



Editor's Note

John Adams, the second US President, once famously declared, "Where annual elections end, there slavery begins". The recently concluded Afghanistan Presidential elections and the Indian by-election results provide us with an interesting and captivating comparison of the two democracies. One in its nascent stage, the other already evolving and developing with time. The by-election results managed to ambush Sheila Dixit and Nitish Kumar, both riding high on their Lok Sabha victories. In spite of having acquired an aura because of their development-centric approach, they were still not immune from the crippling effects of inner-party politics and division of votes. In Afghanistan, the euphoria over the Presidential elections was undermined by the reports of widespread ballot malpractices, intimidation, and other electoral frauds.

Amidst all of these debates, the October edition of the Lokniti Newsletter attempts to look at the electoral trends reflected in the recently concluded by-polls, and presents a brief abstract of the Assembly Elections scheduled for October. It also carries a report from Praveen Rai of Lokniti, who was a part of a five member team sent to Kabul by Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) to observe and assess the legal framework needed for conducting free and fair elections in Afghanistan. Any Comments and suggestions towards broadening the scope of this newsletter are highly encouraged and we hope to incorporate them in the future editions. We welcome articles from our readers that can be included in following editions.

Before letting you proceed with the newsletter, I would like to thank Banasmita Bora for her generous support and patience while answering my innumerable queries. Without her support this edition would've never taken shape (or colour).

Pratiksha Khanduri
—Guest Editor

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UPDATE:

Dr.G. Gopa Kumar, Professor and Head, Department of Political Science, University of Kerala, visited Monash University , Melbourne and other five universities in Australia as a Senior Fellow of the Australia-India Council to study "Multiculturalism and its Linkages with Australian Federalism " during June-August 2009. He also gave seminars in these places on India and politics in Kerala.

The June 5th, 2009 edition of The Hindu, his published article "The Zones of Conflict in Australia" questions whether the incidents in Melbourne represent a revival of racism or if its related to Australia's sagging economy.

Visit <http://www.thehindu.com/2009/06/05/stories/2009060551701100.htm> for more details.

**Presentations****Political Parties in India: National vs. Regional Are National Parties Really National?**

Mr. Sanjay Kumar, Deputy Director of Lokniti and a Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Studies made a presentation on the classification and nature of political parties at the "Country Roundtable on Political Parties and Civil Societies in Federal Countries" held in Bangalore on September 4, 2009. The roundtable was jointly organised by the Jain University, Forum of Federations and International Association of Centres for Federal Studies. The presentation looked at the classification of political parties, criteria for judging the status of a national party, important trends and implication of fragmenting political parties by evaluating the present scenario.

**Youth Study: The Indian Council of Social Science Research**

Mr. Sanjay Kumar and Dr. Sanjeer Alam made a presentation on the findings of the Youth Study at the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) on September 22, 2009. This was intended to brief a delegation from Macau which was visiting ICSSR to learn about the Indian youth, studies conducted on Indian youth and Indian government's policies regarding the youth. The delegation, headed by Mr. Sou Chio Fai, comprised of members from the Macau Youth Affairs department and scholars from the University of Macau.

Read reviews of the report "Indian Youth in a Transforming World. Attitudes and Perceptions".
http://www.ptinews.com/Bookworm/_19

<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/meet-our-youth-conservative-anxious-optimistic/402200/2>

<http://www.financialexpress.com/printer/news/402374/>

Sanjay Lodha, Associate Professor, Dept of Political Science, MLS University, Udaipur, made a presentation on '**Exploring the MKSS Experiment**' at Global Dialogue on Political Parties and Civil Society in Federal Countries, Bengaluru, Sept 4, organized by IACT, Forum of Federations and International Association for Centers for Federal Studies.

He also made a presentation on "**Informal Local Governance Institutions: Some Preliminary Findings and Observations from Rajasthan**", Workshop of DRC Centre for the Future State, Kathmandu, Sept.22-25, organized by IDS, Sussex.

