness. This this needs to be somewhat debated and discussed too, and I think the point can be taken that political, that Bahujan consciousness in this sense, in the sense of some kind, of a combination, or coming together of moral, social, political knowledge, related, etc. Consciousness, some kind of coming together in a constructive way leads to Bahujan consciousness. which is by and large, similar to a Swarajist consciousness ... which is Swaraj consciousness. Swaraj consciousness is not a political consciousness. I mean the entire

movement, the national movement ... it would have been maintained by Mahatma Gandhi and many others maybe that is Swaraj consciousness ... and yes, he has, and many others have used Swaraj, the word in very different ways, a personal Swaraj and a Gram Swaraj, and Swaraj as a political administration ... All kinds of situations have been described by using the word Swaraj ... personal, political, social, village-related country-related ... everything ... and it was an understanding that one is not talking about politics while talking about Swaraj.

This needs to kind of come out in some way. Not that you were not talking about the state ... you were talking about the State ... and yet not talking about politics. Now this is slightly problematic. In the Western discourse. State is co-terminus with the political society in the class societies of Europe. But it's not the case here. We can see the difference very clearly. Some of these differences need to be properly underwritten, properly brought into focus in this discussion that we propose to hold. It is only after such focus is attained in these discussions that an idea of Swaraj Panchayat can make sense, otherwise it will not make sense. And an idea of Swaraj Panchayat as a Bahujan idea ... Bahujan idea, not meaning that the Bahujan think that way, but some kind of long-term sensibility of the emanating from wherever it does, it doesn't matter from a ... You can't ... you can't determine that... in the interest of the Bahujan, so much social, economic, political, moral, philosophical, all kinds of interests of the local, national, global, I mean all kinds of interests of the Bahujan Samaj. Not just... that is all captured in the European dialogues by saying political consciousness... It cannot (all) be captured here in the Indian case and many other 3rd World countries by talking about political consciousness. This is where the pity lies when the professional classes... those who talk about progress and secularism and the left talk about political consciousness or absence of political consciousness. Yes, there is an absence of political consciousness, but you don't understand... because... because there is no political consciousness at some kind of an apex... consciousness which sums all kinds of consciousnesses within it... that has not happened, and it may not happen, it may never happen, for that matter. It is not as if it has not yet happened, (that) it will happen someday... It's not as if Indians are not like Europeans today, but someday they will become like Europeans. This (is a) bogus argument.

So the idea of Swaraj, through consciousness, through self-governance, through ideas of tradition and many other ways connect. The idea of Swaraj connects with the idea of Bajan Samaj, call it Lokavidya Samaj call it Swadeshi. We have used all these terms before, but it appears to us now at Vidya. Ashram, maybe it is a somewhat North Indian take. I cannot say no to that, because I do not know and understand greatly the political... this thing... nuances present in the in the Southern States. So I can't insist on that. I am not insisting (on) that. But I'm saying that the Bahujan word in the northern parts of this country. I don't even know about Bengal, for how much, how far a word like this can go, but in the largely... in the Hindi speaking belt... there is not a more appropriate word to use for Lokavidya Samaj today. It can change because of the significance, the political, the social, the cultural significance of these words changes with different contexts and times. So today it seems that therefore, we have done this. That's about all. Maybe more later.

Avinash Jha:

You are muted, Girish.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Oh, yes ... No, ... Avinash, will you speak now?

Avinash Jha:

I'm not speaking with any great clarity. Just trying to come to grips and it seems to me we are again back at the drawing board. One point which has come up again and again. What we are calling Bahujan Samaj? And saying it's divided on various lines, language, region, culture class caste, and so on. There is a social discourse also, when we say that Indian society is deeply divided. We should not think of it as deeply divided, looking for uniformity or homogeneity in various parts of society, or various different societies that constitute the larger society.

At least in our country, and especially if we are thinking of Bahujan from the starting point of Swaraj itself. then Swaraj in some sense implies that such a diversity. A society which doesn't have such diversity cannot possibly be a Swarajist society. Okay? Because Swaraj means the decisions are made locally, the structures of authority are distributed, and so on. If there is swarajist tradition in society of any kind, it will naturally result in this kind of diversity. So what does it mean in such a situation to develop a political consciousness? Whether it will be on the model of class consciousness, class society. So I feel this model of class in thinking about this kind of Swarajist political consciousness does not work. It won't work, because it, it always implies that there is a going to be a convergence to a particular class consciousness at some point which is desirable in future, so that everybody comes together and stands together to oppose.

