

Lokniti

Programme for Comparative Democracy



Lokniti Newsletter
(For Private Circulation only)

March- April 2007



Photo Essay- The World of Youth (1)

Photo Courtesy- www.flickr.com (uploaded on 20th June 2006)

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From the Editor's Desk-

Namaste,

Welcome to another double issue of the *Lokniti* newsletter for the months of March-April 2007. The cold winds have finally given way to the warm but dusty air of spring in Delhi. It's a good time to clear out the stale energy that might be cluttering your home and office and make way for new energy to flow in. While the trees get ready for some new leaves for the year, it might be best for you to put the old ideas to rest, stop mulling over new ideas, and get on with some implementation work.

The change in weather however has not made any difference in the pace of *Lokniti's* working. A meeting was held in Bangalore on the occasion of *Lokniti's* 10th Anniversary, from 31st January- 2nd February 2007. Prof. D.L.Sheth delivered a public lecture on the occasion. *Lokniti* in collaboration with Infosys organised a panel discussion during the same time at the Infosys, Bangalore campus. An exit poll was held for Punjab and Uttarakhand, when the states went for elections in February. Under the KAF-CSDS youth study project 16 case studies were commissioned. The case study writers presented their proposed study before the co-ordination committee on 9th- 10th March 2007. *Lokniti* has initiated a new and interesting project titled 'Citizen's Audit of the Democratic State'. The NCERT team has completed three political science textbooks for the academic year 2007-2008. Keeping in tune with the photo-essay of this month, which is on youth, the suggested reading is the World Development Report- 2007 *Development and the Next Generation*.

The 'Youth' phase of an individual's life is a journey of discoveries. It's quite an exciting and energetic phase of life. The individual discovers various aspects of his/ her own life and how the other individuals around him affect this life. Though 'youth' is mainly a temporal concept and varies across societies and cultures, the youth age group taken for the KAF-CSDS youth study project is quite comprehensive (14-34 years). It starts from an age when an individual starts understanding life; starts taking

his/ her own decisions, and ends when he/ she takes responsibility for the next generation. The early youth is mostly an aggressive phase where the 'self' becomes very important. All decisions are taken for the self and the youth opposes authority, laws, rules and 'curfews'. This opposition to authority does not last long though and a more responsible behaviour can be observed as soon as the youth enters his/ her twenties.

The youth have very firm opinions and beliefs in most matters and do not shy away from expressing them, be it protesting against authoritative policies and laws or even displaying affection in public. Youth groups and clubs, sports field, the Internet, are some spaces of democracy, which the youth use to their optimum worth. These are democratic spaces, where all viewpoints are articulated and observed without any constraints. The 'risk-taking factor' is another important attribute of the youth. These risks can be in terms of their health, selecting jobs and planning for the future. Most of the habits formed and choices made in these youth years last throughout the lifetime. As the teenage years progress into the early and mid twenties, the self becomes a little less important and the youth become aware of the life ahead of them. They assume responsibility for their actions and start realising the need for rules and laws.

So what consequences does this world of youth have for democracy? Today's youth is emerging as the new power of the state, who are no longer ready to accept things as were handed down to them by their earlier generation. They are questioning the diktats of the previous generation and accepting them only after weighing them on their own scales. They are ready to take matters in their own hands and are compelling the system to perform its duties. Democracy to them has a much larger connotation than only the political. Freedom of expression is being used by them to not only fulfil their own interests but also to get justice for other youth members, even those who are dead (like Jessica Lal, S. Manjunath). Though they view the government and authorities critically at this stage, promising and talented young leaders are taking full advantage of the political platform provided to them by the state, by entering politics.

For detailed information on *Lokniti* and the projects mentioned here, kindly log on to our website <http://www.lokniti.org>.

- Best Wishes
Reetika Syal

Lokniti Meeting in Bangalore -

Lokniti in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla organised a three day Seminar on 'Electoral Politics in Indian States' in Bangalore from 31st January to 2nd February 2007. Most of the *Lokniti* state co-ordinators presented papers. A half-day meeting was also organised in which a decision was taken to institute an annual award for the 'Best Investigator'.

