



लोकनीति

LOKNITI NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2008

Editor's Note,

The nation is shocked with series of bomb blast and terrorist attack in recent times. At the same time, electoral festival is in a full swing. Assembly elections are being held in six Indian states.

Lokniti team is busy in conducting post poll surveys in these states.

December issue of Lokniti Newsletter highlights some of the activities taken up in the last month.

Comments and suggestions towards broadening the coverage of this newsletter are highly welcome.

Rajiv Kshetri, Editor

CONFERENCE / SEMINAR / WORKSHOP

Discovery of India tour of goan students



As part of Discovery of India Tour, Movement for Amity towards Roads in Goa (MAARG), a Goan based organization organized a two week tour of about 20 Goan students in Delhi. This Discovery of India tour was aimed at giving exposure to the students about latest developments in the fields of politics, academics, media and related issues.

As part of their Discovery of India tour, the students spent two days, 7 and 8 November 2008 at Lokniti- CSDS. The visit to Lokniti-CSDS was aimed at students' interaction with the academic community so that they benefit from their idea, research and related activities.

During these two days, Mr. Sanjay Kumar of CSDS delivered a lecture on *Religion, Region and Caste in Indian Politics*. This was followed by a lecture on *Education Bill* by Dr. Sarada Balagopan of CSDS. Puskar Raj of People's Union for Civil Liberty spoke about *Police Reform in India*. Yamini Aiyar of Centre for Policy Research talked on issues related to *Unpacking the Right to Information Act*.

On the second day, Sanjay Mishra of Ministry of Railway delivered a lecture on the *National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in India*. This was followed by a lecture delivered by Vandita Mishra of Indian Express on *Press in India*. The concluding lecture was delivered by Dr. Rudi Heredia of Indian Social Institute on *Secularism in India*.



CONFERENCE ON CHILDHOODS AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN INDIA

Lokniti, CSDS organized a two day international conference on the theme 'Childhoods and Children's Rights in India'. The conference was held on 10th and 11th November 2008 at CSDS. The conference was a part of the ongoing project on **Democracy and Children's Rights in India and UK: Law Policy and Outcome** which Lokniti has undertaken in partnership with University of Essex under the UK India Education Research Initiatives (UKIERI). Scholars from different disciplinary backgrounds presented papers on childhood and child rights issues.



V. Anil Kumar's paper *State, Civil Society and Dilemmas of 'Mainstreaming' Child Labourers: The Discourse on Eradication of Child labour with Reference to Karnataka* focuses on the combined effort to eradicate child labour in Karnataka by the state government and the civil societies. He argues that since child labourers come from social and economic contexts that compel them to work as labourers, the attempt of the state and civil society organizations and their collaborations to 'mainstream' child labourers in the above limited sense does not translate into reality. Arima Mishra in her paper *Television and Children: Negotiating Ideal Childhood and Ideal Parenting* points out television as an entry point to reflect on issues of the construction of childhood and parent-child relationships.

Highlighting a set of stories on children in Telugu and Malayalam, Deepa Sreenivas's paper *Telling Different Tales: Possibilities for the Representation of Childhood in Children's Literature* assesses that these narratives problematize the normative grids through which one view "childhood" as they depict the complex ways in which children negotiate and cope with the material conditions of their marginality, often drawing upon the resources and relationships within the community. In her paper *Un/thinking children in development: A contribution from northern antidevelopmental psychology*, Erica Burman analyses child development as text by drawing examples from a range of institutional practices and genres are analyzed, and juxtaposed, to highlight newly emerging twists of contemporary tropes of northern, normalised childhoods, in relation to structures of gender, racialisation and familial organisation. Gautam Chando Roy's paper *Adult Perception of Childhood in a Colonial Situation: A Study in 'Writings for Children' in Late 19th and Early 20th Century Bengal* made an attempt to delineate the image of the child found in the pages of children's magazines that came out in a steady, unbroken stream in the last two decades of the 19th century and the first two of the 20th. In his paper *He could have been made a good Dewan in a Native State! Can there be an Indian Boyhood?* Alex M. George attempted to expose the constructive process of the development of a modern childhood/boyhood, in India on thin margins of debates in a social reform legislation under colonialism, the advent of other modern institutions like family, marriage legislations, schooling, etc.

In Virginia Morrow and Uma Vennam's paper *Children combining work and education in cottonseed production in Andhra Pradesh: implications for discourses of children's rights in India* they made a preliminary analysis of children's work in cotton seed production in Andhra Pradesh, drawing on evidence from the qualitative component of the Young Lives study. By exploring a local example, the paper addresses the conference theme of mediation, engagement and contention that discourses relating to children's rights encounter in India.



