

PROCEEDINGS OF THE TWO _ DAY INTERACTION MEET OF
BHARAT JAN VIGYAN JATHA (20-21 JAN. 2007) HELD AT
SHIKSHAK BHAWAN , PATNA

HOSTED BY : SCIENCE FOR SOCIETY, BIHAR (Institutional Member , BJVJ)

Following members were present :

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Morning Session 20th Jan.2007 ; Prof. B.D. Desai presided over the Session
Agenda –

I. BJVJ and related review/progress from 1993 –where we are now/what strength we have

II. Brief presentations about the national scene/critical issues/other movements with issues of marginalized

III. With respect to our position/strength now-what can be our roles with people's movements/How do we re-organise ourselves to begin with.

IV. Concretisation of the suggestions/formulation of possible forward movement.

Sri Soumya Dutta (Delhi) presented a brief review /report of the strengths/weaknesses of the organization starting from 1992- till today.

The report underlined the formation of BJVJ after the activity of 1987 Jatha and 1992 Jatha programme (Both catalysed and supported by Govt. of India through the NCSTC wing of Deptt. Of Science and technology, GOI).

As the organizations who were in the key role in 1987 did not provide working space to **Other** voluntary groups the need of BJVJ was felt and 92 - BJVJ was organized on a big scale involving rural area people and organizations. Due to this interaction and sharing at the grass root level different groups and new organizations came up but as follow up programmes could not be coordinated centrally over the years the linkage was lost.

Though the BJVJ after a good exercise of sharing/interaction came to implement a programme of working towards “ **Universalisation of Elementary Education** “ through Lokshala programme and it got engaged with the groups/ people working towards achieving this aim but as the organization was not developing in tune with the content the edge was lost and different groups started pursuing their own line of work /agenda. The UGC provided support to the programme but the output was not satisfactory and resource crunch also became a key question.

Moreover lack of coconnectivity with the people and the central nucleus not functioning to the demands of the local groups became the basic problems affecting the organization.

The class character of BJVJ rank and file was middle class and this created a gap with the toiling masses, dalit and the deprived sections therefore the programme could not act as a vanguard of the movement for securing basic right to education.. A good number of BJVJ activists/members continued with their science communication programmes (in tandem with NCSTC – Network)during the years

when **Lokshala programme** was the key focus area of BJVJ . They were supportive to the leadership and tried to help the field laboratories.

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Thereby when the collective leadership of BJVJ was formed (in the form of National Convening Group) in the year 2000 the members tried to function but as the center was dissolved and the other centers could not work in a coordinated function we could not move ahead..

Now it is for us to recognize our strengths and weaknesses and initiate a process to regroup the BJVJ members on the common minimum programme of science communication (which was the origin) and helping PSM in India as Science Technology communication activists and in the process try to understand the genuine demands of the people /their struggles and new forms of oppression being managed by global capital which ultimately leads to pauperization of the deprived sections of the society.especially Adivasis, Dalits and the rural /urban poor

We now observe that question of land being usurped by the capitalist for industrialization is coming up as a big form of state oppression.

The Character of State has also evolved/changede from 1992 to 2007. The slogan of welfare state and public sector is now being replaced by a repressive state and global capital as tool of industrial development therefore the forms of struggle will also change.

The other question is conservation Saving of people's resources and of livelihood protection of the people.As the basic natural resources are being taken over by multinational as market forces are being unleashed

Sri Raghuvanshi (U.P. , Delhi) referred to the general criticism of BJVJ that the movement was not a PSM programme but the fact is that we could involve about 600 districts and the main problems affecting the people and society was addressed but we could not build the organization.

Prof. B.D. Desai,(Surat, Gujarat) underlined the organization taking shape around towering personalities like prof. Yash Pal and Anil Sadgopal but alol through weakness persisted and BJVJ could not react or take stand on Various issues of the people.We must take the organization in a democratic manner and encourage local level leadership.

