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LOKNITI NEWSLETTER

APRIL 2009

Editor's Note,

Welcome to the Lokniti Newsletter for the month of April 2009. This newsletter highlights some of the Lokniti activities in the last month and forthcoming month.

Your comments and suggestions to improve the newsletter are highly appreciated.

-----Rajiv Kshetri, *Editor*

NATIONAL ELECTION STUDY (NES) 2009: SOME GLIMPSES

Introduction: Study on Voting Behaviour is one of the specializations at Lokniti- programme of CSDS. CSDS has conducted National Election Studies (NES) on a regular basis since 1967. In continuity to the tradition, Lokniti, CSDS in partnership with various print and electronic media houses will be conducting the NES- 2009 to providing a valuable source of data on Indian elections and voting behaviour in India during the forthcoming general election to Lok Sabha. The goal of the 2009 study is to underline the significance of elections in the largest democracy of the world and understand the main reasons of why people vote the way they do and why some parties are more successful than others. The idea is to contribute to the development of scientific knowledge in regard to motivation of voters and meaning of elections by producing a rich set of data about the attitudes and opinions of voters on social, economic and political issues.

The NES 2009 Pilot Study:

As part of the NES - 2009 Pilot Study, 446 randomly sampled voters spread across 8 states were interviewed on March 22-23rd, 2009. The Pilot Study is conducted to check the efficacy and relevance of the proposed questions to be asked in the NES - 2009 Post Poll. Though a number of questions have been retained from earlier CSDS surveys, many new questions have also been newly drafted. After an in-depth analysis of the Pilot Study data, a number of changes were incorporated in the new questions. After establishing that all questions are statistically valid and that they work in the diverse field conditions of India, the final questionnaire has been designed.

Objectives of NES - 2009:

The objectives of the study are to provide an in-depth insight into the areas of:

- The social bases of voting
- Political participation
- Political communication
- Political affiliation
- Political efficacy
- Trust in institutions
- Public opinion and policy
- Political and social attitudes
- The incumbency/ anti-incumbency debate
- Leadership

Themes:

The survey will also have five areas of thematic focus.

- Democracy, Efficacy and Legitimacy
- Political Choice
- Economy
- International Relations, Terrorism and National Security
- Social and Political Values

The Methodology:

The study is primarily quantitative and based on survey method in tune with the Michigan Model of election studies. Though the primary data of the study will be collected by face-to-face interviews of sampled electorates in the state, data from secondary sources like state electoral office are also used. The components of research methodology are as follows:

Research Instruments:

Five different sets of standardized questionnaires will be used for the study of the electorates across India. Most questions are structured, with the exception of some semi-structured and open-ended questions. While each set of the Questionnaire cover one of the five areas of exclusive thematic focus, some core questions on political behaviour and background information of the respondent are common for each set.

A Fieldwork manual has been specially designed for field investigators with general instructions in how to conduct standard interviews. It also contains question specific instructions explaining skips patterns in questions and probing levels for right responses. The manual also have numerical codes for background variables like education, occupation, caste etc. with pre codes for some open-ended questions.

Sampling:

The universe of NES – 2009 is all registered voters in India and the sample for the study would be more than 35,000 voters spread across the country. The sample for the study is drawn using the multistage stratified random sampling technique.

Sampling of Parliamentary Constituencies (PCs)

- 537 parliamentary constituencies in 29 states out of the total 543 PCs in India have been selected.
- 6 PCs falling in union territories of Chandigarh, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu are left out of the sample for logistical reasons.

Sampling of Assembly Constituencies (ACs)

- 659 assembly segments are selected within selected 537 PCs in 29 states on the basis of random circular sampling.
- The number of ACs selected in each state are in proportion to the total number of ACs in the state.

Sampling of Polling Stations (PSs):

- 4 PS within each sampled AC are selected. The reason for selecting a fixed number of PS within all the sampled ACs is keeping in mind the logistics of conducting fieldwork operations.
- 2636 polling stations (PSs) are selected within the sampled AC by listing all the PSs within the sampled AC in the serial order followed by the Election Commission. The selection of PS is also done using the random circular sampling method.

Sampling of Respondents:

Respondents are selected from the latest electoral rolls of the selected polling stations. In every polling station, 20 respondents are selected from the electoral rolls using the Systematic Random Sampling technique. In each sampled polling station, a list of Sampled Respondents are prepared having the name, age, gender and address of each of the sampled respondents who are approached for interviews.

Substitution of respondents will not be allowed under any circumstances.

