



December 2009

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The team at Lokniti wishes all the readers a very happy 2010!

The results of the Jharkhand Assembly elections were declared this month. They proved to be surprising on some counts. The results are discussed further in the newsletter.

The movement for the bifurcation of the state of Andhra Pradesh also saw a sudden intensification in December with strikes and protests taking place throughout the month. A brief summary of the sequence of events is given here.

We look forward to your sustained support in the coming year. Suggestions and comments about the newsletter may be sent to vanita.lokniti@gmail.com.

Thank you

Vanita Leah Falcao

★ Results of the Jharkhand Assembly Elections Declared

The results of the Jharkhand Assembly Elections held in 5 phases from the 23rd of November to 18th December 2009 were declared on the 23rd of December 2009.

Congress along with Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM) emerged as the biggest alliance with a total of 25 seats. Congress alone improved its performance compared to the 2005 assembly elections both in terms of seat tally as well as percentage of votes polled assembly elections (see table 1).

Jharkhand Assembly Election Results 2009 (with changes from 2005)				
Party	Seats Won 2009	Change from 2005	Vote % 2009	Change from 2005
Congress	14	5	16.16	4.11
JVM	11	11	8.99	8.99
BJP	18	-12	20.18	-3.39
JD(U)	2	-4	2.78	-1.22
RJD	5	-2	5.03	-3.45
JMM	18	1	15.20	0.91
AJSU	5	3	5.12	2.31
Others	8	-2	26.54	-8.26
Source: CSDS Data Unit				

After being defeated in the Lok Sabha elections, stakes for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in this election were high. The results in comparison to 2005 were disappointing for the party, not only in terms of seats won (where a loss of 12 seats was recorded) but also its vote share (which reduced by 3.5 percent). The alliance of the BJP with JD (U) i.e. the Janta Dal (United) also did not help the BJP consolidate votes.

After the defeat of Shibu Soren (President, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)) in the by-election held about a year ago, the re-emergence of the JMM was dismissed by many. However the party emerged as the real winner in this election. Though JMM could not

emerge as the single largest party, Soren managed to stake claim to form the government on December 25 with the support of the BJP-JD(U) combine, All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) and Jharkhand Janadhikar Manch (JJM). The coalition had a total of 44 seats of the 81 member assembly and was invited by the Governor to form the government. Shibu Soren successfully proved his majority on the floor of the House on the 7th of January 2010.

★ Intensification of the Agitation for the State of Telangana

The agitation for a separate state of Telangana (one of the three distinct regions of the state of Andhra Pradesh (AP), the other two being Andhra and Rayalaseema) witnessed an intensification during the month of December. The demand for the bifurcation has been in place since soon after the consolidation of the earlier state of Andhra (formed in 1953 and consisting of only the regions of coastal Andhra and Rayalseema) with the Telangana region in 1956.

In the first week of December 2009, the Telanagana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) president, K. Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) started a fast-unto-death demanding that the Congress party introduce a Telangana bill in the Parliament. KCR was joined in his struggle by various groups and organisations. Bandhs were enforced, bringing the region to a halt.

On December 9, 2009, the Government

of India (GoI) announced that the process for the formation of Telangana state will be initiated upon introduction and passage of a separation statement by the state assembly of AP. KCR called off his hunger strike.

However this announcement by the GoI was met with opposition from many opposing the formation of Telangana state. A majority of AP's legislature submitted their resignations in protest of the separation of Telangana. Members of Parliament and Ministers from the State Cabinet resigned in protest of the Government's decision to begin discussions on forming a new state.

Following this opposition, on December 23, 2009, the GoI announced that the issue of a new state will be addressed only after a consensus is reached.

The Centre called for a meeting of the eight recognised political parties of AP. This was held on 5th January, 2010, however no consensus was reached.

Interactive Session with Professor Steven I. Wilkinson

An interactive session between Professor Steven I. Wilkinson and the team at Lokniti was held on 18th December 2009 at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi. The purpose of the meeting was to receive feedback on the National Election Study (NES) 2009 questionnaire.

Various issues related to selection of questions and answer categories, profile of the sampled respondents, access to persons listed in the sample, filtered and double barreled questions as well as phrasing of sensitive questions were discussed.

Prof. Wilkinson is a scholar of India and South Asia and Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at Yale University. He is a co-recipient of the American Political Science Association (APSA) Woodrow Wilson prize for the best book published in government, politics and international affairs.

