



ISST Newsletter

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ISST newsletter seeks to provide information on research and action programmes being conducted by the institute. The newsletter is available on ISST's website.

The Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), a non-profit non-governmental organization, was set up as a society in 1964 and registered as a Trust in 1980. ISST's overall aim is research for social

change with focus on work and well-being from a gender perspective. In recognition of its work, ISST has been conferred NGO Consultative Status by the United Nations.

Projects at ISST

Completed Projects

Rapid Assessment Study of the Impact of the Financial and Economic Slowdown on the Handicrafts Industry in Sanganer, Rajasthan

ISST has completed this rapid assessment study for ILO, New Delhi. Two sectors, namely the hand-printed textile and hand-made paper have been studied under this project. The study is based on detailed interviews with the entrepreneurs of block printing and hand-made paper industry at Sanganer and workers both at unit level and home-based. Apart from this, representatives from block printers' Association and Federation of Rajasthan Handicraft Exporters were also interviewed. Secondary data published by the concerned ministries have been used in the study. A consultation with the stake holders represented by the government, workers, employers, entrepreneurs, trade union leaders, and scholars was organized in Jaipur on 17 June 2009 as a part of the ILO initiative to deal with the economic slowdown. A report of the study was submitted to ILO, New Delhi in July 2009.

WIEGO Law Project: Issues Paper on Domestic Workers

ISST had undertaken an assignment from SEWA Bharat, Delhi to write an 'Issues Paper' on Domestic Workers. The paper focuses the key issues that have emerged in the sector of domestic workers and documents labour specific legislations in order to develop a platform of legal demands. The overall goal of WEIGO (Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing) project is to make a significant contribution to the development

of an enabling legal environment for informal workers that promotes work and economic opportunity, labour rights, benefits and protection. The paper has been used in national level stakeholder consultation in July 2009, organized by ILO.

Evaluation of Doosra Dashak

ISST has completed a baseline and end-line survey (April 2007 to April 2009) of the Doosra Dashak programme in three blocks in Rajasthan which is supported by Sir Dorabjee Tata Trust, Mumbai. The project is focused on creating youth activists in villages who will be future leaders in the community. The baseline and end-line evaluation has been done in Bap, Kishanganj and Pisangan blocks of Rajasthan. The evaluation report has been submitted to Foundation for Education and Development, Jaipur.

Documentation of the training programme organized by Mahila Samakhya Karnataka

ISST Bangalore was commissioned to document the state level capacity building training programme “*Enhancing the role of women in strengthening democracy*” from 20th to 22nd July 2009 at Bangalore organized by Karnataka Mahila Samakhya. ISST has submitted the report to Karnataka Mahila Samakhya in July 2009.

Ongoing Projects

Documentation of the Experiences of UKSN Women’s Groups in Uttarakhand

The objective of this study is to document the experiences of Uttarakhand Mahila Parishad (Uttarakhand Women’s Federation), a network of around 450 women’s groups (Mahila Sangathans or Mahila Mangal Dal), spread over seven districts of Uttarakhand. The Parishad is a part of the larger network under the umbrella of Uttarakhand Seva Nidhi Paryavaran Shikshan Sansthan (Uttarakhand Environment Education Centre), which has been working in the hill villages of Uttarakhand since 1988 along with community based organisations in different regions.

Based on interviews and discussions with women’s groups in villages in 14 villages in Kumaon and Garhwal, and with community organisers from May 2009-August 2009 the study explores the process of formation of groups; their endeavours in the spheres of natural resource management; accessing government services; resolving conflict; political participation; bringing about social change and change in gender relations. It attempts to capture the strategies and challenges in the process of organisation and the evolution of groups over the years and highlight the unique aspects of the functioning of groups in

different villages. The duration of this study is from April to December 2009. The study is sponsored by Rajeshwar and Susheela Trust.

Impact of Micro Finance to Women on Reduction of Domestic Violence: Case Study in Haryana

The provision of micro finance to women is a way of ‘empowering’ women. ISST has undertaken this study with the objectives to investigate whether there is any evidence to support the view that micro finance to women reduces the incidence of domestic violence, and if so under what circumstances. In the light of the high importance placed upon micro credit and SHGs in the current policy and planning framework, it is believed that more information in the context of north Indian states would be useful. The study has conducted on a small sample of individual members from 12000 SHGs in the state. A detailed questionnaire was developed by the Ministry of Women Child Development, Govt. of India to canvass to women SHG members. Canvassing a questionnaire may not be enough to capture the sensitive issues, hence focused group discussions and in-depth interviews were carried out with the women in each of the study locations. The three districts selected to conduct the survey were Rewari, Ambala and Jajjar. A total of 202 women (SHG) members across three districts in Haryana were interviewed. Data Analysis is under progress. The findings of the study would be presented in a workshop on 30 November this year. This study is sponsored by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India.

