

(for Private Circulation)

Lokniti Newsletter

June 1, 2006

From the Editors Desk

'State of Democracy in South Asia'

Case Studies

Activities

Events Organized

Suggested Readings

Debates

Articles written

Contact us

**"One often learns more from ten days of
agony than from ten years of contentment."**

- Merle Shain

From the Editors Desk

Dear Friends of the Lokniti Network,

Trust this letter of mine finds you all in best, at onset I would like to share with you that for this month I am assigned to edit the *Lokniti* news letter as my colleague Lillian D'costa who previously was looking after the same, has left the Centre with other great assignment.

Last month, we had initiated our pre-poll surveys of four states and we wrapped up the same with the exit poll and post-poll. In May, our Election Lab was working round the clock on series of Exit Poll and post Poll Surveys in the four states of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal in collaboration with The Hindu-CNN-IBN.

Somehow May 8 was the real tough day for the people out here as we had exit poll in the Tamil Nadu and Final Phase of West Bengal. Our Telephone kept on ringing from the morning, as our field investigators were confirming the data they had faxed us for the Exit Poll Survey. Trouble for our colleagues started when our investigators from Tamil Nadu started conveying their message in their local dialects, this was unfortunate for us as we were unable to understand the same, but thanks to two of our colleagues who were conversant with the Tamil language, who then patiently attended all the calls and convinced our investigators that we were in receipt of their faxed data sheet. This was not the end, many of our field investigators had problems with unavailability of fax facilities and they then conveyed their data telephonically from remote locations.

At last, this day marked the advent of celebration time at CSDS office as the broad political picture projected by the poll proved to be correct. The seat estimates were bang on target

Apart from regular election work, we had organised a Dialogue on '*Electoral Violence in Bihar*' on May 22 & 23, 2006 in Patna. The Dialogue was part of a larger study on '*Electoral Violence and Electoral Dispute Resolution*' being conducted in South Asia by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangkok, Thailand. Towards the end of the month informally we colleagues were indulged in serious debate on current issue of reservation, most of these revolved around the writings of Prof. Yogendra Yadav.

In this issue of the newsletter, we have for you, the analysis of the verdict on all the four state Assembly elections, a write up on the accuracy of our predictions. This is followed by with a short write up on the dialogue on *Electoral Violence in Bihar* and finally Yogendra Yadav tackles the **Big storming question of reservation.**

With Warm Regards

Pallavi Shrivastava

‘ STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH ASIA’

CASE STUDY

Democratic Inequalities: The Dilemma of Elementary Education in India

Vimala Ramachandran

The case study examines the relationship between education and democracy. Although literacy and education has little to do with people’s ability to exercise their right to vote, the lack of education influences the ability of citizens to engage with the institutions associated with the practice of democracy thereby denuding this practice. This paper explores how our education system has created new hierarchies and forms of social exclusion and inclusion – thereby challenging the very foundations of equality and equal opportunity and leaving an indelible mark on the practice of democracy. This study explores different domains – the child, family, community and institutions (specifically the primary school, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and other health related services) that impact on child health, nutrition and education and their inter-linkages, both positive and negative.

The case study also looks at the impact of the Rajasthan Shiksha Karmi Project (SKP) that was designed to address teacher non-availability in remote rural areas and the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) through which Panchayats could petition the government demanding a school in a village or habitation provided there were 25 children who did not have access to a primary school within one kilometre. The study points out that the SKP and EGS did enhance access and that remote rural areas finally saw a functioning school. However these and other schemes have been adversely affected by certain developments such as the reduction in the per capita investment on education in remote rural and tribal areas and new slum settlements in urban areas. Further, a new kind of segregation is clearly discernible at different levels. Children from clearly different social and economic groups attend different types of school – private unaided, private aided, government primary schools, EGS or alternative schools (AS). Even within government primary schools, there is evidence of sharp differences in quality – physical facilities, community participation, allocation of funds. Children from disadvantaged groups and from very poor families who have no other options (private schools, tuitions) make do with whatever schooling they get. This new development reinforces existing stratification - giving rise to new ‘hierarchies of access’.

The Government of India made free and compulsory education a fundamental right of all children in the 6-14 age group through the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2002. If EGS and AS models have shown that decentralised management, localised and school-specific appointment of teachers and regular monitoring by the panchayat can ensure regular functioning of schools, then why are state governments hesitating to bring the formal elementary school system under the purview of local self-government institutions

Education system is so designed that all children cannot access elementary education, leave alone secondary education. Children who attend poor quality primary schools and alternative schools are the ones who drop out of the system

Issues raised:

- The lack of education diminishes the ability of citizens to engage with the institutions of democracy
- The absence of institutional support for the poor has led to an inter-generational cycle of poor health, nutrition and education
- Access to double rations through the Integrated Child Development Services was based on a person's caste and the location of the Centre.
- Children from poor families and disadvantaged social groups start life with a cumulative burden of exclusion
- 'New hierarchies of access' have reinforced existing stratification in schools.
- Social attitudes, practices and discrimination have continued within classrooms to the detriment of children from disadvantaged social groups.
- Leaders of social movements of disadvantaged groups have not taken up the issues of the lack of or inadequate educational opportunities provided to children from these groups.

