

## Transcript of Zoom Meeting at 5.00 pm on October 29, 2025

Except for my part and Sunil's, this transcript is mostly uncorrected and has machine-made errors. Request all to go through their parts and send me corrections. The docx file is available in the shared Google Drive sub-folder 2025-10-29 in the shared folder [Lokavidya Debates](#). - Girish

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### Girish Sahasrabudhe:

Let's wait a bit for Gandhi. He said he's joining Okay, I suppose we can start, Gandhi is here And, ... As I said, Suresh had sent a message saying that he is to see the doctor And he may be slightly late. He'll be joining, and most probably, Naresh also may be joining. s last time we met, I think it's almost a month since we met before the... the Panchayat at Varanasi And, I had said that we'll be meeting on 22nd, but of course, we couldn't because of Diwali, I just missed that. So, um... at that time, I had also said that, before I left Varanasi, there were some discussions about this meeting, how to continue these meetings, what frequency, and so on For some time, I have been thinking that maybe we should meet, once a fortnight or something, so we'll discuss that. There was a suggestion about... a meeting... in Hindi, as a part of Bahujan Gyan Vimarsh. Now, this decision was taken later also at Varanasi and Chitra ji has conveyed that decision to us... I mean, the minutes of that meeting. So, as it stands, that meeting is going to be held once a week month, and ... Mostly, I'll be doing it from here ... That meeting will be conducted in Hindi. I mean, I'll be arranging it at least, whether I conduct it or not, it's... yet to be decided. But it may be a larger meeting conducted in Hindi and they have already decided to conduct the first one on 15th of November on the question of, I think (the system) subjecting the Bahujan Samaj to...I think it's... international debt, or even if I don't... if I remember correctly ... so something around that. So, that is on 15th of November So, the first thing we have to decide is meeting... twice a month, or thrice a month? Thrice a month is, of course, odd, so... I suggest that we meet once in 15 days on either side of this meeting in Hindi... Bahujan Gyan Vimarsh Meeting in Hindi... And the more important thing we should be discussing today is in what way to go about these discussions? In fortnightly meetings, ... if that is acceptable ... the fortnightly frequency. Then, how to go about our discussions in those meetings. Those meetings will, of course, continue to be conducted in English, and the group will remain more or less what we are just now. It is, of course, open to members in this to join the Hindi meeting also, I think, ... Sunil will clarify that about the Gyan Vimarsha meetings.

Then basically the... there was this question about taking Swaraj to the global debate given the situation as it is developing both nationally and internationally. As far as the varieties of... you know, nation-state ideas ... varieties of nation-states that have come up for discussion at the global scale ... and for some time now ... I mean we have referred to the Pluri-national state, which is, of course, almost a decade old, or maybe more than that, we have referred to cultural nationalism... you know... talk which is going on, and the civilizational state idea. And... we have been discussing Swaraj In that context. So, the question, at least, was posed in this context, that

... Is it possible for us ... is it meaningful as well as possible for us to take this debate to the global stage. Now, exactly what is meant by that may not be very well defined at this moment, but... what comes to mind immediately is... at least to the... in the sense in which, say, pluri-national state became one of the ideas in the global debate. Now, (it) may not be very widely discussed (today), but at least it became a global idea ... came to be noticed on the global scale. We have talked about it several times. So, when we say taking Swaraj to the global stage I suppose it is at least that that is meant ... that we should be able to lift the idea to the level... at least ... where it comes to be discussed as a serious idea. So that was the question posed. Now, we had some limited discussions on that, as I have written already. Some initial responses came ... and, I think it is best to recognize that those responses can be broadly categorized into two types. One of broad and general support (to the idea). And one of serious concern about whether this is a meaningful idea. And whether it can be meaningfully posed today ... Now, I am not very sure whether I am right in saying that about Swaraj ... or whether, that... applies only to the idea of Bahujan Swaraj, that is, Swaraj, which the Bahujan Samaj takes the leadership to build ... whether that is the idea, which is ... which doesn't appear very meaningful and real. Or whether it is the idea of Swaraj itself.

The point is ... that we should ask ourselves ... I mean, we have had some discussion on it, but I don't think we have - on either side - looked at this question... in any great detail. These are ... according to me ... or should be regarded as initial responses from us - (from those) in this group. So, if that is the case, then we should ask whether it is meaningful to continue with that discussion. We can have that discussion in the context of, you know, coming up with, definite tasks for ourselves. And in that sense, leave the question open. So, discuss it as an open question. We have, of course, already conducted the Bahujan, Swaraj Panchayat on the assumption that the global situation actually demands this kind of work from our side. But we can discuss it more broadly, because various links of Swaraj with... ideas like Lokavidya, like art, and various other things ... which were all mentioned in the... in the Panchayat ... - they remain open. That discussion... remains far from complete. That is one part of it. Secondly, the other opinion, the opinion that it may not be an... idea which is meaningful in today's context ... I think that opinion also came with several qualifications ... in the sense that, maybe it was... a question of how to approach this ... what are the things, which are important to look at, how important is the international situation as far as its, um... other aspects are concerned, like technology that is developing. like the economic side as it is developing, ... and various other aspects, apart from just the political discussion. That is one thing. Secondly, there are ... was this concern about ... Suresh seemed to say ... he will clarify that .... but it seemed to be related very strongly to this... what is happening to... you know, what may be called manipulation of opinion on a very large scale through social media, through fake news, and various other things ... which we have talked about earlier ... Now, this seems to be... to have quite an important place in his thinking as it came out (in discussions) on this group, and in his writings also ...