National Consultation on ‘Current Employment Strategies and Women’s Work

ISST partnered with ILO to provide technical inputs towards organizing the National Consultation on current employment strategies and women’s work on July 6-7, 2009. A background paper on Women’s Contribution to the GDP was commissioned by ISST. The papers and the conference report are being finalized. This project was *sponsored by ILO, New Delhi*

Revisiting Education for All

Revisiting Education for All (REFA), a field-based study of the schooling situation in rural India, entered its third year and initial findings from the study have been shared through seminar presentations. ISST Bangalore has completed qualitative studies in the southern states of India looking at innovative initiatives in education. The project is supported by IDRC, Canada.

Baseline and End line Study for Street Vendors in Ahmedabad City

ISST has undertaken a baseline study on Street Vendors in Ahmedabad under project, “New Strategy of SEWA: To Save the Livelihoods of women street vendors in the Era of World Class Cities”. SEWA has organized 57110 vendors in Ahmedabad city with an objective to save the vendors’ livelihood and to bring them in the main stream. To assess the impact of SEWA’s work on the socio-economic and working conditions of street vendors in Ahmedabad city in the areas of capacity building and promotion and protection of livelihoods with street vendors, Mahila SEWA Trust has commissioned the ISST to conduct an impact study through baseline and end line research survey. ISST has already submitted the report of the baseline survey to SEWA in September 2009. The end-line survey would be conducted in 2011.

Institutional Strengthening and Support: IT Up-gradation, Training, Research and Dissemination

ISST has received an Institutional support grant from IDRC in February 2009 for a set of activities including IT Infrastructure up-gradation, IT training with the intention of building up research and dissemination capacities at the Institute. ISST completed a weeklong training programme on applications of Windows Vista and Microsoft Office 2007 from 24 July to 3 August 2009 at ISST’s Habitat Centre office for its staff members. The training was conducted by the Career development centre of HCL Infosystems Limited. ISST also organized a three-day training workshop on Free and Open Source Software and Linux with assistance from Sarai, CSDS, Delhi between 11 and 13 September 2009 at Saathi Centre, Kalyanpuri for the young and adolescent members of the centre. As a part of the project, ISST Bangalore is presently engaged in carrying out a Study of IT sector programmes for the Youth from Low Income families in Bangalore. Mapping of the training institutions of Malleswaram area is being done and questionnaires are administered to elicit information regarding the youths from low income families. Another set of questionnaire is being used to carry out interviews with the working youths from the low income group in the IT sector. In connection with this various NGOs in Bangalore have been visited.

The Policy Research Environment and Policy Research Organizations in South Asia

ISST has undertaken a research project entitled, ‘The Policy Research Environment and Policy Research Organizations in South Asia’ with support from IDRC, Canada.. This project includes various activities designed to develop better understanding of the nature of policy research organizations in South Asia and the varying environments in which they function. A set of background papers have been commissioned and three Roundtables held

with heads of organizations from five countries in South Asia. The project will continue till May next year.

Urban Poor Livelihoods in the National Capital Region: Emerging Trends

The study examines livelihood issues with special attention to obtaining a gendered understanding and a focus on informal work for the poor and migrated population. The study specifically looks at a sector within informal care economy i.e. domestic work, and a sector that is continuously growing to offer employment opportunities i.e. IT-enabled services and low-end IT work. More than one thousand households have been surveyed under each category adopting a representative sampling method. Apart from this, case studies have been done to supplement the findings from the survey. It is expected that, findings from the present study will lead to action and strategizing some long term policy interventions that would directly benefit the groups of workers studied. The findings from these two studies would be presented in a two-day workshop in November this year. This project is being sponsored by Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Mumbai.

Examining the NREGA – Women’s Participation and Impacts in Himachal Pradesh and Kerala

ISST is contributing through this study to the research programme Social Protection in Asia’ (SPA) Phase II co-ordinated by IDS, Sussex and supported by the Ford Foundation and IDRC. SPA is a research, advocacy and network building programme. The ISST study will explore the likely reasons behind varying levels of women’s participation, wider impacts of the programme, and the various ways in which local contexts influence outcomes. The study has already completed the field works in Palakkad district, Kerala, and Sirmaur district, Himachal Pradesh. A review of secondary literature is also carried out at ISST. The study continues till June 2010.