(Summarized by Edzia Carvalho)

ACTIVITIES

BATTLE FOR THE STATES

The Lokniti programme at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) entered into a collaboration with The Hindu-CNN –IBN to carry out a series of pre poll, exit poll and post poll surveys in the state of Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal with a view to improve the quality of polling in a country, restoring credibility to survey research and gathering the reliable information on political opinions attitudes and behaviour. *Predicting the unpredictable*. The analysis of all these polls can be read by logging at our website www.lokniti.org. The series of these articles are given under the section Recent Survey, in other case they can be read under the section archives at the official site of the Hindu news paper <http://www.hinduonnet.com/>. For each of the four states we had four analytical papers, except for Assam. The analysis of these polls was presented live at the CNN-IBN news channel. It had a complete series of programme entitled *Battle for States*, where a panel of experts analysed the results of the various polls. Rajdeep Sardesai hosted these shows. On the final verdict day i.e. May 11 from the very morning when counting started Prof. Yadav was analysing the trends along with Rajdeep Sardesai at the CNN-IBN news channel. Same analysis was presented on Channel 7 a sister channel of CNN-IBN.

Poll projections come true

The broad political picture projected by The Hindu-CNN-IBN polls has proven to be correct.

Sanjay Kumar, Rajeeva L. Karandikar and Yogendra Yadav

The Post-Poll and exit poll based projections made by the CSDS team for *The Hindu* and CNN-IBN have proved fairly accurate. These polls predicted a landslide in favour of the Left Front in West Bengal, the best performance of the LDF in Kerala in the last two decades, a comfortable majority for the DMK-led alliance but not for the DMK by itself in Tamil Nadu, and the Congress falling just short of a majority in Assam. The broad political picture projected by us has proven to be correct in each of these cases.

West Bengal forecast was 98 percent accurate		
Alliance	Our Projections	Actual
LF	230 - 240	235
NDA	32 - 40	30
Congress	17 - 23	21
Others	4 - 8	8
Assam forecast was 98 percent accurate		
Congress	52 - 60	53
AGP +	25 - 31	28
BJP	10 - 15	10
Others	26 - 35	36
Tamil Nadu forecast was 99 percent accurate		
DMK+	157 - 167	163
AIADMK+	64 - 74	69
DMDK	2 - 6	1
Others	-	1
Kerala forecast was 80 percent accurate		
LDF	107 - 117	98
UDF	25 - 31	42
Others	0 - 1	-

Note: Accuracy rate has been computed as follows. The sum of the deviations between the actual result and the midpoint of the projected range for the two leading parties /alliances expressed as the percent of total seats in the Assembly is the error. Accuracy rate is 100 minus error.

The seats estimate of *The Hindu*-CNN-IBN polls was bang on target in three States. In Tamil Nadu, our seats estimate was 99 per cent accurate. The seats won by both the leading alliances fell within our estimated range. However, the exit poll appears to have significantly over-estimated the vote share lead for the DMK-led alliance by nearly 5 percentage points.

In West Bengal, the seats won by the Left Front and the Congress fell within our range, while the NDA and others are within two seats of our estimate. The overall accuracy of our forecast was thus 97 per cent. The vote-share for major alliances too roughly corresponds to our projections. In this respect the projection for Assam proved quite accurate. The seats secured by all the major alliances fall within our estimated range, giving an overall accuracy of 97 per cent. The vote projection also proved quite robust.

Our estimates were less accurate in Kerala, where we over-estimated the seats for the winning coalition by 12, even if we take the lower band of our range. That makes the forecast 80 per cent accurate. This was

directly related to an over-estimation of the LDF lead by nearly 5 percentage points. We need to investigate this error and take steps to avoid it in future.

The Lokniti research programme at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) entered into a collaboration with *The Hindu*-CNN-IBN to carry out a series of pre-poll, exit poll, and post-poll surveys with a view to improving the quality of polling in the country, restoring credibility to survey research, and gathering reliable information on political opinions, attitudes and behaviour.

In this process we have set three objectives for ourselves: accuracy, transparency, and accountability. It is a matter of satisfaction for us that our projections in Bihar as well as the four States these times have been fairly accurate. In line with the best global practices, we have started sharing all the methodological and sampling details including the social profile of the respondents with our readers. This report is the first step towards being accountable to our readers. As we offered earlier we would be happy to respond to any queries at election@csdsdelhi.org. The accompanying graphic shows a comparison of our projections and the actual results for the four States where we made projections.

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Methodology

The sample for the survey was drawn using a **multi stage stratified random sampling technique**. The first stage involved sampling of assembly constituencies in a manner so that they represented overall party position in terms of the votes polled by different parties as well as in different phases of election. The second stage involved the selection of polling stations. The selection of polling stations was done by listing all the polling stations within the sample constituency in the serial order followed by the Election Commission. **Probability Proportionate Method** was used to select the polling station. The final stage in the sampling was the selection of the respondents. The sample of respondents was drawn from the current electoral rolls of the sampled polling booths. The respondents were interviewed in the *face-to-face* situation at their place of residence using a structured questionnaire in the language spoken by the respondent

Assam				Electors Social Composition									
	No of Respondent	AC	Polling Station	Caste			Religion			Gender		Locality	
				OBC	SC	ST	Hindu	Muslim	Christ.	M	F	R	U
Pre Poll	713	8	32	27	3	64	78	2	17	50	50	89	11
Post Poll	2702	32	124	35	14	11	75	21	3	55	50	85	15
Exit Poll	2779	24	73	29	8	17	66	30	3	60	40	89	11

