

## Vidya Ashram

Sa 10/82 Ashok Marg, Sarnath 221007

### Minutes of Annual Meeting (Online Mode) of the Ashram Samiti

5.30 pm to 7.30 pm, Tuesday, 21 March 2023

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Members Present : Sunil Saharabudhey, Chitra Saharabudhey, Laxman Prasad, Muhammad Aleem, Ehsan Ali, Premrata Singh, Vinod Kumar Choube, B Krishnarajulu, J K Suresh, G Sivaramkrishnan, Abhijit Mitra, Naresh Sharma, Avinash Jha, Girish Saharabudhe

Special Invitees : Krishna Gandhi, Vijay Jawandhia

1. Sunil Saharabudhey was requested to take the Chair. He called the Meeting to order, which was then conducted by Girish as per the Agenda circulated earlier.
2. Brief Report of 2022-23: Chitra Saharabudhey presented a summary of the report of VA and LJA activities, circulated earlier, stressing initiatives of the LJA for unity of lokavidya samaj like dialogue with local organizations of the samaj, lokavidya satsang, kisan karigar panchayat, Varanasi Gyan Panchayat and Darshan Akhada. Girish gave a brief summary of online discussions on revisiting the lokavidya thought as we dialogue with movements of the samaj, and as we look at the global events.
3. Revisiting Lokavidya: Suresh, Krishna Gandhi, Krishnarajulu, G Sivaramkrishnan, Vijay Jawandhia, Naresh, Laxman Prasad, Ehsan Ali, and Sunil Saharabudhey spoke. Much in their statements touched upon possible future programmes of VA and LJA. The following points came up:
  - There is a need to engage in dialogue with activists and thinkers of mainstream movements, and use of innovative language for the dialogue in order to engage meaningfully;
  - We need to identify activists / groups who might participate in swaraj gyan panchyat, and to increase dialogue with activists in farmers movements; others may not respond immediately, and groundwork is necessary;
  - We may revisit lokavidya thought by visiting sant parampara. It is in this that the lokavidya-samaj posits faith anywhere you go;

- While most of the activities being done in the name of 'Hinduism' and our tradition are deeply disturbing, we may engage with some of these and understand what is desired by them;
  - We may experiment with the new skill-development initiative, which promises a 2-year stipend to some 40 Lakh persons, to spread lokavidya awareness;
  - As we revisit lokavidya thought, we must always stay with our primary conviction that there is no politics of change without a knowledge intervention, and seek ways, in which lokavidya might play a significant role in transforming that knowledge intervention into a challenge to the existing order.
4. Online presence, VA website: Girish gave an account of the changes done / desired in the website. Professional help is being sought for new site design and features. The effort is to post multilingual content too. All we need in the beginning is that new writing in any language should accompany an English / Hindi summary by the author. The facebook group will also have a page of its own. It was decided to go ahead with this work.
  5. Programmes for 2023-24: Chitra Sahasrabudhey put forward the proposal already circulated in this connection. She said that a dialogue carried out on the platform of Swaraj Gyan Panchayat can bring together a political discourse on all that has come forth in the weekly meetings – unemployment, social justice, current issues, interaction with activists of ongoing movements, etc. A video channel may also be started in service of this. VA is participating in initiatives on unemployment and education fronts, which are initiated by Prof. Anand Kumar, Kumar Shubhmurty and Prof. Arun Kumar on behalf of Desh Bachao, a forum recently created by erstwhile socialists and sagharsh vahini activists. Our proposal regarding education has already been sent to them and is being followed up. Public initiatives can be furthered by programs like Varanasi Gyan Panchayat also. There was general agreement on this as expressed by Gandhi, Avinash and Krishnarajulu. It was decided to adopt this program and continue the discussion on working out details of this program in weekly meetings.
  6. Appointment of new set of office bearers and the executive: Proposals for adding to membership of the Trust came up. Names of our long time associates Krishna Gandhi and Vijay Jawandhia were suggested. There was general agreement, but since this point was not on the agenda, it was decided that it should be brought through the Executive Committee. After discussion, it was decided to continue with the same office bearers and Executive Committee for the next three year term ( 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026). Following is the list of Office Bearers and members of the Executive Committee.

a. Office Bearers

- i. President : Sunil Sahasrabudhey
- ii. Coordinator : Chitra Sahasrabudhey
- iii. Treasurer : Premlata Singh

b. Members of the Executive Committee

- i. Chitra Sahasrabudhey (Convenor)
- ii. B. Krishnarajulu
- iii. J K Suresh
- iv. Abhijit Mitra
- v. Girish Sahasrabudhe
- vi. Avinash Jha
- vii. Awdhesh Kumar
- viii. Amit Basole
- ix. Laxman Prasad
- x. Premlata Singh
- xi. Ehsaan Ali

7. Finances, Audit and Accounts: Sunil summarised the report of Auditors and said that the donations amount to ~15 Lakh per annum and the expenses are ~87% in 2022-23. These figures remained roughly the same as the previous year. The donors are those present and a few others like Vijay Joshi, C N Krishnan and Ashok Jhunjunwala. The main component of fixed assets (assets with resale value) is the building (~32 Lakh). The papers necessary to support the claim of IT exemption under 80G will be available to donors around mid May. The Audit Report was approved.
8. Any other matter and Concluding remarks by the Chair: No matter other than those which were already covered earlier was mentioned. Also the Chair felt no need for any Concluding Remarks.
9. The Meeting concluded with a Vote of Thanks to all.

(Chitra Sahasrabudhey)