I, myself, have always (thought) ... that it is time for this idea and that is how I wrote that article also in the Bahujan Swaraj ki Kitab, the book which came out (with the Panchayat). Because I feel

that, um... the situation, the multipolar world as it is developing ... there is no denying that fact... everyone understands that it's a multipolar world .... the question is how to understand it ... and what is the importance of looking at various, you know, economic developments, technological developments, shifts of power ... political power... shifts off political idiom, etc on the one hand, and on the other hand how to look at how Bahujan Samaj will face this situation... (this) new situation. So... it is some kind of a... you know ... balance between that. That is what I thought Suresh was once arguing for. But we can have an extended discussion on all this. Well, the only thing I want to put at this moment is for people to opine on whether it is meaningful to continue a discussion on that question from various angles trying to understand that question, and trying to understand the implications. If one answers that question in the affirmative ... that this is the time to take the idea of Swaraj to the global stage and assess the possibilities, assess how we are going to do it, and set tasks for ourselves. And if it is felt otherwise, then... set alternative tasks. So, in that sense, leave that question open. That's what I meant. So that is all I wanted to say at this stage. And, the whole thing is open for discussion. People can come in and ... We can start with ... GSRK, would you like to start?

**Sivaramakrishnan G**

Uh, no, no, I don't think I have anything to start with them, I may... Because I'm not clear about anything, anything that is being... saved or disgusted, and... it'll take time for me, please.

**Girish Sahasrabudhe**

Okay. Alright. Uh, Gandhi?

**Krishna Gandhi**

Uh, am I audible?

**Girish Sahasrabudhe**

Yeah, yeah. Yes.

**Krishna Gandhi:**

Yeah, should we take the idea of Swaraj to a global platform, or global stage. I think that... from my side... it is, we should... and the time has come to discuss Swaraj on a global level, because, nationally and internationally, nation-state... the idea of nation-states is becoming very rigorous, or... That is anti-people, or... . Anti-Bahujan Samaj. So, alternatives should be discussed. What are the alternatives to nation-states? And, civilization-state doesn't at all seem to me to be a better alternative to a nation-state. So, it is a worse thing as far as I'm concerned. So... I think, we should discuss these things. Especially because, there is... A lot of discussion about civilizational states these days. So, that is being proposed as an alternative to the nation-state. So, I think that gives us some, opportunity to counterpose why civilizational state? And why not Swaraj? So... I think we should be doing it. But at the same time, it is not very easy for us to take it up... To a global level, all on a sudden, for example. So, how should we go about doing it? That is also some...

needs some discussion. Because I think that, even... Apart from... let us say, communicating with the people in neighboring countries, for example, to begin with. Or... Maybe even trying to meet some of those people. If possible, that can be explored. Another thing is, I feel that even... our country, India. He's, sufficiently diverse, and, To enable. Us to explore the idea of Swaraj, in a very diverse... Country or diverse situation. So, if we assume that the global situation is very diverse, different cultures, different languages, Different, civilizational... Values, etc. So, the same thing holds true of the people of India also. So, why not have, some discussions, At our country level itself. As a, so precluded to the taking it up at the global level. For example, there are so many... Northeastern states, tribal communities, even Ladakhi people are... Struggling for their voices to be heard. So, Adivasi Samaj, many of them are requesting that they should be identified as a particular non-Hindu. They think their religion should be enumerated as a separate religion in the senses. And so many other things are... there, in our country also, which,... for example, the question of uniform civil code. So... I think that uniform Civil Code is also another platform on which the idea of Swaraj can be explored. In the level of... at the level of... our country itself. So, I think that there are many... This is an opportune time for us to relate Swaraj as an alternative narrative to the civilization-state and nation-state today. So, I think we should seriously take it up. In my opinion, but... Of course, everything is open-ended. We are not proceeding with an assumption that we have got the answer to everything. So, we don't have an answer. We are only looking for answers, and searching, from our experience and ideas. And Suraj seems to be a good candidate as an alternative to the current, Where the people are organized in states, nation-states, and... The kind of governments that are taking place, and other institutions that are ruling the world. So, what is wrong with them? And, how we can... go in a different direction. So, I think these questions should be discussed. You know, whatever platform be that, you should take it up to broader and higher level platforms. That's what I want to say.

**Girish Sahasrabudhe:**

Yeah, thank you. Naresh?

**Naresh Kumar Sharma:**

Oh, no, actually, I only had the question back when... You mentioned, and this is what is in focus of Gandhi also. Taking it to the... global level. What does it mean in this form? Any, any... I love that Bernie's having... Circulation can be as wide as one wants. Taking it to a global level must be having certain meaning in the mind. So, is there any more clarity on what is the meaning of that? Is this a qualitative difference in the... Discussion, or, Engagement with the... Some other people, or... I just heard that the cinnamon ... I just said that I had the question in mind, like, what it does... Okay. What is it saying? Cause... does it mean different, Slightly different kind of, dialogue process, or... The subject matter, some, difference in that. Including ideas from some other... Legacy discussion. What exactly does one have in mind, one says about that? taking the idea of Saraja to the global level. in that sense that I was just seeking clarification that anybody... I'm not saying particularly girlish on the CLIJ again, or any... anybody.

**Girish Sahasrabudhe:**

Yeah, Krish?