Role Reversal: A Look at the 2009 By-Elections

A comprehensive look at the recently concluded by-elections held on August 18, September 10 and September 15 shows that within a few months of the Congress's success in the Lok Sabha elections, the party has had a rude jolt. The ruling Congress lost both Dwarka and Okhla seats in, while the ruling JD (U) in Bihar lost as many as seven seats. The by-elections were held in Bihar (for 18 seats), Gujarat (7), Tamil Nadu and Karnataka (five each), Uttar Pradesh (4 seats), Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and West Bengal (2 each), Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Meghalaya (1 each)

Ruling parties in Delhi and Bihar have been snubbed by the voters, after their victory in the recently concluded Lok Sabha elections. The Dwarka and Okhla seats, earlier held by Congress have now gone to BJP and the RJD. In Bihar, out of the 18 seats, RJD led by Lalu Prasad Yadav won six, the JD(U) led by Nitish Kumar won three, LJP led by Ram Vilas Paswan won three, the BJP and the Congress won two each, BSP one and Independent one. Prior to the by-elections, RJD and BJP had three seats each, the JD (U) 11 and LJP one. These results come as a setback to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar before Bihar goes to polls next year. The upper caste voters may be disenchanted with a blatant wooing of backwards and minorities. Nitish Kumar's efforts to woo the extreme backward castes may have also led to a consolidation of the OBC votes towards Lalu Prasad.



The anti-incumbency factor did not hold true for Gujarat. The ruling BJP bagged 5 of the 7 seats. Of the seven seats where by-polls took place, Congress previously held six seats while one was held by BJP. This was seen as a test for Narendra Modi, who was BJP's star campaigner during the Lok Sabha elections, but abstained from campaigning during the by-polls, avoiding any direct involvement.

Assembly Elections 2009

The Assembly Elections scheduled for October 13th 2009 in Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh and Maharashtra, comprise of all Congress ruled states. Arunachal Pradesh has 60 seats, Haryana 90 seats and Maharashtra 288 seats for the members of the assembly. The Congress will be contesting from 174 seats while the NCP will have the remaining 114. In the previous election, Congress had contested 166 and the NCP 122. Both parties also announced that they would have a joint manifesto and a joint campaign to counter the opposition BJP-Shiv Sena alliance. With MNS bagging a 4 percent vote share in the state and a whopping 21 per cent vote share in Mumbai, Raj Thackeray has emerged as a major political force. MNS has eaten into the Shiv-Sena- BJP vote bank, something which cost them around 9 seats across Mumbai, Thane and Nashik during the Lok Sabha elections. Samajwadi Party could emerge as a spoiler for the Congress-NCP alliance; which has stronghold in some pockets of Maharashtra. Looking to position itself as the third alternative, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has decided to contest all the 288 Assembly seats. BSP polled up to 5% votes in Maharashtra during the 2009 Lok Sabha elections.

In Haryana, seeking to capitalize on its success in the Lok Sabha elections, in which Congress retained 9 out of 10 seats in the state, the Haryana assembly was dissolved seven months ahead of its term, paving the way for early polls. While the Congress has decided to seek votes on its development plank, the opposition parties have been criticizing the government for its failure to address the power supply issue within the state. Apart from this, local factors like caste politics and other local development issues will come to play an important part.

Snapping its alliance with INLD, led by former Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala, BJP has decided to contest all 90 seats on its own. While in an effort to give momentum to Congress' campaign, Manmohan Singh, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi have all decided to address public rallies in different parts of the state before the elections.

In Arunachal Pradesh, Congress will be contesting from all 60 seats. Apart from that, the NCP, Trinamool Congress, BJP and JD(U) are also fielding candidates. In the run up to elections, Trinamool Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), both allies of the UPA, have made reports of Chinese incursions and Beijing's claims over Arunachal Pradesh electoral issues in the state. In this state assembly poll, the parties are fighting one another and therefore aren't reluctant to raise issues. Three Congress leaders from Arunachal Pradesh, including the present CM Dorjee Khandu have been elected unopposed to the 60-member state legislature. Out of a total 60, Congress at present has 45 members, it also enjoys the support of 13 independent MLA's and two MLA's from a regional party- the Arunachal Congress. With various other parties entering the race, political equations in Arunachal Pradesh could change and make things difficult for Congress.

Workshop on Research Methodology



Resource persons from the Lokniti network were involved in the conceptualization, design and training in two back to back workshops organized by The North-Western Regional Centre of the ICSSR at Chandigarh around the theme of use of numbers in Social Science Research in September 2009. They included, Ashutosh Kumar (Panjab University), Sanjay Kumar (CSDS), Divya Vaid (Lokniti-CSDS), Rahul Verma (Lokniti-CSDS) and Kailash K.K. (Panjab University).

The first workshop which ran from 14-19 September was introductory in nature and focused on Quantitative Methods and Techniques in Social Science Research. This workshop was meant for beginners and was intended to provide a general understanding of the nature and relevance of quantitative research methods.