But what would be the alternative political imagination of a different kind of political consciousness? And so how do we then understand or identify Bahujan? There cannot be any kind of a essentialist definition of Bahujan. Perhaps we can think of black consciousness in this regard. Black consciousness was a movement which arose in South Africa under very severe apartheid conditions in the sixties. This was after the armed resistance movement had reached an impasse and many ANC leaders like Mandela etc had been imprisoned. It is then this kind of a movement had arisen there. Especially, it started with some student politics where some group of students formed a separate black organizations. They said that liberal white people who, even though they profess to say they are working for the betterment of black, and they want to remove the racial inequality and so forth. But they always in the process assume a higher position of guidance of the whole movement. So in some way, then they reinforce the same thing. So they said, we need to develop black organizations everywhere, students and women and everywhere. And and there was a concept of black consciousness which arose which later even traveled to America. And it became quite influential. Steve Biko was one of the very key persons in the evolution of black consciousness movement in South Africa.

They were accused of being reverse racist. But the idea of black was not that black in color. So black became a political idea where all kinds of different people they came under it, Basically those which were excluded in the white dominant setup, they became black. And later on, the idea of black was quite expanded. In fact, it's freely used for non-white people even now by many people. In many contexts. And the fundamental idea was that that people in some way lost or they were encouraged to lose thinking of themselves as autonomous, to have their own judgments, to

have their own way of fighting oppression, and so on, and so forth. The idea was to recover that confidence, that idea that they also have their own strengths. This was the key idea in black consciousness - to regain their own strength, and the idea that they have their own strength. Similarly, Bahujan does not refer to any thing essential.

There is a very interesting and true anecdote. There was a case in the South African court where Steve Biko was tried in the court. The white judge asked him, why do you call yourself black when you are actually brown? Biko replied why do you call yourself white even though you are actually pink. So in that way, this kind of very interesting debate was there. So I think Bahujan is a similar idea. It's not essentialist kind of identity marker. Basically we can think of it from the idea of Swaraj itself, as we seem to be doing. It comes from that part of society which we are thinking of ordinary people. I think it's not some attribute which can be ascribed to that group of people - People who have this are Bahujan. So maybe it's the people who govern themselves in some way, people who would like to govern themselves, and people who in practice have been governing themselves. These are the people who are Bahujan. They are spread out in society of different kinds, different castes, different regions, different languages and different cultures.

And how do we understand elite? Similarly, we have to think, I think in when we say elite, we have to give various dimensions, not just economic and all, but also like who are the people who are considered to be cultured or 'abhijatya'. So here we can refer to the idea of Bahiskrit Samaj - Bahiskrit Samaj and Paschimicrit Samaj. So the idea became that people only people who are really cultured are the people who are Westernized. It may not apply exactly now, but I think that idea can be referred to. They're also elite. So there will be different dimensions to this elite. And Bahujan. But basically I wanted to say that we cannot think in terms of terms of class or the idea of class struggle here. There is something else that is required.

I need to think about this whole question of nation, state and environment and so on. I just have some brief comment. One thing is that in the current situation Nationalism became a bad word in discourse, especially in Social science discourse, and it was taken for granted, and being a Nationalist is being regressive in some way. But after the collapse of Soviet Union, and oh, okay. and rise of this unipolar World order with the US Hegemony that has developed. and the kind of things that have been happening where certain nation states have been destroyed one after another, who sort of don't toe the line. The idea of national sovereignty came to be attacked. Social science and intellectuals criticise nationalism as a kind of regressive consciousness in a different way. But this globalists who we call neocons. And and they said, national sovereignty is not to be sort of respected. and they destroyed many nations. And it's going on. It's intensified now.

And about the climate question, I just have one. This thing about this whole climate change discourse is that how can we reduce the environmental discourse to the climate change or discourse of global warming, because that is reduction. Environmental destruction is very obvious, very real. Like rivers are destroyed, forests are destroyed. animals are destroyed. Crops are destroyed, fields are, land is destroyed, and so on. But now the whole thing becomes the discussion around global warming and climate change and so many degrees and so many degrees. And there's disputes on that. And so I think, environmental questions should not be

reduced to discourse of this climate change. That's another. I'll come back if I have some other points later.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Right. Yes, GSRK?

Sivaramakrishnan G:

I don't have anything immediately to say. Yeah, I mean, these are issues which we'll have to give. I mean, I have to think about it seriously and then respond, but right now I have nothing really much to say, anything to.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Ok ...Suresh?

