Nehru, Nagaur and New Panchayats

District Planning: Methodology and Agenda..

Meeting of the National Council of ALGI

Panchayats and Socio-economic Change

Tenth Anniversary of WMD

Women’s Political Empowerment Day
Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, former Union Minister of Rural Development addressing the gathering at the Lohia Centenary Celebration "Lohia and Chaukhamba Raj". From Left: Prof. S.M. Dubey, former Vice-Chancellor, Dibrugarh University; Ms. Jaya Jaitly, Editor, The Other Side and Mr. Arvind Mohan, Senior Journalist

From Left: Mr. K. Somaprasad, Chairman Kollam Zilla Panchayats; Dr. George Mathew, Director, ISS; Mr. V.S. Achuthanandan, Hon’ble Chief Minister of Kerala; Mr. N. Padmalochanan, Mayor Kollam Municipal Corporation
Nehru, Nagaur and New Panchayats

The Institute of Social Sciences and Association of Local Governance of India (ALGI) in cooperation with Zilla Parishad, Nagaur and Urmool Trust organized a Panchayat March to Nagaur on 14 November 2009 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the inauguration of the Panchayati Raj at Nagaur. The March organised on the birth anniversary of the country’s first Prime Minister, gave a war cry “Nagaur chalo: Nehru ka sapna saakaar karo” (March to Nagaur: Realise the dream of Nehru). Jawaharlal Nehru had laid the foundation of the Panchayati Raj in Nagaur on October 2, 1959.

Shri Bharat Singh, Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Government of Rajasthan, in his address, spoke about the state government’s efforts to strengthen local governance system. A plan to devolve all 29 subjects with funds and functionaries to the panchayats was on the anvil, he said. Smt. Bindu Chaudhuri, Zilla Parishad Pramukh chaired the programme.

The Panchayat March brought together people from all walks of life - experts, academics, political leaders, students and practitioners from Nagaur and other districts of Rajasthan. They assembled at the Zilla Parishad office and marched to the Panchayati Raj Sthapana Sthal from where Pt. Nehru had delivered his historic speech 50 years ago. More than 1,200 panchayat members, social activists and NGO representatives from Nagaur and neighbouring districts — Bikaner, Churu, Sikar, Jaipur, Ajmer, Pali, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Udaipur and Rajsamand shared their views and experiences about

“Nagaur chalo: Nehru ka sapna saakaar karo”
(March to Nagaur: Realise the dream of Nehru)
Nagaur’s historic importance for the Panchayati Raj.

The programme began with patriotic songs. Folk singers from Urmul Trust and girl students of Ratan Ben Senior Girls School welcomed the guests in their traditional costumes and presented songs that filled the area with hope and enthusiasm. Zilla Pramukh Smt. Bindu Chaudhuri welcomed the participants. She laid stress on devolving more powers to Panchayati Raj Institutions.

A special attraction of the programme was a rendition of Jawaharlal Nehru’s recorded speech of 1959 at the venue. The historic speech of Jawaharlal Nehru played on the occasion was listened with rapt attention.

Shri Likhma Ram (Posthumously), first Zilla Panchayat President, Nagaur, Smt. Rameshwari Devi Bagaria, member Zilla Parishad, Nagaur, Smt. Manju Meghawal, former President, Block Panchayat, Jaayal and currently Member of Rajasthan Legislative Assembly and Sri Maharam, former pradhan were felicitated on the occasion. Maharam remembered the days he spent in association with Nehru.

A charter of demands for ensuring people’s active participation in local governance was adopted at the meeting and a plan of action formulated for strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

In the afternoon, a seminar was organized in the Zilla Parishad Hall to chalk out the future plan of action for making the panchayats in Rajasthan ‘institutions of self-government’. Panchayat members deliberated on the complexities of India’s evolving Panchayati Raj.

Some of them stressed that it was the Panchayati Raj that set up local democracy at the district, block and village levels in the form of Gram panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zilla Parishads respectively. However, the Panchayati Raj failed on account of several reasons even 17 years after the enactment of the 73rd Amendment and 15 years after its implementation by various States in 1994.

Workshop for Madrassa Teachers
The English Language Skills Workshop for Madrassa Teachers was held in the Institute from 20th to 31st July. The first session of professional development began with Dr. M. Amir Ullah Khan, local resource person from Aligarh Muslim University, showing the participants how to introduce oneself by making paper name plates. This exercise was built on the solid premise of multiple intelligence. All the participants were able to introduce themselves to each other within no time. Then Mr. Kevin McCaughey, the International resource person took over in the second session and he began with Paul Theroux’s quotation: “No Language is difficult. Language is a form of play learned through practice”. In accordance with this theory, Kevin set up seven learning stations and subsequently he divided the class into seven groups. Each group moved about like a train, stopped at each station, did the learning activity and moved on. The participants enjoyed this idea of teaching English through playing activity. This programme was supported by Regional English Language Office (RELO) of American Center, New Delhi.
The panchayat members agreed that concerted, systematic and sustained endeavours were needed on the part of those for whom power to people still remains a long cherished dream. Majority of members demanded transparency and honesty in the functioning of panchayats. Social Audit was discussed at length in the meeting.

The Nagaur programme was a landmark event as it gave a new thrust for panchayats to become ‘institutions of local governance’.

Panchayats and Socio-economic Change

At a time when panchayati raj reforms are being widely debated, a seminar on Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia’s ideas on decentralisation generated several valuable suggestions for genuine reforms. This seminar was organised by the Institute as part of the Lohia Centenary Celebrations.

In his welcome address, Dr. George Mathew, Director, ISS, touched briefly on Dr. Lohia’s ‘Chaukhambha Raj’.

Shri Nitish Kumar, Chief Minister of Bihar and the chief guest at this seminar, said that even within the existing limitations Panchayati Raj can be a big instrument of highly relevant social change. He then spoke on Bihar, the first state that introduced 50 per cent reservation for women in Panchayati Raj institutions. The results of this in the form of women’s empowerment can already be seen, he said. The reservation for most backward classes has been similarly fruitful in empowering entirely neglected communities. He said, “it is highly inspiring to see women from weakest sections handling new responsibilities successfully. This combined with other steps like providing free bicycles to all girls seeking...

GTZ Summer School – bridging theory and practice

Thirty young researchers and professionals from Germany and India discussed and analysed how different governmental and non-governmental institutions work together to support a sustainable urban development process in Tirupati, during the GTZ Summer School in India held in Delhi, Hyderabad and Tirupati from 4 – 29 May.