**Krishnarajulu:**

Yep. Okay, first thing is the idea to reduce the frequency 2 months in 15 days. I think it's... is okay. I welcome that Idea proposal to start a... this dialogue. in Hindi. Maybe you're going to do that maybe once or twice a month. I don't know, but that's a very good idea. Parallely, I think... Such dialogues should be... attempted to be carried out in other Indian languages. You see, the point is, taking this idea of Swaraj, or doing Swaraj Gyan Vimarsh. It is required, first of all, all over this country. I don't know about the global stage. We haven't, through our English dialogue, haven't been reached many parts of this country itself. How many people know about. What we've been saying, or thinking, or doing. Outside a small Hindi-knowing-speaking region. In the past. 15, 20 years. Very little. So it's important that we carry out these... I mean, attempted dialogue? in other Indian languages. Try to involve people who are actively... you see, One thing is clear. What we mean by Swaraj, of course, we've said a lot, but... This is, local self-government. the local Panchayat, Talking about various issues. That... that process has to actively begin. That is the local panchayat. Local, you define in whatever sense you want. the collection of so many villages, or a mandal, or what... I mean, whatever locality you can identify. a locality that already... Has some kind of commonality ... a common sort of kinship relationship. Apart from merely caste Or, subcast over to interest. Those kinds of panchyats have been going on everywhere. And people discuss issues, all issues. pertaining to their cast or community, or the effect that the cast or community might face. In the light of certain Sort of what they would look at as, issues that are being tried to be... or views that are being tried to be universalized. And thrust upon them. Now, there is a resistance in the sense that then the local communities get together and say, no, we look at this question this way, that way, and so on. You see, there was a... there is... this problem has been there even within the farmers' movement. There were very strong movements in at least 5 or 6 states at one point of time. Strong. But dialogue between the... different states was very limited. It's alright, you can always join in a more, you know, a Mobar chart to raise an issue against the center. Or to make a demand of the center. See, even the demand for an agricultural costs and price commission, which was finally exceeded 2, and Sarah Joshi, in fact, became a part of that. I think Bhupenderman was also a part of that. But that's about all. The other states We're really not involved. Their concerns? I don't know how much of it was factored in. Into those discussions on agricultural costs and prices. Okay, the Swami Naddan community, that came up... Independent of this Dialogue. But, the outcome seemed to satisfy a lot of people. leave that aside. What I'm trying to say is this process of dialoguing between different constituent parts of this... our nation-state. It's a plural national state, actually. I mean, if you want to call it that. There hasn't been much dialogue. There hasn't been that element of what we call Swaraj. In whatever dialogues that have been going on. We can't even talk amicably, one state to another, about sharing river waters, natural resources. There's always tension. Emotions run high. And now, added to that, there is a... there's this cultural damage and all caste and religion ... and everything coming in. And of course, language. So, you see, for the idea of Swaraj to come is that there's the

elements of Swaraj which we see, which will help build storage. If they are there, then they need to be strengthened. See, all over the world, where are... these... local communities. I'll call them that. they're all what we would call the plurie... I mean, the different so-called small nation states. For in the European Union, why did they get together? They didn't get together on any cultural, linguistic, or even a political platform. They came together on an economic platform. Economic cooperation. Economic give and take. Dialogue. That they've been able to do. And now, other such economic blocs are being formed. Someone, the recent ones are all in opposition to the dominance of America. Which is trying to hold on to the dominance in the global market system. I'm losing ground, of course. But... even in the Gulf states. They don't have anything un... they don't yet have a uniform civil code here. They're all... their codes, civil codes are all based on the Sharia and whatever it is, but they have their own versions. Do not agree on. what is happening one to the other. But... So, their... their cooperation on economics is, also guided by economic consideration. So, you see, this... The idea that... True economic cons... Cooperation, or whatever, it'll happen. will be... insured. a sustained... you'll be sustained. If there is a... an active dialogue, what we call the Suraj dialogue, going on between all these local constituents. Having said that, I think for us. It is important that we start these dialogues. in local languages. So this is idea. Which, Swaraj, I mean, everyone... From what I gathered from the kind of report that came out about the recent Pachat, Is that... the idea of Siraj, seems to be, yeah, taken. I mean, people say, yes, yes, yes. Suraj is what we need. Of course, they refer to Gandhiji and others, and say, yeah, say, they also talked about Swaraj. Swaraj, Swaraj is... Something like that. Swaraj, my birthright. What do they mean by that? The British have gone. But Saraj is still your birthright, right? That means the ability to... Dialogue and come up with... discuss with all issues. Doesn't matter what kind of issue it is, but if it's an issue that affects the local community, then they should dial... discuss that. and come up with some ideas about how it will be solved to the... to their satisfaction, let's put it that way. And then the... if a larger inter-community dialogue can take place, interpanchayat. Dialogue can take place. Then, of course, things are proceeding. Then the Swaraj. Vimash, or whatever, it's Swaraj, Panchayat is becoming active. Can we do something? to do that. So I said right in the beginning that the idea now to start an exclusive Hindi dialogue is useful, but then Our activities, Lokvidya, Janaandal, and other activities, has been largely confined to the Hindi-speaking region, and it has found a lot of ground there, in the sense that a lot of people know about it. Outside of that, People who know us, some of us, may know some of it. Other than that, nobody does. And the English-knowing, speaking public have given up on the idea of anything like Swaraj. You see? The second point that you raised, is it point at all to talk about it? You can... that applies entirely to this English-speaking, knowing, dialoguing section of Indian society, a large section. They're grown up. They will have big seminars on secularism and all that. And their own belief systems are based on some mythologies. What's secularism? This goes on and goes on. You see, can you... reach... what I will say is that the belief system of the local peoples And dialogue with them through that. What are the... what I've been talking about. the Dharmic... Bondage in these local communities. all the tribal communities, the other Adi West, they all have... they're all bonded. That kind of cultural and, you might even say Dharmic bond. Exists, and there, dialogues take place. They're going to Panchaj. In fact, I have been... peripherally, on the Panchayat of the Lombada bunches. Twice, when I was in Gulpurga. I mean,