Note: All Figures in Electors Social Composition are in percent, According to census, women are (48 percent in state) Hindus, (65 percent in state) Muslims, (31 percent in state) Scheduled Castes (7 percent in state) Scheduled Tribes (12 percent in state) and rural voters are (87 percent in state)

Kerala				Electors Social Composition									
	No of Respondent	AC	Polling Station	Caste			Religion			Gender		Locality	
				OBC	SC	ST	Hindu	Muslim	Christ	M	F	R	U
Pre Poll	4377	46	184	55	10	3	62	19	18	49	51	87	13
Post Poll	2722	46	121	51	10	4	61	16	21	49	51	85	15
Exit Poll	900	6	23	60	4	2	65	22	14	52	48	86	14

Note: All Figures in Electors Social Composition are in percent, According to census, women are (51 percent in state) Hindus, (56 percent in state) Muslims, (25 percent in state) Christians (19 percent in state) Scheduled Castes (10 percent in state) and rural voters (87 percent in state)

Tamil Nadu				Electors Social Composition									
	No of Respondent	AC	Polling Station	Caste			Religion			Gender		Locality	
				OBC	SC	ST	Hindu	Muslim	Christ.	M	F	R	U
Pre Poll	4681	58	232	58	27	3	88	5	7	54	46	66	34
Exit Poll	12293	81	301	59	26	4	83	7	8	56	44	67	33

Note: All Figures in Electors Social Composition are in percent, According to census, women are (50 percent in state) Hindus, (88 percent in state) Muslims, (5 percent in state) Christians (6 percent in state) Scheduled Castes (19 percent in state) and rural voters (66 percent in state)

West Bengal				Social Composition									
	No of Respondent	AC	Polling Station	Caste			Religion			Gender		Locality	
				OBC	SC	ST	Hindu	Muslim	Christ.	M	F	R	U
Pre Poll	3535	56	224	9	28	5	77	21	-	53	47	73	27
Post Poll	3186	44	171	10	29	4	82	17	-	53	47	70	30
Exit Poll	995	8	26	8	35	5	68	29	3	62	38	88	12

Note: All Figures in Electors Social Composition are in percent, According to census, women are (48 percent in state) Hindus, (72 percent in state) Muslims, (25 percent in state) Scheduled Castes (23 percent in state) Schedule Tribes (5 percent in state) and rural voters (72 percent in state)

The Team

The fieldwork for the survey was coordinated in the states by Dr. Sandhya Goswami (Assam) Dr. Gopa Kumar (Kerala) Dr. G K Prasad (TamilNadu) Shri Suprio Basu (West Bengal). Sanjay Kumar of Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) Delhi directed the survey. The Central team which designed, coordinated and analysed the survey comprised of D.L Sheth, V.B. Singh, Yogendra Yadav, Sanjeer Alam, Banasmita Bora, Praveen Rai, Pallavi Shrivastava, Vikas Gautam, K.A.Q.A Hilal, Himanshu Bhattacharya, Kanchan Malhotra, Ninu Nair and Ramajayam of CSDS, and Professor Rajeeva Karandikar of Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Delhi

Assam

Since the election already got over last month, this month we did only the *analysis of the verdict* on Assam.

How Assam voted

How different parties fared in the Assam Assembly Election 2006

The final outcome of the election results proved the survey correct, and the identified factors influenced in a remarkable way. Assam this time voted on the basis of political, social and stronger ethnic (Linguistic-Religious) fragmentation. All the parties, including the National parties tried to have a strong ethnic leaning. The reduced share of votes from Bengali and Assamese speaking Muslim to Congress shows the Muslim minority has taken a different turn towards Congress and its political orientation confirms the same. Ethno-centric politics has become so entrenched this time in evident that of the AUDF performance and the ST's votes also have gone out of the mainstream parties. This election is a turning point in the political history of Assam. The formation of a coalition government and the success of AUDF can accelerate further, the formation of smaller ethnic parties and thus greater political and ethnic fragmentation in the state. The Congress has come back to power to play its role as the leader of grand social coalition and internalise this ethnic diversity by accommodating it within the coalition. **(Read the complete article by logging in at our website www.lokniti.org) This article was printed in the Hindu dated-May 18,2006, <http://www.hindu.com/2006/05/18/stories/2006051813441500.htm>**

Kerala

LDF headed for a landslide in Kerala

The Hindu-CNN-IBN Exit Poll predicts between 107 and 117 seats for Left alliance

Sanjay Kumar, Rajeeva L Karandikar, Gopa Kumar and Yogendra Yadav

The Left Democratic Front in Kerala is headed for a record smashing performance in the assembly elections that concluded today. The findings of the Hindu-CNN-IBN Poll, conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) after the voters had cast their vote, leave little doubt about who will form the next government in Kerala. The only real questions are: what will be the margin of the LDF victory? Which record will this victory match or break? **(Read the complete article by logging in at our website www.lokniti.org). This article was printed in the Hindu dated-May 4, 2006, <http://www.hindu.com/2006/05/04/stories/2006050412410100.htm>**

More to it than meets the eye. What determined this election? An unwise alliance and a subtle shift in the minority vote, says Yogendra Yadav