The GTZ Summer School “Sustainable Innovations in India” was a 4-week programme aimed at filling the gap between science and practice by offering an interactive learning dialogue for PhD-students and young professionals from Government Institutions and NGOs from all over India. It was part of the UN-Decade “Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)” project and “Between Lecture Hall & Project Works” initiative of GTZ-Berlin. The GTZ Summer School was conducted for the fifth time, after being held in Vietnam, Egypt, Brazil and Peru.

The four-week program introduced participants to the thematic area of governance, concepts for urban sustainability and its implementation, concepts for water resource management and its implementation and concepts for climate change adaptation and mitigation and its implementation.

In the first week in Hyderabad, the political framework, state-of-the-art methods and peer-learning techniques and best...
admission in class nine in rural schools and a stepped up women’s literacy programme have contributed substantially to women’s empowerment”. Shri Nitish Kumar further said that his government also set up Gram Kachahris or rural courts so that all bailable offences can be tried nearer home, as far as possible within the panchayat, so that cheaper and quicker justice can become available to people.

The next step in panchayat reforms, he said, is the establishment of ‘panchayat sarkar’ - a kind of rural secretariat that provides adequate space and all essential facilities, including information technology, at one place for panchayats and related officials. These will be housed in earthquake resistant buildings which can also function as flood-shelters. Shri Nitish Kumar said that he has been trying to get the central government as well as donor organisations interested in supporting this venture. He told that his government has also formed a task-force on Panchayati Raj under the chairmanship of Dr. George Mathew.

Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, Member of Parliament and former Union Minister of Rural Development, said that all four pillars of “Chaukhambha Raj” are equally important. Negligence of any one of the four pillars can weaken the whole structure. However, the gram sabha or the assembly of all adult villagers still remains a weak link in India’s rural decentralisation effort. Veteran Socialist leader Shri Surendra Mohan praised the recent initiatives of the Bihar government but said that more has to be done to prevent the dominance of panchayats by a few rich and powerful persons. “Speeding up land reforms is also essential”, he asserted. He recommended that Bihar and other states should consider setting up planning institutes on the Kerala model to provide technical and professional help to panchayats. Prof. Anand Kumar of Jawaharlal Nehru University said that basic reforms visualised by Dr. Lohia were still very relevant and significant. Dr. Lohia had a vision which integrated political, economic and technological
decentralisation. He referred to Lohia talking of abolishing the post of district collector, making district level police entirely accountable to local people and also providing a much larger share of resources to villagers. He also talked of scaling down industries and machines. These various aspects of decentralisation need to be integrated.

However, senior journalist Shri Arvind Mohan raised questions about the success of the Panchayati Raj. He said that in panchayat elections lakhs of rupees are spent and then efforts are made by the elected persons to recover this money, as a result corruption levels are bound to remain high. In another context he said that in international negotiations like WTO, interests of villagers and farmers are being sacrificed and this can’t co-exist with claims of real decentralisation.

Several close associates of Lohia and socialist thinkers recalled Lohia’s contributions and the relevance of his thinking to the contemporary times. The participants in the “Reminiscences” section included Dr. Ved Pratap Vaidik, senior journalist, Shri Brij Bhushan Tiwari, Member of Parliament, Prof. S M Dubey, former Vice-Chancellor of Dibrugarh University and Dr. Bhagwan Singh. Ms. Jaya Jaitly, Editor, The Other Side chaired the evening session.

Conference on District Planning: Methodology and Agenda for Action
The Institute of Social Sciences and Zilla Panchayat, Kollam in co-operation with Department of Local Self-Government, Government of Kerala organized a conference on “District Planning: Methodology and Agenda for Action” on 28 and 29 August 2009 in Kollam. The conference was supported by GoI-UNDP project “Capacity Development for District Planning”. The three-day programme (27, 28, 29 August) was aimed at initiating measures to make District Planning an operational reality. The first day was set apart for the field study of
A three-day seminar on the topic “Self Development and Conflict Management” was conducted at the Institute from 16 to 18 March 2009 for the middle level women police officers in which 20 women officers from all parts of the country participated. Topics like Self Development, Gender Bias in Law Enforcement, Sexual Harassment in workplace and Stress Management etc. were discussed. The seminar was sponsored by Bureau of Police Research and Development.

Kollam District Planning process and the subsequent two days were devoted to deliberations at the conference. There were 300 participants. These included DPC Chairpersons, Secretaries of DPCs, Planning Board Members, academic experts, representatives of Planning Commission, invited representatives from other countries and UNDP experts.

The Planning Commission, in its Manual for Integrated District Planning recommended that spatial planning has to be part of the district planning process at all levels and cited Integrated District Development Plan for Kollam District as an example. The Planning Commission noted that the project had considerable replication value.

Objectives of the conference:
1. Evolving a more refined methodology of preparation of District Plan, using the Kollam Plan.
2. Formulation of a strategy to implement the preparation of District Plan in all the Districts of Kerala.
3. An action plan to initiate and complete the project of preparation of District Plan.
4. Can the Kollam plan be replicated/adapted in other districts of India?
5. What lessons other countries can learn from the Kollam model?

Adv. K. Somaprasad, Chairman, DPC and President, District Panchayat Kollam, gave the welcome address. Dr. George Mathew, Director, Institute of Social
A workshop on “Trafficking in Human Being” for West Bengal police personnel was held at the Office of the ADG (Training), Kolkata from 2 to 3 September 2009. Forty-two officers including DySPs, Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors of police attended the workshop.

The Director General of West Bengal Shri Bhupinder Singh inaugurated the program and the valedictory address was delivered by Shri Prasun Mukherjee, Director General, Bureau of Police Research and Development, New Delhi.

The subjects covered in the workshop included:

a. National & International Dimensions of the Problem of Trafficking
b. Law and Procedures Relating to Human Trafficking
c. Cross Border Trafficking & Re-Trafficking
d. Post Rescue Rehabilitation of the Victims of Trafficking
e. Investigation Search & Seizure Etc.
f. Prosecutions of Trafficking Cases – Issues Faced by Prosecution
g. Forensic and Medico-Legal Issues Relating to Trafficking
h. Human Rights Perspective in Trafficking
i. Non Sex Based Trafficking – Police Officers Role

Shri P.K. Gurudasan, Minister for Labour and Excise, Government of Kerala delivering the Presidential Address
District Planning: Methodology and Agenda for Action

A training seminar was organized for Police Officers of all the ranks from Inspector to Constables at Haryana Police Academy, Madhuban from 4 to 5 June. The theme of the Seminar was “Human Rights and Police”. Various issues concerning human rights and their importance were discussed. Over 500 trainees benefited from the programme.

on the Plenary Session III: District Planning - Experiences and Lessons from States-II. Dr. Shashikala Sitaram, Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, Bangalore, presented some reflections on DPCs in Shimoga, Karnataka. Shri Buddhadeb Ghosh, Former Director, Kalyani Institute of Local Government, West Bengal; Dr. Abhijit Datta, Malcolm Adisheshia Chair Professor were presented some reflections on DPCs in West Bengal.