I was invited by a friend who's also a Lombada. When they sat down, just listen to what they were saying. See, but they are talking actively about their own thing. And within that community, I saw there were people who are Congress supporters, BJP supporters. They support everyone else, but that's all right. That doesn't affect their unity. They... Choose political alliances to suit their community's needs. Finished. So... There seems to be something where you can get people to dialogue on various issues. If you're able to set the right context, you can't... put an abstract concept, I mean, whatever we've been talking about. To that extent, it's all... they're all actually abstract concepts. We've arrived at those positions through our training, logic and rationality and... Whatever else it is, an observation of... Historical events, and so on and so forth. Ordinary people don't do all that. There's something else that drives them. Can we go and... I mean, we may not be able to go, but start a dialogue among these local communities, encourage this, and then they will come up with ideas and suggestions from which we can learn. So, I, i.e, I have nothing to say about the global, I mean... It's outside the sub... this subcontinent. I don't know what we can do. these, knowledge dialog We did. participate. In a few of them. M. What was noticed at that point of time, which is clearly highlighted in... That book, written by... What's her name, please? Anyway... She clearly says that it's only the LJA that has put the knowledge thing as the center of the moment. all the other movements, the Living Learning dialogues, which she was talking... really wrote about, she said. Knowledge is not the center for others. And that's what she found unique about our... Lg. You see, so... I think the global thing is a little thing. Let's not... to my mind, if whatever limited resources and energies we have left... and lifetimes we've got left... we can... Try to initiate these dialogues. In as many as possible... something that goes on. You see, outside the... let's say the UP. Basically, UP region. Sanjeev has been working now for so many years, and he's tried to do something in his own way. Create a dialogue there. In and around indoor. Yeah, and he's been able to involve Some semblance of some tribal communities and some other things and all that. It's fine. But Dalits... Nothing has ever happened with them. That community. Did... You see, there are points at which we've got stuck. leave that aside, but I'm saying other regions. I think a dialogue can be conducted because we've come across some active groups who are talking about, knowledge dialogues and all that. For example, in Kerala, that group. Maybe Gandhi can initiate an online dialogue. You see, when the Hindi dialogue is going on, Maybe Gandhi can... Hold the... Malayalam dialogue also. And Gandhi can, my suggestion is, Trying to involve surrendering in that dialogue also. So... that at least you have one other language, and I don't know. See... We certainly tried it in those so many years that I was there in Hyderabad. We did try, and Nared Row... Exerted himself quite a bit. But did... Okay. Whatever happened, happened. You see, so... It's important. And we've done a lot of writing, but the writings have... in non-Hindi languages are very limited. appearance. our ideas. So who... whom do you want? You want the English people, knowing people, to read what we write? I'm saying it's... it's alright. They'll only recognize that, yeah, these guys are saying something different. Beyond that, they're nothing. We don't that... I... my impression that we have not been able to reach out to any of... I mean, to my manager, just to... To put it very simply, waste a waste of time. you know, Knocking on a closed door. I'd rather go and... sit in a... I mean, if possible, sit in a local Panchay language, which I know. They allow me to sit in there, listen to what they are trying to say. Whatever issue they're discussing. That way, it'll be a learning experience. And that'll be... Some? local Panchayat... local

Swaraj Panchayit in action. Let's see what they say. And there will be numerous such things going on everywhere, and if it's possible for us, individually. Little collectively, as far as possible, to be able to do that. I think that's it. I think... Faradam, Girish and Javindaya can do that in that region. Marathon. Either by mother or daughter. Dialogue with local people. unseat. See, this is... The precursor to any political imagination that you might want to reach at. You have to. Talk to people. Because... Even at the global stage, you can see what's happening to politics at the global stage. A great amount of... Various weird kinds of polarizations taking place. Weird kind of political alliances taking place. Pakistan is willing to give Well, it helped Iran in its nuclear program in the initial stages. Iran is a sworn enemy of Israel. So is Pakistan, appropriately. But Pakistan has built a great alliance with or is trying to build a great alliance with America. It always had one. military alliance. That's in opposition to China, but Pakistan has maintained a fairly good relationship with China. So, you see, if you're trying to unravel the political... alliances. You're not going to get any picture. Working picture. Something that's useful for the ordinary people, for Bahujan. They are just like pawns in different board games. Look at what has happened to Gaza. I think after the Holocaust, this is the greatest Human tragedy that has ever happened. Don't do it. Nobody's talking about it. Nobody is talking about the genocide that has taken place in Gaza

There will be more such genocides, I perceive. In the days to come. So, yeah, let me not divert, but I think... Yes. We can reduce our dialogue twice a month, or even less, I don't care. But we do increase our dialogue in local languages. with local communities. As much as possible. That is important. And then, you see, once we are getting those things going, then we come together to share the experiences of the local dialogue among ourselves. And then maybe fine-tune some of our ideas. And maybe... think a little more about them and all that. That way, it'll be useful, we can take these things forward. That's it

**Girish Sahasrabudhe:**

Okay. Sunil?