Karen Wells and Shazia Wasiuzzaman, in their paper *The Social Networks of Child Domestic Workers in India* made an attempt to contribute to the sharpening of sociological concepts around both 'childhood' and 'social networks', the ethnography of children's work and to policy and practice in relation to children's labour. Their main argument is that children's poorly remunerated part-time work may not be contracted within the nexus of capitalist labour relations (i.e. an exchange of labour for capital). The paper *Ideals of Hindu Girlhood: Vidya Bharati's Balika Shikshan*' by Nandini Manjrekar discuss the ideological contours of the knowledge proposed in this text and the pedagogical demands of its transaction. The paper also made an attempt to deconstruct, through the knowledge and implied pedagogy of the text, the image of the Hindu girl for whom it is intended.



In her paper, *The right not to play: Long-distance migration, education and children's struggle for respectability in a Kerala village*, Olga Nieuwenhuys tried to compare the social world of children in the village in 2007 with the situation in the late seventies and look in particular at the impact of remittances from the Gulf on children's lives. The paper focuses more specifically on toys and play, seeking to explain why a higher level of living has paradoxically resulted in less, not more toys and playtime.

In his paper *Pathologised Childhood, Disabled Rights: The Case of 'Right to Education' of Disabled Children* Saptarshi Mandal made an attempt to explore the intersections between experiences of childhood and disability, by focusing on a very specific, albeit significant aspect in the lives of disabled children i.e. access to education. Instead of focusing on how impairment affects attainment of education, the paper however illustrates how structural barriers and attribution of negative values by the education system prevent disabled children from acquiring education.

The paper *Landscapes of Memory: The Child and Childhood in Contemporary Tamil Fiction* by V. Geetha gathers together fictional representations of childhoods whose time appears past, both in a biographical and historical sense, and subjects them to a rather whimsical reading, whose salience is open to question. In her paper *The Issue of (Girl) Child Prostitution in India: Politics and Framing*, Vicky Randall began by providing a brief descriptive account of the context and character of child prostitution in India followed by a closer examination of some of the central issues of definition involved. She made her conclusion by reflecting the implications of the way the issue of girl child prostitution emerged and has been framed for the character and impact of policies to deal with it.

The paper *Beyond Compassion: Representation/ Resilience in the 'Political Society' of Sex Workers' Children in Sonagachi* by Oishik Sircar and Debolina Dutta begins with the argument that Children are such a group, for whom vicarious appeals by activists, philanthropists and the state alike contribute towards a discourse of compassion that is globally throbbing with funds, protective laws and images - primarily of children from the South - who, it is claimed are the worst victims of scourges like trafficking, sexual abuse, exploitation, homelessness, hunger, armed conflict etc. Given the kind of connection that this discourse of compassion has established between 'children' and 'innocence', they further argue that the objective of compassionate interventions becomes to protect and preserve the innocence that children are at the risk of being robbed. Binu Roshni P.'s paper *Our Schools for Whom?* aims to see what happens to dalit -adivasi children between enrollment and SSLC examination? How do they engage in their studies? What is the impact of habitus on their education?



ONE DAY FOLLOW - UP WORKSHOP ON SUMMER SCHOOL 2008

On 13th November 2008, Lokniti organized a one day Workshop as a follow-up of 2008 Summer School, Shimla. In the workshop, seven summer school participants presented their papers that were developed during Summer School -2008.

- Banasmita Bora presented a paper on *Religiosity and Social Conservatism in India: Is there a Causal Relationship?*
- Ambuja Kumar Tripathy presented a paper on *Civil Society Association and Political Participation: An Empirical Investigation in India.*
- Elizabeth Devi presented a paper on *Electoral Politics and Security: the Verdict*
- Rahul Verma presented a paper on *'Voters' satisfaction and Incumbant Party: A Puzzle in Election Studies*
- Kshetri Rajiv Singh presented a paper on *Interest in Politics: An Analysis*
- Dr. Sudhir Kumar presented a paper on *Relevance of Caste on Political Choice of Women*
- Kailash K.K. presented a paper on *Who is Unopinated? Analysis of 'No Opinion' Response in NES 2004*

Professor Pradeep Chhibber, University of California, Berkeley and Irfan Nooruddin, Ohio State University who had trained the participants on data analysis during the summer school also made their presence during the presentation. There was an open discussion among the participants on each paper. Professor Chhibber and Nurooddin also gave valuable suggestion for improving the papers. All the participants are expected to submit revised papers for publication.

PANKAJ PUSHKAR'S PARTICIPATION

Pankaj Pushkar of Lokniti participated as a resource person, in a training workshop on 'Democratic Politics' with school teachers at New Era Public School, Vadodara from 13 to 15 October 2008.