It was a landslide that everyone one knew was coming in Kerala, the tallies of the last elections were almost as exactly reversed. The last time the UDF had 99 seats and the LDF 40, the scorecard this time; UDF 42 and LDF 98. The CSDS poll finds out the reasons behind LDF victory, it was not the usual anti-incumbency factor, which plays a greater role always in Kerala electoral politics. The additional contesting factors this time played were: the reduced level of anti incumbency against Chandi led UDF government and over estimated political strength of Karunakaran's DIC (K). This made the left front to walk on the tight rope in the earlier part of the election. **(Read the complete article by logging in at our website www.lokniti.org) This article was printed in the Hindu dated-May 17 2006 <http://www.hindu.com/2006/05/17/stories/2006051714791200.htm>**

Tamil Nadu

DMK Front Headed for a Big Win in Tamil Nadu

The Hindu- CNN-IBN Exit polls finds 10 % point lead, predicts 157-167 seats for DPA; coalition government likely

Sanjay Kumar, Rajeeva L. Karandikar, G. Koteswar Prasad and Yogendra Yadav

The CSDS- The Hindu- CNN-IBN Exit poll survey results outcome was: DMK+ (45%) could able to score 10% points more than AIADMK+ (35%) and DMDK was at the third strong position with 10% points and the estimated seat share was 157-167, 64-74, and 2-6 respectively.

(Read the complete article by logging in at our website www.lokniti.org). This article was printed in the Hindu dated-May 9, 2006 <http://www.hindu.com/2006/05/09/stories/2006050911320100.htm>

The Making of an Extraordinary Verdict

Was the election ever too close to call? What gave the DMK alliance the edge? What do the results signify for Tamil Nadu's political future? Yogendra Yadav tackles these and other questions.

The outcome of the election results proved that there are considerable serious shifts, which has taken place is striking the balance of all the political parties. Because the traditional strong regional- social communities hold of DMK (North, North-Central and Kaveri delta) and AIADMK (South, Deep South and West) is seen break-ups and both performed well in its non-traditional grounds. This shows an interesting picture and a new tool for analysis assumes that a kind of social churning and change in political geography is on cards. So it was concluded as the familiar, iron-like grip of the two Dravidian parties over Tamil Nadu politics is loosening, opening up a wide range of political possibilities. (Read the complete article by logging in at our website www.lokniti.org). This article was printed in the Hindu dated-May 19, 2006 <http://www.hindu.com/2006/05/19/stories/2006051911291400.htm>

Left set for landslide in West Bengal

The Hindu-CNN-IBN Poll predicts 53 % vote share and 230-240 seats for the ruling Front

Sanjay Kumar, Rajeeva L. Karandikar, Supriyo Basu and Yogendra Yadav

	VOTE SHARE (%)			SEATS (OUT OF 296)		
	ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2001	LOK SABHA ELECTIONS 2004	ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2006 (PROJECTED)	ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2001	LOK SABHA ELECTIONS 2004	2006 (PROJECTED)
Left Front	49.1	50.7	53	199	223	230-240
Trinamool-BJP	35.8*	29.1	27	60	35	32-40
Congress	8	14.6	16	28	35	17-23
Others	7.1	5.6	4	9	1	4-8

Note: Trinamool Congress and BJP contested separately. Figures here are estimates of their performance.

The ruling Left Front (LF) in West Bengal is headed for its seventh successive win, and by a massive majority. *The Hindu-CNN-IBN Poll*, conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, suggests the Left's performance may approximate its best-ever showing, in the 1987 Assembly elections. (Read the complete article by logging in at our website www.lokniti.org). This article was printed in the *Hindu* dated-May 9, 2006. <http://www.hindu.com/2006/05/09/stories/2006050911310100.htm>

The Opportunities and the challenges

The left may have registers yet another massive victory. But behind the familiar result, lies an interesting story about shifting support bases and voter perceptions, says Yogendra Yadav

The ruling Left front in West Bengal stormed back to power for a record seventh time, with 235 seats. The Trinamool-BJP alliance and the Congress + allies were restricted to 29 and 21 respectively. It was no difference this time, for successive occasions the Left front had managed 200+ seats. Things should have been better for the opposition as the EC had monitored the five phase elections, against the alleged scientific rigging of Left front but that had not much to do with the development agenda and strong organizational capacities of the Left front. In other words, the real problem with the opposition was a divided house and its inability to come up with a credible leadership, a clever strategy or an attractive agenda that would bring the non-Left voters together.

(Read the complete article by logging in at our website www.lokniti.org). This article was printed in the *Hindu* dated-May 16, 2006. <http://www.hindu.com/2006/05/16/stories/2006051611501200.htm>

Response Towards our Election Survey

The Hindu

Date: 12/05/2006

URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2006/05/12/stories/2006051205011203.htm>

Letters to the Editor

DMK chief M. Karunanidhi deserves praise for spearheading the DPA to a stupendous victory. The people expect the formation of a coalition government with the much needed checks and balances. They also hope there will be no political witch-hunt and Mr. Karunanidhi will extend a hand of friendship to the Opposition. A word of appreciation is also due to *The Hindu* -CNN-IBN team for the accurate projections in the exit poll.

J. Anantha Padmanabhan,

Srirangam, T.N.