ಡಾ|| ಜಕ ಸುರೇಶ್ :

No, no, no, I I really. I'm unable to sort of grasp. I mean, you know much of what was said by Buddhyy. I'll try to have a look at the recordings and then get back. What I could recognize is that you know the larger kind of a main scope of what Bahujan means, and in what way that could actually be, you know, central to a new imagination, and so on. But I don't think I've got it properly, and so on, and I think, in light of much of what was return, I mean a note that I wrote and so on. I'm unable to sort of square that with what has been said before and what was said today. So I will have to really look at everything afresh, and then come back.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Okay ... Naresh?

Naresh Kumar Sharma:

Oh, hello! Oh, yeah. As a matter of fact, I thought that both Suresh and GSR ... they have put forward many questions. So oh, after that note came for October meeting on that idea, and some of the things that once in a while I have mentioned, I think more coherently, more quietly. There, we put some of those things. Of course I'm not saying that that is the only thing we are saying. We have many other things safe. So if you have to take it forward I will be looking forward to their discussion now or later. Whatever in particular. The last sentence that GSR says, I think I have it. I have talked a few times about that. Also that if you don't look at that, then.

ಡಾ|| ಜಕ ಸುರೇಶ್ :

I'm unable to hear the Naresh. Please. Sorry I we lost you. I lost you for 30 seconds.

Naresh Kumar Sharma:

I was saying that what you had written Suresh ... are you able to hear me now?

ಡಾ|| ಜಕ ಸುರೇಶ್ :

Absolutely no issues. Thank you.

Naresh Kumar Sharma:

Okay. So after the note on the October meeting, which is basically an outline of what should we discuss there... What the note that you Suresh and GSR have written ... They have raised questions of several ideas there, but I think it is important to take it forward. The discussion that they should be elaborated upon, maybe, or discuss further. So that is the only point I wanted to make.

Oh, it seemed to me that some of the questions that I have once in a while raised. Those have been also raised here in more, perhaps more coherently, more presently, and many other questions. Oh, including many practical questions about the way one should proceed further. Oh, in in that sense, also that it's we are grasping the issue, the problems then, then it should be possible to proceed further by looking at answers to those questions. So I would have. Instead, I was looking for not only what would they was going to elaborate on that note because he has written that. but also what you have said and what GSR has said about webinars. I am not going to react now, because oh, oh, the the-the-, the direction of that is slightly different from what two of you have talked about. So maybe you wanted to take up different directions one at a time. So those questions remain there. of course, the way one talks about ... for example, you have mentioned divided into those things it gives one kind of for notation. When you have said about class ... class and all those things of whether we should use this kind of term, or whether you kind of term, that they are identified with so many things, where division is only one aspect, but also interaction between them is another aspect. So we will use a a different kind of annotation then, basically how people identify themselves. So that is the only thing I will add there. Oh, from oh, my own! Whatever observations that I have and also experience. I think the question raised by you as well as by GSR we'll take it forward ... that discussion. That is what I'll say ... so And there are number of questions that you have raised, and GSR has not got the same format, but I think he's also raised. But there's 2 or 3 questions sharply there. So maybe we should take it forward whether you want to do it. Now GSR is going to be here. You said you are going to leave at 6 pm. but GSR. Is good to hear whether you would like to do it ... come back later on this ... or next meeting, but I think we need to take it forward. That is what I'll say.

Sivaramakrishnan G:

It's.

Naresh Kumar Sharma:

Yeah. Was it audible?

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah, okay.

Avinash Jha:

Yeah, yeah.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

So Suresh, are you saying that you will come back next time on whatever was said today?

ಡಾ|| ಜಕ ಸುರೇಶ್ :

Yeah, yeah, sure. Sure. Thanks.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Actually both you and GSRK.

ಡಾ|| ಜಕ ಸುರೇಶ್ :