Lokniti's first 10th Anniversary lecture was delivered by Prof. D.L. Sheth at Bangalore University on 1st February 2007. It was a public lecture organized with the department of Political Science, University of Bangalore titled 'Caste and the Politics of Exclusion and Inclusion: Reflections for the Political Theory of Caste'.

Lokniti in collaboration with Infosys organised a panel discussion on 'Economic Reforms and Electoral Politics' at the Infosys Campus in Bangalore on 2nd February 2007. The panelists were K.C. Suri, Nandan Nelekani, Pradeep Chibber, Ram Chandra Guha and Yogendra Yadav with Peter R. deSouza as the moderator.



Photo Essay- The World of Youth (2)
Photo Courtesy- www.flickr.com (uploaded on 3rd August 2006)

Elections in States-

Punjab and Uttarakhand went for polls in February and *Lokniti* captured the mood of these states with an exit poll. We were fairly accurate for the Uttarakhand results, but the Punjab poll results came as a surprise.

Punjab, 13th February 2007 - The CSDS-CNN-IBN-*Hindustan Times* Exit Poll on predicted an equal 41% vote share for both the Congress party and the SAD-BJP alliance, and an almost equal share in terms of seats as well (50-60 seats each). The results of the exit poll were announced hours after over 65 per cent of electorate voted to elect a new Punjab Assembly. However, the counting of votes, which was held on February 27, declared the SAD-BJP alliance as the majority party.

Uttarakhand, 22nd February 2007- In Uttarakhand the exit poll suggested that there would be no anti-incumbency wave and that BJP will emerge with a clear majority in the state (with 33 to 39 seats). The remaining 8 to 10 seats are likely to go to other smaller parties, mainly the UKD and the BSP. After counting the votes however, BJP was given till 20th March to prove their majority.

KAF-CSDS Youth Project Commissions Case

Studies-

The KAF-CSDS youth study commissioned 16 case studies for the project in January 2007. The studies were selected on the bases of entries received through an advertisement given in August 2006. The selected case study writers from all across the country, made presentations on the content and methodology of their particular studies before the coordination committee members on 9th- 10th March 2007 at CSDS. Prof. Peter R. deSouza, one of the principal investigators of the youth study said that the case studies are not an illustration of a theory, which we might have worked out before. They are intended to surprise or startle the reader. A quantitative survey method will be covered by the nationwide sample survey therefore there is scope that different methods like ethnography, group discussions and personal interviews be used for the case study methodology.

The titles of the selected case studies are-

1. Youth in Violent Conflict in Jammu and Kashmir: A Comparative Analysis of Perceptions and Attitudes of Minority Community Students of Jammu University and Kashmir University- **Falendra K. Sudan** (University of Jammu, J&K)
2. Regimes of Control: Hindi, Films and Political Culture of Youth in Manipur- **Yengkhom Jilangamba** (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)
3. Youth And Student Politics: A Case Study Of Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi- **Pushkar Raj** (University of Delhi, Delhi)
4. Ethnography Of Dalit Youth Protest In Maharashtra - **Gopal Guru** (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)
5. Hear The Unheard Voices: Tribal Youths On The Issues Of Development- **Govind Chandra Rath** (G.B. Pant Social Science Institute, Allahabad)
6. Whither Formalism, Fundamentalism Or Feminism: Sania Mirza, 'Sexy' Dressing And The Politics Of Youth Perception- **Surbhi Tiwari** (University of Pune, Pune)
7. Youth And Cyber Cafés: A Case Study Of Ranchi- **Shweta Jha** (Ranchi)
8. Shaping Their Life: Kerala Youth Respond To Changing Socio-Economic Order- **Rajesh Komath**, (Mahatma Gandhi University, Kerala) and **Rakhee Timothy** (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi)
9. Modern Youth And Corporality As/ In Work- **Swati Ghosh** (Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata)
10. Youth, Consumption And Entertainment: A Study Of 'Prasads Imax' In Hyderabad- **C. Ramachandraiah** (University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad)
11. Youth Residing In The Slum Area Of Mumbai District of India- **Rohini Sudhakar** (SNDT Women's University, Mumbai)
12. Illiterate And Semi Literate Youth In Democratic India: Their Hopes, Struggles And Aspirations- **Jasvir Singh** (Independent Researcher, Bangalore)
13. Young Girls Dealing With The Pressures of Early Marriage in Rural Areas of Rajasthan- **Pinki Solanki** (Independent Researcher, New Delhi)
14. Enrolment, At 12+ Level Course by Muslim Women Studying at Undergraduate Level- **Suniti Nagpurkar** (V.E.S College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Mumbai)
15. Changing Life Styles and its Psychological Implications for Youth: A Study of Bangalore- **Shailaja Shastri** (International Academy for Creative Teaching, Bangalore)
16. Image and Identification among Indian Call Centre Workers- **Jonathan Murphy** (Cardiff University, United Kingdom)