The verdict is the most authoritative expression of voters' minds and no political party should belittle it. As for the opinion polls, many magazine-based studies that predicted one-sided results went wrong. As usual, the interpretation of public opinion became a babble of discordant voices and conflicting claims.

R. Bhakther Solomon,

Chennai

The results looked like a mirror image of the exit poll figures. Congratulations to *The Hindu* -CNN-IBN team.

Saravanan Loganathan,

Chennai

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Comments can also be read at www.ibnlive.com two links for the same are given here.

http://www.ibnlive.com/article.php?id=9823§ion_id=4

<http://www.ibnlive.com/news/thumbs-down-to-aiadmk-dmk-set-to-sweep-tn/9826-4.html>

What The Hindu has to say about CSDS Survey

Editorial

Election outcome positives

Date: 12/05/2006

<http://www.thehindu.com/2006/05/12/stories/2006051205051200.htm>

Few popular contests in recent memory have been as interesting, as instructive, and as productive of democratic positives as the April-May 2006 round of Assembly elections. The first big positive of course was the magnificent voter turnout, ranging from 70 to 80 per cent, in the five spiritedly fought Assembly battles — in two large and two medium-sized States and one Union Territory. Voting percentages in Tamil Nadu (70.56 per cent) and West Bengal (81.63 per cent) went up quite sharply over the 2001 level while Kerala (72.12 per cent), Assam (75.72 per cent), and Pondicherry (85.89 per cent) registered their customary highs. Politically speaking, these are the vanguard Indian States in terms of political awareness and citizen participation in the democratic process. Studying elections is a challenging but very worthwhile business. For this newspaper, it is a matter of satisfaction that the trust it placed in scientifically conducted polls, done in this round by a large team put together and led by Yogendra Yadav of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, has been vindicated by the electoral outcomes in all the four State arenas. In particular, the seat estimates offered by *The Hindu*-CNN-IBN exit polls (combined in three of the four States with post-poll surveys) were spot on for the difficult-to-predict electoral contests of Tamil Nadu and Assam and also for the one-horse race in West Bengal; only in the case of Kerala did the exercise turn out to be a moderate overestimate, by about 15 seats.

A nationally important political outcome is the emergence of a re-energised and stronger Left headed by the CPI(M). Led by a dynamic and far-sighted Chief Minister, the ruling front in West Bengal has increased its popularity, conquered new space, and routed a divided and confused opposition, setting a new world mark for the Left in multi-party elections. In Kerala, the outcome may seem to fit the traditional pattern of regime alternation but the Left Democratic Front has, following its clean sweep of the State's Lok Sabha seats in the 2004 general election, reaped its best-ever harvest of Assembly seats. After the Left, it is the Congress and the DMK that have done reasonably well in this round. The implications of all this for the health and stability of the United Progressive Alliance government are, in net, positive. But they can be turned to political advantage only if the proper lesson is drawn from the different outcomes: even in periods



of fairly high economic growth, governments need to pay attention to the reality of mass deprivation and do something about it. In their own ways, the West Bengal, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu campaigns have underlined this message from the voters. What is superficially understood and depicted by sections of the media as resistance to reform or 'populism' is actually a political coming to terms with structural inequities and the unmet basic needs of ordinary people. The UPA Government and all State governments need to be reminded that they can hope to do well politically only if they heed this lesson.

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How CSDS fine-tunes polling exercise

Date: 22/05/2006

URL: <http://www.thehindu.com/2006/05/22/stories/2006052202281100.htm>

The dust has settled, and so too, I hope, the doubts. Doubts over the exit polls jointly sponsored and published by *The Hindu* and CNN-IBN. The accuracy rate of the exit polls conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi, led by Professor Yogendra Yadav, varied from 80 per cent in Kerala to 99 per cent in Tamil Nadu.

Unlike in 1999 and 2004, the conduct and publication of the polls was not seriously challenged this time in court. In those years, the Election Commission of India moved the Supreme Court to bar such surveys of voter preferences but failed to have its way. The basic legal contention on the side of the news media was that opinion and exit polls were not part of the electoral process, but were exercises that fell outside the scope of electoral laws and the powers of the Election Commission. Any curb on the publication of such polls would be a violation of freedom of speech and expression guaranteed by Article 19 of the Constitution. The merits and demerits, and accuracy, of opinion and exit polls have been debated upon at length. I propose only to deal with doubts and reservations expressed by readers over the latest polls in communications to me.

A reader who says he has 41 years of experience in conducting similar surveys in industry questioned the methodology adopted and whether Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) guidelines on random sampling were followed. Another reader suggested publication of exit poll results of previous elections to judge whether the paper had been able to predict accurately. While pollsters could be well versed in arithmetic, they were not alive to the chemistry and logic of the voters, was another comment, which added that the large voter

turnout especially of women would disprove the findings. One reader cited my own words in an earlier column on not publishing unverifiable reports that did not have evidentiary support. For him, a scientifically conducted survey with statistical records to back the findings belonged to that category.

Some of the captions for the statistical interpretations were commented upon. It was contended that to describe the DMK's lead among women as narrow, when it was 6 per cent, and to say the richer the voter, the higher the support for the DMK alliance, when it had a 7 percentage point lead even among the "poor", was misleading. The community and religion-wise categorisation of the respondents as was done made the sampling size small, one reader felt. The whole exercise was "neither authentic, nor scientific, and only to scare the public," said a dismissive voice. There have always been questions about polls — can a randomly selected small percentage of the population, especially in a society as diverse as ours, represent the general view? Some critics have pointed to "non-sampling" errors such as the wording and order of questions, the process of interviewing, the motivation of the pollsters, and so on.

