

1

00:00:02,398 --> 00:00:10,798

Anjali Montero: Silence!

2

00:00:10,798 --> 00:00:18,479

Offscreen: Someone please say it once!

3

00:00:18,479 --> 00:00:51,238

Offscreen: Can you please say something?

Narayan surve: Yes sure!

Anjali Montero: As you will say it...that way.

Narayan Surve: Yes sure...

Anjali Montero: What did you do in the morning....since the morning?

Narayan Surve: Since the morning what.... I wrote letters, articles. I read. And I was waiting for you. I was thinking in the back of my mind as to what to say. That's why I took your sheet of paper to see what exactly you want. Now I have understood that. The sound is coming right? Will that do?

4

00:00:51,238 --> 00:01:06,518

Anjali Montero: We shall start.

Narayan Surve: We shall...

Anjali Montero: So from the start... your childhood experiences..

Anjali Montero: Looking at me...

Narayan Surve: Shall I start?

Anjali Montero: Yes.

5

00:01:06,518 --> 00:02:58,518

Narayan Surve: I am known as an adopted child in a way. The truth of it is, the story is, that in this area of Chinchpolki, my mother left me near a dustbin on the road when I must have been about 3-4 months. Why did she go? That is something she herself knows. Because the women don't have such a good life in this country. And even today in India, 6 lakh children are born on the roadside, farms, attics, factories and in railways. I won't blame that mother. Some calamity must have befallen her which is why she must have left me and gone. By that same way, in Indian Woollen Mill, the mill which does not exist at Mahalaxmi today, it was there 45-50 years back, in that mill, the mill worker Gangaram Kushaji surve working in the Trason department used to come at 7 in the morning walking all the way from Mahim to Mahalaxmi. He took a turn from that road itself and that time the sound of my cries fell upon his ears. By that sound of crying a person naturally feels, 'Who is crying?' so he ran ahead, cleaned the garbage around, and he saw that there was a small child. And he quickly picked me up. He picked me and he must have abused the mother who gave birth to me also. That's not his mistake. It is not his mistake considering his pattern of thinking. But he took care of me and brought me up.

6

00:02:58,518 --> 00:04:13,559

Narayan Surve: That day he did not go to work. He bunked it and he came home. In those days mill workers went to work at 7 in the morning and they worked for 12 hours. So, he brought me home. The woman who took care of me at home was Kashibai. He handed me to her and said that, 'This is our adopted child. He was lying on the road. I have brought him. Now you take care of him.' And in this way I was at their house. He started bringing me up as an adopted child. Naturally I feel that from there itself my link with the working class started. The connection took off. The next day he went to work. At home how that mother took care of me, in what way she brought me up- there is no way for me to know as that was my childhood. He told me all these happenings when I was 10-12 years old. He told me how they found me, where they found me, how you were. As a joke he told me that, 'You had a big tummy! You were very thin.' There is a saying in Marathi, 'The hands and feet are thin and the stomach is huge'. There is such a saying in Marathi... so you were like that!

7

00:04:13,559 --> 00:05:29,079

Narayan Surve: So as I was 10-12 years old and as I had a bit of understanding, as I had studied upto 4th grade, I asked him, 'Dad...' I called him dad, 'Dad...how did you happen to find me?' And he told me this story. That's why I know this. So I don't know the name of the mother who gave birth to me. But as they were workers, they used to feel that as they were uneducated and they had brought this boy... they didn't have children. They had just one daughter. So this boy should be given education. Just because we are uneducated, he should also not follow the same. You see, the humanity in humans! The manner of thinking...inspite of being workers. They put me in school. They put me in school and gave me a name. They named me 'Narayan'. So it's 'Narayan Gangaram Surve'. So he took a child from the road and brought him up as his own, there is nothing more great than that. Okay, so he named me. He named me and put my age. There was nothing as keeping a track of age in those times. If you asked workers and farmers in those days, 'When was your son born?' then day would answer, 'It was a full moon night!' or 'In the days of Ganeshotsav'. Because, they were not all that aware. In the same way in my case he told my age my estimation.

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00:05:29,079 --> 00:06:07,158

Narayan Surve: And an estimated age was accepted in schools in those times. Municipal schools had just come up. So, in a school in Mahim, he admitted me. So that estimated age happens to me my age. The caste which he put in is my caste. The address which he gave is my address. They took up my parenthood. So I wrote in a place that 'It is good that my relation with the working class was established in this manner'. At this point I feel like sharing one more memory. That last year itself in 1999, I won the 'Kabir prize'. It is the most honourable award by the Indian standards.

9

00:06:07,158 --> 00:07:24,718

Narayan Surve: After I got the prize the Prime Minister Digvijay Singh said, 'Mr. Surve, please say something'. And I stood up to talk. That time he said, 'See the issue is, we celebrate 600 years of the birth of Kabir. 600 years back too, Kabir too was left by his mother in the same manner at the bank of a river. She left him. Kabir doesn't know who his mother is. By the same way, a weaver was going past. Their names were Neera and Nimu. They went near that child and quickly picked him up and brought him up in their own house. He went on to become Kabir. And after 600 years exactly my story occurred- I too was left on the road and I was taken by a mill worker... '<i>julaha</i>. And that weaver named him Kabir. I was

taken by a mill worker passing that same way who bunked his work. He adopted me. The surprising thing is that there is no mention in history as to where Kabir studied. But as he gave me his father's name and put me in school, I studied upto 4th grade. When I said this people were startled and were listening in awe. And then I continued.

10

00:07:24,718 --> 00:08:39,359

Narayan Surve: I remembered this because in history, Kabir is a respected figure- leave that part aside. But it is worth looking at how it is similar. But the funny thing is that at the age of 10 or 12 I passed 4th grade. He was working in India Woollen Mills and mother was working in Kamla Mills okay?... in winding. Women used to work in those days in winding balls. They used to tie the needles and they used to wind wires around it. I don't know what is there in the new system as I have lost contact with it for 40 years. I am not connected to mills now. But, back then, I was there. So that time, mother was in Kamla Mills. Kamla Mills is very reputed among women and in the whole of history. This whole area has a great significance in history. In Indian history; mill workers, their struggle, their strikes...you don't know- these mill workers struggled and so the day came down to 8 hours. Because these mill workers fought, we got bonus. Even a clerk in <i>Sachivalaya</i> gets a bonus now and even a mill worker gets it. Yet, a clerk in <i>Sachivalaya</i> is considered a friend and a mill worker is called a bamboo. This is the make up of the society...! He is called a mill bamboo. This understanding is there in the Indian tradition. Let it be!

11

00:08:39,359 --> 00:09:55,718

Narayan Surve: Hence they said to me, 'Now you are 10-12 years of age. You have studied upto 4th grade. Now take these Rs. 10/-. We are going to Konkan.' They were from <i>Vaibhavwadi</i> in Konkan of <i>Het</i> village. They became old and went off to Konkan. And I became an orphan again. I took the vest, half pants, shirt and went off to the footpath again. Hence I have written in my poems, <i>'There was no house. No family. I had all the land I could walk upon. There were the crevices of shops. And the free foothpath of the government was always open!'</i>. Once again the foothpath was all mine. The relation of life and poetry came automatically. And hence it was my life. So now, what to do? There was no one to support me. Then I started doing any work I got. I used to stack sacks near the stairs. One good thing at that time was, there was much more love among the people. There were less people. Women used to call me and feed me. They told me to clean the place. Even I wanted food, right? Understood? But they looked upon me with affection. For taking a bath they gave me access to water and said, 'Take your vessels aside. Let that child go..he is an orphan'. This is the love of the workers.

12

00:09:55,718 --> 00:11:10,198

Narayan Surve: This is the love in the working class. It does not come deliberately. It does not come through education. It comes by experience. In this way I grew up in Mahim. I first became a mill worker in India United no.3. That time, war was going on. In 1935 the war started and it got over by '45. The Germans slowly started... I started working as a child labourer in India United No. 3 here, near Shivaji Park. I am the first child labourer.... I mean not me, there are lakhs of people like that. But I started off that time as a child labourer. There are movements going on outside against child labour. You see, this is the way it is. I started doing night shifts initially. I did winding balls that time. And that time, they used to recruit child labourers! Not now. Now you need age, certificate. Now you need to be educated to work. That time I was not educated-

just 4th grade...child labourer. I used to go at 6 in the night. And I left at 4 in the morning. Sometimes 4 AM, sometimes 5 AM. And there my connection with the working class was established.

13

00:11:10,198 --> 00:12:13,799

Narayan Surve: Slowly, I started earning money. That time, there were trade union movements. When those trade union movements drifted to the working class, I got involved in the trade union movements. In my poetry I have written, *'A few good things for the moon'* (Implied meaning: A few good things for the working class). What I thought of is derived from that. *'O moon! There's nothing but barren land on you. You are a jobless worker. You land down here in my factory and I will teach you. And later I will make you a trade union member too.'* That's the way it is. This is the way the combination of reality and imagination comes in poetry. After that I became involved with the trade union. That time, gradually the talk of nationalist movements was going on. Indira Gandhi should be brought down, our country needs freedom-the movement of 1942. I have seen Gandhi! Suli Batliwala wearing a vest and half pants... that Parsi man... What does Gandhi look like? No one will bother about me at home or outside! But i was jobless...! I went off! (Laughs). It is all a joke.

