

Lokniti

Programme for Comparative Democracy



Lokniti Newsletter
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November 2006



Photo Essay- Exporting Democracy to Iraq – 2003-06 (1)
Photo Courtesy: www.flickr.com (posted on December 15, 2005)

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From the Editor's Desk-

Namaste,

With the onset of winters in Delhi, I extend a warm welcome to all our newsletter readers. The impending launch of the *State of Democracy in South Asia* report on the 4th of December has things pretty heated up in the *Lokniti* Project room.

October saw the second phase of the NCERT textbook writing process. Two meetings were held to review the old NCERT Political Science textbooks and to launch a separate course on Contemporary World Politics for class XII.

This month, Edzia Carvalho has submitted a note for our section 'In the line of Research'. Edzia was the first editor of the *Lokniti* newsletter, and we propose she be the convenor of the *Lokniti* UK regional office with, Solano as the lone member!

The theme for this month's photo-essay is 'export of democracy' to Iraq by the United States. The ostensible reason for the US military action on Iraq was to relieve the Iraqi population of the oppressive, fascist Saddam regime and to re-introduce democracy in the country. Iraq also represented a threat to its neighbouring countries in terms of its alleged possession of the Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Constitutionally, before 2003, Iraq formally possessed a democratic structure of government, with the President as the head of the governmental affairs, elected by parliament. But this was only in theory as Saddam had full political control of the government and the state as the leader of the Baath party and the commander of the armed forces. Saddam Hussein was also accused of human rights violations in Iraq in the vein of restricting freedom of speech of the Iraqi people.

America intervened as a 'friend' of the Iraqi people in July 2003. It started with bombing the country, which continues till today. It attempted to 'export democracy' of the American kind, to the already suffering population of Iraq. But, the significant question is, can democracy be exported? And, does it get domesticated as easily? Also, are the recipients as ready to call it their own?

The American effort of exporting democracy to Iraq has clearly been a colossal failure, threatening the population with trifurcation into Shiite, Sunni and Kurd groups. Although the political power was transferred to an interim Iraqi government within a year, and a formal government established in January 2005 after perceived 'free and fair' elections, Iraq has descended into chaos. The Iraqi people have been traumatized by the never-ending war. The damage has been extensive to the Iraqi families and community.

The only positive outcome of the US experiment has been the end of the Saddam regime. But at what cost? The arrest of Saddam has given a free hand to ethnic groups. Now there are reports of at least a 100 innocent people getting killed in daily clashes between Shiites and Sunnis. About 2 lakh Sunni Arabs have abandoned home and nearly 3-4 lakh Iraqis have become refugees in their own country.

Iraq represents the 'exporting of democracy through the barrel of the gun'. Can democracy (or Socialism) be exported peacefully (remember the Russian army in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and Hungary in 1956)? With over 6 lakh civilian casualties since 2003 (as per the John Hopkins University estimation) how much is permissible in the name of democracy?

NCERT Meetings-

Last month *Lokniti* was involved in its continuous engagement with the NCERT textbook writing process. This month speeded up the second phase of textbooks of political science. In this phase of textbook writing Prof. Yogendra Yadav and Prof Suhas Palshikar were entrusted with a responsibility of creating three textbooks of Political Science, which are 'Democratic Politics II' for class IX and 'Contemporary World Politics' and 'Indian Politics since Independence' for class XII.

During 13th and 14th October, a meeting was held to discuss draft chapters of the textbook 'Democratic Politics II'. This meeting started with a review of the first 'Democratic Politics' textbook. Having evaluated the previous experience of textbook writing, the present textbook development committee found it highly desirable to work on the exercises, activities and other dialogical inputs in the textbook.

Along with Prof. Yogendra Yadav and Prof Suhas Palshikar, Professors Peter deSousa, Rajeev Bhargava and K C Suri were also present in the meeting.

Another meeting that expedited the textbook writing process was held on 23rd and 24th October 2006 for the 'Contemporary World Politics' textbook for class XII. This book will be the first of its kind because there has never been a separate course on Contemporary World Politics in class XII. Other than the two chief advisors, Prof. Kanti Bajpai is one of the main architects of this textbook. Professors Anuradha Chenoy, Madhu Bhalla, Sanjay Chaturvedi, Varun Sahani, Sidharth Mallavarupu and M V Prasad are among others who started drafting this textbook.