By highlighting the contribution of many associates of Lokniti on the development of NCERT Textbook of Political Science, Pankaj stated that the new textbooks have sparked some new concerns and thinking about the education of politics. Feedback from teachers and students has shown that many more related issues demand proper attention, argues Pankaj. Finally he concluded by saying that exchange of knowledge and peer learning among teaching community is a facilitating component of a greater task of developing linkages between pedagogy and the discipline of politics in the existing education system in school.

MEETING/ DISCUSSION

MEETING ON THE PROJECT: INDEX OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

A meeting of Lokniti members was held on 14th November 2008 to discuss the progress of the project on **Index of Democratic Governance in India**. Members who attended the meeting were Yogendra Yadav-Co Director Lokniti, Suhas Palshikar- Co Director Lokniti, Sandeep Shastri- National Convenor Lokniti, K.C. Suri- Lokniti Network member, Sanjay Kumar- Deputy Director Lokniti, Pradeep Chhibber, University of California, Berkeley, Irfan Nooruddin, Ohio State University, Sanjay Lodha- Rajasthan State Co-ordinator of Lokniti, Kailash K.K. Punjab University and Pavithra Suryanarayan of Lokniti.

In the meeting, possibilities of taking up the project were discussed by analyzing the findings of the pilot survey conducted prior to the meeting. The meeting discussed the strategy for generating the possible resources to carry forward the project as well as the scope to be incorporated in the project.

The meeting concluded with a substantial discussion on the research methods to be designed for the project. Lokniti is preparing to conduct a national survey in all the Indian states by the end of December 2008.

FORTHCOMING EVENT

LAUNCH OF REPORT

Lokniti-CSDS is launching a report titled **Indian Youth in a Transforming World: Attitudes and Perceptions** on 22nd December 2008 in New Delhi. The study was conducted in collaboration with KONRAD- ADENAUER -STIFTUNG. The report is divided into seven chapters such as Trust and Circles of Belonging, Family and Social Network, Leisure and Lifestyle, Politics and Democracy, Governance and Development, Nation and the World, and Anxiety and Aspiration.

UPDATE

NEW PEOPLE AT LOKNITI



Rahul Verma, a M.A. Development Studies student at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, joined Lokniti as an intern for one month since beginning of November. He has previously worked at Lokniti as an intern from April to mid June 2008. Currently, he is working on the Assembly Elections in Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Rajasthan, Mizoram and Jammu & Kashmir involving in questionnaire designing, survey research and data analysis.

His research interest includes studies on party politics, electoral system, state and democratic governance. Currently, he is writing his M.A. dissertation on "The Politics of Dalit Mobilisation and Democratic Upsurge: A Case Study of BSP in Uttar Pradesh."

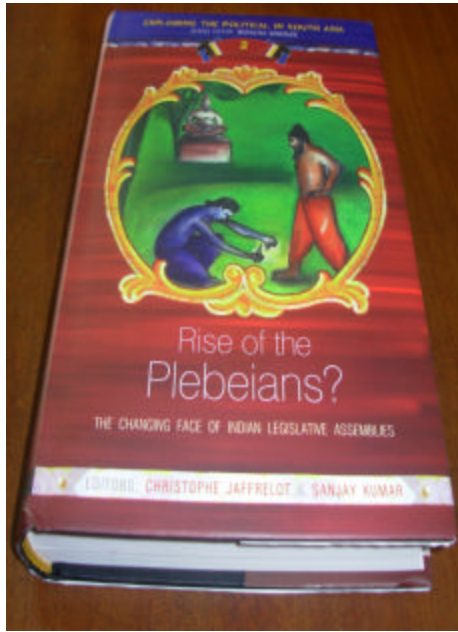


Navprit Kaur joined Lokniti as a Research Officer on part-time basis since November 2008. She has an M. Phil degree in Political Science along with a Master's degree in Education. Currently she is pursuing her doctoral research in the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi.

Her association with Lokniti has been since year 2000 when she attended the summer workshop on democracy organized by Lokniti, CSDS.

PUBLICATION

BOOK PUBLISHED



A book titled as "Rise of the Plebeians? The Changing Face of Indian Legislative Assemblies" edited by Christophe Jaffrelot and Sanjay Kumar has been recently published by Routledge in association with Centre de Science Humaines, New Delhi, CERI & CNRS, Paris and CSDS, Delhi.

The book is a part of the series on "Exploring the Political in South Asia" edited by Mukulika Banerjee of University College, London.

The book has seven parts on the themes such as the Hindi Belt towards Social Engineering, the North-eastern Pattern, the Reign of Dominant Castes in the Deccan, Tribal States, Where the Upper Castes Resist, the Domain of Proportionality and the Tamil Exception: the Subalternist Tradition.

The book examines how India's caste based social diversity gets translated into politics, by tracking the individual trajectory of sixteen states since the 1950 to the present times. Tracing the changing social profile of the elected representatives of the Indian states, the book also points to an uneven democratization of the regional political class.

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