Many of these issues were anticipated and resolved by the CSDS team. As it pointed out in *The Hindu* on May 12, the aim was accuracy, transparency and accountability and all details were shared with the readers. The results are visible. The best way to answer doubting readers, I thought, was to let Professor Yadav respond. I posed the questions to him when he was in the thick of election analysis. After "recovering from the election exhaustion," he was gracious enough to provide detailed answers. Welcoming the public scrutiny and attention the polling exercise had received ("opinion polls have a tendency to degenerate in the absence of monitoring and criticism,") he said his team would be happy to answer further queries at election@cstdsdelhi.org Dealing with the entire range of polls that the CSDS team conducted, including the pre-election and post-poll surveys and the exit polls, Professor Yadav made the following points:

BIS Guidelines: To the best of my knowledge, the BIS has no specific guidelines for opinion polling in general or election-related exit or post poll surveys in particular. Its guidelines pertain to general principles of randomisation, which need to be applied to specific situations. We have devised our own methods for implementing the principle of random selection of the sample. We select our sample in three stages. First we select a few representative constituencies (numbers always reported in each report) usually by the circular random sampling (Probability Proportionate to Size) method. We verify this selection to ensure that the past electoral record of this set matched the record of the entire State. In the second stage, we take the list of polling stations of the selected constituencies and again use circular random sampling to select about four to six polling stations (numbers always reported). Finally, we obtain the latest electoral rolls of

these selected polling stations and do circular random sampling to select the specified number of respondents (e.g. if the rolls have 1,200 names and we want to select 30 names, we pick every 40th name on the rolls beginning with a random number. If the random number is, say, 27, we select the elector number 27, 67, 107, 147, 187 and so on). We hand the list of these names to our investigators and ask them to interview these respondents. What distinguished our method from that of all other polling agencies (and may account for the moderately better results that we get) is that we do not leave the selection of the location or the respondent to the investigators and thus reduce much of the sample selection bias that polls usually suffer from.

Methodology: There was a methodology box with every report. We are the only poll to give methodological details like the date, sample size, number of locations and constituencies sampled and the team that conducted the survey. (This should be mandatory and unfortunately, many polls have stopped giving even this minimum information.) We have also started the practice of sharing with our readers the social composition of our sampled respondents in terms of some select and significant attributes (rural/urban, men/women, major social groups and minorities, etc.) so that the reader can judge the representative ness of our sample. There was one lapse though. In our exit poll story on Tamil Nadu, we carried all the relevant details in the story itself but did not have a separate box on the methodology. We should have explained the exact procedure of exit polls and how it differed from the post-poll we used in other States.

It is not possible for exit polls to take into account the gender composition of the turnout, for this data is not available at the time of making the forecast. All we can do is to ensure a fair representation of women voters in our sample. Among the respondents we interviewed for the exit poll, 44.5 per cent were women. Among the actual voters, women constituted 49.1 per cent. This discrepancy did affect our vote estimate, for the AIADMK performed better among women.

Table captions: All the table captions referred to make a relative point. The point of these detailed break-ups was not just to repeat that the winner was leading everywhere, but to see if the lead had a pattern across different social groups. We were simply reporting that the DMK enjoyed a higher lead among some sections compared with others.

Disaggregation into caste and regions does pose a problem of small sample size. We have followed the standard rule of not reporting any category that has fewer than 35 cases in it. In the case of Tamil Nadu, we

were dealing with a very large sample size and therefore did not have any problem of this kind. Professor Yadav concluded with a request to readers and a request to politicians on how to relate to the poll forecasts.

To the reader: Survey estimates are after all estimates, at best scientific estimates. It can be a good overall guide, but these are not magic numbers. There is no method that can guarantee a precise forecast of the number of seats in our first-past-the-post electoral system. We were lucky to get our forecast so accurate in three States this time. Please do not expect this to happen every time.

To the politicians: Please do question and criticise polls by all means. But please do not attribute motives. Also, please do not offer unintelligent and uninformed criticism like "how can a few thousand interviews tell you about several crore people?" readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

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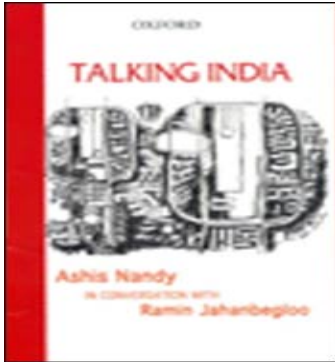
EVENTS ORGANISED

Dialogue on 'Electoral Violence in Bihar'