MIT-Pune Students Visit CSDS-

The students of MIT School of Governance, Pune interacted with the faculty at CSDS on 26th March 2007. MIT had earlier shown interest in the working of Lokniti and CSDS, and this visit was a part of their study tour to the capital.

Lokniti Regional Centre at Pune-

A regional centre of Lokniti at Pune was formally activated in the Lokniti meeting at CSDS, Delhi in December 2006. Since then the centre has carried out the following activities

- A two-day workshop on *Caste in Contemporary India* was organized on 19th –20th December 2006. The workshop was planned as a preliminary brain storming exercise to understand caste in its contemporaneity and to try to develop an empirically rooted, integrated approach for the study of the caste question. Discussions in the workshop were planned around three broad themes. First, *caste- occupation linkages-* extent of changes in the traditional occupational patterns, second, *the re-emergence of single caste consciousness-* caste identity and caste associations and third, *caste and politics in post-Mandal era.* Discussions on each of these themes were woven around one or two lead presentations of scholars working in the respective areas. The workshop was useful in redefining the research questions about caste, in taking a stock of the various ongoing exploratory studies on caste and also to discuss the possible collective research agenda for a better understanding of the caste question. Apart from the Pune team, Prof. D.L.Sheth and Prof. Yogendra Yadav from the Lokniti group participated in the workshop. There is a plan to publish/circulate a detailed note about the proceedings of the workshop soon.
- It was decided at the Lokniti meeting in Bangalore, in May 2005 that the Pune centre would initiate pilot studies for the District Profile project. Accordingly, three districts in Maharashtra were studied initially. Draft reports for the same (in English and Marathi) are ready. There is a plan to go ahead with the other

districts of the State once these reports and the estimated expenses for the project are discussed among Lokniti members.

- As a continuation of the regional centre's study of Pune city, a socio-economic survey has been planned in select municipal wards of Pune city in March-April 2007. This will be an attempt to observe the patterns of generational social mobility among different caste groups of the city dwellers. The work is undertaken in collaboration with Prof. Ghanshyam Shah, who is planning to conduct a similar survey in the city of Ahmedabad, Gujarat. In Pune, the estimated sample to be covered in the survey is of 1200 families.

For further information on the above projects please contact Rajeshwari at For further information on the above projects please contact Rajeshwari, Lokniti's network member at rajeshwarid@unipune.ernet.in



Photo Essay- The World of Youth (3)

Photo Courtesy- www.images.google.co.in

Punjab Activities-

Dr. Ashutosh Kumar, *Lokniti* coordinator for Punjab, had organised a national seminar titled *Regions Within Regions: Rethinking State Politics In India* on 26th- 27th February 2007 in Chandigarh. He also organised a two-day teachers' training workshop on the theme *New Trends in Political Science* on 19th- 20th March 2007 for the teachers of Panjab University.

NCERT Textbooks Endeavour-

The *Lokniti*- CSDS endeavour with NCERT to write political science textbooks for classes X and XII is almost complete for this academic year. Prof. Suhas Palshikar and Prof. Yogendra Yadav have been the chief advisors for this project. The completed textbooks are '*Democratic Politics II*' for class X and '*Contemporary World Politics*' and '*Indian Politics Since Independence*' (almost complete) for class XII. The three textbooks will be included in the national syllabus of NCERT for the academic year 2007-2008. The team has also written separate Hindi versions of the textbooks.