In our country during all these years there has been vast erosion of value system in society and institutions . We must make people aware of there rights and move ahead.

Prof. S.P. Verma (Patna , Bihar) observed that in 2003 we had a two day interaction in Patna and some decisions were taken but we failed to implement them ,therefore in todays exercise we must look back and arrive at some workable conclusions/decisions.

Whenever we go for large scale awareness programmes and meet people at their doorstep we arouse the aspirations of the people and if the leadership does steer the organization towards relevant follow up actions then we fail to build the organization or v fail to sustain the movement.He gave examples of J.P. movement which is fresh in our memory.People came out on streets and formed their own units to move ahead but at one stage the leadership failed to steer them and the whole momentum was lost.In lokshala programme also the field lab people /villagers were aroused and they moved to work towards strengthening the local educational system and make it pro-people but after a few years the labs became non-functional and the local leaders could not sustained it.Some labs may be sustaining on their own but could not get empowered through all India linkage.

The BJVJ platform has an advantage that people/ organizations having diverse background can come together for a common goal of empowering the people and their local area movements in search of a dignified quality of life.

The other important element is their fraternal relationships and autonomy. They can come together to create newer areas of intervention and can aid each other in building organizations to build new India.

One example is the growth of our organization in the state of Bihar and when the YSA-Jatha was organized it looked or worked like BJVJ.Which again provided fresh lease to the local area groups.

At one stage the BJVJ leadership could not integrate and take up the challenge of steering the All India struggle /linking all the 600 groups which came to Manthan meet.as their was no infrastructure/support system available.

It was a difficult task but still there is time to forge linkages with grass root movenments, learn from them , provide generate support systems for them from existing organizations having similar goals. It may take 10-15 years to build but if the organization is rooted in the peoples struggles and aspirations/demands, then it can be sustained as a chain reaction.

Soumya Dutta intervened and said that as the nature of state has changed since 90's the people's struggle will also be changed and we have to understand the effects of so-called developmental action of the state.

Prof Devendra Prasad (Patna) pointed out that we must define the people for whom we stand and he does not think that the nature of state has changed. There are three classes the ruling class, the middle class and the underpriviledged/marginalized sections.. As we are not a political party we have to be careful in choosing our position.we must see our limitations as a voluntary organization.

There was a lively debate and **Mrs Malathi (New Delhi)** pointed out that initially the independent India moved on the British model and State was termed as welfare

state. But now the change is seen as it is fast becoming pro-capital and supportive of international groups like world Bank and I.M.F.

Prof. Verma pointed that as time flows the nature of State may not be static in changing economic environment..

Mr. D.N.S. Aanand (Jharkhand) observed that what we are doing as project work of DST and such activity does not provide space for ideological work. Even the volunteers now expect some monetary facilities when doing NCSC activity. And we fail to reach our goal. Some people should be released for ideological work so that we can get inspiration and strength

Dr. Prakash Jha (Delhi) observed that we must devote some time on understanding the Developmental issues . A core group should be formed so that constant sharing takes place . Building our connectivity with PSM is also a great challenge.

Post Lunch Session(20 Jan '07) Prof. B. D. Desai was in the Chair.

Presiding over the session Prof. B.D. Desai summed up the discussion of forenoon session and identified three issues (1) Conceptual clarity is required for undertaking linkage with people's struggles.

(2) A core group should be constituted. For rejuvenating the organization.

(3) How to undertake the coordination of programmes and live sharing.

He asked the speakers to focus on the above three areas.

Mr T. Surjit Singh (Meghalaya) observed that the present India is not a society of dignified living. He thought a New India can be created through the Dream of BJVJ as it is a organization of good people but I found very few people have the philosophical background for the purpose of creating new India Mr . singh referred to situation in North east being different from the rest of India and it is still a task to create an Indian identity of the people of the region. He will be working with the BJVJ and expressed his solidarity.