Yeah. But I think you know, it may be useful to sort of dwell upon these questions ... questions that both modes raise and that context, I mean, you know. discuss what has been actually placed on the I did not update.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Yeah, okay. yeah, that is okay. I mean, because, you see, I thought that this ... there has to be some kind of a, you know, a very broad consensus in the in the Panchayat on ... not just among ourselves. but also, ... I mean, ...in case the day 2 program is really to be carried forward, and then day 3. Also. it would make sense to have this type of consensus on the use of the word Bahujan and Bahujan consciousness. That was the impression I had from the ... you know, the otherwise. And I ... This question about the ... about reservations I raised precisely from that angle. We need to have a very cogent kind of submissions there in the Panchayat, because I don't know about the participants there who are ... who, we are thinking, are going to participate in this. Or what is their ... Has it been discussed? What is their broad position on the question of reservations. As far as this view of the from us about reservation goes, I mean the the fact that it has built an elite in the in these castes which is essentially because, ... you see, the views about reservations is changing even in the ... within the political parties. It is ... Earlier the stress was to bring up people from ... who are who are backward, who are uneducated, who are economically badly off, etc. Etc. Now it's more on social management. So the elite is recognized, and in fact, the elite is there to manage these samaj's. It is given a explicit position within the new thinking about reservations. So this is the other side of reservations. As it is coming up now. So I think we need to discuss some of that also.

Sivaramakrishnan G:

Yep.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

That is within the political parties. There is a sort of consensus now to admit publicly that these are the people who are going to ... I mean that they are already doing it ... but now they are ... they will become social managers explicitly in collusion with the State and governments. So they are, ... they are recognized ... elite with recognition. very much a part of the ... which they already are, but now formally also so. In one sense it is something which, of course, makes our position makes our position clearer. So it is far easier to take that position now than maybe it was, say, 5 years back. But we need to discuss that. And we need to maybe write also explicitly on these

things. And second, is this notion of consciousness. Kind of what is the way to look at Bahujan consciousness? ... Krish, you want to come in.

Krishnarajulu:

We used the word, *Bahishkrit Samaj* over 50 years ago to describe the same section of Indian society that now we have chosen to call *Bahujan Samaj*. The word *Bahishkrit* was already there in currency. I think Ambedkar used it to refer to the untouchables, basically the outcastes. So *Bahishkrit* is a word to describe them. But we used the word with an entirely different connotation. We used it in counterposition to the term *Paschmikrit* very clearly. and we didn't say that by saying *Bahishkrit* we were referring to only to the so-called outcast, scheduled caste of whatever regions/origins but I think over the course of time we see that *Bahishkrit* refers to the weakness of this section of the population; as they were referred to in the early movements in South India, especially as the depressed classes e.g. Non, Brahmin movements, and so on. And remember the 1st reservations on the basis of caste for the so-called depressed, oppressed. disadvantaged sections of society was, initiated by the Maharaja of Baroda, quickly followed by the Maharaja of Mysore. (and in Mysore/Karnataka they celebrated the 100th anniversary of introduction of reservations some time back). So by *Bahishkrit* we were referring to their weakness. relative weakness, that is, within the entire Indian context. They were the weaker sections. - we were trying to identify them through this weakness parameter, and then, after some time, we used the word *Swadeshi*. I think at that time we began to realize that *Bahishkrit* does not really capture the abilities or the the plus points of the strengths of this section of society, and we use the word *Swadeshi Samaj*. because the word *Swadeshi* was used in opposition to British rule primarily in the days of the freedom movement. So all the domineering aspects of British rule were supposed to be opposed by those who had the *Swadeshi* spirit. There were practical manifestations which were encouraged through the Khadi movement etc. But when we used that term to refer to them we were not referring to the consciousness of this Samaj. We did not say that they were conscious of their weakness, nor that they were conscious of their strengths, etc. But I think about 30 years ago, when this term *Lokavidya* was used; and all these terms, let me say it very clearly, because I know. because I first came across this term *Bahishkrit* and began to sort of understand and think about it only when I read Buddhey's thesis, and then later on, *Swadeshi* after a lot of discussions with him and others, and then, *Lokavidya*, of course, is something that he first proposed about 30 years ago, *Lokavidya* seems to to me to capture the **strength of this section of society**. It refers to their strength, apart from their numbers is in their knowledge. We had now reached a stage where we could see the distinction in society, the main dividing line as it were, the prominent dividing line; as being one in the knowledge sphere- that is practiced knowledge not merely received knowledge to the practiced knowledge that the lives of this entire section of society/ Samaj revolved namely the knowledge in society or *Lokavidya*. So it was our recognition of their strength that led to the coinage of this term. We have developed different dimensions of *Lokavidya* in the sense that- you know we had a big discussion for over a year on *Nyaya, Tyaga and Bhaichara*, because at the end this section of society is not a political society. To my mind it is what I'd call a *Dharmic* society- *Dharmic* in the sense that they're all bound together by a consciousness of a moral duty- a moral duty in every aspect, in the way they live, the way they interact, the way they their discourses take place, etc, etc. There is caste- hierarchy. There is gender-hierarchy. There's a hierarchy between the dwellers in settled areas, what we'll call urban cities/towns and those who