**Sunil Sahasrabudhey:**

Hmm. Well, about... about organizing... these dialogues, amongst us, in English and Hindi. Hmm. that can... be done... In tune with the agreement of most of the people. My suggestion is twice a month for this one. And maybe once a month, the larger dialogue. in Hindi. That... it will have to be designed, larger meaning what? Who all would be there, who all will be invited, and how will that be done? But it should be there. A larger dialogue in Hindi. Should be there. which involves people from other states also than just Uttar Pradesh or other places than just Varanasi and so on, other than our people. Other than us. So, it will require an effort, and we should be ready to do that effort. This is about the first part.

About the second part, about, About taking the dialogue to a global... scale. You see... Swaraj? When we talk about going to the global level. I mean, there have been questions about what we should mean by this. You see, the entire global debate, except for recent times where Mul Nivasis, that is, tribals of different areas... namely, Latin America, and then some... gathering together of

those in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and so on, but an initial one. Nevertheless, it is important that it has happened. In recent years. after the Latin American phenomenon that has happened. But... That has not led to any kind of... global discourse, and they have been defeated. This rise has been, in the first round, defeated at many places by the neoconservative formations, particularly in Latin America. But that needs to be seen in detail, why, what is happening, etc. We're not doing that. There is a location. May I first point out and then go about what I want to say... there is a location called WSM Discuss. World Social Movements, ... earlier it was WSF. World Social Forum Discuss, run by Jai Sen, and maybe some others with him. Jai Sen, many of us may know, many may not. He's from the WSF gang. He was in the midst of the organization of the WSF, Knew the chief architects, worked with them, and so on, has written books, and has worked on ideas like self-organization, self-education, autonomy, and (things) like that. Some kind of central ideological framework of... of the WSF. Later, at some point of time, when WFSF ceased to be what it was, he started WSM, World Social Movements. Some of us may be on the list. And may res... may be receiving. Or, I think we should, just to be aware of what kind of international debate that may be going on. It's not a huge debate. But people keep writing. about the wars in the two places, and about the situation largely in Latin America, and the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. And this is an international crowd of some sort. WSM Discuss will have a place I expect, I have had no discussion with Jason, but so far, whenever I have made a remark there or said anything there, well, it has been well accepted, and I have spoken from the point of view we have. And it will be accepted. This is what is my expectation, that there will be no problem. It will be a smooth moving into some kind of an international space, which may not be very wide open, but it would be an international space where there are people who are talking about various things. Not only from the left, but from the left also, and also those who have supported the idea of pluri-national state in Latin America, and others who work for autonomy, etc. and who have focused on, why... why Ukraine troubles the West more than Gaza does, and so on. This is going on. This debate is going on. So all I am saying is that WSM Discuss may provide a ready-made place Because I do not see the capacity within us capacity in the sense we have not done this before, and I don't see how we are going to go about doing it. Looking at the people involved, and the amount of effort we put for what we are doing. to create an international network of debate. We may be able to do that if we make some progress on WSM Discuss. Have another, another, online space. Defined in a different manner for a different purpose, embodied with a different kind of debate that we desire, primarily.

This is one point, the first point, that there exists a place where we can start going, taking our ideas to that place. From... through that place. Number two, there is... And this will rise and fall, the debate, in the context of the nation-state. It has been there since the days of globalization. When a section of the global activists argued that greater repression is in the ... more, greater repression is about to come, or has come. In the name of globalization, and there was the other side, which called it a... what a neoliberal economy. I mean, there's nothing liberal about it being called neoliberal economy. It's liberal in the sense of privatization. If reform means privatization and... what is that other word? And corporatization. Then privatization and liberalization go together. In that sense, it was a neoliberal world, but for most people, it had no elements of

liberalism anyway in it. Globalization came hard on the people. And since then, it has, and now much more, since the neoconservatives have taken up in the name of the nation-state against globalization. But that kind of... it will go on. I don't think we should... we can pin anywhere our hopes of a debate on the existing global dialogue. That we must go about establishing our points relatively independently of what the global dialogue only sets the context. Only, makes it possible But that... it doesn't make it feasible in that sense. That context is not very useful for us, other than pointing or realizing or understanding that that context provides a place for us also. That's about all.

So we don't need... we don't need to debate on the question of pluri-national state or civilizational state, etc. We can... I think it would be more desirable... we should be debating all this in our... in this group. Before we come to any kind of decision at all, if we do. You see, Bahujan Swaraj Panchayat has three parts. Bahujan, the ordinary people. This is expressly questioning a politics where caste or class... or varna in India... occupy the focal position... occupy the primary position of a primary determinant of in what terms you will think about politics. Terms of politics, not politics itself. But terms of public behavior, terms of... that public domain will accept and will not accept. So, only discussion on... and the TV debates are very clear. If you don't talk in terms of class, caste, or varna, or something else like that. You are not heard. So, this is... In India, (???) Europe and the rest of the world, now the original people of those places, Adivasis generally. But, so far, it has been the bourgeoisie and the workers. Class... and... and, well, class has been the only thing. Politics is conceived through... a conception of a class, or... class struggle, or class relations, and so on, Marxists included, then go to (???) They take an extreme position on the relationship between classes, but the understanding is through classes alone. So, Bahujan, by using and popularizing and accepting and redefining the meaning of Bahujan on a larger scale, we are giving a call not to use class or caste as the primary determinant of politics, then you will see future a little more clearly for the ordinary people, or for the oppressed classes, or for the depressed castes, and so on. But we will talk only in terms of ordinary people, that is. We have done this. We didn't talk about ordinary people, we did talk about ordinary life. And some of us thought that ordinary life was a very powerful idea. To take forward. Ordinary life was a powerful idea, because it had connected with... it had a connection, deep connection, with the idea of Bahujan. Although we had not expressed it in that way then. But then, all politics, has shaped... around the class and caste conception, caste in India, and class generally, And... It has been shaped by... by a concept of party... political party. Acceptance of the idea of political party is as old as the acceptance of the idea of science, post-Kant. This is early 19th century and thereafter. That party is the instrument. It grows, grows further and grows further. And... and democracy. That... then you can go on. Bahujan Swaraj Panchayat, gives an idea of Swaraj. That is imaginable not in class terms but in terms of Bahujan, in terms of ordinary people. Also, perhaps, I think also not in caste terms. It's not imaginable. It will have very serious problems of conceptual foundation if you try to imagine it in caste terms. In terms of ordinary people and the elite. In today's words, ordinary people and the professional classes. That is how today's world is primarily divided.