Shri V.S. Achuthanandan, Chief Minister of Kerala delivered the Valedictory Address. Shri A. Shajahan IAS, District Collector, Kollam, gave Vote of Thanks.

Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations
The Institute organized the 16th Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations on the theme: “Climate Change, Women and Panchayats” on 23-24 April at the National Cooperative Union of India Auditorium, August Kranti Marg, New Delhi. It was sponsored by WaterAid and Plan International (India Chapter).

More than 400 elected women panchayat leaders from 16 states participated in the programme. They shared their views and experiences with their counterparts in the various sessions. Representatives from civil society organisations, academia, media and government participated in the event with great enthusiasm.

Welcoming the delegates, Dr. George Mathew, stated that ever since the provision of not less than one third seats for women in local governments became part of Indian Constitution on 24 April 1993, women’s political empowerment has acquired a new meaning. “The celebration is very significant and special because we are holding this event at a crucial time when nation is going to elect new government”, he said. The chief guest, Sundar Lal Bahuguna, environmentalist, Gandhian and founder of Save the Himalaya Campaign, in his inaugural
What do the forests bear? Soil, water and pure air. Soil, water and pure air, are the basis of Life.

address said: “We have created a world, which is confronted with the problems of pollution, depletion of resources, poverty and hunger. The concept of development has made man the butcher of nature. The ultimate goal of humankind is to march from nature to culture. This dream will be achieved, if women take the responsibility to save the earth. I have been devoting myself to achieve this goal for the last so many years. Now I want all the women leaders present here, to devote some of their time for this noble cause. Otherwise after a few decades there will not be a single human being alive on this planet”.

Noted environmentalist and activist Vimla Bahuguna along with her husband Sunderlal Bahuguna told the women panchayat leaders: “women are the ones who get most affected by displacement which disturbs the hill life, leading to sustained agony.” Indira Khurana, Director, Policy and Partnerships, WaterAid, greeted the women panchayat representatives saying “Panchayats are local governments, not just service deliverers. Today 2.4 lakh panchayats directly implement 2,000 rural development programmes and they directly impact on our growth and rural development.”

Bhagyashree Dengle, executive Country Director, Plan International (India Chapter) in her address said, “I know that for many of you it is extremely difficult to speak in the presence of men, still you have
A training program on the topic “Human Rights” for police officer in Bangalore was held on 19-20 June. Nearly 100 officers of different ranks were called from different districts of Karnataka. It was held in the police conference room in Bangalore. Justice M.N. Venketachaliya, former Chairman National Human Rights Commission, inaugurated the program. Justice Shivaraj V. Patil, former member, NHRC and former Justice Supreme Court, Justice S.C. Nayak Chairman State Human Rights Commission, Shri Chaman Lal and other senior officers of Karnataka police addressed the participants. The talk was about their constraints and dilemmas. Discussions were interactive and constructive. It was widely publicized in both electronic and print media.

accomplished the tasks and achieved, what many of us, urbane, educated and living in big cities could not so far. I appreciate your spirit, strength and character”.

Three women panchayat leaders were honoured for their outstanding performance as elected leaders of panchayats - Kiran Kumari (Sarpanch, Kachahari Raj Raghai Panchayat, district Muzaffarpur, Bihar), Rugmini Subrahmanyan (President, Poothadi Gram Panchayat, district Wayanad, Kerala) and Manju Sharma (Pradhan, Chutmalpur Gram Panchayat, district Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh) - by Padma Vibhushan Sunderlal Bahuguna.

In the plenary and working group sessions the delegates deliberated upon green energy, water and climate change, drinking water and panchayats, reducing negative impact of climate change through panchayats, impact of climate change on vulnerable groups, and growing hazards due to green house effects. All the sessions were characterized by animated discussion and enthusiastic participation by women panchayat leaders. The presence and participation of well-known experts such as Rajendra Singh, Magsaysay Award Winner and General Secretary, Tarun Bharat Sangh, Shantha Hariharan, academician and environmental specialist, Richard Mahapatra, national coordinator, Citizens’s Report Initiative, Water Aid, Gopal Iyer, formerly Professor of Sociology, Panjab University, Chandigarh, Joy Elamon, moderator, Decentralisation Community Solution Exchange, UNDP, B.S. Baviskar, Senior Fellow, ISS, Ash Narain Roy, Associate Director, ISS. Arun Kumar Tripathi, Senior journalist Hindustan and activist, and Arun Kumar, known as Pani Baba, environmentalist and Mahi Pal, Assistant Commissioner, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India raised the level of discussions.

The questions raised by women panchayat members added substance to the discussions. Kiran Kumari and Manju Sharma, recipients of the outstanding women’s awards raised the issue of capacity building and training needs of the women panchayat members. Many
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women delegates put forth several practical ideas such as total ban on plastic bags, sanitation and cleanliness and above all the need to protect ponds and rivers to save the planet.

Varsha Das, Director, National Gandhi Museum and the noted writer was the chief guest of the valedictory session. She gave the clarion call to all the panchayat leaders to unite to save the earth. Sunderlal Bahuguna stated that his participation in the two day session was one of the best experiences he and his wife had in recent times.

All women participants took oath to plant trees in their panchayats.

Tenth Anniversary of the World Movement for Democracy

The Institute of Social Sciences organized a meeting on February 27 to mark the 10th anniversary of the World Movement for Democracy. The day-long programme organized at the Institute in collaboration with the World Movement for Democracy saw the participation of practitioners of democracy, academics and civil society representatives from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the US. Besides the inaugural programme, there were panel discussions on global democracy and democracy in South Asia and special sessions on judiciary and democracy and future of democracy.

While welcoming the delegates, George Mathew recalled the 1999 Delhi meeting which saw the participation of 400 democracy activists from all parts of the globe. He recalled the words of Prof. Amartya Sen: “We are democrats of different nations and cultures who have gathered in India, the world’s largest democracy, to consider how the prospect for democracy in the world can be advanced on the eve of a new millennium. It is our belief that the time has come for democrats throughout the world to develop new forms of cooperation to promote the development of democracy.” The message from the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh was read out by Dr. Ash
A training programme titled “Human Rights and Police” for police officers at Haryana Police Academy, Madhuban, District Karnal, Haryana was held on 28-29 October. Over 500 Officers of different ranks attended the program.