Training: A two-day training workshop will be organized before the survey fieldwork starts at various places in the State to train the field investigators (FIs) and supervisors who carry out the fieldwork operations. Trainers conduct an intensive and interactive workshop for training field investigators on conducting face-to-face interview based on the questionnaire. The investigators undergo an orientation programme and train rigorously about interviewing techniques and communications with the respondents. A comprehensive and detailed interviewing guides, designed on the basis of the questionnaire and survey methodology, is prepared for the interviewers.

Field work: The interviews of the selected electors will be conducted at their residence or place of work. Field investigators on meeting the respondents will explain the purpose of the interview, establish their identity and inform them about the expected research output of the study. The field investigators will conduct the interview of the selected respondent in face-to-face situation using the questionnaires designed for this purpose. The investigators will also follow the standard and accepted practices of fieldwork and information collected will be kept strictly confidential.

Supervision and Back-Checking: Keeping in mind those rigorous quality controls at each stage of fieldwork and processing ensure consistently high standards of data collection and analysis for the survey, the interviews conducted by them will be properly supervised and the fieldwork done by them will always be back-checked.

CONFERENCE/ SEMINAR / WORKSHOP

WORKSHOP ON SURVEY RESEARCH AT CPS, JNU

A group of Lokniti research team delivered a series of lecture at a workshop on Survey Research at Centre for Political Studies (CPS), School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi on 4th March 2009.

The workshop began with a brief introduction of Lokniti and its activities by Banasmita Bora. Sanjay Kumar presented a paper on *National Election Study Tradition at Lokniti, CSDS* and Professor Yogendra Yadav spoke on *Distinctiveness of National Election Study 2009*. Both the papers were discussed by Professor Sudha Pai of CPS, JNU.

After the discussion, Dr. Sanjeer Alam presented a paper on *Sampling: Methods and Design*. Dhananjai Joshi also presented a paper on *Questionnaire Design: What goes behind it*. Finally, Praveen Rai presented a paper on *Fieldwork and Training Workshop*.

The workshop was attended by a large number of students and faculties of CPS.

LOKNITI MEMBER AT WORKSHOP

Dr. Anil Kumar Verma, Chair-Department of Political Science, Christ Church College

Kanpur was invited by the *Centre of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy, BHU, Varanasi* to guide deliberations in an Orientation Course on "*Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy: Dalit Perspective*" on 23rd Feb. 2009.

He also chaired a session on *Media and Women*, organized by Women Studies Center, Acharya Narendra Dev Mahila PG College, Kanpur on 8th March, 2009.

RESEARCH WORKSHOPS AT CHRIST CHURCH COLLEGE, KANPUR

The Department of Political Science, Christ Church College, Kanpur organized twin National Workshops during 18-20 February 2009 on *Statistics and Its Applications in Social Science Research* and *Designing of Research Projects and Writing of Research Papers*. The workshops were attended by senior, mid carrier teachers and junior research scholars. The Workshops were not funded from any source and were innovative in "collective self-help learning". Such similar workshops on Research Methodology were organized during 2007 and 2008.

WORKSHOP ON ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF ELECTION

Lokniti in collaboration with University College of London will be conducting a Comparative Electoral Ethnography in India during the forthcoming general election to Lok Sabha 2009. The study will be directed by Mukulika Banerjee of University College of London. In order to conduct the study, a Training and Brain-Storming Workshop on Comparative Electoral Ethnographies was also conducted from 7th to 9th March 2009 at CSDS, Delhi.

Bringing together the strengths of large-scale surveys and local-level investigations, the current project aims to provide comprehensive electoral ethnographies in 12 sites across India. These sites have been chosen, keeping in mind regional balance, electoral histories, the availability of researchers and accessibility, and coverage by previous studies. The unit of study of each site will be a neighborhood (*mohalla*) in a town/city or a cluster of villages in a rural setting. It is expected that in some cases the research site will cover more than one polling station whose average catchments area is 1000 voters. This will also provide a more varied section of the electorate to be captured by the study. The PI has extensive contacts with anthropologists and researchers based outside and inside India. Each researcher is a social scientist/ anthropologist, has extensive local knowledge of the site and is a scholar in his or her own right. They are currently based in India, Europe and US.

These electoral ethnographies will mark a whole new approach in the study of elections. Rather than treat elections as dry statistical events that focus on the 'numbers game' and results, elections in this project will be studied with their full cultural and cosmological meaning, as the most important modern and secular festival of democratic India.

This study will seek to capture the diversity of the electoral experience across different settings in India through simultaneous studies by a team of 12 scholars in multiple sites, covering all aspects of the electoral procedure and popular participation, as it unfolds over 4-6 weeks, from nominations, campaigning, and media coverage to voting and the declaration of results. This project will therefore generate new, comparative understandings and collective insights into the social, political and cultural life of elections in India as a whole despite the enormous local variations and will lead to new understandings of democracy within contemporary India.