The specialised training workshop which followed from September 21-26 2009 focused on quantitative data analysis. This advanced workshop used a modified version of the Lokniti-summer school training module. This was primarily a hands-on application workshop where the participants worked with the India component of the World Values Survey 2005 Wave Data file.

The participants who attended the workshops came from a wide variety of disciplines, including sociology, psychology, business studies, economics, education, mass communication, anthropology, geography and political science.

Democracy Update

German Federal Elections: 2009

Ever since the 2005 German elections, Angela Merkel of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) had been governing a grand coalition with its political adversary, the Social Democratic Party (SPD). After an uneasy alliance with its traditional rival, the CDU is all prepared to form a centre-right government after the recently concluded German Federal elections, held on 27th September

The Social Democrats saw their support plunge, receiving only 23% of the total votes, an 11% decline from the previous elections, the biggest loss in percentage faced by any German party in over 60 years. The FDP gained around 5%, giving it a share of 14.6% of the total votes. SPD suffered because it lost votes amongst its core supporters-the working class and the youth. In spite of her popularity, even the support for Merkel's conservative bloc fell down to 33%. **Only 17.9% voters in the eastern states supported SPD, a drop of more than 12% compared to 2005.** More than half of the lost votes went to other left-leaning parties, the Greens and the Left Party. The party that benefited the most from a staggering SPD was FDP. The 2009 elections have made smaller parties the biggest beneficiaries of the shift in votes, their strength and confidence is something that CDU will have to consider.

Japanese General Election : 2009

The national elections held in Japan on August 30, 2009 brought out surprising results for Prime Minister Taro Aso of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The LDP was defeated by Yukio Hatoyama of the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) which secured 42.4% of the votes cast, as against LDP's 26.4%. The election marked the worst defeat for a governing party in modern Japanese history. The LDP has been the ruling party for nearly 54 years, ever since its inception in 1955, only once being removed from power between 1993 and 1994. This will be the first time since its formation that the LDP will not be the majority party.

Out of the 480 seats in the House of Representatives, DJP now has 308 members, while LDP has 119. The 2009 elections saw LDP's votes decline from 47% in 2005 to 26.4%, a reduction of 177 seats.

The voters turned towards the DPJ, which ran on a populist stand of expanding the social safety net. This result can be viewed as a change, something which slowly found its way since the economy started collapsing.

Presidential Elections in Afghanistan: Still Not Over !

The provisional presidential election results declared after three weeks of polling (held on 20th August 2009) showed the incumbent Afghan President Hamid Karzai polling over 55 percent of the ballots, while his main rival Abdullah gained around 28 percent. The results were a complete surprise to me as during my visit to Afghanistan, the discussions with different stakeholders gave me the impression that Hamid Karzai was neither a popular choice of Afghan people, nor of the western allies. Though most of the observer groups reported irregularities during the election process, few could fathom that the election was being rigged on such a large scale by different parties and groups.

There have been charges of election irregularities and electoral fraud against Karzai. The UN backed Electoral Complaints Commission (ECC) which is the adjudicative body, has received 2384 complaints against the polling and counting stages of the electoral process. So far ECC has disqualified votes from 83 polling stations and ordered a recount in parts of three provinces, thought to be favourable to Karzai. Charges of election fraud and gross irregularities are being investigated by ECC and till the final results are not declared, the political turmoil in Afghanistan will continue.

This situation does not bode well for Afghanistan as there has been an escalation of violence after the elections. The security situation in the country has turned from bad to worse. If votes for Karzai fall below 50 percent, then a 'run off' election would be required between him and Abdullah Abdullah. This will be difficult due to the harsh winters and adverse climatic conditions in the region. In such a situation, the only viable option available with the western allies would be to strike a deal between Karzai and Abdullah and form a joint government.

(Praveen Rai from Lokniti visited Kabul in June 2009 as a member of exploratory mission of Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), Thailand to assess whether the conditions were conducive for sending an election observation mission to Afghanistan).

PUBLICATIONS

Special Issue of the *Economic and Political Weekly*

The Economic and Political Weekly VOL 45 No. 39 September 26 – October 2, 2009 is a special issue on the General Election 2009 in India. Many Lokniti members have contributed articles for this special issue. The papers are based on the findings of the National Election Study 2009 conducted by Lokniti during the Lok Sabha Election 2009. Besides the State specific papers and an overview, this special issue includes various thematic papers on Coalitions politics, Electoral participation, Leadership, Issues in the Election, Economic reforms, Dalit, Adivasi, Muslim and Urban Vote etc.