It was inaugurated by Shri Sudhir Choudhary, Inspector General and In-charge of the Academy and the valedictory address was delivered by Shri V.N. Rai, IPS, Director General of Police (Law and Order). The following issues were covered in the training session.

b. Human Rights Under Indian Constitution and Police Conduct
c. Relevance of Human Rights in Law Enforcement
d. Role of National Human Rights Commission in Preventing Violation of Human Rights
e. Why Human Rights Observance is Necessary for Law Enforcement Agencies

Discussions were interactive and the participants appreciated the contents of the programme as well as the style of teaching. Three senior officers Shri N.C. Joshi, former Director General Bureau of Police Research and Development, Shri P.S. Bawa, former Director General of Sikkim, Shri S.P. Singh Dy Inspector General of National Human Rights Commission were the main speakers.

Narain Roy, Associate Director, Institute of Social Sciences.

David Lowe, Vice-President, National Endowment for Democracy, said that last December marked the 60th anniversary of the promulgation of the UN Declaration of Human Rights, a document that has stood the test of time in what its signatories hoped would “promote respect for these rights and freedoms and, by progressive measures, national and international, secure their universal and effective recognition and observance.”

And this November we will arrive at the 20th anniversary of one of the most thrilling events of my lifetime, when the Berlin Wall came crashing to the ground.

These two anniversaries are united by the idea that men and women around the world share what Abraham Lincoln characterized as “the spirit which prizes liberty as the heritage of all people, in all lands, everywhere.” And so it is this occasion, that we are brought together to recall and celebrate an event whose motivation derived from that same spirit.

When two highly respected Indian organizations, the Centre for Policy Research and the Confederation of Indian Industry, teamed up with my organization, the National Endowment for Democracy, to bring to the capital of the world’s largest democracy several hundred democratic activists for plenary addresses and panel discussions ten years ago this month, we could not have imagined that within the relatively short space of a decade, the movement we launched would be able to boast all of the following:

♦ A global network consisting of thousands of grassroots democratic activists linked through common values, shared objectives, and new information and communication technology;
♦ An international Steering Committee led by the former Canadian Prime Minister Kim Campbell that includes parliamentarians, representatives of political parties and democracy foundations, NGO leaders, journalists, and scholars;
A round-table discussion entitled “Towards Inclusive Society: Urban Policies and Practices” was held on 1st October at the Institute. The round-table was organised by UNESCO, in the context of its Social and Human Sciences activities in the area of social inclusion in urban areas, and in cooperation with the Institute of Social Sciences, UNESCO Chair in Social and Spatial Inclusion of International Migrants - Urban Policies and Practices (Università IUAV di Venezia, Italy), UNESCO Chair in Social Revitalisation of Historical Districts (Yonsei University – Space Group, Seoul, ROK) and the Italian Cultural Centre (New Delhi). The round-table aimed at identifying feasible steps to incorporate United Nations social inclusion parameters, criteria and principles into urban planning processes and policies. Four thematic sessions were structured for the debate:

- UN-HABITAT Asian study on Safety and Urban Poverty - A Framework for Urban Safety in India
- UNESCO Project for the Establishment of an International Research Centre on Inclusive Cities (Porto Alegre, Brazil)

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- Cross-border functional networks of like-minded democratic activists who share ideas and skills and who seek practical solutions on issues like local governance, the participation of women and youth, and others;
- Regional networks of democrats whose work cuts across those functional categories who combine to tackle the major issues they face both nationally and regionally and to speak with common voice against autocrats in their respective regions; and finally,
- Four global assemblies since New Delhi, where working groups have explored the key challenges facing those striving, in the words of the Movement’s Founding Statement, “to strengthen democracy where it is weak, to reform and invigorate democracy even where it is long standing, and to bolster pro-democracy groups in countries that have not yet entered into a process of democratic transition.”

Najam Sethi, Editor-in-chief, Daily Times and Friday Times, Pakistan, said that nearly a week after the Mumbai attacks passions were high and some of his Indian friends outside the conference were telling him that the Congress government was under pressure to carry out strikes against Pakistan as elections were round the corner. “People are outraged. We do not want to feel impotent. We have to do something. There may be strategic strikes”. To which I asked them to consider if it was conceivable to carry out strikes against Pakistan i.e., hot pursuits, limited strikes. I asked them not to talk like this. This will be counter productive. This is exactly what those who carried out attacks in Mumbai wanted. We have to rise above this because any strategic strikes or retaliations against Pakistan will be met by bigger response from Pakistan. Things will go out of hand. The peace process launched by General Musharraf in 2003-04 has got nowhere. We have been engaged in back channel diplomacy for five years. But it took only 24 hours to knock the peace process off. The peace process got stalled in 2007 and never got back on rails. What should have been India’s response? It should have been to get back to the peace track. I asked a senior Indian official why do not you get back to the peace process now that we have a civilian government. What is the problem now? The senior Indian official...
said “this government in Pakistan seems to be weak, it does not seem to be sure of itself and we do not know how productive a dialogue will be with a weak government”. Well, dialogue must go on. It does not matter who rules in Pakistan. This is not just a dialogue between India and Pakistan but a dialogue to strengthen civil society and democracy in this region. This is a dialogue that should bring to an end proxy wars that India and Pakistan have fought.

Pakistan desperately needs a huge dose of democracy. There are people in Pakistan who do not like democracy and want to derail both the peace process with India and the democratic process in Pakistan. Our civil society is weak, fractured, fragile and confused. There was a debate in my newspaper as to how to get rid of Musharraf whether in revolutionary way or traditional way – we carried out a transition and it was a bad transition. Now again there is a revolutionary upheaval, but the question is where will it lead us to. How long will this revolution last? What will be its’ impact on democracy? Will it bring the army back to power? We need to know the answers to these questions.