The Lokniti Programme of the Centre for the Study of developing Societies organized a two day Dialogue on 'Electoral Violence in Bihar' on May 22 & 23, 2006 in Patna. The Dialogue is a part of a larger study on 'Electoral Violence and Electoral Dispute Resolution' being conducted in countries of South Asia. by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Bangkok, Thailand The Dialogue aimed to understand and underline the nature and extent of electoral violence in Bihar. The dialogue was divided into seven sessions. The broad themes of these sessions are as given: (1) *Electoral Violence: Historical Perspective*, (2) *Poll Violence: Socio Political Context* (3) *Elections in Bihar: Issues of Neutrality* (4) *Electoral Violence: Impact on Electoral Outcome* (5) *Electoral Violence: Response of Political Parties* (6) *Curbing Poll Violence: Role of EC, Political Parties & Civil Societies* (7) *Free & Fair Elections: October 2005 Bihar Assembly Elections*. It was inaugurated by Dr. P N Tiwari Principal Patna College. Sanjay Kumar fellow CSDS addressed the main topic highlighting on the various components of the poll violence, historical perspective, socio-political context, impact on electoral outcome, role of the election commission especially in context of October polls and role of the political parties. Some prominent politicians who spoke at the dialogue were Shri Sanjay Paswan, Shri Shivanand Tiwary, Shri Naval Kishore Yadav. Some other speakers were Shri D P Ojha former DGP Bihar, Prof. J Khan, Prof. Sunanda Banerjee, Shri Shrikant. The dialogue was given a wide media coverage, Both the Hindustan Times and Dainik Jagran (Patna Edition) had carried a report on its proceedings.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Nandy Ashis Jahanbegloo Ramin (2006) *Talking India, Ashis Nandy in Conversation with Ramin Jahanbegloo*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi



The book has grown out of series of six comprehensive interviews conducted by Ramin Jahanbegloo. The interviewer questions Nandy within the context of his own Indian ness and his affinity with and criticisms of things Indian – from philosophical thought and religion to cultural pluralism and participatory democracy. The conversation covers Nandy’s perspective on wide range of issues, including political cultures of India and Pakistan and the future of democracy in south Asia globalisation the survival of Indian culture and traditions and Gandhi.

Apart from being prudential dialogue between two intellectuals, from east, but also a part of broader global dialogue of cultures and an exercise in mutual learning.

DEBATES

Wrong Route, Right Direction

Yogendra Yadav and Satish Deshpande

A decision wrongly arrived at need not always be a wrong decision. We need to remember this as we begin to understand the long-term consequences of the government's decision to implement 27 per cent reservations for OBCs in higher educational institutions. The way in which this decision was taken exemplifies what is wrong with the policy-making process in our country. A major decision affecting the career prospects of lakhs of students every year was taken without careful deliberation and transparent procedures that could have inspired some confidence. Larger political considerations were outweighed by short-term political games that are routinely played in Delhi. Thus a major opportunity to fine-tune the policy instruments of social justice was lost by default as a nervous government fell back on a tested, tried and tired formula of reservation based on a simple caste-bloc approach. We may have to wait for another decade or so for another opportunity to present itself. This is clearly not how big decisions should be taken.

Yet it does not mean that the decision is a disaster for the country, as critics of the policy would have us believe. Viewed in a long-term historical perspective, Mandal II is a logical corollary of Mandal I. It takes forward the process of transfer of social and political power to majority communities. The government's decision will help reduce the extreme inequalities in educational and job opportunities for different caste-

communities in our country. The data of the 55th round of the National Sample Survey shows that in urban India, out of 1,000 upper caste Hindus, 253 were graduates. Among Hindu OBCs, this figure was only 86 per 1,000. We do not have reliable information on the caste-wise distribution of well-paid jobs in the organised sector. But it is quite obvious that upper caste Hindus, who constitute anything between a quarter to one-third of our population, have cornered around twice as many jobs as their share in population might justify.

Notwithstanding all its problems, the government's decision is likely to reduce this kind of skewed distribution. It is likely to improve the access of OBCs to higher education and to middle-class jobs. It should also help expand the pool from within OBCs that can take advantage of the existing scheme of reservation in government jobs. In that sense this decision is a step in the right direction. Even a crude caste-bloc based quota is better than no provision at all. An appreciation of the positives of this decision should not lead us to close our eyes to some of the long-term costs.

The government's decision to use a one-dimensional policy of caste-bloc based quota cannot but result in an inefficient targeting of this scheme. The relatively better off families, that too from 'upper' OBCs, will be able to corner most of the benefits.

In regional terms, students from south India and other states with long history of affirmative action and backward caste movement are much better placed to take advantage of this scheme. Needless to say, most of these opportunities will be cornered by OBC men, for the gender gap in education is higher among OBC communities as compared to upper caste Hindus.

The inability to target the scheme very efficiently is bound to give rise to deep resentment. Many non-OBC students and their families would feel, and rightly so, that they are more disadvantaged than those OBC students who are getting admissions based on the new reservations. Can the government still do something to remedy the situation and reduce some of these costs? The government's policy declaration closes one of these possibilities, namely that of attending to disadvantaged groups other than OBCs.

But it can still do something to ensure that reservation for OBCs is targeted more efficiently. First, it can declare that the 'creamy layer' within OBCs will be excluded from the benefits of the new reservation. The exclusion of 'creamy layer' is already in operation for job reservations and the government has to simply apply it to education. Second, the 27 per cent quota should be sub-divided among 'upper' and 'lower' OBCs. Such sub-divisions already exist in many states and the government can request the National Commission

for Backward Classes, a statutory body, to prepare lists of upper and lower OBC for each state. Third, the government can make some provision to ensure that OBC women have a special opportunity to access this quota. Finally, for taking a final decision on all these and related matters to target the OBC quota more effectively, the government can constitute an independent expert committee to work out the modalities.