Photo Essay- The World of Youth (4)

Photo Courtesy- www.flickr.com (uploaded on 20th April 2006)

Citizen's Audit of the Democratic State- Call for Essays

Lokniti has initiated a new and interesting project titled 'Citizen's Audit of the Democratic State'. This is an attempt to encourage all young citizen's under 30 years of age to assess the democratic state. The state we encounter everyday has deficits, distortions and dysfunctionalities (3Ds), very different from our picture of the ideal democratic state. We want accounts, of these 3Ds, that will help us understand why the Indian state expresses itself in ways that are so citizen unfriendly. The cases must refer to any one of the 5 attributes of the state

- *To Protect life and liberty*
- *To Redress Wrongs,*
- *To Provide Documentation of Citizenship,*
- *To Regulate political, social and economic activity,*
- *To Provide Welfare, Development and other Services*

For more information log on to- www.lokniti.org or write to lokniti@gmail.com.

Suggested Reading-

Development and the Next Generation- World Development Report- 2007

The World Development Report (WDR) is a report that documents the need of the hour. It stresses that in order to alleviate poverty and bring about global development, investment has to be made in the right channels. In this regard the WDR recognises the youth as that channel and agent of change. The WDR 2007 *Development and the Next Generation* documents the size of the youth population across the world and identifies various aspects of youth-hood where investments could be made. These investments aim at increasing opportunities and developing capabilities of the youth and reintegrating them in the mainstream through second chances. The report terms these as the transitions of a youth's life such as

education, employment, forming families and political engagements of youth, which it terms as citizenship. It is during youth that people start to participate in social and political life on their own and decide which skills to acquire, where to work, and whom to develop intimate relationships with.

The WDR defines youth as '*a transitional phase from childhood to adulthood when young people, through a process of intense physiological, psychological, social and economic change, gradually come to be recognized- and to recognize themselves-as adults*'.

Expanding the sections of the report, the first one deals with the importance of making investments in youth. This is because in terms of knowledge and health, the youth today are more favourably placed than the previous generation. There is considerable expansion of the labour market and even the demand for skilled workers is increasing. While previous policies in developing countries have benefited the present generation of youth, there are several constraints yet to be solved. The second section identifies themes/ issues like where the young people face challenges in like education, health, employment etc. that would serve as potential areas in which investment in terms of youth friendly policies could be made. Concentrating on such sectors would help build capabilities of youth and give them abundant opportunities of growth.

The section begins with, the chapter on education highlighting the importance of focussing on quality learning, which expands learning opportunities, develops the decision making capabilities of youth and gives a second chance to those who failed to acquire basic skills the first time around. This can be achieved through financing the expansion and improvement of post primary education (which is a constraint in most low-income countries), improving the incentives to learn, and offering a second chance to the ones who dropped out.

The next chapter discusses a range of problems of youth and employment sector like child labour, unemployment, lack of mobility within jobs, and other factors that make the youth vulnerable in the job market. Some interesting findings of the report are that the youth are more vulnerable than adults in the job market, in the public sector the wage gains are significantly greater for youth than for older workers, female participation has increased in the labour market and that there is a greater preference among the youth for government jobs. It also states that employment policies fail to have desired results in most countries due to their poor design and weak enforcement and that the government should move from job guarantees towards facilitating job mobility among youth and help them in developing their skills through vocational trainings.

The chapter on health investigates issues of communicable diseases, lifestyle disorders and abuses most prevalent among youth. Even though the death rate for young people (between 12-24 years) is the lowest, it does not mean that the youth are safe from risky health habits. The communicable disease section discusses about AIDS and other STDs, the rate of which is very high in the youth. Non-communicable or lifestyle diseases such as obesity and hypertension etc. and practices of smoking, alcohol and substance abuse such as drugs are also a part of today's youth life. The formation of risky behaviour in youth can deplete the economy of productive human capital for many years into the future, and result in wastage of initial governmental investment made when an individual enters the workforce.

Forming families is another important aspect of youth-hood as young people start taking responsibility for their spouse and children during this phase. Their decision about family formation and parenthood shapes future demographic trends. Nearly 60% girls in developing countries become mothers before the age of 25 and the average age for boys is 25-29.

For many reasons including societal pressures, newly weds make a swift transition to parenthood. Availability of good nutrition and optimum reproductive health are extremely important as pregnancy related illnesses drain women's productivity, thereby jeopardising their income earning capacity. All the above-mentioned conditions hold extremely true for India, with sharp differences in terms of rural-urban and educated-uneducated. Marriage and child bearing are practices most people adhere to. However the trends seem to be changing. Due to the expanding educational opportunities and rapid socio economic changes, the trend of late marriages and delayed motherhood is becoming increasingly common.