14

00:12:13,799 --> 00:13:09,919

Narayan Surve: Eshwarbhai Patel was there that time. I became a volunteer of People's Volunteer Brigade. And I went there to Gowalia Tank. Now Gowalia tank has been beautified. That time it was an open ground. And in this way I got closer to the trade unions. Slowly from there, I saw Gandhi when he came up with the resolution of 'Quit India'... *'Bharat Chodo'*. He put forth the resolution on the 8th of August and the movement started on 9th August. That time the first *lathi* was hit on me. That time, when I must have been about 14 years of age I experienced the *lathi* of the British, the crowd and tear gas. Wiping my eyes with a wet cloth I went nearby to see what Gandhi looked like, what Nehru looked like, what Maulana Azad looked like? All this is very romantic you know. I feel astonished to know I saw all of this! This is my luck... the richness of my experience.

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00:13:09,919 --> 00:13:49,679

Narayan Surve: Thereon I understood that there is slavery in this country. Workers don't get justice in this country. In this country we are nobody...we too are workers! C'mon! In that way I got involved in the movements. In this way, at times there was no one. I will tell you one funny incident. I was staying in Mahim. I wore only a vest and half pants. All of us children, went to swim in the Mahim creek. We used to go to steal onions there at that time! Onions... that's what I am telling you... ! If I keep on talking it will go on for a long time. (Laughs). So, we used to go to Mahim creek... there's no problem right?

16

00:13:49,679 --> 00:14:10,718

Anjali Montero: You were telling that story about Mahim...

Narayan Surve: Yes with Mahim I will tell you two more stories...that will make it one.

Anjali Montero: Start...

Narayan Surve: So some of us kids went to swim at the sea.

Anjali Montero: Shhh! Silence!

17

00:14:10,718 --> 00:15:04,439

Narayan Surve: So some jobless kids like me went to swim at the sea. Because I didn't know anything about swimming. Instead of sitting beneath some pipe, the sea was better. That's why there are constant mentions of the sea in my poetry. Let that be. So we went to swim at Mahim creek. At Mahim, there's a masjid. There is a fakeer in the masjid. They too were jobless. They too used to come. And one day... so 5-6 kids... we took off our clothes and kept in under a stone as they should not get blown by the wind. The fakeer came when we were engrossed in swimming and took away everybody's clothes. Now everybody's clothes were taken and they would go home. But, what about me? I didn't have any home or any place. I thought about what I should do and ran from there and reached the masjid in Mahim in the mosque. There is a coffin in the mosque. Now it has been improved. I sat quietly behind the coffin.

18

00:15:04,439 --> 00:15:59,718

Narayan Surve: I was naked. I sat there. The muslim people came there to offer their prayers. They had a system of bringing a towel to pray. They used to spread the towel, sit on it and pray to the Allah. I was scared in the end. He got the scent of me or he heard my breath while praying and he said, 'Who's there behind?' I raised my hand. He got up from his prayers! He came out and abused me. 'What are you doing hiding here? Hey! Stand up! You are naked! This is not good! Where are you from?' He thought for a while and offered me the towel he used for praying. That's my first prize. I draped the towel and emerged from the mosque. That's the way life is! Reality...reality...what does reality teach you after all?

19

00:15:59,718 --> 00:17:03,119

Narayan Surve: I will tell you another story. I was there in Spring Mill...in Morbakh... no.. not Spring Mill... Century. I was a child labourer in Century Mills for night shift. When we left at 5.30 in the morning, we used to walk at the sea near Century in Worli. One day we thought, why should we walk from the sea? Let's walk on the road! I had a friend called Pulaji Gaikwad. And we walked it up. We were awake at 5.30-6 in the morning. We had stayed up all night. We used to hold each other by the hand and we used to walk the road drowsily. Our hands used to go here and there.. One day one funny thing that happened was, a big car came before us and was honking. None of us knew anything. The driver got down and spanked us like anything. (Laughs) We ran away! And he abused us, 'Can't you walk properly? Where do you work?' We said, 'We are night shift workers. We are child labourers'. He, the poor man let us go and hence we were saved.

20

00:17:03,119 --> 00:18:12,598

Narayan Surve: In those days, in this Morbag Mill, in Spring Mill, in those days... do you know? Workers used to stand at the door to beg for work. And if a relative of theirs was a jobber, if he was a supervisor, as a villager... he used to come outside. I was appointed as a temporary worker. When I first went in Spring Mills as a temporary worker hordes of people were standing. Just as today, you won't get an idea... many people stand at the <i>Bhigari Naka</i> and ask for work. Hordes of people were standing. No relatives could take you in. This was the situation at that time. There was no freedom at that time, nothing. Everything worked as per the instructions of the supervisor. The supervisor too was uneducated. But as he was the senior, and as he knew the techniques of the machines he was at that position. In this manner...not only this, I will tell you more... in that time, I am telling you the story 55 years back... now my age is 72..

approximately! Because the age Gangaram Surve put is my age. It may be less or 2-4 years more. Let that be.

21

00:18:12,598 --> 00:19:18,759

Narayan Surve: In those days, it was the understanding of the workers, that there is injustice. We are not given a payraise, they burden us with work. And this is because of the machines. And because of these machines when they went on strike, they vented out the anger of the employer on the machines. And they used to break everything and stand outside the barricade of the mill. In that way they used to destroy the machines. Which means that they did not even understand that we have an employer and he does not provide for us... they did not understand that. They got angry on the machines. At times accidents used to happen. Now there is a lot of security around the machines in the mills. Now there are new things. In the sense, one of the workers is talented enough. He is a writer. He may be special. In those days, there was nothing of the sort. There were no facilities. At such times the workers vented out their anger on the machines. I saw this with my eyes. When accidents happened, as the accident happened because of the machine, they broke the machine itself.

22

00:19:18,759 --> 00:19:51,279

Narayan Surve: One day a worker's hand got injured. They dragged that hand outside the factory and said, 'Look this is the mistake in this factory!'. Not the mistake of the owner, but the mistake of the mill and the mistake of the machine. Now, out of understanding, slowly, and growing slowly, the mill business has come upto a very wonderful stage. This is the way it is. In this way there are many facts. And in India Today I have written very well because I have experienced all that. Later on I did a lot of other businesses.. here...

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00:19:51,279 --> 00:21:07,359

Narayan Surve: But I have seen a lot more than him because now, because I have myself seen all that. Those days there were moulds in mills. Even now there are moulds. There were 300-400 spindles. Which meant, that if you worked in spinning, we call it *Trasan Khata*, one worker handled 300 spindles in a spinning yard. The thread was raw in those days. No. 12, 14, 16 and the thread used to break all the time. The ball was down and the spindles were up they used to run up. And I used to work as a *Dafar boy*.. it meant that when the spindles were full, the machine used to stop. And those full sticks... now I was looking while coming in the weaving department... those sticks are small. Fat bamboo and a thin stick- these were the kinds of names in those days. Fat bamboo meant it had a black stick and it was raw. And a thin stick meant more... No. 24, 22 it was of superior thread. And it used to stain. And when it stained, we did the work of cleaning up. And we used to take a basket we used to tie it and quickly clean up and throw it and empty the basket and do the same. That was our work.

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00:21:07,359 --> 00:22:08,318

Narayan Surve: And later sometimes when the wire used to break, then the moulder used to be there. He used to be distressed. He had a wire in his ear the way it is in weaving department in the yarns. When the wire broke, he used to join it. All of that... there used to be a lot of dust. If you dusted it.. it is mentioned in my poems... when you dusted it the soot used to fly about. And all of that soot used to settle on us. It used to go in the worker's noses, here and there. Most of the mill workers used to be TB patients. Because there

were no facilities. Only slog and work hard. But there was no medical aid or anything of the sort. All of this was there. After that the women were in a bad condition while making balls. The whole day... women were mill workers in large numbers. Now the milling business is almost over today. The women used to sell chillies and all on the roads, here and there, they did housework and made a living.

25

00:22:08,318 --> 00:22:57,078

Narayan Surve: The women were strong in those days. The supervisor of the women was not called a supervisor. The one heading the men was called a supervisor. The head of the ladies was called a heroine. Now the reference of a heroine in marathi is different. A heroine is more close to a prostitute. But, it is there in my poem, <i>'The heroine Chandra used to fill in cotton in her cut hair. The soot used to dabble in her hair'</i>. A critic said that he is mentioning a prostitute. But he did not take into consideration that a woman working in the mill will have soot in her hair! So these references have been made in my poems. I am telling all this to show how I and poetry grew up together.

26

00:22:57,078 --> 00:24:12,838

Narayan Surve: So, in this way I started getting involved with trade unions. I got to hear some things because I got involved in movements. I got to see some things. I myself was a worker. Here in Lalbaug, there was a factory of Godrej near the Gas Company. It was of asbestos sheet. Now Godrej has shifted to Vikhroli. I have worked as a porter in the asbestos factory. In Tata Oil Mill, when the oil was ready then the stains that emerged on the straps has to be washed off? Did you understand? Then I had to labour in cleaning and washing this. Then somehow managing things I came up as a pune in a Municipal Primary school. There are many such stories worth telling from my childhood. How I met people... the working class at that time. Even today I see, that in a very downtrodden poor society, there is a lot of love for each other. Because they know that I am poor and you too are poor. They know that I am uneducated and you too are uneducated. They know that you have to struggle and live and I have to struggle and live. Out of that comes up a natural humanity. You don't find that humanity in books! You understand that humanity while practically growing an living with that person. And that humanity has affected my poetry.

