

# Lokniti Newsletter

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*IN THIS EDITION:*



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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the twelfth edition of the Lokniti newsletter!

We have come a long way since the first publication in October 2004 and my thanks go out to the Lokniti team in Delhi and the Lokniti network who have contributed to its various issues. I had expected much more participation from the network considering that the newsletter is a medium of introducing one's work to an international audience, and I earnestly hope that this will happen in the near future. My special thanks to Mr. Sanjay Kumar and Prof. Peter Ronald deSouza who have kept me inundated with inputs and suggestions throughout this year.

Since I will be leaving Lokniti this month, Ms. Chandni Khanduja will take on the task of producing the newsletter. I wish her and the Lokniti team all the very best.

Further information on Lokniti and the projects noted here can be found on our website [www.lokniti.org](http://www.lokniti.org).

With best wishes,  
Edzia Carvalho

### 'STATE OF DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH ASIA'

A meeting of the Principal Investigators and Country-coordinators for the *State of Democracy in South Asia* project was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka on 17-19 August 2005. The project was reviewed here and an integrated outline of the report

was worked out. A team of writers was allotted the task of writing the report and a timeline for the publication of the report was also prepared.

### Qualitative Assessment

A brief summary of two Qualitative Assessment papers that have been received under the SDSA project follows.

Sanjay Palshikar, *Promise of Democracy in India*: The paper focuses on three themes – the conceptions of the people, representation, and true vs. nominal democracy. The author concentrates on Nehru, Gandhi and Ambedkar as representative figures on the Indian thinking of democracy as democracy was ushered in, in the context of the freedom struggle and internal democratization on the one hand and the origin and development of the nation-state on the other.

A large number of ordinary people have been the object of politics across the ideological spectrum. There have been two images of people: one as crowds and mobs who are affectionate and enthusiastic but prone to unruliness, and the second as a listless apolitical people. The first image brought in the themes of disciplines and organization of the masses, the second the theme of their awakening; the connecting link in both these themes is a wise and selfless leadership. The theme of discipline is further explored in the role that satyagraha could play against one's own government. The question of the nature of representation especially with reference to minorities and the depressed classes was also raised during this time.

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Given the historical context, there are three methodological options in presenting an account of democracy in pre-independence India – one, by concentrating on the different uses of the term ‘democracy’; second, by including both the thinking on democracy and social justice on the grounds that the latter is about democratization of the society; and third, by treating independence and democracy/democratization as conceptually and practically related and placing the discussion of democracy in the context of their interrelationship.

#### Suggested Reading

Beetham, David 2005. *Democracy: A Beginner's Guide*, Oxford: Oneworld

This challenging and informative book designed for the activist, the student and the common reader confronts modern democracy and poses the question: is democracy still worth fighting for? It, in turn, offers new directions for a modern democracy based on freedom, equality and active participation at every level in society.

-- The blurb

#### Case Studies

Here is a list of case studies that have been received either in their revised or preliminary versions:

- Dr. Jani de Silva, Sri Lanka: *Democracy, Power and Violence: Party Politics and the Transformation of the Village Feud in the Sri Lankan South*
- Dr. Kumari Jayawardena, Sri Lanka: *Dynasties and Democracy: The Family in Politics in Sri Lanka and South Asia*
- Dr. Markus Mayer, Sri Lanka: *Youth and Democracy's Future: Social Change and Alternative Political Expressions -Selected Cases from Sri Lanka*
- Dr. Saba Gul Khattak, Pakistan: *Women's Rights are Extended During a Dictatorship and not by Democracy*
- Dr. Vimla Ramachandran, India: *Democracy and Compulsory Education in India*
- Mr. Alito Siquiera, India: *Life of a File: An Anthropological Study of the Citizen's Experience with Bureaucracy*
- Mr. Deepak Thapa, Nepal: *Monarchy in a Democracy: The Case of Nepal*
- Mr. Rajendra Pradhan, Nepal: *The Ethnography of the Legal Process: A Case Study of Nepal*
- Mr. Suresh Dhakal, Nepal: *Transforming Local Government: The Case of Bhaktapur*
- Ms. Shandana Khan Mohmand, Pakistan: *Devolution of Power in Pakistan: For or Against Democracy?*
- Prof. Errol D'Souza, India: *Corruption's Impact on Political Institutions*

Manjari Katju, *Design of Party Political Domain in India*: The paper traces the growth of a formal structure of organized political competition in India from the early twentieth century. It analyses the Government of India Act 1919 and the Government of India Act 1935 and examines the implications on the institutional structure of government. It also delves into the elections to the Constituent Assembly and the working of the Assembly in the task of the framing of the Constitution. Most importantly, the author traces the emergence of political parties and the shaping of the party system and the impact of the electoral system on the party system.