Empowering Adolescent Girls as future leaders and Trainers

ISST has undertaken an evaluation on Empowering Adolescent Girls as future leaders and trainers for “Indian Academy for Self Employed Women”. The study intends to assess the impacts of the trainings being imparted to the adolescent girls of Ahmedabad city. The study consists of two phases – baseline and end line. The base-line survey carried out in Ahmedabad in 2008. The end line study is currently being completed.

Baseline Study to assess the impact of SEWA's work in Delhi

ISST completed a baseline study in September 2008 sponsored by SEWA Bharat, Delhi to assess the impact of SEWA's work in Delhi in the areas of capacity building and promotion and protection of livelihoods with street vendors, construction workers and home-based embroidery workers. ISST has conducted surveys and interviews which were supplemented with the discussions with SEWA Bharat activists on issues like advocacy, representation efforts and achievements. An end-line survey will be conducted after two years in 2010 to study the impact of SEWA Bharat intervention.

OUTREACH PROGRAMME OF ISST

Ever since its inception in 2000, the activities and areas of work of ISST Community Outreach Programme in East Delhi has been expanding. It continues to empower the youth through information, education and dialogue and reaches out to them in a variety of innovative and interactive ways like discussion groups, workshops, theatre groups, film club, non-formal education, computer training etc. Recently, ISST has opened ISST Community College, which is affiliated to Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and a Gender Resource Centre under the scheme of Delhi government.

Discussion Groups

In the last three months, discussion groups were organized on Friendship, Reservation and Corruption. Adolescent boys and girls from the neighbouring communities, coordinators, peer educators and volunteers of the community centre participated in the lively discussions. The young members initiated the discussion by sharing their thought on and meaning of "friendship and who is a true friend". The discussion session concluded on the note that a true friend will always show you the right path. In the next group discussion on 'Reservation', the children initiated the discussion, they shared what reservation means to them. The third session was on "Corruption". During this discussion session, the facilitator motivated the children to write a complaint to Food commissioner as they complained of not getting ration in proper quantity which is also of very poor quality.

ISST Community College

ISST Community College is a new collaborative initiative with Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) that will offer two programmes: Six month Certificate Course in Computer Education and Six month Certificate Course in Functional English Language. The certificates will be awarded by IGNOU on successfully completion of the course. IGNOU's initiative of Community College is an alternative system of education which aims to empower individuals through appropriate skills development leading to gainful employment in collaboration with the local industry and the community. It's expected that community

colleges will help in developing skills towards employability particularly for the marginalized and underprivileged sections of society. The course on Functional English has been started from July 2009.

Jan Shikshan Sansthan Resource Centre:

This year in August, Saathi Youth Resource Centre conducted a mobile repair training programme in collaboration with Jan Shikshan Sansthan to the youth of the community. This was an initiative of ISST to offer vocational courses to children and youth from under-privileged sections of the society. Twenty-three boys attended this course at Saathi Saathi Centre, Kalyanpuri.

Workshop on Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) and Linux:

A three-day workshop on Linux and Foss was organized at Saathi Centre, ISST, Kalyanpuri between September 11 and 13, 2009. The logistics of the workshop was organised by ISST while the training part was handled by Sarai, a programme under Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) conducts research and action in the field of information, media and urban society. Around 15 participants, mostly the peer educators of ISST community centre participated in the workshop. The workshop was a new experience for the participants. They understood that Linux and Free and Open Source Software are able to provide a platform for them where they can explore the world of computer applications freely and legally. The participants showed a lot of interest and aptitude to know about the FOSS philosophy its advantages. They were also interested to learn the new software and applications like GIMP and Open Office.

Workshops/Seminars Conducted by ISST

- **Workshop on Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) and Linux:** The three-day training workshop was organized by ISST with Sarai, Delhi at Saathi Centre, Kalyanpuri. 11-13 September, 2009.
- **National Workshop on National Rural Employment Guarantee in India - lessons from Implementation:** The two-day national workshop was organized by Institute for Human Development (IHD), New Delhi and Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), New Delhi under the Social Protection in Asia (SPA) Programme at Bangalore, 8-9 September 2009.
- **National Consultation on current employment strategies and women's work:** The two-day national consultation was organized by ILO and Ministry of Labour and Employment in partnership with ISST in New Delhi, 6-7 July 2009.

