

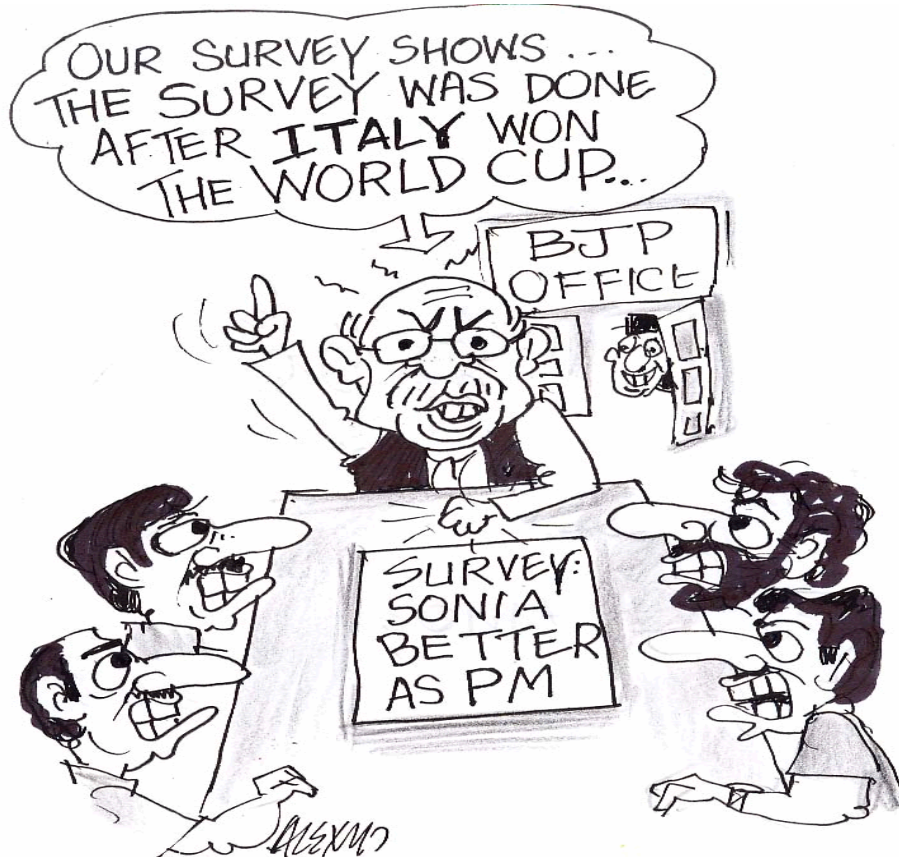
# Lokniti

Programme for Comparative Democracy



Lokniti Newsletter  
(For Private Circulation only)

August 2006



*Gomantak Times*, 25<sup>th</sup> July 2006.

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## **From the Editor's Desk-**

Namaste!

Wishing all friends of *Lokniti*, A  
Very Happy Independence Day.

We thank Pallavi for doing a wonderful job of keeping us informed of the happenings here for the past two months. Here's wishing her all the best for her future endeavours. I, Reetika have recently joined the Lokniti team as research assistant and am glad to be given the opportunity to edit the newsletter and interact with the larger *Lokniti* network.

The various events that dotted *Lokniti's* calendar in the month of July include two dialogues on "Electoral Violence" one in Western U.P in Meerut and the other one at Rohtak in Haryana. An opinion poll on Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh was conducted with the support of *Indian Express* and *CNN-IBN* that has thrown up some interesting findings.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, a stimulating discussion on Political Parties in South Asia was organized with IDEA, based on Prof K.C. Suri's report on Political Parties for IDEA. Work on the SDSA report is in full swing. *Lokniti* hopes to launch the report by the end of this year.

For detailed information on *Lokniti* and the projects mentioned here, kindly log on to our website <http://www.lokniti.org>.

Regards,  
Reetika Syal

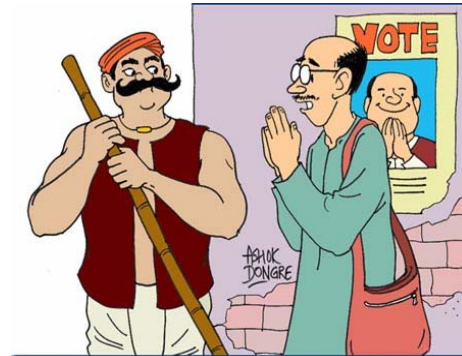
## **Events Organized-**

### Dialogue on Electoral Violence-

Continuing with the dialogues on "Electoral Violence", the next two in the series were held on July 15<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. The venue was appropriately chosen as Meerut and Rohtak due to the widespread violence in Western U.P and Haryana regions at the

time of elections.