★ Academic Engagements of Members of the Lokniti Network:

Maharashtra Contextualized: Towards Comparing Indian States'

Suhas Palshikar and Rajeshwari Deshpande organized an international seminar titled 'Maharashtra Contextualized: Towards Comparing Indian States' at the Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Pune, Pune, on December 21-22, 2009.

The seminar examined the achievements, failures and limitations of Maharashtra which completes fifty years' of existence as a language based state in May 2010. This seminar was part of the continued effort of the Department of Politics and Public Administration at the University of Pune to understand the nuances of Indian politics from a regional vantage point. This was an initial effort to adopt the comparative method to understand state politics, with one state as the core focus and bringing in the experience of other states to make an assessment.

Scholars presented research papers to discuss historical legacies, political economy, party systems and the interaction of caste and politics in Maharashtra in comparison with states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Rajasthan.

The seminar was supported by the Centre for Advanced Studies in Indian Politics and the Diamond Jubilee seminar grants of the University of Pune.

Ashutosh Kumar, Punjab

Participated in a national seminar titled 'Towards an Inclusive India: Role of Parliament in Social Change' organized by Institute of Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Kerala and Maharaja College, Ernakulam held from December 15-17, 2009. He presented a paper 'Electoral Politics in Regional States of Haryana and Punjab'.

Kumar, A. 2010. 'Assembly Elections 2009 in Haryana: Exploring the Verdict'. Economic and Political Weekly Vol 45(1): 19-21

Anupama Saxena, Chhattisgarh

Presented a paper titled "Exploring Gender Gaps in Rural E-Governance In India" during a panel discussion on "Women and ICT in South Asia: Exclusion or Empowerment" which was a part of an international conference on "Fostering Sustainable Development in South Asia - Responding to Challenges" organised by Sustainable Development Policy Institute, Islamabad, Pakistan. The conference was held from 21st-23rd December.

Sanjay Kumar, Delhi

Kumar, S. 2009. 'Religious Practices among Indian Hindus: Does that Influence their Political Choices?'. Japanese Journal of Political Science Vol 10 (3): 313-332

Presented a paper titled 'Regional Parties, Coalition Politics and Functioning of Indian Parliament' at a national seminar 'Towards an Inclusive India: Role of Parliament in Social Change' organized by Institute of Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Kerala and Maharaja College, Ernakulam held from December 15th -17th, 2009.

Delivered a lecture "Surveys in Social Science Research" for a refresher course in Methods of Social Research at the Academic Staff College, Aligarh Muslim University on December 11th, 2009.

Sanjay Lodha, Rajasthan

Speaker at a workshop on Revival of American Studies in India, organized by American Centre, New Delhi on December 14-15, 2009. Presented on "The Role and Effectiveness of Indian Associations of American Studies".

Guest speaker at a workshop organized by the National Foundation of India on December 18th, 2009. The theme of the workshop was 'Self-Governance and Welfare State: Two Visions of State Building".

Key speaker at a symposium on the theme "Issues for Studying Society and Culture in Rajasthan" organized by Rajasthan Sociology Association (RSA) during the XVI All India Conference of RSA at Udaipur on December 27th, 2009.

Baba Mayaram, Madhya Pradesh

Mayaram, B (2009). *Satpura ke Bashinde*. Madhya Pradesh: Kisan Adivasi Sangathan.

★ **Recommended reading:**

How Far are the Electoral Rolls in India Ideal for a Democracy?

Retnakumar, J. 2009. Journal of South Asian Development, Vol. 4 (2): 137-160.

The base of a democracy lies with the voter population of that country, and they are supposed to uphold the principles of one-person, one-value and one-vote. But, how far can India's electoral rolls embrace those basic principles of democracy? In India, there are provisions for annual revision of the electoral rolls of every constituency, which includes the inclusion of eligible and exclusion of ineligible electors. In this context, it is important to examine to what extent the voter population in the electoral roll matches with the actual voter population. Which are the major states responsible for anomalies in the electoral rolls? What are the possible explanations for the inconsistencies in the electoral roll? This article addresses these issues and the findings suggest that the over-reporting of electors in the electoral rolls is to the extent of 20 million in 2004. It throws into light the exigency for improving the quality of electoral rolls timely and with proper methods prior to every election to maintain the principles of democracy.

Call for Papers

Seminar on "Assertion of the Regions: Exploring the Demand for New States in India" being organised by the Department of Political Science (UGC –SAP and ASIHSS Programmes, Panjab University Chandigarh on February 22-23, 2010

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