And then the idea of Panchayat. Panchayat... can Panchayat be imagined? You see, Panchayat has come back in a big way after the Bhartiya Kisan Union, particularly Uttar Pradesh, kept holding Panchayats and nothing else. They, they held... they did all kinds of old things also in the name of Panchayat, but they called it a Panchayat. They had a karyakarini, and they had this and that... local committees, everything, but all meetings, all... everything was in the name of Panchayat. So, popularize the idea of Panchayat. Panchayat is a very different idea. It is both an event and an organizational form and a process. It's all of this. Depends upon when and where the term is being used, with what purpose, and with what meaning. So, panchayat is some kind of a parallel idea to the party. when we talk about Bahujan Swaraj Panchayat, if we take a step further. the... the... what is being discussed in Varanasi at the moment is creation of Bahujan Swaraj Panchayats wherever it is possible. If it is possible in a village, do it in a village. If it is possible at a block level, do it at the block level. If it is possible at a district level, do it at the district level. If it is possible at a Nyay Panchayat level, do it at that level. If it is possible at a local market level, do it at that level. So, no external constraints to be observed, no structure to be imagined, that there will be Bahujan Panchayat of the village, and then this, and then that, like you have in Dr. Lohia's Swaraj Panchayat. Dr. Lohia's Chaukhamba Raj. No such imagination is there. We are against such imagination... that Bahujan Swaraj Panchayats be created anywhere and everywhere, wherever possible, with whatever the number of people, with whatever territorial extension, and with whatever social composition. But not with a constraint on social composition. That would make it a candidate for a candidate, in the sense, in place of a party, for governance, as well as... For producing that... for creating that unit. Around which a larger political formation takes place. Just as there is a party in a democracy, there would be Panchayats in a Swaraj.

We know, we know this, we have discussed this, and there is nothing to argue in this group in favor of this. Everybody has this idea. By and large, slightly differently, maybe. So... we have created... starting with Lokavidya, an entire... cluster of ideas... that are parallel to the ideas that were created in 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe for political development, Marx included. Marx only sits at the top of the... Western political philosophical trend. He's not, I mean, well, whatever, we are not discussing Marx, we may, if one day we need to... We have produced an entire cluster of ideas. Lokavidya, ordinary life. meaning also ordinary people, but not just ordinary people. This is important. Ordinary life constitutes a part of life of even professional classes. So ordinary... it's not a division, it's a notion, it's an idea. It doesn't create a strict division among the people. It creates a division, but it doesn't create a strict division of that kind. That one may see ordinary people on one side and some special images of people on the other side. No. All people, all of them, all professional classes, whether here or in England, or Europe or America, have a reasonable aspect 30%, 40, 50%, 60%. A large part of their life as ordinary life. That is not... that is a life not governed by professional considerations, not governed by science, not governed by technology per se. All this have influence only through a larger change in society, and not directly in governing the life of these people. To that extent, that becomes part of ordinary life, and ordinary life constitutes a large part of all... all the people, everybody, under this Sun. In that sense, we should be able... and to that extent, Lokavidya also. Science and all those methods generated by science The argumentation that... Science teaches you is used only in... in your professional life...

whatever that may mean. I need not go into the details of that, it's understood. So, are we... when we are talking about Bahujan Swaraj Panchayat the word Lokavidya is not there... It's additional. We start with Lokavidya. We come to Bahujan, we come to Swaraj, we come to Panchayat, and along... Bahujan we come to through an idea of ordinary life that ... meaning thereby that Bahujan is embedded in every individual. Nobody is free of the Bahujan aspect of their life. Bahujan aspect is the aspect of ordinary life. we should be able to argue that Bahujan leads to a... is in tune with the concept of ordinary life, and not just describing ordinary men, men and women. It's not just the ordinary population. It's not just the non-elite, but it is also part of the elite in very well-defined senses.