Youth is also the phase when young people can vote for the first time. They start taking up roles that are social and in a broader sense political. Young people have more opportunities to participate in public life than ever before, as 60 % of the world's countries are democracies. Many countries including India have taken up initiatives towards political decentralization providing opportunities to participate at a sub-national level. In several low-income countries, interest in politics and confidence in the civil service is increasing as opposed to the attitudes in developed countries. Data shows that in all low and middle-income countries especially China, India and Nigeria more young people are interested in politics in 2000 as compared to 1990 (World Values Survey).

The third section deals with some issues, which are located beyond these transitions like forming of appropriate policies for youth and interaction of youth across borders. The issue of migration is concerned mainly with youth who migrate due to economic, family and community reasons. Information and communication technology is making youth all across the world interact with each other and with E learning, the youth from developing countries are taking up courses online with universities in developed countries without having to leave their land.

Lectures/ Presentations

- Prof Peter R. deSouza participated in the Management Committee Meeting of Children's Rights in Goa, on 17th and 18th February 2007.
- Dr. A.K.Verma, *Lokniti's* Uttar Pradesh co-ordinator was invited as an analyst for a live telecast on 'Pre- Election Analysis: A discussion on the emerging political scenario in Uttar Pradesh' by ABC Channel, Kanpur on 24 February 2007.
- Dr. A.K.Verma, presented a paper 'Identity Politics of Sub-regions in Uttar Pradesh' at a two-day Seminar on *Regions within Regions: Beyond State Politics* at the Department of Political Science, Punjab University, Chandigarh on 26th- 27th February 2007.
- Lallian Chunga, *Lokniti's* Mizoram co-ordinator presented a paper on 'Human Right and Judicial Administration in Mizoram: Problems and Prospects' at a two-day seminar on *Human Rights: Concepts and Issues* which was organized by Administrative Training Institute, Government of Mizoram under the sponsorship of National Human Rights Commission on 1st- 2nd March 2007.

- Dr. A.K.Verma was invited by the Nehru Study Centre, Department of Political Science, University of Kerala, Thiruvananthapuram as Visiting Fellow from 5th- 9th March, 2007 to deliver lectures on the following topics- Party System in India and Nehru's Contribution, Social Osmosis and Reverse Social Osmosis in Uttar Pradesh, Identity Politics and Indian Democracy: A Cross Sectional Analysis, Problematising Identity and Identity Politics: The Post-Independence Transformation and Issues and Trends in the Electoral Politics of Uttar Pradesh
 - He presented another paper on 'Ideology and Caste in Uttar Pradesh: A Theory of Social Osmosis and Reverse Social Osmosis' at an international seminar organized by Giri Institute of Development Studies, Lucknow, on 28th- 29th March, 2007.
 - Mr. Sanjay Kumar, delivered a lecture on Survey in Social Science Research, at Panjab University Chandigarh, on 20th March 2007.
- Sanjay Kumar, Rajeeva Karandikar, Yogendra Yadav, Mulayam, Maya Neck and Neck: BJP Trails Far Behind, Congress Farther, *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, March 28, 2007
 - Sanjay Kumar, Yogendra Yadav, Lens May Be Caste But All Eyes Are On Development, *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, March 28, 2007
 - Peter R. deSouza, Neighbour's Envy, Owner's Pride, *The Indian Express*, March 16, 2007
 - Peter R. deSouza, And Miles To Go Before They Wake, *The Indian Express*, New Delhi, March 30, 2007



Articles Published-

- A.K.Verma, The Elusive Samajwad, *Seminar*, No. 571, March, 2007, pp.43-48
- Sanjay Kumar, The Prospects, Battle Ground U.P, *Seminar*, Issue No. 571, March 2007.
- A.K.Verma, Reverse Social Osmosis in Uttar Pradesh, *Economic And Political Weekly*, March 10-16, 2007, pp. 817-820.
- A.K.Verma, Local Writ Large, *Indian Express*, 15 March 2007, p. 11

Photo Essay- The World of Youth (5)
 Photo Courtesy- www.flickr.com (uploaded on 24th July 2005)

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The next issue of the *Lokniti* newsletter
will be published in May 2007.