27

00:24:12,838 --> 00:24:49,558

Narayan Surve: Hence I told the head of the Literary Convention that, 'That there is not a word more pure than human in the dictionary'. Because man is a great worker. Sometimes man does something bad, but the creation that is there, the humanity that is there, the sacrificial virtue that is there, there is nothing great than that. Or else, tell me, why would have Gangaram Surve picked me up while going to work? That humanity is there in the working class. It is there in everyone, but I came across it in them and hence I came in such a situation. In this way, there are a lot of things I would like to tell.

28

00:24:49,558 --> 00:25:45,038

Anjali Montero: Can you tell about your worker's movement? Now did it develop later?

Narayan Surve: Now I told you I was naturally involved with the trade union because in those days trade unions were very strong. And one trade union was major, 'All India Trade Union's Congress'. Understood? That was the only union which was in the mill business. Back then the biggest industrial business in Mumbai was mills. Now everything has changed you know. Now iron factories have come up, medical factories have

come up, utensil factories have come up, there are food and biscuit factories- they all have come up. But the biggest business in Mumbai was mills. And most of the workers were from Konkan. They used to come from Konkan. Because in Konkan there was nothing in the city apart from the four months. And that mill worker came here and stood for work at the door of the mill. He used to go through someone or the others reference. And in this way that mill worker is great.

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00:25:45,038 --> 00:26:56,838

Narayan Surve: So naturally in that way I came into contact with the trade union movement. Once I came into contact I got carried away. I have sat at night in front of Tata Mills and torn receipts of the union. I have sat in front of Spring Mills at night... I told you, it is in my poem, I have written in the poem on Marx... I was saying in a gathering, 'What is the reason for recession? What is the reason for poverty? What is its caste?' I have written in the poem on Marx... In another gathering when I was speaking Marx came forth and said, 'Wow! You write poems and all, is it?'. All of this has come from my... and my thinking pattern was moulded through all this...by reading people. I always say that read people first. Read the situation in which people live. And then if you have time then read novels. Because novels tell lies but reality doesn't lie. This is the principle I have for myself. Taking all of this into consideration I came up in the movement. And so I saw that among all the businesses of the trade union the main business was mills.

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00:26:56,838 --> 00:28:00,759

Narayan Surve: So in this way the worker in those days.. 40-50 years back... he was in the prime business here. He was in the center of the movement. Middle class movements used to happen but when the working class movements happened, everything in Mumbai used to shut down. That was it. The working class area was from Mahim to Tardeo... and from Byculla, the area ahead... it was all a working class area. It was the world of the workers. From here emerged writers, drama movements, the stage of the workers, working writers, the dramas for workers... here you would get you hear shows. Here you would get poetry. Here there will be fairs. It was this kind of a cultural world too in those days. We can say approximately that this period before 60's. I mean... from 1945-50. Before that, I was there but I don't know anything else.

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00:28:00,759 --> 00:29:14,359

Narayan Surve: You see the worker's ground is here. There is <i>Nare Park Maidan</i> here. Or, there is the <i>Sane Guruji</i> garden at Prabhadevi.. at Worli. In all these areas there were gatherings of workers. Those gatherings may be about nationalist struggle, they may be about bonus, they may be against some violence somewhere, but all these gatherings were in great numbers. And in these gatherings there were mainly workers. I have heard gatherings at <i>Nare Park</i> of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Dange was an important leader at that time. His centenary took place last year. He had a lot of gatherings and I was his follower. I used to love Dange's thoughts a lot. He used to speak in a very easy, clear and straightforward manner. N M Joshi... this road is N M Joshi road... opposite is Sane Guruji Road... they were all great people. I have heard their speeches. All workers were gathered around them. The worker that time was one who used to take a tiffin to work. Now there are <i>dabbawallahs</i>. He used to take his lunchbox to work at the mill... it may be small or three tier... and he used to get it back in the evening.

32

00:29:14,359 --> 00:30:25,399

Narayan Surve: In those days there were <i>dabbawallahs</i>. I have myself written in one of my poems... <i>'I took my lunchbox to the mould. As the ironsmith moulds the hammer, I got moulded.'<</i>. So, I have written in this poem of mine, when I had taken Gangaram Surve's lunchbox to the mill because my father would go hungry. And if mother could not take the food she made at night, then? In this way, there were <i>dabbawallahs</i>. And most of the workers were uneducated. They could not read and write, most of them. And they had studied upto 4th, 5th or 6th grade at the most and not more than that. And there was a tendency as to what would education do? We work at the machines and earn money, that is enough. This was also a part. This was a new working class. And it was together by the businesses having started afresh. But with that it was involved in the happenings that were going on outside. As I said, the <i>Samyukta Maharashtra Movement</i> happened here. Maharashtra was independent in 1960 right? In the 105 people in it, 90% were working class people. 90% is working class!

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00:30:25,399 --> 00:31:24,838

Narayan Surve: The big Quit India movement that happened here in '42...that time I have heard Shankarrao Deo's speech and got beaten up in the police attacks... today Shankarrao Deo is not there. Dange is not there. We owe them a lot. In all this my mentality was built. There were chawls. Most mill owners, mill workers built chawls around them. Because instead of workers coming from here and there, they would stay there on rent. The India United chawl is there, there is a chawl of Finlay Mills, there are chawls of Tata Mills, that is Tata. I don't know if that mill is there. They all used to build chawls. They built chawls for the working class, they took rent from them. In this way, those workers got involved in politics, literature, culture, the movements that happened outside, in all the social activities. And in that I too was getting involved.

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00:31:24,838 --> 00:32:22,558

Narayan Surve: And there was a lot of intimacy in that. If you go in a worker's chawl and go underground.. I had become underground once... I had participated in a movement and the police were after me. They hid me in their last room. They shut the door and two workers stood outside the chawl in case the CID of the political branch came to deny that they knew anything. I was seeing all this too. The intimacy that comes from all these movements, I decided- this is my hero. And no one will understand this, how much ever they tried. Because we have been learning from life, reading from life and writing in life. And hence, everything is in that. Elections happened here in a very robust manner. Now in the new age they don't allow and trucks and all to be used in elections. In those days trucks used to be filled in elections. Nare Park used to become a big war front in the evenings. Absolutely! Whatever used to happen... but there was unity.

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00:32:22,558 --> 00:33:17,918

Narayan Surve: And, I have written in the preface of my book that there was unity here. And now we are lost people. What do we have to sell? Labour and hardwork. There is nothing else we have got. My case was the same. All these workers that are here in this way... on this D'liel road, all the emigrant workers used to stay here. Which meant that on other days and on holidays if you visited them, you won't find them in chawls. They would find them on roads, chattering away. You go in this <i>Rani ka baug</i>... in Victoria gardens... you would find workers there on holidays, specially those from Konkan. They would sit in groups. They had co operative unions. They wanted to build temples in villages, they wanted to build schools in villages. Funds would go from here. There was this kind of unity. And in this unity man got connected with man gradually.

36

00:33:17,918 --> 00:34:39,878

Narayan Surve: The scenario changed after 60's. Firstly, the chawls dissapered. Other businesses came up. In trade unions, more 4-5 new trae unions came up. Workers could be brought together by one or two trade unions. Today, there are 4-5 trade unions for one company. Go in any.... in the mill industry there are 6-7 unions. Hence, there was a divide. Other thing is, there was a change in the mentality here. The new working class came up. The new worker now combs his hair well, wears wonderful clothes, here, his comb is there, he has a newspaper, he does not carry a tiffin. After leaving in the evening, he goes to the drama group. He stands by the roadside and fools around or he goes to the gym, or he plays a sport. He is nowhere related to politics. Because the connection with the politicians was broken. In that, he is somewhat educated. He is influenced by films. He is being wasted as there is no one to guide him. But the qualities he has reacts somewhere. In this way there is a wonderful scenario today.

37

00:34:39,878 --> 00:35:57,079

Narayan Surve: Most of the working class stays out today for most of the time in the areas of Borivali, Virar. And it commutes to work from there. Because, the chawls here were demolished. At times, they sold their houses, chawls and rooms and went there. This is the situation today. I became a teacher in a Municipal school later. I have taught students in a gallery. There was so much crowd. Today there is no crowd in a municipal school. Because there is competition in education too. Good schools came up. They got concessions. And the municipal employee and workers thought, 'It is better for my child to go there rather than here'. Actually the teachers in Municipal schools teach much better. This is my experience as I was a teacher. He is a friend. There is intimacy. But that isn't there anymore. Hence all this impact-economic, social, political mess, new trade unions came up in the working class, and overall the life pattern started changing. There were no 18 storeyed buildings in <i>Kamgar baug</i> earlier. Now there are 12-15 storeyed buildings now. And who stays there? No worker but some third person itself!