Dr. Ash Narain Roy, Associate Director, Institute of Social Sciences; Mr. Gautam Adhikari, Editorial Advisor, The Times of India Group; Mr. Tariq A. Karim, Vice President, Bangladesh Enterprise Institute and former Ambassador to United States; Mr. Prem Shankar Jha, Senior Journalist and Columnist; Mubashir Hasan, Former Finance Minister, Government of Pakistan; Prof. Amitabh Mattoo, Professor, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Mr. Rohan Edrisinha, Director, Centre for Policy Alternatives, Colombo; Mr. Sushil Pyakurel, President, Accountability Watch Committee and former Commissioner, National Human Rights Commission, Nepal; Justice Rajinder Sachar, Former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court and Human Rights Activist; Syed Muhammad Shah, President, Lahore Bar Association; Mr. Amir-Ul-Islam, Chairman, Legal Education and Training Institute (LETI), Senior Advocate, Supreme Court of
Lecture by N. Gopalaswamy

On January 28, Mr. N. Gopalaswami, Chief Election Commissioner, delivered a lecture on ‘Jammu and Kashmir elections 2008’, organized by the Institute of Social Sciences. “The election in Jammu and Kashmir was the easiest out of the six Assembly elections that took place simultaneously”, Gopalaswami said. Chattisgarh elections proved to be more troublesome than the one in Kashmir. In Chhatisgarh, there were 60 incidents of violence and 29 people (most of them security personnel) were killed. Polling could not take place in five polling stations. In contrast, the commission did not face any such problems in Jammu & Kashmir. It was a smooth sailing there, he said.

Initially, all the three major political parties had opposed elections in J&K. But the Election Commission was sure of the peaceful outcome. Some Confidence building measures had already been taken in Jammu, which showed positive results. Bogus voting was prevented with the use of identity cards. Ladakh region registered 51.5% polling and Jammu 71.79%. A total of 32.78 million voters participated in the elections, which was a record, he said.

Meeting of the National Council of Association of Local Governance of India (ALGI)

On August 4, a meeting of the National Council of Association of Local Governance of India (ALGI) was held in the premises of Institute of Social Sciences. There were 48 participants from 20 states of India. Hon’ble Minister for Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, Professor C.P. Joshi was the Chief Guest. Hon’ble Minister patiently listened to the feedback from the various states and said that although there is lot of problems, NREGS has given an excellent opportunity to the Panchayats to become strong. It is for the first time that they have got the power to make schemes, implement them and money is no more a constraint. He urged the ALGI members to make full use of this opportunity.

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Delegates of the National Council of Association of Local Governance of India (ALGI)

Reflections on Global Dialogue on Federalism

The Institute of Social Sciences, in cooperation with the Forum of Federations, organised a roundtable to review the Forum’s Global Dialogue on Federalism programme on September 3.

On this occasion, the volume titled ‘Local Government and Metropolitan Regions in Federal Systems’ was released by Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, former Union Minister of Panchayati Raj, Government of India.

Voices from the states

The meeting also gave a unique opportunity for the representatives of the states, many of whom were Gram Panchayat Pradhans to speak about their problems at a National platform and suggest possible changes. Briefly speaking, the comments were as follows:

- The representatives from Bihar called for greater emphasis on capacity building of the Panchayat representatives.
- The member from Gujarat said that the SC/ST/ and women representatives are often removed from power by a small group within the Panchayat. This needs to be changed so that only the people at the Gram Sabha can remove them. There was also call for a correct BPL list.
- Haryana has recently seen lot of adverse news regarding the ‘khaap panchayat’. The representative from the state called for legal action against
such bodies so that they are not able to use the term ‘panchayat’.

- The representative from Uttarakhand pointed out that there is as yet no separate Panchayat Act for the state and something needs to be done immediately regarding this.
- There were calls of a fight against corruption in the bureaucracy especially in Bundelkhand region of UP where in order to release schematic funds the lower level bureaucrats charge a commission.
- In Karnataka Panchayats as yet do not have the power to give birth and death certificates, causing enormous difficulty to the poor people.
- A representative from Tamil Nadu said, and others agreed, that the amount sanctioned for BPL for housing of BPL families under the Indira Awas Yojana is unrealistically low and should be increased to Rs 100,000/-. 
- A member from the Rajasthan Zilla Parishad said that ward level monitoring committees need to be set up in order to ensure better implementation of the schemes. She also pointed out that Sthayee Samiti elections in the state do not happen on time and this results in weak monitoring.
- The representative from West Bengal, a Panchayat Pradhan, felt that the Panchayats need to be properly equipped with hardware and software and also be given enough manpower.
- Members from Goa called for ALGI to take up the cause of the Women Reservation Bill. She also expressed the need to set up a legal cell and zonal committees.
- All the representatives expressed their anguish at the absence of election in Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir.

Lecture by Dr. Mary Elizabeth King
The Institute organized a lecture by Dr. Mary Elizabeth King on: “To Continue the Long March of Those Who Came before Us: The Influence of Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King on Barack Obama’s Campaign and Presidency.” The lecture was held on 14 March at the Institute of Social Sciences.

Dr. George Mathew addressing the gathering. From Left: Dr. Mary Elizabeth King, Professor, UN Affiliated University for Peace and Dr. Varsha Das, Director, National Gandhi Museum
Special Lecture by Prof. Susanne Rudolph and Prof. Lloyd Rudolph

The Institute organized a special lecture on “Gandhi and the Civilisational Debate” by Prof. Susanne Rudolph and Prof. Lloyd Rudolph (formerly of the Department of Political Science, University of Chicago) on 27 March. Prof. Gurpreet Mahajan, Centre for Political Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, presided over the lecture.

Dr. Varsha Das, Director, National Gandhi Museum, New Delhi presided over the meeting.

Mary King began her lecture with her impression of President Obama’s inauguration. “President Obama’s history-making victory was remarkable in its own right, but equally stunning was the spectacle on Inauguration Day: a crowd the size of 3 million filled an area half the size of the Rajpath here in Delhi. Washington, DC, went from the 27th largest city in the US to the 4th largest in the space of about six hours. People came from 50 states (and overseas) to celebrate the inauguration, a peaceful gathering that was among the most inspiring spectacles in U.S. history. With such numbers, some feared violence, crime, and terrorism. But the day was “amazing,” the police officer said, because “nothing happened. No violent crime, no theft, nothing. Not a single reported incident all day.” The only emergencies were of “elderly people suffering from exposure to the cold.” It was an extraordinary moment of peace and unity in American history.”

Talking of Gandhi, she said: “Here in Delhi, the legacy of millions of people gathering without violent incident conjures memories of Mahatma Gandhi and the struggles for Indian independence. In many ways, Obama’s campaign and presidency is the continuation of Gandhi’s work with collective nonviolent action in South Africa and India. Today, we will consider the influence of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr., on Barack Obama’s “campaign for change” and presidency.” She further said “King explicitly applied Gandhi’s theories and methods of nonviolent collective action to the burgeoning movement in the Southland of America.” With that said, Gandhi and King never had to run a country, or sell a federal budget to the U.S. Congress. Neither were they chief executives of a super-power. This is a key difference between Obama and King. Gandhi and King’s nonviolent strategies changed the world, in social movements for justice and transformation, yet they were each always on the outside, appealing to the powerful. Obama ran as an “outsider” in Illinois for the Senate and sought the Presidency as an outsider who could see the folly of the war of choice in Iraq. He was thus able to appeal to many of the same powerful emotions, yearnings, aspirations, and strategies as did Gandhi and King. Now, in power, let us hope that he governs with the same empathy and inclusion with which he, King, and Gandhi built movements. If he is able to do this, he will, as King described of Gandhi, “belong to history.”