All researchers will be invited back to a de-brief workshop to be held at Indian Institute of Advance Study, Shimla by the Principal Investigator and Lokniti. Each researcher will be expected to submit a written report and make an oral presentation. Each report will be followed by a detailed discussion to reflect on the data and analysis to be presented by the end of June 2009. According to the research design of this project, the common framework of questions, issues and methodologies a collection of genuinely comparative essays on electoral ethnography will emerge.

After the study, a report will be prepared for the Election Commission of India and an academic volume with the findings of the comparative study will be submitted to the book series 'Exploring the Political in South Asia' by Routledge. A book of photographs of all visual material collected during the project will also be prepared. Besides, a 40 minutes radio documentary will be made for BBC Radio 4 to be broadcast on a Thursday evening.

Finally, a website will also be set up and maintained by the staff of Lokniti and CSDS which will be updated regularly to document the materials collected during the project. Visitors to the site will be encouraged to leave comments, add their own pictures and 'election stories'.

TWO DAY MEETING ON NES- 2009 QUESTIONNAIRE

On 8th and 9th March 2009, a core group of Lokniti held a meeting to finalise the questionnaire to be used for NES- 2009 at CSDS. Those members who attended the meeting were Prof. Yogendra Yadav, Prof. Suhash Palshikar, Prof. V.B. Singh, Prof. Dhirubhai Sheth, Prof. K.C. Suri, Dr. Sandeep Shashtri, Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Prof. Sanjay Lodha, Dr. KK. Kailash, Dr. Rajeshwari Deshpande, Praveen Rai, Dhananjai Joshi. In the meeting, each section of questionnaire and their wordings were minutely discussed.

TWO DAY TRAINING WORKSHOP ON NES- 2009 AT LOKNITI, CSDS

In preparation for the NES- 2009, a two day training workshop was conducted on 29th and 30th March 2009 at Lokniti, CSDS. The workshop was participated by all the Lokniti state coordinators and supervisors from the North Indian states- Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhandh, Maddhya Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttrakhandh and the state of Maharastra. In the workshop, all the state coordinators and supervisors were trained by Professor Suhas Palshikar and Sanjay Kumar on how to select field investigators and how to conduct training workshop for field investigators which has to be held later in their respective states.

Besides, a brief discussion on the sampling methods and research instruments was also made during the workshop. Such similar workshop will also be regionally conducted in other parts.

PUBLICATION

Articles Published By Lokniti Member:

Dr. Anil Kumar Verma, 'Bahujan Samaj Party: Beyond Uttar Pradesh', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44(7), February 14-20, 2009, pp. 19-22.

Sanjay Kumar, Jharkhand: A divided UPA would benefit NDA, www.Indiatoday.in, March 27, 2009
-----, Mayawati's Brahmin card, www.Indiatoday.in, March 24, 2009
-----, Bihar: Development vs. Electoral Arithmetic, www.Indiatoday.in March 22, 2009
-----, The Battle Ground: Lok Sabha Elections 2009, www.Indiatoday.in, March 20, 2009
-----, Spotlight on the young voter, www.Indiatoday.in, March 18, 2009
-----, Delimitation may marginally affect turnout, www.Indiatoday.in, March 16, 2009
-----, Will five phases of elections make a difference, www.Indiatoday.in, March 4, 2009

UPDATE

UKIERI RESEARCH PROJECT AT LOKNITI

Under the UK-India Education Research Initiatives, Kamena Dorling, *Legal and Policy Officer*, Children's Legal Centre, Colchester, UK has undertaken a research project to explore the administrative detention of children in India at Lokniti, CSDS. This study is a part of the larger project on *Democracy and Children's Rights in India and UK* which Lokniti in collaboration with University of Essex, UK has been carrying forward since 2006. Kamena Dorling will be working in India from 16th March to 17th April 2009, with 3 weeks in Delhi and 2 in Goa while will be working from 23rd March to 10th April 2009. She will be working with another researcher, Mariana Muzzi, Child Protection Officer, UNICEF, New York, USA

Given the size of India and the issues, the research, in the form of interviews and field visits, will be undertaken in both Delhi and the western region covering Goa, Maharashtra and Karnataka, looking at legislation, policy and practice in both regions.

Review of law, policy and practice to be completed between March 23rd and end of April 2009: Both researchers will be working together at Lokniti, CSDS to ensure effective collaboration and coordination of the research. A final report of the study is expected to complete by end of June 2009.

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