38

00:35:57,079 --> 00:36:52,958

Narayan Surve: If you see at Elphinstone, there are huge buildings there. If you go by railways, then there are buildings in Mahalakshmi. I have no problems with them coming up. But the area in which they come up... but they got that land for free. The owner invested his money and made a building. These kind of changes have come up. Now you can almost see a picture where the children of the workers are educated. The girls too are educated. The outside environment influences their children too. And they want to surge ahead overcoming all of that. They cannot surge ahead. They cannot go behind and so they are hung somewhere in the middle. Sometimes it is said that an educated worker now comprises the 'middle class'. It is not middle class. They are somewhat educated. It is different to be of the middle class and much different to be of the working class. If we live a good life, then we become of the middle class.

39

00:36:52,958 --> 00:37:47,118

Narayan Surve: When I came to stay in the chawl in Chinchpokli, in the municipal quarters, then I was accused that Narayan Surve- the boy who grew up on the footpath-became a middle class man. But did my mind become of the middle class? My mind thinks about my class only. They don't see this. This is also one part. There is a confusion in the thinking, a confusion in the understanding. These are all the things. The

new change that is there today, the mill business is almost done away with. New trades don't come up here at all. Whichever come up go on in the suburbs. Did you understand? Most of the trades go on in the suburbs. And the others which are not needed are going on everywhere. This is the way it is all going on- be it in politics, trade unions, and wherever. When Ambedkar's funeral went past here, in Dadar Hindu Colony, that time I was there to witness it. We all went in that procession.

40

00:37:47,118 --> 00:38:31,158

Narayan Surve: What a great man he was! He was if this area. Some of Ambedkar's education took place here in BDT Chawl in Parel. I had written a lesson on that earlier. He used to sit beneath the streetlight and study. This area has had such great people. There are so many famous actors here. Now, Nana Patekar... I spoke to him only yesterday... he is from here, Parel itself. Nana Patekar. The singer Wadkar- so many people- Suresh Wadkar. He is from the working class. So all of this is on one side. And on the other side it is a pitiable condition. There are changes happening and they have no face. I don't know how that is going to happen.

41

00:38:31,158 --> 00:39:33,999

Narayan Surve: The working class I saw used to wear <i>dhotis</i>, carrying tiffins, only a shirt and a <i>dhoti</i>, and at the most a pyjama. And once he was in the mill, he used to take off the pyjama and work in half pants. They must be doing the same. He worked in half pants and a vest. And while going back he would dress up again. So, all this was there. And even theatre... this working class.. only two theatres are old- one is Bharatmata. Someone else told me the day before... only one or two theatres are that old. Everything else has become modern. And people are attracted by this. Very much. And the poor people are more attracted. Those who don't get find everything new, it is desirable. But the working class has a future. And the working class will make this country progress. But today, if someone will bring them together, if all trends will come together then something will happen. But today there is truly a pitiable condition.

42

00:39:33,999 --> 00:40:42,799

Narayan Surve: You asked me what will you take to the 21st century? Then I myself ask people this question that what are we going to take? Divisions, hatred, disorganization, hopelessness, what? And our history is big. It is nice. Who wrote the first poem on workers? It was written by <i>Keshav Suta</i> named <i>Upasmareche Paali</i> (The time of fasting). It was on workers. He was not a worker. He was a teacher. It is a poem of 1884. And now it is 2000. It is a 116 year old poem. But the working class is unaware of it. The trade union hasn't told them. I doubt if the leaders of the trade union know about it. Because it is okay to say, 'Victory of the working class!'. But they don't tell how the working class lives, what has it learnt, what potential does it have, how it it's life, what food of thought should we give to it? They have been brought in for their rights to bonus, economical rights and national rights. That is correct.

43

00:40:42,799 --> 00:41:41,958

Narayan Surve: But that working class- it has a social part, it is related to history, it should not get caught up in religious divisions because India is an amalgamation of all, you should respect your neighbour's religion then the neighbour can tolerate you. The worker's held processions to stop the riots in Mumbai. I remember 14 April 1944 when the boats came back from the war. And a huge blast occurred here in a boat in Bandra.

And that boat was on fire. At that time I was a volunteer. I was 18, 19 or 20 years of age. And the people of CPI and trade union took trucks and ran to that place at night. There had been a bomb blast. We wanted to evacuate people from there. This is the thing that is there. But that is not a reason to lose hope. Did you understand? This is the fact.

44

00:41:41,958 --> 00:42:38,239

Anjali Montero: Then what do you feel of the thoughts of the leftists and where did they go wrong and what did they do?

Narayan Surve: No. All these thinkers I told you before... I don't think our country has been saved because of the leftist movements. This is my clearcut opinion. Not saved means what? That this country is based on the four classes of the Aryan society. This country is as big as Europe and India together. This country has its own history. There are cultural movements here. It has its own history here. This country has its own societal limits. All these things... this country has the bank of the river Ganga. The Mughals ruled his country for 600 years and the British ruled it for 200 years. The mentality here has been affected by 800 years of slavery. Thats the first.

45

00:42:38,239 --> 00:43:25,718

Narayan Surve: Second thing is the four classes of the Aryan society here which believes in class divisions. Meaning it believes in untouchability. All these things are there which the four classes haven't observed. Buddha was born in this country. Charvak was here. There are some people of Jain religion. All these things we have never seen ever. In this country Buddha said, 'O child, when you will go outside, that time keep a waterpot, a staff, and keep a blanket on your shoulders. Whichever donor will serve you food- then be it non vegetarian or vegetarian- take that much only. Give the rest to someone else.' This country preached this. This is named as socialism- keep some for yourself and give the rest to someone else. We didn't pay enough attention to this Buddha.

46

00:43:25,718 --> 00:44:26,839

Narayan Surve: Charvak- who denounced everything. Buddha denied the existence of God. He denied fate. Buddha said that man is once. His compassion is one. Give him one life. Such a period won't come now- that is a true thing. But this is our legacy. Didn't I say that? Did you understand? Charvak-He denounced everything. This religion and everything outside is nothing. Everything is in our physical world itself. That has to be changed. That much! I mean Marx came after him. Understood? Meaning to say, if the pattern of socialism has to be brought in our country, then the history and condition of this country has to be retained. The man who absorbs the good and bad out of this history is there. He has to be there. And because of that all of us ... after that, when questions cropped up, everyone had pride, everyone asked for their share of the history. And then the chaos started.

47

00:44:26,839 --> 00:45:23,839

Narayan Surve: Now the working class includes all castes. But, if you ask people belonging to a special class who is going to work. He will say, 'This is my caste'. Today, caste has gained priority. On one hand they announce fight against casteism and those very people give priority to caste. These are the kind of scenarios. Actually, this is very uneven. For this, our trade union movement is of 100 years. Not 100, but it

is of 76 years... 1924. I will give you an example of Tilak. Tilak passed away in 1920. He had delivered a speech in the year 1919 that, 'Only the working class and the farmers have made this country fresh. So, workers form an organization' Tilak! Lokmanya Tilak! This has been printed. We could not understand Tilak.

48

00:45:23,839 --> 00:46:40,718

Narayan Surve: Shivaji of Maharashtra! This country got only one such king who was the ruler of people. Who said... when there had been a famine he relaxed the taxes. He distributed land among the poor. He appointed people of all castes. There were Muslims and Pathans in Shivaji's army. This was King Shivaji! A king who stayed! But in this era they made him the protector of cow and Brahmins. What did Shivaji do? He protected cows and Brahmins. This fake history is a result of our movement. If they were firm on this before and had they told this to our class before... to be true, there was a bomblast in the Baug the day before... in March... 4-5 years back... Shri Krishna hawal and all. That bomblast was against workers. How very emotional ! We say that we will change the whole world. I myself have written it in my poem. Sometimes I feel, Narayan have you written lies? That is not fake. Because on one hand a poet visualizes his desires and dreams. And on the other hand he sees the reality.

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00:46:40,718 --> 00:47:34,158

Narayan Surve: Keshav Sut said 100 years back 'Not a Brahmin, not a Hindu, I don't belong to any one caste'. Today we carry forward that very movement. But as the entire foundation is not right, we see this condition. And hence I say that it is not that the working class doesn't have a future. The working class will bring about change, because it has nothing to lose. Understood? Some people in industries will give you 8.33% bonus. They won't leave the whole factory in their business... rich people or... those who are called industrialists. They won't leave it. It's going the other way round now. They are shutting all factories to make them specialized. Specialization means they themselves will run it right? Meaning, instead of our efforts, labour and money being directed towards the government, they will go back to these people itself. In this way a roundabout process has begun.

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00:47:34,158 --> 00:48:42,799

Narayan Surve: As this is going on in the political and economical front, it is the same in the case of social, historical and religious cases. The same thing is going on. We could not tell who the real Shivaji was. We could not tell about the real movement. It's all like this. Hence I say that our country should be read again. That where exactly are we. There are arguments in the form of north and south here. Here, when I go to the South they praise Hindi and when I go to the North they praise English. These are arguments on language. All this will come but if the people before would have given a vision to all of this then this would not have happened. But we can't do anything. Hence I feel that the leftist movement has created a big weakness in all this. There was a movement called as the national movement. And there are other rightist forces. They want this cultural revolution. What is that? Beat up Christians and beat up Muslims. This should be called cultural revolution?