The participants from political parties, media, academics, and civil society represented diverse views. Interesting concepts of 'silent violence' and the positive impacts of violence came up in the discussions. You can read more about the dialogues by logging on to <http://www.lokniti.org>.



SORRY BROTHER, WE DON'T NEED ANY  
BOOTH CAPTURERS THIS TIME. WE HAVE ALREADY  
HIRED COMPUTER HACKERS TO MANIPULATE  
THE ELECTRONIC VOTING MACHINES!

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([www.boloji.com](http://www.boloji.com))

Author: Ashok Dongre, Mumbai, India

Link: <http://www.boloji.com/cartoons3/00727.htm>

### Opinion Poll (Manmohan Mandate)-

The *Indian Express*- *CNN-IBN*, *CSDS* opinion poll was carried out at 106 locations stretching across 53 assembly constituencies in 18 Indian states. The respondents were selected randomly from the voters list. A total of 1,884 respondents were interviewed between July 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> 2006. The survey is perhaps the first one of its kind with the prime minister as the center of attention. The verdict was a good mix of positive and negative responses. The respondents think of their prime minister as an honest, wise and trustworthy person, but they are not sure of his being a strong leader. They are satisfied with his work but are very sure that it is Mrs. Gandhi who's actually running the show.

*Thumbs up for Manmohan at the wheel but most think Sonia doing backseat driving, prefer her as PM*

Yogendra Yadav / Sanjay Kumar

The good news first- 56% respondents were satisfied with the prime minister's performance and gave him 68/100. This is a good score considering that he represents a minority community in India. 8:1 respondents feel he is an honest and trustworthy leader. Although the people considered him intelligent, only 8% believed he took policy decisions on his own. Sonia Gandhi emerged the more popular of the two, and the most respected political leader in present times. 90% of the congress voters preferred someone from the Gandhi family to lead the nation as prime minister to Manmohan Singh.

As far as the bad news goes- the P.M came in for severe criticism for not handling the issues of reservation, farmer suicides, terrorism and price rise. While the respondents approved the approach to reservation, they were mystified by Manmohan's silence.

They were discontented with the handling of farmers' suicide and expressed anxiety over the terrorism issue. The most severe attack on Dr. Singh was his failure to control price rise. This proved him a failure at handling poverty.

While the profile of the respondents matches the profile of the population of states where survey was conducted, substitution of constituencies led to a slight over-representation of the urban population. This has been corrected in the analysis presented here by using weights. The survey was directed by Sanjay Kumar of the CSDS and the data analysed by Himanshu Bhattacharya, Kanchan Malhotra, K A Q A Hilal and Praveen Rai.

Read the complete article by logging in at our website <http://www.lokniti.org>. This article was printed in the *Indian Express* dated 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2006:

[http://www.indianexpress.com/story/9119\\_.html](http://www.indianexpress.com/story/9119_.html). To know more about the survey log on to [http://www.ibnlive.com/printpage.php?id=16367&section\\_id=4](http://www.ibnlive.com/printpage.php?id=16367&section_id=4)

#### Discussion on Political Parties in South Asia

A round table discussion on political parties in South Asia was organized in association with IDEA on the 4<sup>th</sup> of this month. It discussed the nature of political parties and how they operate to mobilize the citizens and public opinion. The participants, in addition to the Secretary General Mr. Vidar Helgesen, included Sanjay Ruparelia, K.C. Sivaramakrishnan, Abhay Dube, R. Srinivasan and Manoranjan Mohanty.

It was established that there are numerous similarities and dissimilarities amongst South Asian political parties. Three thought provoking subjects, which came up, were whether the parties are fulfilling their role of educating the citizens or not.

.Secondly what was the position of decentralization within the political parties (in parliamentary and assembly elections) with regard to women participation. Thirdly it was felt that there is a lack of internal democracy within political parties themselves.

Prof. Yadav regarded the role of factors other than party systems, important for success of political parties, such as proliferation of Parties, civil war and violence.

Summing up the session, Prof. Peter deSouza believed that a well-structured party need not necessarily lead to success in elections. In fact success could be seen as a result of weak organization but strong entrepreneurship. The citizens have access to the nation's resources only through political parties and they will trust the parties only if they perform well and help in socialization

#### NCERT Endeavor-

Prof Yogendra Yadav and Prof Suhas Palshikar, in their personal capacity have been appointed Chief Advisors for Political Science textbooks of classes IX to XII for NCERT. A meeting for the same, organized in CSDS on July 28<sup>th</sup> 2006, was attended by Prof Krishan Kumar (Director, NCERT) and the Chief Advisor and Advisors for classes X and XII. Addressing the meeting, Prof Kumar thanked CSDS and *Lokniti* research programme for supporting the writing of the NCERT books by making available some of the key personnel, resources and professional time for this task.