- **Gender Policy Forum (in association with India Habitat Centre) Casurina Hall, IHC: 4 August, 2009**

Her Earnings ‘Endowments’: An Exploration of Asian Wives’ Contribution to their Household Income in the United States: The sixteenth session in the series of talks under gender Policy Forum, jointly organized by ISST as India Habitat Centre (IHC) was held on 4 August 2009 at Casuarina Hall , India Habitat Centre. The speaker for this forum was Dr. Veena S. Kulkarni, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Dept. of Criminology, Sociology and Geography, State University, Arkansas, USA. The Discussant was Dr. Lekha Chakraborty, Fellow, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi.

Workshops /Seminars Attended by ISST

Ratna M. Sudarshan

- Preparatory meeting for developing Family Development Index, Samajik Suvudha Sangam, Govt of NCT of Delhi, New Delhi, 3 July 2009.
- National Launch of 2-year Associate Degree Programme in Community Colleges, IGNOU, Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi 4 July 2009.
- Board of Trustees meeting, National Foundation for India, Delhi. 14 July 2009.
- National Consultation with Civil Society on Domestic Workers Issues, ILO, 15-16 July 2009.
- Consultation on Gender in Microfinance: Issues and Challenges, Indian School of Microfinance for Women, at ICSSR, New Delhi, 20 July 2009.
- Academic Council meeting, Institute of Marketing and Management, New Delhi, 21 July 2009.
- ‘Home Based Workers’ presented at seminar on ‘Addressing Urban Poverty in India: Opportunities and Challenges’, Oxfam India, New Delhi. 29 July 2009.
- National seminar on universalisation of social security scheme, organized by Social Security Association of India and FES, Kolkata, 31 July 2009.
- Workshop to launch the DFID/ESRC Joint Scheme for Research on Poverty Alleviation, 4 August 2009
- ‘Selected Issues from IDRC-ISST Roundtables on Policy Research Environment and Organisations’ and ‘Policy research and Practice in India’, presented at Linking Research with Policy: South Asia Regional Workshop, organized by Forest Action, Kathmandu, 6-7 August 2009.
- Uttarakhand Mahila Sangathan Meeting, Almora, 10-11 August 2009.
- Opening Session of National Conference of Ministers of Environment and Forests, 18 August 2009, New Delhi.
- Panel discussion on “*From Outlays to Outcomes: Getting Development from Development Expenditures*” organized by The Centre for Development Finance and The Accountability Initiative, 25 August 2009.
- ‘Local contexts and impact on women: Kerala and Himachal’, presented at Workshop on ‘NREGA and Women’s Empowerment’, IHD, New Delhi. 31 August 2009

Sudhamani. N

- Enhancing the role of women in strengthening democracy: state level capacity building training organized by Mahila Samakhya Karnataka. Bangalore. 20-22 July, 2009.
- Health and health rights, organized by the Women's Unit of ISI, Bangalore. 25 July 2009.
- Jana Arogya Andolana Karnataka's (JAAK) meeting: Discussion on to carry out a quick study on the status of health centers in Bangalore. 8 August 2009.
- Two-day workshop on NREGS at NIAS, Bangalore organized by ISST and IHD. 8-9 Sept. 2009.
- 'Gender and Violence against Women' for the youths and PRI members of the ICPRD project at Channapatna. 21 September, 2009.

Shrayana Bhattacharya

- Civil Society Consultation on Domestic Work in India, organized by ILO July 2009
- Government Consultation on Domestic Work in India, organized by ILO August 2009
- Annual Conference on Feminist Economics, Boston, USA, June 2009.
- Home Based Work: Impact and Challenges, organized by Homenet South Asia and FES, September 2009.

Ammel Sharon

- Women Leaders in Panchayats in Karnataka, Workshop organised by Mahila Samakhya, Bangalore, July 2009.
- Daughters of Fire: The Indian Court of Women on Dowry and Related Forms of Violence Against Women, organized by Vimochana and Asian Women's Human Rights Council in partnership with other women's groups, 28 July 2009
- National workshop on National Rural Employment Guarantee in India: Lessons from Implementation organized by Institute of Human Development and ISST (New Delhi), Bangalore, 8-9 September 2009.

Recent Publications / Reports

Sudhamani. N

- Documentation of the training programme "Enhancing the role of women in strengthening democracy" organized by Mahila Samakhya Karnataka

Meera Pillai and Radha Ramaswamy

- Qualitative studies of selected educational initiatives in South Indian States (Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh). Report was prepared under the project Revisiting Education for All (2006-09), supported by IDRC, Canada.

Newspaper Clippings 2008:

- Newspaper Clippings on: Right to Education, NREGA, Violence against Women in India.

Staff News

- Ms. Madhuri Karak left ISST in August 2009.
- Ms. Bidisha Chaudhury left ISST in September 2009.

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Send your comments and suggestions to rajibnandi@isst-india.org

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