51

00:48:42,799 --> 00:49:42,878

Narayan Surve: This is cultural revolution for the Hindus. There are speeches. Those who have not shed a drop of blood for this country are now ruling. A writer like me feels ashamed. But we have been seeing those battles since 1942... what is going on? They haven't shed a single drop.... they are ruling today. They dictate edicts today. They demand Ambedkar's constitution to be changed. Which means that we will have the decrees of Manu again. This is a political judgment but yes, we are writers so this is our judgment. Because, this country belongs to me. I am don't carve emotions only but I am a writer and writers know everything. And hence I am bothering so much to say that all this should become fine again. Let's see. I am not dissapointed about the future. Why should we get dissapointed? Because finally the society makes history. There is no dispute about this.

52

00:49:42,878 --> 00:50:50,999

Narayan Surve: I won't go further in the political domain. There is a lot. But whatever major that I have told you is like this. Even now nobody knows the history of our country properly. Really. And they talk about culture? Whose culture? Who is the bearer of that culture? According to me only three people are the bearers of culture: one are the hardworking people-working class, peasants, farmers- they are the true bearers of the culture. Second, artists, thinkers, film makers, directors, meaning, artists ..they are the second. And third bearers of the culture... ummm.. working class, thinkers and scientists! Scientific... had Galileo not been there.. had many scientists not been born then we wouldn't have these new facilities. They are the true ones. But this is all knowledge. The efforts of the farmers, the efforts of the workers and they have stood strong on their efforts.

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00:50:50,999 --> 00:52:03,319

Narayan Surve: The owner didn't build the factory. The workers came and built it. Taj Mahal was built by some artist itself. The King won't work and make it with the mud. These were all the hardworking people. Second were thinkers, the artists, writers-these people. And the third were scientists. Those who gave a scientific outlook, such people. New science came in. How to look with a new idea towards life, thoughts, education, history. And how can the world be changed in a beautiful manner? Marx says that all of this has happened in the world. That is right. But how to change the world? That I will tell you. I will give you that key. And that key is the thought. Hence I say in all the speeches, that any thinker is not of one country. Any thinker does not belong to any one caste. These thinkers, scientists, artists, writers belong to the whole world.

54

00:52:03,319 --> 00:53:08,999

Narayan Surve: Why do we adapt Shakespeare's plays? And why does Gatte adapt Shakuntal of Kalidas? Because that is human unity. Culture comes into play here. The industrialists built their bungalows on our efforts itself. And they dictate the culture- they will build a temple or they will build an academy for you. And they will head it. This is my conclusion. And from this new people, new places are coming up. There are new possibilities. We can see that a new thought has come up in the country that the working class has to unite. All the artists around the world and in India should again come together. All thinkers should again come together and contribute new thoughts. Revolutionary movements are going on. It is small but it will work.

55

00:53:08,999 --> 00:53:49,358

Narayan Surve: You see how our national freedom movement was? It was small like this only. Further we moved to, 'Quit India'. Or else it was about giving us government jobs and all. Then we said, 'Give us our rights'. They didn't say 'Quit India'. Slowly they said, 'Quit India'. The same thing is about life. But that's not a reason to be disappointed. But we cannot deny the situation. And the situation can be changed and thinkers are there for that. Let's see what happens again.

56

00:53:49,358 --> 00:55:09,279

Narayan Surve: We see in the world that after war... fascism came. To oppose fascism, Bolsheviks as well as Capitalists were there. Communists were there too. The Communists wanted to retain communism and the Bolsheviks wanted to retain their revolution. After that when change started happening we see that wherever Bolshevism or communist countries came up, in the communist countries too, the tendency to depend on each other was created. Understood? In Russia to there are some mistakes in Stalin's rule. Understood? Because Stalin was there Fascism was defeated. This is also true. Understood? Because he stopped. Because Churchill and all in America were not exactly of the opinion that Fascism should go. It was in their minds that if possible they can blow up the whole of Russia itself. That will be beneficial. But that was not possible. And because of the development that Lenin and Stalin did in some places made Russia stable But the development that Russia and the communist nations in East Europe wanted to bring about did not happen. You cannot build your nation all the time by Soviet aid or China's aid. That's one thing.

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00:55:09,279 --> 00:56:07,239

Narayan Surve: Second thing is, internal crises started in Bolshevik Russia. Then bureaucracy came in. Bureaucracy captured everything. After that capture people started struggling for bread. I myself have stayed in Soviet Russia for 5 weeks. I saw these scenes there but later quite some things fell on my ears. From all this that struggle emerged. After that came Perestroika . We want complete freedom. When they said we want complete freedom, immediately the doors opened, and America came there. He has painted a very beautiful picture...he says.... the father of Perestroika... Gorbachev. Gorbachev pats the back of Clinton and says ... or whoever it was that time... 'You see the doors have been opened now. We want freedom. Our doors have been opened.'

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00:56:07,239 --> 00:57:02,319

Narayan Surve: You cannot preserve freedom by opening doors suddenly in this way. Today in Soviet Russia itself, in Bulgaria, in many of these countries, the communists are messed. Because people experienced this for 15-20 years. People say we don't want America, we don't mind staying on half stomachs. But they had so much of internal struggle, that Soviet Russia was divided into parts and it was completely buried. So a model that was there before them was finished. China did not do that. We praise China because China did not do that. China said we won't let our party go, we won't let our government down but we will absorb whatever good changes are there. Hence they make pacts with America in China too. Understood? They make improvements in new factories, new things... but the country is theirs. This is in China, it is in Vietnam.

59

00:57:02,319 --> 00:58:09,479

Narayan Surve: The speech of Fidel Castro the day before, we won't realize if it will flow away as we are sitting in a boat. All of this under the name of globalization. There are countries telling that. This is on one side and on the other side, electronic media has come up largely. It has come up on a large scale. The world has come even more closer. And America is again trying to establish its supremacy over the world. The game that is there between India-Pakistan even today... what is all this that is going on? Under the name of globalization we will help you and you should follow us. That is what it is. 3 years back I went to Gangtok. Gangtok is the capital of Sikkim. I was the guest of the state in the All India Poetry seminar. I was in Gangtok Hotel at that time. I will tell you a small thing. And we got down. When we came down, Naukan Barua, me and one more writer from Bengal... while talking he said, 'Naayan, tell me about your Marathi'. I said, 'The sentences in Marathi are like this...'

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00:58:09,479 --> 00:59:14,799

Narayan Surve: So, that time itself in Gangtok people of the GAT pact... the farms in Gangtok is in small parts. And Sikkim is on a mountain. From those small farms, how the water will flow, how does the farm produce, what is the quality of land...they were observing all this. And in the observation there was a Maharashtra person. When my words fell on his ears he quickly turned and asked, 'Are you from Maharashtra?' I said, 'You?' He said, 'I too am from Maharashtra'. 'What are you doing here with that thing on your eyes?' 'I am testing the land here for the GAT agreement. That if we buy the land here... because the policy is like that... we have to buy the land here. We have to make a product out of this and sell it back here only.' Nice trade! Because the labour is cheap here. The land is cheap. On top of that we owe them a favour. I was like... 'My friend..' He said, 'I know. But I am just a servant. What can I do? When I heard your Marathi I understood that you are from Maharashtra. Then why have you come here?'

61

00:59:14,799 --> 01:00:04,559

Narayan Surve: The point of telling this is, they call it globalization. Test things everywhere and wherever you can buy things, by giving loans... one of them is the GAT agreement. And I found this sample here.. in Gangtok who is testing the whole land there. Hence we should oppose globalization. And they oppose it. Newfound strength has come up in communist countries. New things are happening again. But again globalization has a great impact. There is the environment of the international world. And electronic media... there are experiments of hydrogen bombs... now they want to capture the space. They want to control earth from up there... such new things are happening.

62

01:00:04,559 --> 01:00:35,438

Narayan Surve: My relative tells me a lot about it. He watches TV everyday- Discovery India, Discovery World. He finds new things there. 'Dad you don't know.' 'I know. You speak well'. (Laughs) But, these are the sort of things. Globalization should be opposed but we are not stable on our own feet here. Many such questions are there on the national, international, state level, on the Indian level.

63

01:00:35,438 --> 01:00:37,519

Anjali Montero: The Mumbai that is there today...

64

01:00:37,519 --> 01:00:51,799

Offscreen: Then saying such a thing is also spells doom!

Narayan Surve: No, nothing of the kind...!

65

01:00:51,799 --> 01:01:46,118

Narayan Surve: If I am to speak about Mumbai then the history of Mumbai is such, which I have read, seen and heard... Mumbai was a village of 7 islands. And the people who mainly lived here were fishermen, adivasis, agris.. some were Pathares, Prabus, etc...these people. They were the main inhabitants of Mumbai. This must be about 200 years ago. Because this has been described well in the book, *Mumbaicha Varnan;* (Description of Mumbai) by Malgaonkar. Further the rule of the British commenced. And in 1818, when the Peshwas declined, British came in Maharashtra. Because the British rule was defined by the Union Jack. When the Peshwas fell here in *Shaniwarwada* from there, the British came. The people who went against the British in the end were from Maharashtra and Calcutta in Bengal. This is the history.