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Kerala Delegation Visit to Switzerland and United Kingdom

The study visit of a delegation of elected local government representatives from Kerala state to Switzerland and United Kingdom was organised by the Institute of Social Sciences (ISS) from 9 to 19 September 2009 at the request of Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA). This study visit was sponsored by the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC).

This study tour/exposure visit of the functionaries of Local Government Association and policy makers of local governance in Kerala was planned to study the local governance and the functioning of Local Governments Associations in countries like Switzerland and United Kingdom so as to get a first hand knowledge of their functioning.

A briefing session was organized at the Institute on 8th September. Dr. George Mathew, Director, Institute of Social Sciences, chaired and conducted the session. It was a very informative and useful session for all, especially those going for the first time outside India.

As per the request of Institute of Social Sciences and recommended by the SDC Office, New Delhi the Swiss Association for the Service to Regions and Municipality (SEREC) organized the programme for the delegates in Valais and Vaud in Switzerland from 9 to 12 September 2009. The SEREC is an association whose members are municipalities, regions and cantons. The SEREC assists the public authorities and institutions of civil society in their development efforts and efficient management. It is also active in the areas of local and regional development, sustainable land management and resource, implementation and management of co-operation and organizing exchanges of experience.

The national seminar on “Community Policing” at Bhopal on 9th June was inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh Shri Shivraj Singh Chauhan. The Home Minister Shri Jagdish Devrah was also present. Senior officers of the rank of Addl DG and IG of Police from different states participated and made presentation on community policing initiatives in their respective states. There were also discussions in which leading NGOs and eminent public men participated.
During the visit to Switzerland the delegation learnt several innovative ideas about the local government. They saw several programmes under local governance system. It was interesting to see that the Confederation does not have any direct implementing capacity in the domain of local governments; the implementation was left to Cantons and Communes. In fact, Cantons act as intermediaries between the Confederation and Communes.

The delegation spent the next week (12 to 18 September) in the United Kingdom. Mr. Ivor Wells, Local Government Association (LGA), London, received the delegation at the Heathrow airport.

The Institute organised a Debriefing Session with the members of the delegation that visited Switzerland and the United Kingdom in the Seminar Hall at Institute of Social Sciences on 19 September 2009. The members expressed satisfaction of their visit and shared some of their experiences in Switzerland and UK. It was felt that such visits would greatly help in strengthening local governance in the country.

Democratic Governance in Cities Symposium
Prof. M.A. Oommen and Dr. Mary George were invited to participate and present papers at the Conference on “Democratic Governance in Cities Symposium” held at Porto Alegre on November 24 and 25, 2009. They spent major part of November and early December in Porto Alegre, meeting informed persons, university scholars, political leaders, city councillors, community leaders and so on.

About 90 cities representing various continents besides representatives from UNESCO, World Bank and institutes engaged in research on urban governance participated.

Prof. M.A. Oommen (fourth from right) and Dr. Mary George (seventh from right) along with other participants of the Symposium
Visit of Lithuania Foreign Minister

Besides making special presentation at the inaugural session, Prof. M.A. Oommen spoke on Participatory Governance: Experience and lessons from India’s Kerala State. Prof. (Dr.) Mary George presented a paper on “Participation of women in Decentralised Governance: The Case of Kerala”.

Prof. M.A. Oommen and Dr. Mary George had several meetings, interviews and discussions with experts and practitioners. On 26th and 27th of November, meetings were held in the University of Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Rio Grande do Sul- PUCRS. In the university, Professor M.A. Oommen delivered a speech on the theory and practice of people’s plan of Kerala. These meetings and subsequent discussions provided them an excellent opportunity to interact with scholars engaged in participatory budgeting and the process of popular participation.

They also had meetings and discussions with the Municipal Officers in the City Hall. It gave an opportunity for them to get a vivid picture of the evolution of PT (Workers’ Party) and the structure, growth and performance of participatory budgeting (OP) in Porto Alegre.

Visit of Lithuania Foreign Minister

His Excellency Mr. Vygaudas Usackas, Hon’ble Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lithuania along with Mr. Albertas Algirdas Dambrauskas, Charge d’Affaires, Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania, New Delhi and 5 high ranking officials visited the Institute on 2nd December.

H.E. Mr. Vygaudas Usackas explained in his address the present situation of

- “Third WFDA Biennial Conference” from September 16 to 18 at Seoul, South Korea, organized by World Forum of Democratization in Asia (WFDA).
- “Deepening and Sustaining Democracy in Asia” from October 12 to 14 at Paro, Kingdom of Bhutan, organized by UNDP, Bhutan.
- Member, State Planning Board, Government of Rajasthan.
- Chairman, Task Force on Panchayati Raj in Bihar.

Ash Narain Roy

- Attended the Arab Economic, Social and Development Summit in Kuwait from 15 to 21 January.
- Participated in the Asian Regional Forum meeting in Jakarta where he presented a paper on “India’s response to global economic crisis”, April 30-May 1.
- Delivered a lecture on “Coping with Climate Change & Financial Crisis: The India Narrative” at University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany, 10 June.
- Presented a paper on “Socio-Political Transformation through Inclusion and Empowerment at the Grassroots Level” in Male, Maldives, August 12.
- Presented a paper on “Inclusion and Empowerment are Grand
Lithuania and how he eagerly looked forward to the ‘Community of Democracies’ programmes. He also emphasized that the Institute of Social Sciences should partner with Lithuanian agencies working for CD especially in the area of local government and gender equality. The discussion that followed the address was lively. The participants included Members of Parliament, Representative of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, democracy activists and diplomats.

M.A. Oommen


Papers Presented/Published


Conferences/Seminars

- Organized an International Conference on “District Planning Methodology and Agenda for Action”, August 2009 at Kollam – as a Chief coordinator of the Conference.