Recalling his own association with the CSDS in early 1980s, Prof Kumar underlined the role of CSDS as a space for innovative experiments. He complimented the textbook development team that wrote Political Science textbooks for classes IX and XI.

These textbooks mark a fresh departure from the old style civics textbooks and will prove to be a service to our nascent democracy.

The writing of textbooks of Political Science was more challenging. While the other disciplines have had to refine the existing textbooks, the challenge here was to redefine what it meant to write a textbook.

He expressed confidence that this team will continue the spirit of experiment in this round of textbooks as well.

#### Shodharthy Meeting-

The review meeting of 'Shodharthy', a quarterly hindi journal was held at CSDS, Delhi on 28<sup>th</sup> July and was attended by Yogendra Yadav, Peter deSouza, Arvind Mohan and Anindo Saha among others. It was felt that the language of the journal needs further refinement and simplification. The sales of 'Shodharthy' have shown a constant rise; hence the publishers have decided to double the printing order for 2006.

There were five reviewers of the earlier issues; N.K. Jha (Pondicherry University), Rajendra Vora (Pune University), Anindo Saha (Syracuse), Arvind Mohan (HT), and Yogendra Yadav. 'Shodharthy' is a publication of Lokniti and is edited by Dr. A. K. Verma, our U.P state coordinator.

#### Co-ordination Committee Meeting-

Taking advantage of the NCERT meeting, when Sandeep Shastri (convener), K.C. Suri and Suhas Palshikar were in Delhi, a meeting was held on 29<sup>th</sup> July in CSDS to review the vision document and the agenda for *Lokniti* work in the near future. Those who met were Yogendra Yadav, Peter deSouza, Sanjay Kumar, Suhas Palshikar, K.C Suri and Sandeep Shastri.

Existing activities with respect to Asia Barometer, Political Parties, Democracy Assessment, Youth Study, Elite Study, North Eastern Study, Data Unit and the CNN-IBN commitments were discussed. Also new initiatives were talked about, particularly with respect to NCERT textbooks, under the rubric Pedagogy of Democracy.

The meeting examined the need to increase the contributions in the Working Paper series, to strengthen North Eastern network, and regional centers, and to prepare for a summer/ winter school.

The *Lokniti* network meeting will perhaps take place in the end of November where the convener will present a fuller report.

## **Projects-**

### **State of Democracy in South Asia-**

#### **Brainstorming Session-**

The three Principal Investigators, Prof. Suhas Palshikar, Prof. Peter deSouza and Prof Yogendra Yadav along with Prof. D.L.Sheth, Prof V.B.Singh and Harsh Sethi (consulting editor of SDSA report) had a brainstorming session in Goa from 12<sup>th</sup> –15<sup>th</sup> of June. The editorial details of the report and other logistics were discussed.

## **Forthcoming Events-**

### **State of the Nation Survey-**

CSDS along with *The Hindu* and *CNN-IBN* is conducting a survey in 18 states with a sample of around 13800. Apart from mapping the political attitudes of the people, the survey will have a special focus on the Youth and Food Habits. The questions will include themes like independence of Youth, their political participation, views on marriage, societal and family values, and above all their aspirations and anxieties.

The fieldwork for the same will start in the first week of August and the results will be televised on *CNN-IBN* from the 12<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> August. Detailed reports will be published in *The Hindu* the subsequent day.

## **Discussion Scheduled-**

A discussion on the book *Of the People-* by Biswarup Sen is being organized by *Lokniti* and *Sarai*, in seminar hall CSDS on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2006.

## **New Project-**

### **KAF-CSDS Youth Study-**

According to the commonly held view, the consequences of reform and liberalisation of the economy have brought changes in Indian society. They have not just ushered in a consumerist culture along with social mobility but have also resulted in a change in existing values. Moreover, these have also transformed the character of the prevalent societal development.

The objective of the KAF-CSDS Youth Study is to determine to what extent this applies to Indian youth, to what degree a shift in interests and paradigms within this group is emerging and what would be the implications of a possible change in values of Indian youth for India, and the World.