Mr. Sabestian and Prof. Vikram Dasgupta (NEST, Goa) observed v that though they are interacting for the first time in this forum but they are working on the question of livelihood of the marginalized sections at various places including Jharkhand and circulated a report on the capital investments being planned in Jharkhand in different areas and how it is going to affect the adivasis of the region. They wish to join hands with BJVJ and will take a formal decision after due discussion at their forum, NEST. They are working on consolidation of the local movements in different areas on the question of livelihood and capitalist modee of development.

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Dr. Prakash Jha (Delhi) shared his concern for the mode of industrial development vis-à-vis environment and deprivation of the masses. As he is working as consultant he has opportunity to observe the process at close quarter and looking for sustainable models. He has specific ideas and will like to help organize a session on understanding development processes. For this he will be in connectivity with new friends in Delhi.

Mrs Sarita Anand (Jharkhand) requested/demanded that a fresh campaign against Superstitious belief prevalent in Jharkhand should be launched by BJVJ and they are ready to work on this programme mobilizing local resources. They had a chance to interact with local adivasis during YSA programme and that mode should continue. Friends of the host organization said that they are part of BJVJ and they will work at local district centers on activities as finalized at the meeting. The basic units should be kept in constant touch by the central office. **Md. Zeyullah, (Sitamarhi)** spoke on behalf of the hosts/district coordinators of SFS, Bihar.

Sri Shyam N. Singh, Lakhisarai, raised the issue of land reforms and displacement as the key areas in which they wish to work.

Mrs Sandhya Edlabadkar (Maharashtra) observed that she is all for rejuvenating the BJVJ as an organization but unless you strengthen the basic Units the organization will not emerge ahead. Therefore the tasks set in previous interactions must be completed first. We should start working on various issues through basic units and any cosmetic change at the leadership level will not cut much ice.. We may form a working group but unless we take up programmes to energise/excite the B.U. it will not take off.

Sri Prabhakar Pusadkar (Wardha, Maharashtra) shared his experience of working at various levels especially in building up people's organizations. Now he has come back to wardha and will contribute in strengthening BJVJ. He welcomed the initiative taken by Soumya and hoped that after his contribution/input we may go ahead.

Prof. S.S. Roy (Kolkata) observed that whatever we were doing for the last few years, we must prepare a review report and learn from its experience. As the situation is deteriorating fast due to the economic policies of GOI, we will have to focus on the people's movements being generated due to displacements and issue of livelihood. He referred to Singur/Nandigram events and said that next morning he will present a brief report as observed by voluntary groups who visited the area and they were termed by state as outsiders.

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Regarding issue of BJVJ-organisation he observed that A working committee may be formed with a working President , Secretary and Treasurer and voluntary groups/organizations as members and start functioning as a network of people's representatives.

Prepare study report , documents on various ongoing struggles and try to have a live linkage with the movements ,then only we can move ahead.

He further observed that we must look back upon the vision document and the constitution so that a workable format may be evolved. A constiitution like Communist party's constitution may not work with us..

He proposed the Names of Sri Souimya Dutta, Delhi as secretary of the Working Committee, Sri R. Raghuwanshi as Treasurer and Prof. S.P. Verma, Patna as Working President of the organization to make it functional. The functionaries will be duly elected at the next convention (to be decided)after six months work.

After due discussion the members agreed to the formation of a working Committee. Prof. S.P. Verma observed that the previous CEC may be retained with inclusion of new members (present here from new areas that included friends from Goa, Delhi, Uttaranchal, Patna)

Morning Session ,21st January 2007

Prof. B.D. Desai presided over the session

As agreed Prof. S.S. Roy presented a brief report of the events taking place in west Bengal especially movement of agricultural workers in Singur (small car project) and Nandigram.(land to be given for building SEZ)

He pointed out that the decision of the state govt to provide agricultural land to Tatas for the car factory can be termed as anti people as it is effecting a large section of populace in the area. The small car project has minimum labour force to be recruited and markedly a large chunk of land has been allotted about four times the need ofr the car project. It is heard that Tata co. is specially interested to get agricultural land as it wants to diversify towards agro-products also. If the govt has chosen land in the Bankura/Purulia region ,no hulla would have been created.