ISS Regional Centers

Kolkata

1. Research Projects

A. Urban Studies

i. Job of Consultancy Services to ULBs for Compilation of DDP and Internal Appraisal of DDP for Non – KMA ULBs of West Bengal

The project started in March 2008 and was continuing till the year end. The project is sponsored by the Project Management Unit of the DFID supported Kolkata Urban Services for the Poor (KUSP) applicable for the ULBs outside the Kolkata Metropolitan Area in West Bengal. The project was carried out in collaboration with Organization for Livelihood and Advancement. In 2009, appraisal work of the DDP of Old Malda, Jiagunj – Azimgunj and Habra municipalities was completed and that of Panskura, Egra, Raigunj, Murshidabad, Kandi and Medinipur were continuing till the year end.

B. Panchayat Studies

i. Legitimacy and Accountability Issues of Civil Society Organisations in West Bengal

This project was under the West Bengal Civil Society Support Programme (WB – CSSP) supported by DFID and managed by PRIA. The project started in December 2008 and continued till October 2009. The study wanted to understand the accountability mechanisms practiced by the NGOs of West Bengal. More than 60
NGOs from three districts were selected for the survey. Case studies on some good NGOs from West Bengal and other states were also done under the study.

ii. Citizens Report Card for West Bengal
The project started in September 2009 and is continuing till date. It wants to understand to what extent the poor and the marginalized sections of rural community are accessing the benefits of programmes and services from the GP to which they are entitled. The project covers three backward districts of West Bengal from where again the backward communities have been selected. Field work is finished, now the report writing part is going on.

2. Visit by the Researchers of SEWA Academy
Twelve researchers from SEWA Academy, Ahmedabad conducted a study tour in Kolkata from 11th September to 18th September 2009. On 16th September 2009, they visited ISS, Kolkata. The purpose of the visit was:
- To learn and share latest quantitative and qualitative research method being utilized.
- To increase knowledge of setting organization structure systems to support research environment.
- To know about the new research topics in development sector.
- To form relationship and explore opportunities for potential partnership in research.

On behalf of SEWA, a presentation was given on issues and methods of research carried out by the organization. The faculty of ISS Kolkata also discussed the issues covered by them in different research projects.

Chairman, State Finance Commission:
- M.A. Oommen was appointed as Chairman of the 4th State Finance Commission by the Governor, Kerala State.

Archana Ghosh

Publications
i. Archana Ghosh et. al: “A Comparative Overview of Urban Governance in Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai” in Governing India’s Metropolises edited by Joel Ruet and Stephanie Tawa Lama – Rewal, Routledge Publications.

ii. “Participatory Urban Governance and slum Development in Hyderabad and Kolkata” in Governing India’s Metropolises edited by Joel Ruet and Stephanie Tawa Lama – Rewal, Routledge Publications.
i. Archana Ghosh and Madhulika Mitra “Institutionalising People’s Participation in Urban Governance: An Inter – City Perspective of Ward Committees in West Bengal” in New Forms of Urban Governance in India, edited by ISA Baud and J. De Wit, Sage Publications.

Conference and Workshops

- Attended the third consultation of experts for Ford Foundation- IIM Ahmedabad project titled ‘The Globalizing State, Public Services and the New Governance of Urban Local Communities in India’, on 30-31 March at Hyderabad University.
- Participated in the final consultation of experts for the Ford Foundation supported and Public Policy Division of IIM Ahmedabad conducted research project on, ‘The Globalizing State, Public Services and the New Governance of Urban Local Communities in India’ in IIM Ahmedabad on 3 and 4 December.
- Reviewed the Working Paper No. 7 of Centre for Social Studies (CSS), Surat prepared by Mr. Vimal Trivedi on his research on ‘Door to Door Garbage Collection Programme in Surat City’ in May as external reviewer at the request of CSS.

Bhubaneswar

Projects
A. Land Alienation and Entitlements in select Tribal Districts of Orissa

This project has been implemented by ISS, Bhubaneswar Branch with effect from September 2007 for 3 years funded by Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland (represented by the Irish Embassy in India) approved on 26th July 2007. The project was implemented initially in Koraput district. In the second year the same district was taken-up for intensive intervention. In the final year, Rayagada district was selected for intensive intervention.

Objectives:

Overall Objective:
- To improve the standard of living of tribal population by empowering them through awareness and consultation camps for realization of their rights and entitlements over land.

Specific Objectives:
- To examine the present status of immovable properties in study area
- To make people aware of land related Acts and Rules and other legal provisions regulating land administration.
- To assess the present impact of all land related laws in tribal areas.
- To locate the gaps in implementation of these Acts and provide technical and legal expertise to protect and defend their cases in legal floras.
- To prepare inventory of illegal transfer of lands of tribals.
- List out illegal transfers and their restoration to the owners through legal intervention.
- To sensitize, educate and empower a few selected group leaders in the

Dr. B.K. Sahu, Project Coordinator, ISS, Mr. Gadadhar Parida, District Collector Koraput, Dr. P.C. Mohapatra, Director, COATS, Koraput and Mr. K.K. Patnaik, Senior Fellow and Regional Coordinator, ISS, in the District Level Workshop at Koraput under Land Alienation and Entitlements in Select Tribal District of Orissa Project
A tribal lady receiving patta from Mr. Gadadhar Paridha, District Collector, Koraput in the district level workshop

community on land problems in the study area to carryout the beneficial messages on a sustained basis.

Key Activities:
- To sensitize, educate and empower a few selected group leaders in the community on land problems in the study area to carryout the beneficial messages on a sustained basis.
- To undertake a research study on ‘Land Alienation and Entitlements in Select Tribal Districts of Orissa’.
- To create Information Data Base.

Project Area:
- Koraput District in the first two years.
- Rayagada District in the third year.

Target Group:
- Village Community leaders
- Key persons
- Government Officials
- PRI members
- Local organisations

B. Baseline Studies and Micro Plan in 50 villages of Rayagada and Kalahandi Districts of Orissa.
- The project was undertaken in the month of August 2009 funded by Vedanta Aluminium Limited, Lanjigada, Orissa

Objectives:
- To design a multi-dimensional baseline study in identified 50 villages
- To develop an electronic database to store relevant data from the baseline study.
- To prepare village wise micro plans in these villages.

Specific activities related to the Scope of Work:
- Design a comprehensive baseline study for the long-term development programme, which includes developmental tools and methodologies.
- Develop data collection techniques, formats and guidelines

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- Reviewed the Case Study of West Bengal by Dr. Gopa Samanta under the IIM Ahmedabad research project on ‘The Globalizing State, Public Services and the New Governance of Urban Local Communities in India’ in December as an expert adviser of the project.