Exporting Democracy to Iraq – 2003-06 (2)
Photo Courtesy: www.flickr.com (posted on April 30, 2006)

Shodharthy Article Bank-

Shodharthy, a quarterly hindi journal published by *Lokniti*, has developed an article bank of over 300 articles from reputed international journals. Those desirous of obtaining the list/ articles can write to the editor of *Shodharthy* Dr. A. K. Verma at anil_verma@vsnl.net

Lecture Delivered-

Dr. A. K. Verma, delivered a lecture on 'Electoral Politics in Uttar Pradesh since 1989' at the Department of Political Science, MLS University, Udaipur (Rajasthan) on 5th October 2006.

“In the line of Research...”



Assessing the Implementation of the International Child Rights Regime

- Edzia Carvalho

Studies on the rights of the child constitute a fledgling area of systematic research. Normative conceptions of children's rights have been forged from moral and legal debates engaged in by Freeman (1997; 2004) and Van Bueren (1995) among others. Some of these deliberations have examined the impact of law on the notion of the children's rights and the role of historical events, institutions and practices in shaping law. Although some of these debates date back to the early twentieth century, it was only during the deliberations to introduce the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1980s that the issue of children's rights came to the fore internationally.

Empirically, the record of studies in the field is much less systematic, and is especially focused on certain rights that are protective in nature, e.g. the rights to be protected from sexual and economic exploitation. Prominent among the efforts in this area are Verhellen's (1996) extensive work on the issues involved in monitoring children's rights, the identification of 100-odd indicators to measure children's rights by Ennew and Childwatch International (2004) and Save the Children's efforts to identify indicators to measure children in care, children orphaned or made vulnerable by HIV/AIDS, etc.

The UNCRC, which is the primary international legal instrument recognising children's rights, is almost universally ratified, giving it a moral and legal authority that no other international treaty can claim. It has set into place laws and institutions that could be considered to constitute an international child rights regime. The work that I am engaged in at the present centres around two themes:

i) The agents and structures that constitute the international child rights regime, how they function independently and in relation to each other, and

ii) Measuring the impact of the regime on rights protection and ascertaining the factors that affect how the regime functions. I draw on the work of Landman (2005) on human rights for this area of research.

With this in mind, I have constructed a measurement matrix that seeks to serve the following purposes:

- ~ to chart out states' obligations under the UNCRC and help determine whether states meet these obligations;
- ~ to enable a baseline assessment of the implementation of children's rights and map the progress and trends over time; and
- ~ to enable IGOs, donors, states and CSOs to identify the areas of implementation that are weak and that therefore require particular focus and prioritization.

The matrix combines the following principles:

- ~ states' obligations to respect, protect and fulfil rights
- ~ implementation principles of availability, accessibility, acceptability and adaptability
- ~ human rights principles of participation, adequate realisation of rights and provision of effective remedy and
- ~ children's rights principles of survival and development, best interests of the child, non-discrimination and evolving capacities of the child.

References-

Ennew, Judith (2004), *Monitoring Children's Rights: A Programme on International Rights of the Child*, Ashgate Publishing

Freeman, Michael (ed.) (2004) *Children's Rights*, Aldershot: Ashgate Dartmouth.

Landman, Todd (2005) *Protecting Human Rights: A Comparative Study*, Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press

Van Bueren, Geraldine (1995) *The International Law on the Rights of the Child*, Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

Verhellen, Eugene (ed.) (1996) *Monitoring Children's Rights*, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.

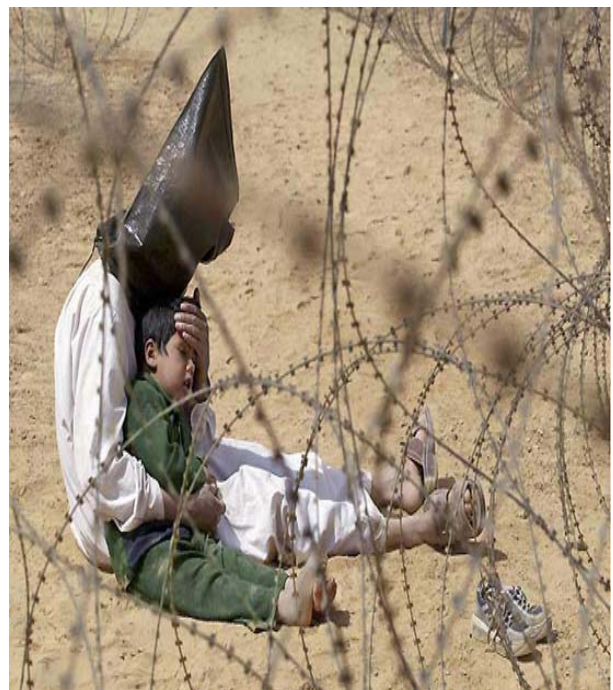
Edzia is a first year PhD student in the Department of Government, University of Essex and also Research Assistant to Dr. Todd Landman on the IDEA project for the preparation of a revised Handbook of Democracy Assessment. You can give your comments, insights, and leads on similar research that you might be aware of. Kindly contact her on edziacarvalho@gmail.com.