Though the movement in the media appears to be spearheaded by Trinamool/BJP combine but the fact is that marginalized farmers/bargadars are affected party and both the area is under the influence of parties w3hich are small partners in the Left front govt such as CPI or Forward block.

One should observe and study the displacement process /loss of basic livelihood coupled to capitalist development and we should come out with alternative model

of development for the backward nations of the world (especially India). Several teams of volunteers have gone to the area and will be reporting back to us. After the above report the members again focused on the mechanisms with which we start the process of rejuvenating the organization along with live linkages with various people's struggles for their bare minimum need for survival.

CONCLUDING SESSION (Jan 21, 2007)

The Members after a one and half day's deliberations came to the following decisions :

- (i) the proposal for activating the organization through a working committee headed by a working President, Secretary and Treasurer moved by SS Roy was approved. The members of the previous CEC along with new members taken in at this session will constitute the Working Committee. (list Attached)
- (ii) Some immediate action points/ tasks were underlined :
 - (a) Starting a center of communication at Delhi, presently located at the NCSTC- Network Office and this will be made functional by Sri Soumya Dutta, as secretary.
 - (b) A supportive center at Patna may assist him centred round Prof. S.P. Verma, Working President of BJVJ. Science For Society, Bihar will provide necessary infrastructural support to this Office. Printing of Newsletter, and other communication may be done from this office.
 - (c) Connectivity with all the basic units/personnel/groups associated with BJVJ may be rebuilt. An address/email access should be circulated.
 - (d) Publication of quarterly newsletter be started. (may be an e-newsletter which can be brought out in print also)
 - (e) Preparing mod/vision/action programme for linkage with the year of Planet Earth Programme. e.g the basic units can take up a programme of "understanding My Village" and through this process the B.U. can get strengthened (suggested by Ms. Sandhya)
The volunteers can study the local area issues/movements and generate an understanding of the situation.
 - (f) Documentation
Report on the deliberation of the present interaction session
Report on Lokshala field labs status/features (T. Surjit Singh and Akshay Kumar can prepare on their field lab)
Report on Tawa Reservoir issue, Hoshangabad (Prof. Sadgopal can help) especially the intervention of Scientific workers.

Report on ongoing people's movements on issue of displacements and development(singur, Nandigram, Delhi, A.P., Maharashtra and other places)

- (g) As a registered body BJVJ can submit Study proposal to the funding agencies also or couple their programme /intervention alongwith/embedded in the proposals .

The following participants gave/committed contribution for starting the abovementioned action points

1. Prof. S. S. Roy , Kolkata-	Rs. 1000/- (Paid)	
2. Dr. B.M. Sharma Uttarakhand-	1000/-	
3. Sri Prabhakar Pusadkar , Wardha-	Rs. 1000/-	
4 Sri R. Raghuwanshi , Delhi	- 1000/-	
5. Ms. Sandhya Edlabadkar, ,Maharashtra-	1000/-	
6. Prof. V. Dasgupta -	Rs. 500/-	
7. Sri D. N. S. Anand –	500 /-(paid)	
8. Sri A.K. Jaiaswal -	1000/- (paid)	
9. Prof. Devendra Pd. –	500 /- (paid)	
10. Dr. Prakash Jha -	1000/- (paid)	
11. Sri T. Surjit Singh –	500/- (paid)	
12. Prof. B.D. Desai -	1000/- (paid)	
13. Prof. S.P. Verma -	1000/-	:
Total contribution collected in the meeting	-5500/-	
Dues to be collected-	5500/-	

It was agreed that member/organizations will be requested to contribute towards the rejuvenation process and will render their support at various levels. A list of contribution of the organizations was drawn up by the Treasurer and he offered to take up the responsibility of fund raising.