That gives us a much larger take. On where we are, and a much larger take on the basis where... on which we can stand to make a case. Make a case for Swaraj. Make a case for, whatever else we want to. Lokavidya and ordinary life. Bahujan and Swaraj... and Panchayat. Let us see how we can tie up these. Can we carry out an exercise? We are precisely the people who can carry out an exercise... Just take these five elements, Lokavidya, ordinary life, Panchayat, ... Swaraj, and Bahujan. One by one, place one of them at the center, and four on the periphery. And use the... connect the center to the... to these points. Center is the node, and you have edges connecting these four. So, if you have Panchayat at the center, then how is Panchayat connected... related to Lokavidya, to ordinary life, to Swaraj, and to Bahujan? Similarly, if Lokavidya is placed at the center.... This would mean... an exercise like this would mean that none of them... no, the idea is not reducible to any one of them... there are parallel ways of creating this new world that we are talking about. People may start with Panchayat, people may start with Bahujan, people may start with... All of them are equally powerful to provide a base to construct a political argument. All that I'm saying now, at this moment, is the construction of a political argument. You can start from any one of them. You don't have to start with Lokavidya. We did at one point of time. But I think now that we don't have to start with Lokavidya, all these, Lokavidya, Bahujan. Ordinary life, Swaraj and Panchayat. All these provide a certain kind of what we have been discussing, a natural state of humanity. When we discussed the concept of Swaraj being a law of nature. there was this idea about... Gandhi has also talked about Swaraj being a process, not just an objective. Not a... not a name, but a process. this would... this would come in there very easily. It would be under... it can be understood if we start with all this. I think this exercise should be done. By each one of us. I will also do it. I have not done it. I will also do it, others should also do it, and let us come back.

Can we have this discussion so that we are clear about... you see, we are at a certain... we are not going to construct a Panchayat that is... that is going to lead to a structural change in this country. We are going to talk about issues and matters and ideas at the world in a manner such that those who can construct those panchayats will go ahead and construct those panchayats. Whether they like to talk to us or not, it doesn't matter. We want to... I mean, there are... there would always be people... we have an interface in Banaras, but we don't have people who can really construct those panchayats. They are different people. They had not... they had not come to Swaraj Panchayat. Some of them were invited. But they had not come. You see, it takes time. For the level of conceptualization we are doing, we always will go through intermediates. Don't...

may not be always, but very often we'll go through intermediaries who understand us and are connected with the people, but not our... but are not maybe great organizers themselves. But they are connected. We have people with us, many of them, who are connected and deeply connected with people who are organizers, who have done the organizational work, who are involved in people's organizational work, and so on.

So this is... this is how we see as the matter going forward at the local level, at the level of actually constructing the Bahujan Swaraj Panchayat, at the level of debating, and well, I think, once we stop reducing the idea to either look with their ordinary life, or any one of these, just these five. Ordinary Life, Lokavidya, Bahujan, Swaraj and Panchayat. I am not sure whether this will work. Let me be very clear. This is a group which thinks where one thinks aloud, and where you put your ideas forth for .. for a good discussion to proceed, to come to a good conclusion. I am not placing before you any conclusion of any ideas on which I have been working for long. No. I am just placing before you some ideas that have occurred since the organization of the Bahujan Swaraj Panchayat. And it's very tricky. For example, if we stick very hard to the idea of Bahujan as non-elite, and not involving numbers, we are in difficulty. And we... if we stick to the idea of Bahujan as the majority, again, we are in difficulty. You see, even Bahujan could not be interpreted just as ordinary people, or as majority of people, or as non-elite of some kind. There is... there is always a play... you can't... social categories cannot be, perhaps, identified so strictly with their boundaries so well defined. That is not going to be possible. Not particularly in... through the conceptual frameworks that we are used to. We are used to have conceptual frameworks which are a bit too tight for social realities that we live in. And that may not very well work. So, this is my suggestion, if we do this exercise. Place each one of them at the center and see how it is related. Center meaning it's primacy. It's prior to others in a logical sense. Logical priority will define the relationship each time differently. When Lokavidya is the center, Lokavidya and Panchayat relationship would be different from Panchayat and look with their relationship when Panchayat is at the center. It would be very interesting. Little difference would be there. And sometimes the difference won't be there. You see, all this. The entire exercise is a Swaraj-like exercise. You see, Swaraj is not just... Swaraj is a way of thinking. Swaraj does not provide any, any... anything that is logical... logically prior to everything else. There are no axioms. There are no, rules of inference which are to be abided to under all circumstances. Nothing of the kind, it's a social phenomenon. And our exercise, our conceptual exercise, need to take into account the fact that this is a social exercise. this thought itself, doing this thinking itself is a social exercise. I think if we carry out this exercise. We will be much richer for both. For imagining a global presence. For global presence, there is another thing, if some of you were familiar with, Edufactory exercise, which came with the idea of cognitive capitalism. And that, the struggle of the factory has shifted to the struggle in the university. Europeans and some Australians and some of them from there came up with this idea and ran the show for 3-4 years. Amit and Avinash were much more part of that. Amit was also part of the governing council of 25 persons on the global level, and so on. So they can tell much better about how it works. Finally, it got reduced into debt relief. It was... it went... against the corporatization of education in the Western world, and then got reduced into students' demand of debt relief, and after that, after a while we stopped hearing about it. So we are not interested in

a positivistic conclusive... a positivistic conclusion, which will lead to practice immediately. That is, which will have all the elements of, of guidance to practice. We're not doing that. But we are very close to that, but we won't do that. We should... we will keep away from that. Just as we were part of the Bhartiya Kisan Union all along, in Uttar Pradesh, even holding local positions and so on, and very well connected with ... But we kept a distance from Mahendra Singh Tikait. Because unless we were in a position to sit with him... at least 3-4 times a week... we thought that we will not be able to build a bridge. There will be a problem. And there was a problem for those people. People like Ganesh Bagaria had a huge problem. He thought... Mahendra Singh Tikait thought that Ganesh Bagariya was a spy ... was, what is it called? ILU, Intelligence Unit Man. Local Intelligence, LIU, man... Because he wanted to go too close to him. You see, the worlds are so different that we can't easily... we can't imagine that we are close.