- Prof. Gopal Guru, India: *Jan Sunwai: A New Instrument of Democracy in India*
- Prof. Moonis Ahmar, Pakistan: *The Modern Elite, Clergy and the Islamic Movement in Pakistan*
- Mr. Hari Prasad Bhattarai, Nepal: *In a State of Statelessness: A Case Study of the Citizens without Citizenship in Nepal*
- Dr. A. Bimol Akoijam, India: *Production of the 'Extraordinary': Violent Self-Infliction of a Political Paranoia*

#### Case studies that have been declined

- Dr. Binayak Sen, Bangladesh: *A Street View of Policing: Does Democracy Protect Against Tyranny for the Children on the Street?*
- Dr. Hossain Zillur Rahman, Bangladesh: *The Informal in Democracy: Reflections on the Micro Credit Movement in Bangladesh*
- Dr. Sunil Bastian, Sri Lanka: *Patronage Networks as Resource Transfer in Sri Lanka*
- Mr. Lakshman FB Gunasekara, Sri Lanka: *Media as an Industry and not as Democracy's Watchdog and Source of Public Information: The Case of Sri Lanka*
- Mr. J. Sriram, India: *E-Governance and Democracy: Who Wins, Who Loses?*

#### **Dialogues**

The following dialogues have been held under the SDSA project:

- Bangladesh:
  - *State of Democracy in Bangladesh*, Dhaka, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> March 2004
  - *Democracy: Majorities and Minorities*, Chittagong, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> July 2004
- India:
  - *State of Democracy in India (South India)*, Bangalore, Karnataka, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> December 2003
  - *State of Democracy in India (North-East)*, Imphal, Manipur, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004
  - *State of Democracy in India (North India)*, Delhi, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> April 2004
  - *Democracy and Human Security*, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> September 2004
  - *A Dialogue on Democracy*, Jaipauri, west Bengal, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> November 2004
- Nepal:
  - *State of Democracy in Nepal*, Dhulikhel, 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2003
  - *Democracy: Majorities and Minorities*, Kathmandu, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> August 2004
  - *Democracy and Human Security*, Pokhra, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November 2004
- Pakistan:
  - *State of Democracy in Pakistan*, Lahore, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> February 2004
  - *Democracy and Human Security*, Karachi, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> August 2004
  - *Democracy: Majorities and Minorities*, Rawalpindi, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> October 2004
- Sri Lanka:

The case study authors are requested to contact Mr. Puran Singh Adhikari at [psadhikari@lokniti.org](mailto:psadhikari@lokniti.org) or [lokniti@csdsdelhi.org](mailto:lokniti@csdsdelhi.org) for response to administrative and other queries.

- *State of Democracy in Sri Lanka*, Colombo, 13<sup>th</sup> December 2003
- *Democracy: Majorities and Minorities*, Kandy, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2004
- *Democracy and Human Security*, Colombo, 24<sup>th</sup> November 2004

### EVENTS AT LOKNITI

A meeting of representatives from Lokniti and the UNDP-Bangkok was held on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> August 2005 in Bangkok, Thailand. Discussions were initiated to pursue research on elections, violence and conflict resolving mechanisms. Suggestions on this theme are invited from the network.

The Lokniti Steering Committee meeting was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2005 at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi. The various projects undertaken by Lokniti in the last two years i.e. the *State of Democracy in South Asia*, Election Process Information Collection (EPIC), the South-South Exchange Programme, the National Election Study (NES) 2004 and the thirteen state election studies, Political Parties in India and the Indian Language Programme were taken up for review. A note was also made of smaller studies that were conducted by Lokniti like the tsunami study in India and Sri Lanka, the study on slum demolitions in Mumbai, and the Poinguinim election study in Goa. The expansion plans of the programme were also discussed. A vision document for Lokniti was presented at this meeting.

### CONTACT US

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### NEXT ISSUE

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