B.D. Ghosh

Papers and monographs:
- ‘Panchayats: Institutions of Rural Local Government’ – Course material for the diploma programme of IGNOU, New Delhi (Awaiting publication).
- ‘Decentralizing health care delivery system in West Bengal: A review of the recent initiatives’ in Girish Kumar (ed), Health and Social Sector Reforms in India, Manohar and CSH, New Delhi, 2009.
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Conference and Workshops

- Delivered West Bengal Cooperative Union Endowment lecture on ‘Cooperative Principles, Local Organizations and Rural Development’ at Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan on 16 March.
- Gave a talk on ‘Local Communities, Local Institutions and Rural Development’ at the Refresher course of college teachers in Political Science organized by the department of Political Science of Kolkata University on 27 March.
- Submitted a paper on the indicators for constructing devolution index in the workshop for developing indicators of performance of states on devolution organized by UNDP (Decentralization Community) on 13-14 July, at IIPA, New Delhi.
- Presented a paper on ‘District Planning in West Bengal’ in the international conference on district planning organized by ISS at Kollam, Kerala on 28-29 August.
- Made a presentation on the sixth report of the Administrative Reforms Commission on ‘Local Governance’ at a seminar organized jointly by Lok Kalyan Parishad and ISS at Kolkata on 7 September.

- Lead a team/teams to conduct the comprehensive base line study utilising the tools and methods developed.
- Compile, analyze and validate the data collected for the baseline study and produce an analytical report.
- Design and develop an electronic database and appropriately store the study data in an easily accessible format in both electronic and hard copies.
- Prepare the village wise micro plans in identified 50 villages using PRA tools and produce the village wise reports and consolidated report.

Research

- The study was looked by Dr.Pramila Prava Patnaik under the guidance of Sri K.K. Patnaik and Dr.A.C. Jena, Retd. Prof.NIRD Hyderabad. Three Research associates and a team of 40 Investigators were engaged for the purpose. The Report on Socio-economic study and micro plan under Baseline studies and Micro plan of 12 villages of Kurli GP was completed and reports submitted during Dec09.

Bangalore

Projects Undertaken

Plan India – I: “Promoting Universal Birth Registration Among Children in Difficult Circumstances in Karnataka”

Goal: To achieve 100% universal birth registration by focusing on children in difficult circumstance (marginalized and vulnerable) in the project area.

C. Prevention of human trafficking (Women and Children), India: Making Interventions through Elected Representatives of Panchayats and other stakeholders in high source trafficking areas.

Objectives:

- To create awareness among the elected Panchayat members, District administration and members of civil society about the dimensions of trafficking of women and children. This was a pilot project for 4 months with effect from November 2009 starting with Ganjam district of Orissa.
Karnataka is one of these states where both birth and death registration is over 80 per cent and has demonstrated that with several problems it has been able to show remarkable progress and is much closer to achieve 100 per cent registration by 2010 with continued efforts. The present programme is another step in this direction. This year the focus is on children in difficult circumstances as they have remained excluded from the mainstream. Such children in the project areas are mainly the tribals, lamhanis (gypsies), migrants and vulnerable/marginalized children including children of devadasis, HIV+ persons and child labourers. During the current Plan India – UBR (Universal Birth Registration) follow up programme there will be a special focus on these families/children. ISS is the State Nodal Partner in this programme working with 4 District NGOs namely;

1. SAHAYOG, Bidar District
2. VIKASANA, Chikkamagalur District
3. PMSR, Chamarajanagar District
4. VISHWA BHARATHI (WORDSC), Gulbarga District

The first activity was to conduct a Situational Analysis for understanding their special problems and for arising at solution. Based on this, to conduct activities in the 4 districts of the state.

Plan – II: “Conducting Trainings and Undertaking Publicity Measures for Improvement of Registration System”

Plan India is conducting successful birth registration campaigns in 8 districts of the Karnataka State under Universal Birth Registration Programme. Under this programme registration system has improved. A two pronged approached to improve the birth registration in rural areas would be capacity building/training programmes and information dissemination/publicity through hoardings and brochures. ISS is the Nodal Partner in implementing this programme in close co-ordination with the State Government and Plan India who are the two parties in implementing this project.

**Directorate of Mass Education (DME): “The Impact Study of Karnataka State Literacy Programmes in Karnataka”**

The ISS will undertake “The Impact Study of Karnataka State Literacy Programmes in Karnataka” covering all the districts of the State for the Directorate of Mass Education, Karnataka. The Institute will study the various literacy programme carried out in the districts of the State to assess their impact on the literacy rate.

**Event**

1. The ISS conducted a two day seminar “Human Rights” on June 19–20, at CID, Carlton House, Palace Road, Bangalore.
2. The ISS conducted workshop on “Reaching out to Children in Difficult Circumstances for Universal Birth Registration” June 25, at Bharatiya idya Bhavan, Bangalore.

**Monthly Publication**

The Institute is publishing monthly bulletin called “Panchayati Raj Vartha Patra” in Kannada from June 1995 to March 2009, focusing on information about the Panchayats at the District, Taluk and Village level in the State of Karnataka, news from other states and other important activities and issues related to Decentralized Governance.

**Recent Publications**

A book titled “Trafficking in Women and Children: Myths and Realities” written by Shri Sankar Sen and Smt. Jayashree Ahuja was inaugurated by Dr. Girija Vyas, Chairperson, National Commission for Women on 7 October. The book highlights the nature and complexities of the problems of trafficking in women and children in India and emphasizes the ground realities. It also provides a concise account of the findings of the voluminous study in Trafficking in women and children done earlier by the Institute of Social Sciences in collaboration with the National Human Rights Commission.

3. B.S. Bhargava and K. Subha, Inclusion and Exclusion in Local Governance (Edited by B.S. Baviskar and George Mathew), Sage Publications, New Delhi.

Journal Publications
1. B.S. Bhargava and K. Subha, “Training For Panchayati Raj Functionaries Through Satellite in Karnataka”, Department of Public Administration, Presidency College, Chennai

Visitors
Academics, Researchers, Students, and Activists from India and abroad visit this centre. After having detailed discussion with the faculty, they also collected data from the resource centre. The general response is very good and people find the centre very informative.

Other Related Activities
In addition to the above, the faculty members participate and contribute papers in seminars and conferences organized from time to time by University Departments and other Research Institutions; also they serve as Resource Persons for training programmes in decentralized governance. They also deliver lectures in different Universities as outside faculty, especially in the Department of Political Science, Sociology and Development Administration in some of the leading Universities in Southern India.
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Dr. George Mathew and H.E. Dalai Lama at the International Conference on “Peace, Democracy and Human Rights in Asia” at Prague on 10-11 September 2009