Linked to this would be an analysis of how widely prevalent is the Indian way of thinking and way of life, what impact would these have on development objectives and processes and how would these shape international dialogue in future

The survey of youth will be conducted with a national representative sample of about 4000 youth spread across almost the whole of India. The study will be a combination of research tools of surveys, dialogues, analysis and case studies.

### **“In the line of Research...”**



This is a new section where you get the opportunity to write about your current research paper/project (preferably not more than 400 words) and get inputs from our readers for suitable readings, objectives and other focus points. Through this we hope to forge a link between the various scholars who are working on democracy and contribute to the knowledge pool.

### Suggested Readings-

Samaddar, Ranabir 2005, *The Politics of Autonomy- Indian Experiences*, India, Sage Publications.

The contributors tell us that politics of the future will be the politics of autonomy, which has become an essential ingredient in the building of post-colonial democracy. They draw attention to the contending principals of autonomy, its consequent politics and the inescapable co-existence of autonomies. They analyse historical/ colonial experience, multiple forms of autonomy, the complex path of constitutionalism, and the unyielding state that is determined to keep the nation intact.

Sen, Biswarup 2006, *Of the People- Essays on Indian Popular Culture*, New Delhi, Chronicle Books.

“...In a postcolonial society like India, the meaning of popular culture is intricately bound up with the crucial role popular texts play in mediating national aspirations and global realities.” The essays are based on the premise that Indian Popular Culture needs to be examined if we are to make sense of Twenty-First Century India. They demonstrate that popular culture is not a mindless diversion but serves both as a crucible and an agent for the formation of national consciousness.

### Articles Written-

- Yogendra Yadav with Sanjay Kumar, Thumbs up for Manmohan at the wheel but most think, Sonia doing backseat driving, prefer her as PM- *The Sunday Express*, July 23, 2006.
- Yogendra Yadav, Saadhu ki Jaat, Media ki Baat, *Hindustan*, July 11, 2006, New Delhi.

### Seminars/ Talks Attended-

- The World Congress of International Political Science Association was held in Fukuoka, Japan from 9<sup>th</sup> –13<sup>th</sup> July. Presentations by Lokniti members included ‘*Democracy and federalism in India: Two Episodes and a Set of Questions*’ and ‘*The Democratic Audit of South Asia: An Auditor’s Notebook*’ by Prof Peter R. deSouza, ‘*How Wide and Deep is the Support for Democracy in South Asia*’ by Prof Yogendra Yadav and Prof Suhas Palshikar and ‘*Electronic Voting Machines: In Comparative Perspective*’ by Dr. Sandeep Shastri. The visit was supported by International IDEA and was a part of our findings for the SDSA work.
- Prof Peter R. deSouza attended a conference organized by Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group in Darjeeling on 25<sup>th</sup> June, on the theme *An Inquiry into the Condition of Social Justice in India*. He also presented a paper titled ‘*Social Justice, Dalits and Discrimination in India*’.
- Dr. Sandeep Shastri presented a Paper on the theme ‘*Direct Democracy in India*’ at the Asia/Pacific Regional Seminar on Direct Democracy organized by International IDEA at Fukuoka on 14th July 2006.
- Panel discussion was held on *Reservations* in the India International Centre on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2006. Prof. Yogendra Yadav was a member of the panel along with Dr. Nandini Sundar (Delhi School of Economics) and Mr. V. Rajashekhar (Director, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment). Mr. Dileep Padgaonkar chaired the discussion.

- Another Paper presented by Dr. Shastri was '*Contextualizing Human Rights Literacy*' at a UGC sponsored Seminar on Human Rights and Value organised by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and MES Teachers College at Bangalore on 21 July 2006
- Prof. Yogendra Yadav and Prof. Satish Deshpande gave a talk on '*Affirmative Action*' on July 24, 2006 at the Centre for Policy Research, Delhi.
- Prof Yadav presented a paper on '*Redesigning Affirmative Action Policies: Castes and Benefits in Higher Education*' as a part of a one-day workshop on *An Assessment of the Impact of the Reservation Policy* in Jawaharlal Nehru University. The workshop was held on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2006 in the ICSSR conference room.

### **Contact Us-**

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### **Next Issue-**

The next issue of the *Lokniti* newsletter will be published in September 2006. Please send us your inputs for the newsletter on or before 25<sup>th</sup> August 2006.

### **Advertisements**

Call for papers for Case Studies for KAF-CSDS Youth Study. Log on to <http://www.lokniti.org/papers%20for%20Case%20Studies.pdf> for details.

Call for applications for appointments as Research Assistant and Research Associates. Log on to <http://www.lokniti.org/Research%20Assistant%20and%20Research%20Associates.pdf> for details.