

# Lokniti Newsletter

(Private Circulation)

# 6/ December 2005

*IN THIS EDITION:*

The death of democracy is not likely to be an assassination from ambush. It will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference, and undernourishment.

-Robert M. Hutchins

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

Case Studies

**Projects undertaken**

**Announcements**

**Debates**

Editorial

Contact Us

Next Issue

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the last issue of the Lokniti newsletter for this year.

The Lokniti team is just recovering from the flurry of exit polls and post polls survey that marked the Bihar elections. We are proud to say that the hard work of the 'Bihar team' paid off as the CSDS survey was the most accurate survey conducted on the Bihar elections.

The Lokniti team is now gearing up for yet another survey on the mood of the nation.

With best wishes,  
Lillian D'Costa

## 'STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH ASIA'

The SDSA editorial team had a meeting from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> of November 05 to take stock of the inputs for each chapter of the SDSA Report. The meeting was attended by Prof. Peter DeSouza, Prof Yogendra Yadav, Prof K C Suri, Prof Suhas Palshikar and Prof Philip Oldenberg

## Case Studies

Below is a brief synopsis of the third case study done for the SDSA project.

In his case study '**Production of the 'Extraordinary': Violent Self-infliction of a Political Paranoia**', Prof. A Bimol Akoijam, a researcher at CSDS does a psychological analysis of the Indian State which causes it to impose the Armed Forces Special Powers (Assam and Manipur) Ordinance 1958, subsequently modified in 1972 as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). The Act has been in force in the Northeast for the late 47 years.

Hardly seven years into being a 'democratic republic' the Indian state was besieged by a fear of the 'enemy within' and 'legally sanctioned a disguised war on a section of its population by camouflaging its military as an instrument of restoring 'law and order' through the AFSPA'.

A cursory read of the AFSPA says, Prof. Akoijam 'will unmistakably show that the Act seeks to supplant rather than supplement civil authority by an illicit ethos and regime. The declaring of an area as 'disturbed' gives the armed forces sweeping powers to shoot, destroy, arrest on suspicion and suspend nearly every right of a citizen. This is the primary reason why non-combatant casualties can be brushed aside as 'collateral damage'.

Prof. Akoijam then goes on to recount how the AFSPA has left the armed forces in a uniquely safe situation where they can engage in plunder with impunity, unquestioned either by the Indian citizenry or international community. To make matters worse India is not even signatory to the Additional Second Protocol of the Geneva Convention 1977. Prof Akoijam then goes on to question the concept of citizenry and 'equality before the law' when the people of the Northeast have lived under this draconian law for nearly five decades. By maintaining the

AFSPA, a military structures and ethos has been entrenched into the polity and structure of the State, elaborates Prof Akoijam.

Prof Akoijam further points out that the State has recourse to two separate forces to be deployed in two different spaces. One, the police for internal spaces and second, the army for alien spaces and their respective laws have been framed accordingly. The army, which has laws to deal with foreign intervention and external conflicts, has had grave consequences on the people of the Northeast. The inability of the army to deal with the insurgency problem for the last fifty years shows that it has failed. Prof. Akoijam then points out that this failure of the army is because the Northeast problem is not a military but a political one.

The author goes on to argue about the double standards displayed by the Indian State towards the Northeast. Places like Telengana which have had a longer history of conflict than the Northeast have not had any military deployment, even the Panjab which had a problem of infiltration had a military deployment only for a brief period of time, why then should the Northeast have military presence for nearly half a century, he questions.

Prof. Akoijam then goes on to write that the attitude of the Indian State towards the Northeast is based on a deep prejudice that the entire region is 'backward' and that the people have no loyalty towards India. It was this and the 'strategic necessity' excuse that justified the 'take over' of Manipur in 1949, after placing the Maharaja under house arrest and dissolving the democratically elected Legislative Assembly.

The prejudice that the Northeast people have no loyalty towards India backed by the civilian space being turned into a combat zone has led to civilians being made casualties, virtually in 'retaliations' for attacks on the armed forces by 'insurgents'.

Prof. Akoijam ends by saying that 'what the Indian State tries to seek is a sense of *national security* through militarism to assuage its inherent sense of insecurity born out of its inability to see the 'presence' the Northeast as a 'real presence' in the 'national imagination' of the Indian State.

### Projects Undertaken

- Bihar Assembly Election Study 2005, A Post poll survey and Exit poll was conducted, and forecast for vote share and seats were made for IBN (CNBC) channel. The reports were also published in the *Hindustan Times* as *Hindustan* (Hindi)

### Recent Publications

- Dr. Sanjeer Alam, Jharkhand –Samasiaon ka pitara Jharkhand (a Pandora's box) Prabhat Khabar, (Hindi) 15<sup>th</sup> November 5005
- Praveen Rai, Jharkhand Sarkar Ke Mudde par Paanch Saal Ka Lekha Jokha ( Jharkhand -an assessment of five years of Governance) Prabhat Khabar, (Hindi) 15<sup>th</sup> November 5005
- Yogendra Yadav and Rajeeva Karandikar, NDA Heads for a clear majority, *Hindustan Times*, November 11, 2005 (*also in Hindustan*)

- Yogendra Yadav and Rajeeva Karandikar, NDA Ahead, but not much, *Hindustan Times*, November 11, 2005 (also in *Hindustan*)

- Kumar Ashutosh, 'Problems of Democratic transition and consolidation In Nigeria: drawing lessons from the Democratic experience in India' *Journal of Asian and African studies*, Sage, London, Vol40(5):371-392, 2005

#### Lectures/ Talks and Seminars given

- Social Base of Political Parties, Paper presented at a Seminar on Global Political Parties, India Habitat Center, November 5-6, 2005
- Sanjay Kumar, Live Election Analysis

#### Suggested Reading

Edited by Dahl, Robert A, Shapiro Ian, Cheibub Jose Antonio, 2003, **The Democracy Sourcebook**, The MIT Press, England.

**The Democracy Sourcebook** is a bulky compilation of 74 articles, categorized under 9 headings, some of which are, Defining Democracy, Democracy, Culture and Society, Democracy and Constitutionalism, Representation, Democracy's effects and Democracy and the Global Order.

The book offers a collection of classical writings ranging from 'The Social Contract' by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and 'Perpetual Peace' by Immanuel Kant to contemporary writings like Democratic Justice by Ian Shapiro and Freedom Flavors Democracy by Amartya Sen and is a book worth having.

Programme, for ETV, Bihar, Hyderabad, November 19 and 22, 2005

- Prof. Yogendra Yadav, Live Election Analysis for IBN on the CNBC channel on November 22, 2005
- Prof Pradeep Kumar memorial lecture delivered by Prof Neeraja Gopal Jayal. The topic was ' Democracy in India: Representation and Beyond' organized by the Dept of Political Science, Panjab University, Chandigarh on 29<sup>th</sup> November 05

#### Announcements

- Prof. Peter deSouza of Lokniti has been appointed by the Goa Government to head the recently constituted Knowledge Commission for the State.

#### Debates

1. Should union ministers resign from public office, immediately after being accused of corruption or should they hold office till proven guilty.

↑ Top

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## **NEXT ISSUE**

The next issue of the Lokniti newsletter will be issued in  
December 2005.