The moment you do that, you encounter a failure. So, we have not done that. I'm sure we are able... we will be able to do this, both the... and the global presence, I... I agree with... that we need a greater national debate in all regions, language must be an essential aspect of that, and so on, all that. Very much needed. Actually, when we started talking about Swaraj, in a discourse with... I... I forwarded that today to some of you. The question that came to my mind is whether there is something called a Dravidian Swaraj. I mean, there may not have been, but can we imagine one? Can the present politics give way to a Dravidian Swaraj? Or... the Balgangadhara students in Shimoga and other places who have done... those who were there on the coordination committee of the Shumoga convention, two of them were there. They have done a lot of research after that in the regions of Karnataka. GSRK talked about his experience talking to people in early 60s or early 70s with those who had gone to those places where land redistribution was taking place, and so on. And the manner in which it was being done. And all of Dharampal's work, it really relates to mainly Kamil Nadu and part to Karnataka. So, and it is, it is from there, Chengalpattu, or other, or his, Panchayat, and community exercise of Tamil Nadu, all this... then definitely. And you see what is happening. This man, this Tamil Nadu politics, First, created a... they built, this thing, a murti... What is it called... a statue of Vishwanath Pratap Singh. On some particular occasion. The entire North Indian crowd, who came into politics because of his Mandal Commission implementation, could not do this... the Tamil Nadu politics had sufficient space for building a statue of Vishwanath Pratap Singh. And today's paper I read that civil society... I think Hindu has published it. That civil society in Tamil Nadu rejects SIR. Special revision, poll revision, what is it? Intensive, special intensive poll revision, some such thing. That was carried out, Where was it? And then it was being planned in Bihar, or was carried out in Bihar, now is being planned in 12 states. The statement has come. by the... by the election commission. And Tamil Nadu Civil Society reacts immediately, saying that we will not allow this to happen. We reject that. So the states from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka are in the lead. On most of these questions, they are on the lead. But why are not... why are we not able to see that? Why are we not able to see that talking about Swaraj is far closer? In some sense, they may not accept it. The issue is not whether they will accept it. But far closer to the kind of political processes that have already been unleashed in South. So, I don't know. North, it is going on the way because Hindi had been the region of... has been the language of politics, through the national independence movement. there is an

advantage in talking in Hindi, but it really doesn't hold the key. It doesn't seem to hold the key at all. So, we have people from every state. What is the problem? ... Kerala socialists have been in the forefront in the socialist... in talking about socialism in this country for the last 5 to 10 years. They are the great organizers of the ... of most of the online and other things also. They've been calling people. Aflatun was called from Kerala. To give a speech somewhere. So, southern states are far more active. Politically and organizationally, even in the parallel sense. Actually, in the parallel sense, in the alternate sense. And we have much to... we should be able to find the space there. Here, we tried to do something against SIR, and even the Samajvadi Party did not respond at all. Zero responded. Only Congress responded. And Congress is too large a party for any civil society group to work with. They simply steamroll over everything. And we stayed in that meeting we had. And Samajvadi Party didn't respond at all. And here is a civil society, resolution from Tamil Nadu that they don't accept SIR. I don't know whether, what the political parties, how will the political parties in Tamil Nadu or in Karnataka will react to that. But we need to keep some kind of track. I think there is a place there. Both in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, and in Kerala. I don't know, Andhra Pradesh, we are not there anymore to... We're not connected in the inside... with the inside story, anyway. So, I mean, day to day, there is nothing coming from Telangana or Karnataka, or Andhra Pradesh. So, both... all three, four things that we have talked about, I think it is possible. And, if it is the right thing, you see that, if it is the correct If the apo... if the opportune moment is there, Then, our strengths do not matter at the fundamental level. If a problem is doable, then it is doable by the given means. This is a very popular saying among, I think, among the management fellows and so on. That if a problem is solvable, it is solvable by the given means. You can't say that we don't have this, therefore we can't do this. This is not there, therefore this is not doable. All that is not there at all. It has no place. Let us think about it .

**Girish Sahasrabudhe:**

Okay. It is 6.30 ... quite late. If we stick to what we talked about today, we will meet only on... Two weeks ... it is the 12th. This Hindi meeting is going to take place on 15<sup>th</sup>?

**Sunil Sahasrabudhey:**

We don't know yet

**Girish Sahasrabudhe:**

Because if it is going to take place on 15th then I think we should shift to 19 th, and then... then keep on... on either side of... The...

**Sunil Sahasrabudhey:**

Yeah, our meeting ... but if we... but if we have a meeting, before the Hindi meeting

**Girish Sahasrabudhe:**

It will be on 12<sup>th</sup> then ...

**Sunil Sahasrabudhe:**

Yeah ... Yeah ... with some details about how the Hindi meeting is going to go ... then, it will be better, because we can further shape it better ...

**Girish Sahasrabudhe:**

Okay, then let us do that. We have 14 days, and I'll make the transcript of this available. I'll also talk to Suresh. He was unable to come. He sent a message that he was not able to make it, and GSRK also left around 6.15. I'll talk to, both of them, and then see what one can come up with on... in the 12th meeting. And then we can discuss that, maybe it'll... I don't know how it'll help on 15th, but ... because 15th, some topic has also been decided ...

**Sunil Sahasrabudhey:**

What is the ...

**Girish Sahasrabudhe:**

Some debt ... for discussion. It may be changeable, I don't know. But anyway, let us, let us then meet on 12<sup>th</sup> ... 12<sup>th</sup> is, Wednesday after the next.

**Sunil Sahasrabudhey:**

Hmm. Ok.