Suggested Reading-

Mamdani, Mahmood, 1997, *Citizen and Subject: Decentralised Despotism and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press.

The book analyses the legacy of late colonialism and the obstacles to democratization in post-colonial societies. Prof Mamdani observes contemporary Africa to argue that the legacy created a bifurcated state. The book argues that the de-racialisation of the state has failed to come to terms with the institutional legacy of colonialism.

In attempting a creative theoretical synthesis, Prof Mamdani goes beyond modernist and communitarian positions by examining two related phenomenon- how power is organized and how it tends to fragment resistance. Independent Africa reveals one possible outcome of a reformed state structure- a de-racialised but decentralized despotism. The book has relevance for all developing democracies.



Exporting Democracy to Iraq – 2003-06 (3)
Photo Courtesy: www.flickr.com (posted on July 1, 2006)

Research Output-

Development Projects and its ramification on the environment of North-East

- Lallian Chunga

This summarized article is a modified version of the talk delivered by the author at a seminar on Shwe Gas Pipeline-Implication on India and Myanmar at Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi on 17th April 2005. The original article was published in NEWSLINK Vol-VIII No. 228 dated 10 October 2006. Lallian Chunga is the State Coordinator for Lokniti for Mizoram.

North East India, now comprising of the eight sister states was least known in the pre-independence period. The difficult geographical terrain of the region was one of the reasons for its isolation from the mainstream. The isolation of the region was such that, even today, the common village folks in several parts of the region treat Indians from other states as foreigners. Of late, North Eastern Region came to the limelight and became a major concern of the Government of India. They believed that the Central Govt was showing step motherly treatment towards the northeast people that was mainly responsible for the rise and proliferation of several insurgent groups in the region.

In order to stem the tide of insurgent activities, the central government began taking steps for the development of the region. NEC and DONER were formed to undertake development programmes and monitor the development of the region.

The North Eastern Region is characterized as forest-hill region and the population is dependent primarily on nature and forest. But the government did not specifically work out the pattern of development suitable for this region. Thus development activities have led to massive destruction of the forests, caused enormous damage to the natural resources and displacing

population, which are dependent on these very resources.

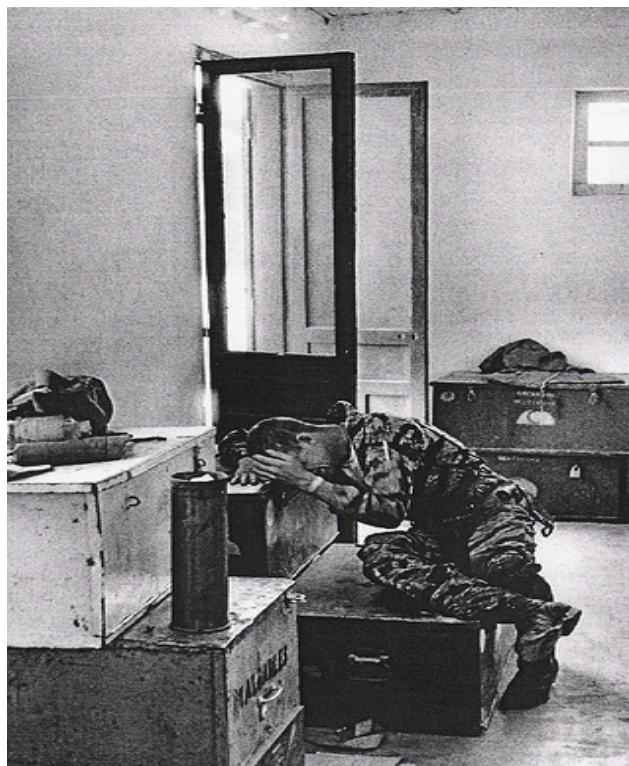
Northeast's recent economic boom based on coal and fuel inefficient technologies is rapidly creating pollution problems of unparalleled magnitudes. The author describes the air quality in the cities to be so bad, that simply breathing is like smoking two cigarettes a day.