66

01:01:46,118 --> 01:03:02,559

Narayan Surve: So these 7 islands came together. When these 7 islands came together, that time they named it Mumbai or whatever... And when those islands came together, why did this cotton industry start? The reasons for that is that Mumbai is the last tip of India. It has a huge waterbody. As it has a waterbody, the climate is humid. And a humid climate is very useful for cotton. Understood? Cotton curls here very well. Third reason is that you can trade from here by the sea. You can go to Europe or anywhere in the world by the sea. Calcutta was there, but this feels easier than Calcutta. And then they started railways in Mumbai. So there were railways, waterways, humid climate, poor settlements- in all this the first mill started in Mumbai. It started in Surat, started in Mumbai and it started in Calcutta. And in Madras. From here the working class started. And it has a 150-200 year history.

67

01:03:02,559 --> 01:03:40,279

Narayan Surve: Now it has been 50 years since the British went from our country.. 52 years. Because of this, things came together. And the island that was there came together. It started as 'Bombay city'. First people from Gujarat came here to establish their industries and trades. Because the traders in Gujarat are very rich. Meaning Mafatlal, etc the Gujarati people who are there, I think even this Podar is a Gujarati owner. Marwadi... generally people who are involved in trade. Understood? They started the the mill business here. The British encouraged them.

68

01:03:40,279 --> 01:04:41,358

Narayan Surve: The first railway that started in Mumbai, it has an interesting history. The first railway started in only Mumbai from Boribunder to Byculla to Dadar and at the most Bandra. But no one was ready to board that local. The locals started much later. The engine was run on coals. So because of the coal engine no one was ready to sit in the train. Because there were jungles around, houses were there, it was all like a village. If asked why they said the engine is an evil ghost. The British have brought a monster. So run! Run! If anyone went to the toilet in the morning, and if the whistle of the engine blew, they would run like that from

there! It has been noted in history. They were so wonderfully afraid. They said the English sires have got a new monster. Today in Mumbai 35 people cut and die. This is the situation. So no one was ready to sit in the train.

69

01:04:41,358 --> 01:05:24,239

Narayan Surve: Same is the case of the boats. We people in Konkan came to Mumbai first as mill workers. That time there were boats. That time the Tukaram boat drowned. Tukaram boat and Ratnagiri boat. There is one more boat. When the boats went back from here, nobody was ready to sit in the boat. The owners of the boat at that time... they gave you a ticket of 8 annas and a packet of puffed rice to eat during the journey. Now they don't give puffed rice..nothing! And after that people got used to it. Meaning, you have to make people used to things. And in this way mill workers came to Mumbai.

70

01:05:24,239 --> 01:06:24,718

Narayan Surve: As mills had just started, as I said before, hordes of people used to stand at the door. As there are hordes of people standing on *Bigardi Naka*. They are different. They have work. That time they had nothing. That time: (1) Excellent climate (2) A city facilitating trade by sea route (3) A city facilitating trade by railways.. and so the British said, 'Welcome!'. Because as the British were ruling here, it was our duty to give them concessions. The British brought the post office first. Not only in Mumbai, but, in the whole country. Otherwise, we didn't know anything about post offices. If one had to give a message, a person would go on a horseback or by walk. This was the kind of situation there was. In Bengal, Gurudev Tagore has written a wonderful story on postmen. He used to bang his stick constantly and go from one village to the other. There were bells tied to the stick. Because snakes used to come on the road he traversed. They used to run by the sound of bells. I cannot quickly remember the name of that story. But it is like that

71

01:06:24,718 --> 01:07:21,479

Narayan Surve: So in this way the mill business started in Mumbai. There were small factories. Then new kind of production started, in all ways. There was no means of production as such in Mumbai. There was only the mills business. The traders came slowly and gradually the working class was created. And from that the development of Mumbai happened. And as I said before the mill owners who started their factories here made chawls around them. So that the workers may not go outside anywhere. They took rent from them. Even now in some places... the Aji Kasam chawls that are there in Lalbaug... there are chawls in Chadiwa... there are chawls in the compound of Finlay Mills... there are chawls in India united Mills... the ones of Spring Mills are there... the ones of Tata Mills are there. Now all that is gone from there. Now new things have come up.

72

01:07:21,479 --> 01:08:19,917

Narayan Surve: This is the development of Mumbai before. Now that business is almost about finished. This is the situation. I mean the mill business is finished. Yeah! Ramdas boat... Ramdas boat... Tukram boat... the boats were also named in such a way that they would make you emotional and catch you. The history is such that when the rail first started in Mumbai, that time no one was ready to sit in the train. Because it is a monster. It is a ghost. That time, Pherozshah Mehta, the first mayor of Mumbai at that time- he used to sit in

the train. And the regional head of that time used to sit besides him. For what? To reassure people that if people sit, if Pherozshah Mehta sits, then why don't we sit? It is a wonderful, surprising mentality. That is what we get to see.

73

01:08:19,917 --> 01:09:15,479

Narayan Surve: Now further Mumbai has developed. What can I say about that?

Anjali Montero: What do you think about the Mumbai today?

Narayan Surve: Today's Mumbai has developed in many huge proportions. Now big roads have come up, towering buildings line up those roads, the respectable classes of Pathares, Prabhus has been wiped out. All Marwadis, traders, industrialists they have changed the face of Mumbai. They have changed it the way they wanted to. This is the picture of Mumbai today. Yet you will find old chawls in some places. Now in Mumbai a village is comprised of colonies- Nagu sayaji's colony, this colony, that colony. Understood? A village is comprised of colonies in Mumbai!

74

01:09:15,479 --> 01:10:23,238

Narayan Surve: Earlier in Mumbai, it has been described that the Parisis were the first ones to run the toddy business in Mumbai. And if you went to their toddy shops then they used to give you these many nuts and glasses of toddy. They used to go to sell toddy! This is the history. Now that whole Parsi community came further in business. And they went in the banking line. All of that happened, now what? But I have observed one thing in Parsis. They are very polite. There is one such class in Mumbai which is the Parsi community. They are very polite. As I told you, when Gangaram Surve said, 'Take this Rs. 10/- note and you fend for yourself.' So, that time there was a Parsi named Daruwalla. He was the manager of iron in Tata's mill in Cotton Green. I did the work of taking care of his children. But when he came in the evening or at night he used to ask, 'Hey Narayan, did you have food?'. He would ask this. This politeness is not there today.

75

01:10:23,238 --> 01:11:30,318

Narayan Surve: I don't care if you ate or if you died. Tell me if you did my housework. This humanity reflects man. This is still there in that community. It is still there in some rich households. Day before one person told me, that these Tatas that are there, the eldest of the Tatas- Ratan Tata... a writer had come to me. He was in Air India. He is retired. He wrote some poetry. He said that, 'I was there during the Tatas. When they used to board the flight they used to recognize me. They used to ask, 'Brother, did you eat well today? What did you get in your tiffin today?' Ratan Tata used to ask like that! In a capitalist society there is a role of humanity. But now the question is not of the part of humanity. The question is of their ownership. Instead of the wealth going to the nation, to the country, it goes into the hands of one person. And they can make anything out of our future. This is the difference in thoughts here.

76

01:11:30,318 --> 01:12:44,318

Narayan Surve: Daruwalla... he was a very nice man. Even today after 60 years I still remember him. He used to tell me, 'You just go there and drop the kids and get the bottles while coming back. And then rest over there.' I used to get my salary on time. He used to give clothes once in a year. Yes! I met a lot of good people rather than evil people. They gave me a vision. This is true. This is the old Mumbai. And now everything has changed drastically. If I ask anyone about the change in Mumbai, nobody can really tell me.

It's face has changed so completely. Right from the movements to the way of life of the people-everything has changed. Now my grandson sitting in my house sees things on TV and tells me about them. He has the time to listen to it and it is all readymade. There was nothing readymade for me. I had no place to live ! He has everything readymade. You know that very well. This is the difference. This is also a difference.

77

01:12:44,318 --> 01:13:53,719

Narayan Surve: Now you have TV in huts. Which means that even a boy who works as a vendor somewhere on the streets buys a TV first. That is not wrong. That is not wrong as every person needs entertainment. Understood? There is nothing wrong in that. But the question here is what do they show on the TV... the electronic media? Do they show anything about life? No. They just show replicas of the West. He learns that. Shall I tell you something interesting? The media also has effect. I have a grandson of 5 years of age. This happened only last year. This was told during Sane Guruji's centenary in Amalner. Your Shyam that is there... look at the Shyam of today. My grandson came home in Diwali. He bought a toy gun in Diwali. And he was firing that Cape gun and came in front of me. I was reading the newspaper. He shoved the paper aside and said, 'Dad... Now what will happen of you Kalia?' and he fired it. Oh my! I kept on looking.

78

01:13:53,719 --> 01:14:50,318

Narayan Surve: He quickly fired the Cape at me. Which shows how the media impacts at times. It is surprising! You are the Shyam of today. I don't know what will happen to you tomorrow. The does not get anything outside. It is all like that. I must be going back and forth while telling all this, but this is also the situation. But there are positive impacts of TV. And they are a lot at the other end. As I said just now they show advertisements in the newspaper! The news is of 15 minutes. In that there are 2 minutes of advertisements. Atleast show proper 10-15 minutes of news. No. Business should happen. Because, the country needs money. I don't know where the money goes. It's all like that. Every odd person goes abroad. He goes there to make money.