Other Publications

Rajeshwari Deshpande, "Breaking Free of the Post Mandal Deadlock", *Seminar*, #601, September 2009, pp76-80.

Yogendra Yadav, "Rethinking Social Justice", *Seminar*, #601, Republic of Ideas, September 2009, pp81-88

List of Articles in Economic and Political Weekly, September 26-October 2, 2009: Lokniti Contributions

Between Fortuna and Virtu: Explaining the Congress' Ambiguous Victory in 2009

Yogendra Yadav , Suhas Palshikar

Patterns of Political Participation: Trends and Perspective

Sanjay Kumar

Alliances and Lessons of Election 2009

K K Kailash

Are National Elections Any More Than Aggregations of State-Level Verdicts?

Pradeep Chhibber

The Economy and Voting in the 15th Lok Sabha Elections

K C Suri

Political Communalisation of Religions and the Crisis of Secularism

D L Sheth

Issues in General Election 2009

Praveen Rai

How Did Women Vote in Lok Sabha Elections 2009?

Rajeshwari Deshpande

Leadership at the State Level Mattered

Sandeep Shastri

Wither Muslim Politics?

Mohd Sanjeer Alam

Dalits Voting Patterns

Rahul Verma

Urban Patterns of Voting and Party Choices

Vanita Leah Falcao

Electoral Participation among the Adivasi Community

Divya Vaid

On the Electoral Process

Banasmita Bora

Andhra Pradesh: A Vote for Status Quo?

K C Suri , P Narasimha Rao , V Anji Reddy

Karnataka: A Default Win for the BJP

Sandeep Shastri , Veena Devi , B S Padmavathi

Kerala: A Negative Verdict on LDF Government

K M Sajad Ibrahim

Tamil Nadu: Against Expectations

G Koteswara Prasad

Chhattisgarh: An Emphatic Win for the BJP

Anupama Saxena , Praveen Rai

Bihar: Development Matters

Sanjay Kumar , Rakesh Ranjan

Madhya Pradesh: Congress Makes Unexpected Gains

Yatindra Singh Sisodia , Ram Shankar

Goa: Return of the North-South Divide

Maria Do Ceu Rodrigues

Gujarat: BJP Scrapes Through

Mahashweta Jani

Maharashtra: Congress-NCP Manages Victory

Rajeshwari Deshpande , Nitin Birmal

Bihar: Development Matters

Sanjay Kumar , Rakesh Ranjan

Jharkhand: Politics of Performance

B K Sinha , Harishwar Dayal

Naveen Patnaik Authors a New Chapter for Orissa

Surya Narayan Misra

Sikkim: Politics of Inclusiveness and One-Party Dominance

Mukund Giri

West Bengal: Mandate for Change

Jyotiprasad Chatterjee , Suprio Basu

Arunachal: Emergence of Issue-Based Politics?

Nani Bath

Assam: A Fractured Verdict

Sandhya Goswami

Manipur: Congress Triumphant

S Mangi Singh

Meghalaya: Verdict on Expected Lines

R K Satpathy

Mizoram: The Congress Holds Its Ground

Lallian Chhunga

Nagaland: Behind the Curtain

Amongla N Jamir

Fifth Victory in a Row for CPI(M) in Tripura

Sukhendu Debbarma , Mousami Debbarma

Delhi Elections – The 'Local' Matters

Biswajit Mohanty

Haryana: Congress Retains Its Electoral Supremacy

Kushal Pal , Praveen Rai

Himachal Pradesh: Pro-Incumbency Helps the BJP

Ramesh K Chauhan , S N Ghosh

Punjab: Resurgence of the Congress

Ashutosh Kumar , Jagroop Singh Sekhon

Rajasthan: Performance and Campaigning Pay Dividends

Sanjay Lodha

Uttar Pradesh: Signs of a Congress Revival?

Mirza Asmer Beg , Suhir Kumar

Uttarakhand: Congress Outperforms Its Opponents

Annupurna Nautiyal

Lokniti Interns

Pratiksha Khanduri:

Pratiksha is currently pursuing her Bachelor's degree in journalism from Lady Shri Ram College, Delhi University. She is in the process of writing her dissertation on "*New World Politics and the Emergence of New Media Tools: Democracy and Politics in the 21st Century*". Her areas of interest include political sociology, globalization and its socio-political-cultural impacts, political communication, and media and cultural studies. Pratiksha was responsible for bringing out the Lokniti newsletter for October 2009. In her spare time, she likes to watch reruns of South Park and catch old videos of Bill Maher.

She will be interning at Lokniti for the month of October.

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