Therefore Mr. Chunga feels it necessary to define the concepts of development and growth, which are often used interchangeably and describe economic progress, but the difference in their meaning becomes fundamental to any discussion on environment. He describes growth as an expansion in production, output and even income, a common indicator of it being GDP (gross domestic product) per capita. Development is illustrated as human advancement and can be understood in the context of issues of distribution. A state's economic growth rate does not communicate how wealthy the country is. Human development indices of health, education, and having access to resources for a decent standard of living make known the development of a country in a more obvious manner. This dimension of development also includes political empowerment and participation, human security, protection of environment and gender equality.

The projects in the northeast are being pursued at the cost of development, without considering the negative impacts on the environment, resulting in deforestation and desertification. The only concern of the government remains, pushing up the economic growth rate of the country. The construction of the natural gas pipeline from Myanmar- India via Aizwal (Mizoram) should be given serious consideration. Its construction will naturally involve deforestation, clearing of land and snatching land from people living in the surrounding areas using fair or foul means. This in turn will destroy the natural habitat of the plant and animal species, and also the human security of the people, living in those areas

The Mizoram government may receive transit fees from GAIL but it will definitely be far less than the cost of the environment that the pipeline will destroy. Besides, there is no beneficial measure such as establishment of a Booster Station/ Tap-off point for the state of Mizoram in the Detailed Feasibility Report prepared by TRACTABEL of Belgium, whereas Assam will have a Tap-off point for maximum utilization of natural gas passing through the state.

The author strongly feels that if projects are undertaken for the sake of development, they should be based on the idea of 'sustainable development'. Initiatives by the government, NGOs and other statutory bodies should aim at the participation of the local masses. If the people are imbued with a sense of community ownership of natural resources, they will not allow the government to take up development at the cost of the environment.



Exporting Democracy to Iraq – 2003-06 (4)
 Photo Courtesy: www.flickr.com (posted on January 16, 2006)

Seminars Attended-

- Prof deSouza presented the framework of the study of 'Youth Attitudes in India' supported by the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation at Frankfurt at a colloquium organized by KAF on 5th October 2006. He also gave a lecture on 6th October at Berlin on 'The Second Wind of Democracy in India: Challenges to the Party System in the World's Largest Democracy', at Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Deutsches Institut fur Internationale Politik und Sicherheit.
- He participated in the National Seminar on *Quality Enhancement and Substance in Higher Education* organized by Dhempe College of Arts and Science, Goa from 16th – 19th October 2006.
- Prof deSouza also visited Rome from 26th – 30th October to participate in the international symposium: *The Purpose of Politics and Economy: New Challenges for the Social Sciences in the age of Globalisation* organized by the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation and the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Papal Gregorian University.

Articles Published-

- Sajad Ibrahim, Hamas and the Right of Return of the Palestinian Refugees: A Standstill in the Peace Talks, *India Quarterly* (New Delhi) vol.LXII, no.2, April-June 2006.
- Lallian Chunga, Development Projects and its ramification on the environment of North-East, *Newslink* Vol.VIII No. 228, 10th October 2006.
- A.K. Verma, Uttar Pradesh: Formation of Muslim Political Fronts, *Economic And Political Weekly*, October 7-13, 2006, pp. 4241-4243.

Contact Us-

Lokniti,
Centre for the Study of Developing Societies
(CSDS)
29, Rajpur Road, Delhi- 110054, India.
Phone: +91-11-23942199,
Telefax: +91-11-23831290
Email: news@lokniti.org or
reetika@lokniti.org

Next Issue-

What do you see in the photographs through the Democracy Lens? Please send us your inputs on the photo essay and newsletter on or before 15th December 2006.

The next issue of the *Lokniti* newsletter will be published in December 2006.



Exporting Democracy to Iraq – 2003-06 (5)
Photo Courtesy: www.flickr.com (posted on February 3, 2005)