79

01:14:50,318 --> 01:15:52,958

Narayan Surve: This is the mentality of the new generation. It is not a reason to be dissapointed. They were smart people at a point of time. When they were smart is not known. This is the kind of situation. Electronic media is not bad. It depends on who uses it and who controls it. What does he use it for? That is the important point. This is the important point... We come to know about shows going on outside, the new developments in science through media. There is no dispute about that. But we come to know unnecessary things too. My granddaughters... I am of one generation. My children are from the next and my grandchildren are from the next. I have eight grandchildren. One is just born. Two are on college level. I see their scents, their clothes, their capacity to think, what topics do they discuss about- only actors and actresses. (Laughs). Nothing wrong in that !

80

01:15:52,958 --> 01:16:43,238

Narayan Surve: Then, how did they fight? Then how does he dress differently? My grandson who I saw day before has become very tall. He is in 10th grade. But he has thrice the number of clothes than me. Because he wants what he sees. And we give him because we are helpless too ! (Laughs). This is the kind of

situation ! So, this is there. But yet, I am not upset. I have written in one of my poems, 'This age is such that if you think, you will be saddened'. Yet, I won't be upset. Because even I have journeyed like that and come this far. There are so many things.

81

01:16:43,238 --> 01:17:40,958

Anjali Montero: After 1982, after the mills went on strike.. after that...?

Narayan Surve: Everything was completely destroyed. Now I won't take names in this interview. But all the new trade unions that came in, competition was created in them. The battle of struggle that is there, it too has a limit. Limit in the sense, Gandhi initially said, 'I want self rule' and gradually 'Quit India' came in. In that way, in struggle, one has to battle two steps ahead and two steps behind. Some leaders don't take that into consideration. And then they say, now the working class is in our hands, it is in our control, so then let's use it. And so there was a strike going on for many months in the mills. It had a huge impact. Understood? It had a very great impact.

82

01:17:40,958 --> 01:18:55,079

Narayan Surve: And then there must be some things in the international market. The capitalist class took advantage of that. All of this must be there. They started becoming patriotic. I say there is one reason that.. please note it. All this should be written down. In England or in America... how is our working class? The working class in India? Tirodkar please listen. Half of the working class in India comprises of farmers. And half of them are workers. It is not completely comprised of workers! Not completely workers! In the sense his life is completely dependent on that business. It is not like that. It is not so in Europe. It has nothing to back it in some places. So what he does is, when there is a strike, he gets up and goes to his village. Understood? And when there is a strike for 15-20 months, when the person who is fighting goes on the farm, then, who will fight here? Who will give a fight?

83

01:18:55,079 --> 01:19:21,639

Narayan Surve: The reason for that is, his dream is to work for 8 hours and go to his village. He does not love the factory. It is because he gets money. That's why he is partially a worker and partially a farmer. And that's why he has been affected.

84

01:19:21,639 --> 01:19:46,438

Anjali Montero: Can you tell this again? About partial worker and partial farmer?

Narayan Surve: Yes, I will tell.

85

01:19:46,438 --> 01:20:48,119

Narayan Surve: I have formed my own opinion. That the whole working class that is there in India, is a mixed. For example... instead of telling you about Mumbai I will give you an example of Calcutta. The working class in Calcutta is very big. But what is it comprised of? It is from Bihar. The Bengali man in Calcutta is *Babumoshai*. And the jute mill workers in Calcutta are from Bihar. And naturally his attention... had industries and factories come up in Bihar, he would have stayed there. Yet, the worker in India according to me is partially a worker and partially he is a farmer. His attention is... he has come here

to earn a living but his land is actually there. Even if it is small, yet he will go to teh court for it, hire a lawyer, he will fight, break the family- but he will go there. He is not completely dependent on the industry.

86

01:20:48,119 --> 01:21:36,639

Narayan Surve: Had he been completely dependent on the mill work, then there would have been a huge struggle here. It didn't happen. This must be one reason for it- this is my opinion. This is one reason for it. I told you before, if you go to the <i>Ranicha Baug</i> today on a Sunday, then most of the people gathered there are from the working class. They are in groups. They will think about- how to build the temples, how to start a schol, how to improve our house. They will give all of their earnings here to there. And where will we finally go? I have my village. This is the tendency. I can't tell what the reasons for it are. But this is the kind of picture I see. That is true.

87

01:21:36,639 --> 01:22:35,599

Narayan Surve: I don't have a village. I was brought up by Gangaram Krishnaji Surve. Okay? I don't have a village. When I became the head of the Literary Convention, then I don't know what the whole village felt, 'He has become such a big man from Parbhani. Then let's get him to our village'. Because they were proud of one thing- I was the adopted child of Gangaram Surve. I went to the village. There was a big honouring ceremony and all in the village. Understood? I came back. Because I knew quite some things they came to me in the third year and said, 'We have decided to build temples in the village. There is not a good temple in our village. So went want to make it better and big. So can you please gather funds for us?' I said, 'Instead of a temple why don't you start a lodge? Make a floor on the top of the school. Why do you want a temple?' 'That village has a nice temple so doesn't there need to be one in iur village?' So, look at the kind of mentality there is.

88

01:22:35,599 --> 01:23:40,758

Narayan Surve: Understood? I don't follow these funds. I said, 'I have given a fund of Rs. 10,000/- by the name of Gangaram Krishnaji surve to the village. The one who took care of my... by my humility... Give the children free books by his name every year. I did that much.' But you see what they came to me for? Let's make a school, add one more floor to it, it doesn't matter if we start a lodge. Bring in something new. No! There is one more experience about them. I won't tell the name of the village. And there are Dalit children there. One boy, Sunil Kamble called me the other day. Where did he call me from? From Kudal. He is in the railways. Those Dalit children are much more aware. He told me, 'Please send all your books to us.' You see! 'I went to the village. There is no library there. There are 3 schools in the village. The school doesn't have a library.' Take money for that. Then we can say that the money was spent in a good way. What is going to happen by making a beautiful, decorative temple? Now I am gathering funds for that.

89

01:23:40,758 --> 01:24:23,119

Narayan Surve: Because, they have the desire to learn. Give us a library, give us good books. So we should be on the side of people who want to learn. Those who will just go in temples and clap their hands and crib about fate and destiny, I am not interested in them. Because I know I have been moulded by a man. I have been moulded by movements. This all is not mine. My literature is a product of people's

thoughts, chapters of their lives which they have shared. This is the kind of difference. He is a boy named Sunil Kamble. The question is not whether they are Dalit. They have new thoughts and thinking.

90

01:24:23,119 --> 01:25:43,398

Anjali Montero: Now all that is going on here... can you tell us a bit about it... the land of mills is undergoing a change. What do you feel about it?

Narayan Surve: There is complete disappointment about it. Now yesterday I got a call saying... tomorrow is the 12th right? Yes, tomorrow is the 12th. I won't tell the names of those trade unions. He was telling me everything as I am a writer of the working class. He called me saying, 'That tomorrow we will..' Tomorrow I guess is the *Pandharpur Yatra*... *Ekadashi*. 'We will take out a procession on the eve of *Ekadashi Yatra*. Saying *Ram Krishna Hari*.' I was surprised! Why will people of the trade union take out a procession saying *Ram Krishna Hari* suddenly? They said, 'Nothing is working. This trade is declining. We are doing so many movements for it. Nothing is working.' I said, 'There is ICTUI, CTI, Utkarsha sabha, Shivsena's unions are there, BJP's are there.' 'None of them are coming together'. I said, 'Okay. What is the administration doing? The head of the administration is yours. He is Hussain Dalwa.' I told his name. He grew up among us. 'No one is moving' 'Then what is the use of taking out processions?'

91

01:25:43,398 --> 01:26:53,918

Narayan Surve: Tomorrow is the procession. Now I have not decided whether I should go or not. Worship God but pay attention to other things. They say no... we are finished so let's worship God. There is agitation in that. There is a kind of anger in that. But I don't know what will happen by using such methods. That is there. So this trade has declined. It will work again if the State government or if the Indian Government plays a key role in it. Because there is a demand for it in the market. A worker worth 3 or 3.5 lakhs is now worth 70-80,000. Where have all these people gone? They spread all over the country. If the trade unions, Government of India and Government of India take the lead, or if anyone who wants to save this business.. they should take the lead. The situation is such that the Maharashtra Government does not have money to pay its employees. (Laughs). This is the other reality. What should I say? Tell me.

92

01:26:53,918 --> 01:27:17,999

Narayan Surve: And, I am no seer. I am telling you my observations. So, they are going to have a procession. You will find it in the news day after. Do, *'Ram Krishna Hari'*. There is agitation in that. They will create a mess. I don't know.