live in villages and in the jungles. All these hierarchies exist, no doubt, and it appears to me that there never was a violent 'resolution' of any of these hierarchies (and I've tried to see if in historical records, if there was a mass slaughter of dalits or mass slaughter of tribals, or whatever it is, or other castes.; there doesn't seem to be any such thing. as far as I know. I've tried, to find some instances, in pre British India, where there was a mass slaughter of Dalits; of course, in independent India we heard of massacre of Dalits in all parts of the country - Kilvenmani, Bhagalpur, Belchi. and so on). So there is hierarchy. But this Samaj was apparently able to manage this, or come to terms with this problem through their own consciousness. Now, the word *Lokavidya* doesn't capture that consciousness. So you see, we did not really tackle the caste question or its resolution because our conception does not actually come to terms with that. It's there. They, the Samaj, have resolved it in a way, because for thousands of years they've lived with this caste- hierarchy, untouchability, etc. And it has gone on, however this Samaj has been conscious of this caste-based oppression and there have been attempts to **give fillip to the consciousness that seeks to resolve this social fissure**. For example,. Gandhiji refers to them as *Vaishnava Samaj*. That means people who are conscious of the oppression within society, that is, disempowering, making people disadvantaged, oppressing people, etc. The Vaishnava Jan, have that consciousness that understands the wretchedness of the oppressed/ Social injustice.

The word *Bahujan*- it was probably there for a long, long time, because Buddha uses it. And the Buddha is talking about, primarily, infinite compassion- The nonviolence, both physically and spiritually for all sentient beings. *Bahujan*, then, seems to be that term that captures the consciousness about being conscious of social injustice. The terms class and this and that, and nation, or even race does not capture this aspect. So I think when we use the word *Bahujan*, we are now actually expanding our recognition of this aspect of the Samaj. We are trying to give them an expanded identity. They themselves are not aware of this. Now it has already been pointed out by many of you that, when we have this Swaraj Gyan Panchayat, then this consciousness, this idea of *Bahujan* or *Bahujan consciousness*, or the fact that *Bahujan Samaj*, as we have defined it, becomes conscious of not only it's strength in knowledge, but it's strength in its Dharma/moral duty.- that It's a moral society. It's a *Dharmic* society. What British rule did was essentially destroy the *dharmic* bondage in society. It brought in a new set of values which is sometimes called scientific, practical, pragmatic etc. In fact it is just something to adopt in your pursuit of capitalism and the 'values' that capitalism promotes. These values, to my mind, were not there in *Bahujan Samaj*. It is on the fertile ground of this Dharmic consciousness, that people like Buddha, or Basवेशvara, or Guru Gobind Singh, or Gnaneshwar, or Kabir or Narayan Guru, etc actually sowed the seeds for Nyay, Tyaga and Bhaichara to flourish. They were using this consciousness in order to bring about social change, political change. Gandhi tried that too. So it is important that we spend some time with whatever abilities we have, whatever way we can express it (art, music, bhajan etc), to get the people gathered for the panchayat. and whoever is looking at what went on there, to bring home the Bahujan consciousness- that is going to really lead to this new political consciousness. Let's call it Bahujan consciousness. and it incorporates everything. It incorporates not only the knowledge, strength of *Lokavidya*, but also includes the moral strength of the consciousness.

We are a dharmic society, I think the large sections of India, the Bhaujan are essentially dharmic(the word dharma in South India is not used to do anything with religion. They don't see it as religion.