Besides these immediate and short-term measures, the government must think of two long-term measures. First, it must get NSSO or some independent organisation to carry out a comprehensive nationwide survey of the social profile of students of higher educational institutions and job holders in the organised sector, public as well as private. Lack of such data is the biggest hurdle blocking the transition to a more transparent, robust and fine-tuned policy-making process in future. Second, it is time the government constituted a Diversity and Disadvantage Commission, a statutory body to regularly monitor the diversity profile of all public institutions and to advise the government on improving it.

Yogendra Yadav is senior fellow at CSDS; Satish Deshpande is professor of sociology at Delhi School of Economics. (The article was printed in the Times of India dated-31 May 2006)

Inclusive Models

May 29, 2006

http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/7849_1708116.001601090000.htm

HT research team spoke to a range of academics to find out if we can broaden the caste-wise reservation to include the poor from all communities. Sociologist Dipankar Gupta favours SC/ST reservation but is against OBC quota, historian Ramachandra Guha wants all reservations to be confined within 33 per cent. Social scientist D L Sheth believes that the 'creamy layer' must go and a group of most backwards must be carved out of the OBCs. The following two more inclusive models -- one by Yogendra Yadav of CSDS and Satish Deshpande of Delhi School of Economics and the other by Purushottam Agrawal of JNU, combine merit and deprivation points:

Yadav and Deshpande model: Combine 'merit points' with 'disadvantage points'. Convert marks in the qualifying/entrance exam to a maximum of 80 points. The remaining 20 points (maximum) would be 'disadvantage points. **'Disadvantage points** (maximum 12 points) can have sub-components based on

social groups, gender, schooling, and family background. The backward castes can be divided into 'upper' and 'lower' OBCs' (or MBC) depending on the regions they come from.

Example: 10 points for a male MBCs from most backward region, 6 points for male OBC from less backward region and 2 points for a male OBC from a developed region. (Women in each category get +2 points)

Schooling points: (maximum 5 points) 5 points for Class XII from a rural govt. school; 3 points for a corporation run school in a metro; 2 points for small town private (non-English medium) school and no points for English medium private school in metros or for residential public schools.

Family background points (maximum 3 points) 3 points if none of the parents is in organised sector jobs or runs tax paying business, 2 points if one of them is a clerk or equivalent and 1 point if both of them are in low salaried jobs. No points if any one of the parents is a professional, officer or Income tax payer. The points for schooling and family background would apply to all non SC/ST categories, including forward class students from poorer families. There is no need for a separate OBC quota. The disadvantage points also take care of the 'creamy layer.'

Purushottam Agrawal's model: Marks for entrance test/ interview and academic performance will account for 70 points. The remaining 30 will be points under the following heads:

Caste/Tribe: (5 points) All SC/ ST candidates get 5 points; MBCs 4 points and OBCs 2 points

Gender: (5 points) for women irrespective of scores on any other index

Economic status: (6 points) No points for yearly family income above Rs 2,50,001; 3 points for income from Rs 1,00,001 to Rs 2,50,000; and 5 points for income up to Rs 1,00,000 and 6 points for the beneficiaries of poverty alleviation schemes/employment provision schemes of Central/ state govts.

Regions: (5 points) No points for candidates from metros and large cities; 3 points for non-metros; 3 points for all towns, and also cities in conflict regions; and 5 points for those from villages and tribal areas.

Schooling: (5 points) No points for students from public, boarding and premier schools; 2 points to students from Central govt. schools; 3 points to students from vernacular schools and 5 points to students from village/ panchayat or municipal schools. (No backward region points for candidates studying in a public, boarding or premier school)

First generation learner: (4 points) No points for a candidate whose both parents are graduates; 1 point if one parent is graduate and the other is matriculate; 3 points if one parent is non matriculate and 4 points and if both parents are non matriculate.

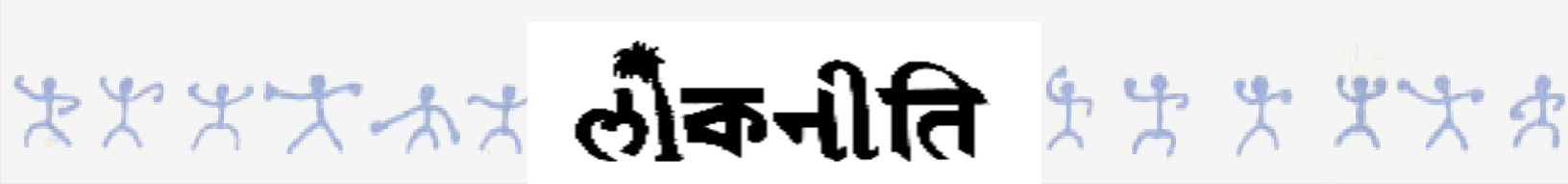
Example: An SC/ ST candidate from Delhi public school with graduate parents and annual family income above Rs 2,50,000, gets 5 caste points but his sister gets 10. A BPL MBC from panchayat school in a backward region with illiterate parents gets 23 points. A forward caste candidate with same background gets 20 points.

You can read more on Reservation in the Hindustan Times dated 29 May 2006.

http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/7849_1708113,001601090000.htm

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NEXT ISSUE

The next issue of the Lokniti newsletter will be in July 2006. Please send us your inputs to the newsletter on or before 30th June 2006

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