93

01:27:17,999 --> 01:28:32,559

Narayan Surve: On the other hand people shut mills and run a cotton mill. I have a friend. They make threads. They don't convert it into cloth. Here we make cloth. From the start all reactions happen to it- it gets coloured and processed into cloth. Some people have mills producing thread only. And now they have made it all automatic. Because, I have spoken to those workers there. It is in Solapur. I spoke to those workers about working class and read out poetry. So those thread mills are automatic. Earlier the worker in the spinning department.. this is spinning only- First the wires are made, then they are put in an artery... they make threads. We call it the rowing department. After that is the spinning department. Then is the weaving department. These are the kinds of words. They make it there.

94

01:28:32,559 --> 01:29:25,559

Narayan Surve: I found two good things there. One is that earlier the thread of No.12, 14 used to break quickly. Then fluffs of cotton used to go and settle. Now as it is automatic a machine comes and cleans it all. Because of that the production is good. And the second thing I saw is, that there is a health check up of the workers done every year. They give them medical aid. Every worker should undergo a check up. The ones who founded a mill are progressive people. I saw these few things which had improved- in the electronic technique and the health of the workers. These things are taken care of. I don't know if they do that here. It was not there that time and it is absent even now. It may be a bit but it is not assured.

95

01:29:25,559 --> 01:30:28,079

Anjali Montero: What do you think about the land of the private mills being sold here?

Narayan Surve: That is going on in full force. The government should stop them from selling it. If the State Government can't handle it then the Indian Government should do it. But the perspectives of the State government and the Indian government is different. Then who else will do it? We can't shell out money from our pocket and make things fine. But we should not allow this trade to die. Be it any trade. But today the situation is such that the capitalist class has everything under its control. Because they have 48 members in the parliament who have been elected. When they open their bags these people get elected. This is another example. Isn't it? And those who are the ministers need an eye. They should have affection. There is no point in saying that this is good and this is bad. They should have the desire to know why this is good and why that is bad. They don't have any such desire.

96

01:30:28,079 --> 01:31:15,758

Narayan Surve: This is the situation. Don't you develop the railway industry? You do. Don't you develop the porters? They do because they get money there. Now the government had taken up some nationalized mills to run. They are also in this same condition. They are going to decline. Now the reason for this is international trade market or what it is I can't tell very well. They took up the nationalized mill to run. Now the banks have been nationalized. The Indian government is planning to give that to the private sector too. This is the chaos. This is the state of the industries.

97

01:31:15,758 --> 01:32:03,039

Anjali Montero: So do you think the face of this area will change in a few days?

Narayan Surve: That is very much possible. If there will be nothing done then that is possible. The trade unions are trying to do something, but that is having no effect. This country has never had a proper government. In 2-3 years one government is dissolved and other is elected. So this country doesn't have a government. And those who are elected are not related to anything. Such people are elected. This is the interesting picture. I guess 7-8 months back another government had come up. 4-5 years back there was another government. They had no idea of anything. Now they say they will do something. Now what will they do? Tell us ! They have no answer. Now shouldn't we take out processions?

98

01:32:03,039 --> 01:32:33,238

Narayan Surve: What do you say doctor? Let'sa say <i>'Hare Krishna Hare Ram!'</i>. Now the agitation is such that the situation is aggravated so let's pray about it and end it once and for all. This is difficult. What should I say? I feel ashamed as well as angry. This is the kind of situation. Why don't you take action? No.

99

01:32:33,238 --> 01:33:33,639

Narayan Surve: Or else they stay happily with each other. The betterment of the people is shoved aside. This is the kind of situation.

Anjali Montero: No body made Mumbai? So who is profiting in the end?

Narayan Surve: That is bound to happen. One who has money, one who has power, he will get it. There is a saying in Marathi, <i>'One who has the hare in his hands has the prey!'</i> Meaning, even if the hare slips off he says I am the hunter though he may or may not be able to kill it. I have the hare in my hands. This is the way it is. You know what a hare is, right? I have the hare in my hands so I have hunted it. I got it all the way from the forest. I have hunted it, not you ! See, this is my barrel, my gun. Where do you have it? He said, it does not take a gun to hunt down a hare. We hunt it that way! What if the hare turns aggressive tomorrow? This is the kind of situation... See, even he agreed.

100

01:33:33,639 --> 01:34:16,079

Narayan Surve: Hence the administration should have a revolutionary movement. This is not the administration which will do that. No administration will do it considering the conditions in which it is coming up. People with socialist and leftist roles are needed for that kind of an administration to come up. Otherwise it is not possible. And these Samajwadis- there are Hindu Samajwadis, there are caste-based Samajwadis, there are only Samajwadis. There are no Samajwadis with a scientific outlook. This is the way everything is going on. Today the society is enough... so Samajwadi. There are Gandhian Samajwadis. All these are funny things.

101

01:34:16,079 --> 01:34:49,639

Narayan Surve: Yet, let's see people will not stay quiet. Don't know. And there is no model before anyone today. Not before trade unions, nor on the political grounds, nor in social battles. Earlier there were models- there was Ambedkar, there was Dange, there was S M Joshi in Maharashtra. And there were a lot of people in a lot of places. But you should not wait for models. History will be created out of all of this. We should pray for that history to be good. For the betterment of the people.

102

01:34:49,639 --> 01:35:26,519

Anjali Montero: Now a model implies Hritik Roshan.

Narayan Surve: This is the way things are going on. Okay you see. Am I not being right, tell me? There is no proper policy even in education. There is nothing.

103

01:35:26,519 --> 01:36:06,278

Narayan Surve: It means this Maharashtra... we always say in speeches, 'This is a region of awakening'... Renaissance. In the whole of India renaissance had not occurred anywhere. To some extent in the South, yes. But in Maharashtra it was to a great extent. Because the first King here was Shivaji who used to talk

about *'Hindavi Swaraj'*. He didn't talk about the rule of the Hindus, but *'Hindavi Swaraj'*. This is his statement. He was the King of the people. It all started from there. That's why Mahatma Phule came in. Agarkar came in. Ambedkar came in. Baburao patil came in. This was the kind of renaissance. And further, trade union movements happened. This is the history. But there is no control on anyone today.

104

01:36:06,278 --> 01:37:11,519

Narayan Surve: Even today, if you see in the North, *Sati* is practised. If you go in Uttar Pradesh or Bihar, women are made to practice *Sati*. In the South, they are against *Sati*. I will tell you something interesting. I went to Aligarh 5-6 months back. To inaugurate the Writer's union of the people. Kamleshwar came upon us who is a scriptwriter. He is the editor of Bhaskar there in Delhi, he came. He said, 'Surve, I have come for it.' The first question I asked Kamleshwar was, 'Kamleshwar what is the position of UP today? You stay in Delhi.' 'Yes my business is in Delhi'. I asked him 'What is the total population of UP?' You see. It is 28 crores, 13 lakh. The population of Uttar Pradesh is 28 crores, 13 lakh. How many MP's are there? There are 85 MP's. They are distributed according to the quota. And what is their education? 45%.

105

01:37:11,519 --> 01:38:02,238

Narayan Surve: The education is 45%. MP's are 85. Population is 28 crores. I said, come to our Maharashtra. Maharashtra is of 8 crores 17 lakh. Okay? 65% education is there. There are 48 MP's. And it is the region of enlightenment. Why is it so? The education in your (region) is 45% is for the middle class and the city people. The village kid doesn't get education there. The education doesn't reach the adivasis. This is the situation. And so UP, MP and Bihar- if a corporator of one party gets elected he forms the parliament there. They form the parliament of India. This is the situation.

106

01:38:02,238 --> 01:39:03,958

Narayan Surve: I went just 5-6 months back. I spoke to them in my manner in my speech that what is all this that is going on? The people sitting in front of me are only *Babus*. Do you ever see a Dalit writer here? Do you ever see a writer of the working class? Do you ever see an adivasi boy as a writer? How will he write when there is only 45% education? Education is there in Lucknow, it is there in Aligarh, it has reached the cities. But it has not reached the villages. And why did it reach us? It is the tradition since Mahatma Phule. This is the difference in one region. This is the difference in one country. In Kerala, the percentage is 95-98%. Why? Because there is a movement there. You will see the same in Bengal. But the rest of the picture is like this. It is bad. These are the regions around the capital okay? We are very far.

107

01:39:03,958 --> 01:40:07,838

Narayan Surve: You see, among 28 crores only 45% education? Here, the children of fishermen, farmers and adivasis... not only this but you will be surprised to know that the police who beat me up in '42 have writers amongst them ! One of them is going to write a preface now. They are writers and poets in police ! Police are taken to be empty brained, and bad mannered but that is not so. Education has come! Because we have renaissance. Atleast literacy has knocked at their doors. Yet, it is 65%. 35% people are yet to learn. This is the scenario in Maharashtra. It has spread in Kerala. I have heard about it I have not been to

Kerala as yet. I have been to 2-4 places in Bengal- I have been to Silguri and all. But what about the rest of the picture? Nothing. Now tell.

108

01:40:07,838 --> 01:40:33,999

Narayan Surve: It is Allahabad in Up! Allahabad! That was from where Nehru was. I am telling you the story of that region. Allahabad comes under UP. And UP is on the border of Delhi. Atleast Delhi has been made an independent capital or else it would have been a part of UP. This is the situation. Okay sir! Now excuse us.

109

01:40:33,999 --> 01:41:33,221

Anjali Montero: For two minutes I want to check the sound. Not yours. Ambient sound...