You give charity. It's dharma. You treat somebody with respect etc. That is the thing, *Naitikta*. Whatever it is, I mean, it can be phrased or paraphrased properly, so that we are able to convey this. When we talk about the Santa Parampara, then it will become meaningful what we are talking about. because I think the Santa Parampara uses that consciousness which is prevalent in society. (and remember that they were all conscious of the caste divisions right from Buddha down to 14th century) They're all fully aware of this caste hierarchy and oppression, but they're saying something different. They're not talking about reservations. They're not talking about that. they're talking about an inner consciousness that will help you deal with that in a very practical way. Swaraj is not about politics, it's a spiritual term. This is what I say. because it's calling on this dharmic spirit. what binds us together is this dharma. That's it. The capitalist system has all over the world basically destroyed the dharma of the various Bahujan Samajas. In all those societies, capitalism has basically tried or has destroyed that. All political parties, the world over are, all capitalist roaders. They have no alternate vision. You see, when we talk about climate change or the effects of climate, we are already talking about this entire paradigm of development. The way you do capitalist development will lead to the destruction of the environment. not only land and forest, but all the animals and everything. I mean, this was talked about 80-90 years ago, or 100 years ago in India. that the dharmic duty expands to all sentient beings. Many people think it's very impractical, but that's it. That's what happened to the welfare state. So you have reservation. So where has this reservation led to?. It has not benefited the majority of the so-called backward castes or oppressed castes. So I think that we need to spend some time and effort in this Bahujan consciousness. We probably understand all the various aspects that are incorporated in this term, Bahujan or whatever terms were used locally to describe Bahujan, Samaj -and various other terms have been used to describe ordinary people in the Telangana agitation they use the word Sakala jana. Sakala is apparently a Sanskrit i term, which means all people. All people. Sakalajanna and I'm sure terms were used in all these big movements. Obviously they did not use words like oppressed or depressed, or outcaste, or something like that. They use some other term that could actually bring the people together and make them transform their lives in a very meaningful way like that. Bahujan Samaj will be able to transform itself when it recognizes its own strengths. And these strengths are all these, not only the knowledge, strength that we have seen in Lokavidya, but also what I would like to refer to as the moral strength. The incorporation of Nyaya, Thyag and Bhaichara has a very inherent part of living and life, the normative aspect of life. If you can do that, I think, then a discussion on Swaraj becomes very meaningful. Swaraj starts within the house. How much of Swaraj is there, in the sense Swaraj is based on a panchayat, is based on discussion, is based on an exchange of ideas and views, or whatever it is, however contentious they may be. If the Panchayat system was apparently very dominant and prevalent. (Dharmpalji, of course, has written extensively about how it actually operates). This has been a tradition in India. The consultation, even for small local disputes. Resolution dispute was through the Panch. This idea of Swaraj starts at that level. You see. when we talk about gender discrimination. Right inside the house there is gender discrimination. So that thing has to be tackled right from there in the inside, the consciousness that one has at the personal level also. And the movement to bring forth this Bahujan consciousness will go a long way to facilitating Swaraj.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Krish, you should put down some of these things.

Krishnarajulu:

No, no, you see ... I will write a note on exactly these kinds of things in the due course, and send it in time for the oh, the Conference the October gathering. I may not physically be able physically, I may not be able to be present. I will explain that to good day later, but I will. I will put down these things.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Yeah. Yeah. But before that also, before that, also.

Krishnarajulu:

Okay, before you see, let me tell you very frankly, I get any, hardly any time to do very serious reading or writing at all here. Okay, wherever I am, because, you know, you have some idea of how it is for people living abroad. It's like that everywhere where I go. So I'm just basically filling in for what my wife would have done had she been around. But then I have to do. I do double duty everywhere. Yeah, so so spare me that. But I will try to put it down because there is this 2, 3 months, and next month I'm going to be in India. So I'll have time. Okay, to be able to do that, and I'll put it down there before that. It's very difficult for me to.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Okay. Yeah.

Sunil Sahasrabudhey:

Tell us what what period you are in India.

Krishnarajulu:

I'm in the whole of almost the whole of July. I'm in India.

Sunil Sahasrabudhey:

Almost the whole of July.

Krishnarajulu:

After that time, 3 months. I'm in Saudi, Arabia, August, September, October again November. and maybe December also I will be in India, because there is some visa renewal problems, etcetera. But I'm definite. I'm booked. I'm there. Yeah.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Okay. And also some more things were to be sent from Varanasi last time you had said that there are some things which you will be sending in 4, 5 days from Varanasi. Some written material was to be sent. Actually, I don't know which That's what you had said last time Yes.

Sunil Sahasrabudhey:

On consciousness on Swaraj consciousness and Swaraj Panchayat that not ... most people won't have. Now. In September 23, it was written.

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Okay. Yeah.

Sunil Sahasrabudhey:

I will send that and see what else ...

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Ok. चित्रा जी आप बोलेगी?

Chitra Sahasrabudhey:

नहीं अभी नहीं अगली बार स्वराज और कला पर ...

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

आप कुछ लिख कर ...

Sunil Sahasrabudhey:

लिखने का टाइम तो शायद नहीं मिलेगा ...

Girish Sahasrabudhe:

ठीक है. अगली बार But, we may start with GSRK and Suresh. Yeah. But yeah, we actually ... इस पर तो काफी discussion होना होगा. Okay, so let's meet next Wednesday.