Hon’ble President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee receives the first copy of the Book Status of Panchayati Raj in the States and Union Territories of India 2013 at Rashtrapati Bhavan on 6 November 2013

- Celebrating 20th Anniversary of 73rd CA
- India-Brazil-South Africa LGF
- Remembering Vaclav Havel and his Legacy
- Gram Sabha and Good Governance
- 12 & 13 D.T. Lakdawala Memorial Lectures
- Women’s Political Empowerment Day
- Empowerment of Women in Panchayats
- Democratization in Burma
Delegation from the Institute of Social Sciences including Dr. Santosh Singh (extreme right), Dr. George Mathew, Dr. Ash Narain Roy and Dr. M. Abdul Salam with the officials of Al-Mustafa International University in Qum, Iran.

Dr. Madeleine Albright (C), Chair of the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and former US Secretary of State was the Chief Guest of the Programme on “Indo-US Strategic Partnership” at the Institute. Dr. Ash Narain Roy delivering the welcome address during the meeting. Mr. Lalit Mansingh, former Foreign Secretary and Ambassador to USA, chaired the programme.
Celebrating 20th Anniversary of 73rd Constitution Amendment

The Institute of Social Sciences organized a national conference to commemorate the 20th anniversary of 73rd Constitution Amendment on 22 December 2012 at the Constitution Club, Rafi Marg, New Delhi. It was sponsored by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, UNICEF, UNDP and the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR).

This gathering witnessed a spirited interaction among around 1,500 elected representatives, academicians, politicians, Union government officials, students, and representatives of governmental and non-governmental organizations from across the country. The participants represented a microcosm of the political, cultural, religious, and social diversity of India and was symbolic of the ‘silent revolution’ which is underway in many villages across the country.

The diversity of participants was complemented by the quality of discussion and interactions among the participants individually and in groups. Moreover, the fact that representatives from places as far as Goa, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Sikkim and elsewhere participated in the event, bearing the unwelcoming weather of Delhi, holds testimony to their commitment and dedication as well as the potential of this institution of local self-governance.
Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar emphasized on the need to clearly define the role and responsibilities among the Panchayati Raj Institutions so that accountability could be fixed.
out of girl students, “the criticality of Panchayats and Local Self-Governance is immense.”

Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat, Chairman, ICSSR, emphasized four aspects that would improve the existing legislation. Firstly, training and development of elected representatives; secondly, regulation and guidelines to protect women and Dalit representatives from discrimination of various sorts; thirdly, sensitization of bureaucracy to enable local democracy; and fourthly, sensitization of men against patriarchy, which is pulling down female representatives.

Smt. Devika Subba, Adhyaksha, West District Zilla Panchayat, Sikkim proposed the Vote of Thanks.

The plenary session that followed was on the theme, “Twenty Years of New Panchayati Raj”. It was chaired by Mr. Mohammad Shafi, Member of Parliament and Former Minister of Panchayati Raj, Jammu and Kashmir.

Dr. Thomas Isaac, former Finance Minister, Government of Kerala, lamented that poverty and underdevelopment kill the potential of the masses and expressed the need for social security and public distribution delivery systems. However, as a remedy, he refused to buy the Union Government’s Direct Cash transfer proposal.

Dr. Binayak Sen, the eminent social activist, emphasized the health care delivery system at the grassroots and the problem of land acquisition and land rights, which plagues the tribals and forest dwellers. He said that PRIs - once considered its greatest strength - has also been its major limitation, in the sense that this participation has really remained statutory, and has not seeped into the political process on the ground. There are major shortcomings in the devolution of the three Fs - Funds, Functionaries and Functions - at the base. He also said that the Panchayati Raj (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act spells out the sovereignty of the gram sabha in decision-making, including decisions on development choices.

Swami Agnivesh, a campaigner for social issues, apart from expressing his hopes for the Panchayati Raj system, exhorted the women in the hall to stand firm against not only the social evils in the society, but also to secure their rights and privileges. He put the onus on the people to utilise the structure of Panchayati Raj in order to achieve empowerment and emancipation.

Mr. Mohammad Umar Ansari, ex-Sarpanch, Vaishali, Bihar, and Vice
Mr. Dharambir stressed that apart from governmental measures, dispute settlement and conflict resolution must happen among the village dwellers themselves, so that the interest of the collective is held over and above individual petty issues.

President, Association of Local Governance of India, explained how he promoted the cause of empowering women elected representatives, which would not only empower Panchayats but also individual families. He also noted that Panchayats are cornerstones of development, and that it is vital that they are further empowered. Smt. Sarita Singh, Pradhan, Dihawa, Gazipur, Uttar Pradesh, spoke about the importance of sanitation, health, and education in the villages and that the vigilance needed by Panchayat and Gram Sabha, especially women in proper implementation of the programs, is very decisive. “A woman educated is the family educated,” she said.

Addressing the panchayat representatives from various States, Ms. Radhika Kaul Batra, U.N. Coordination Advisor, stated: “We are all here to learn from the grassroots and practical experience that the elected panchayat representatives have brought from all parts of India”.

The Valedictory session that followed expressed unflinching faith in the Panchayats. Dr. Mohini Giri, Chairperson, Guild of Service, who chaired the Valedictory session, brought focus on the gang rape incident in Delhi and the rising violence against women in India. She gave a clarion call to the men in the hall to empower their women and to the women to unite and stand up for their rights.

Elaborating on the need for brotherhood and cooperation among the members of Panchayats and Gram Sabha, Mr. Dharambir, Chief Parliamentary Secretary to the Government of Haryana in charge of the Panchayati raj department in the state, in his Valedictory Address, stressed that apart from governmental measures, dispute settlement and conflict resolution must happen among the village dwellers themselves, so that the interest of the collective is held over and above individual petty issues.
Twelfth D.T. Lakdawala Memorial Lecture

Why Equity and Sustainability Matter for Human Development?
The Institute of Social Sciences organized the Twelfth D.T. Lakdawala Memorial Lecture on 17 March 2012 at Mavalankar Hall, Constitution Club, New Delhi on the theme “Why Equity and Sustainability Matter for Human Development?”. The lecture was delivered by Ms. Helen Clark, Administrator, the United Nations Development Programme and former Prime Minister of New Zealand.

Dr. George Mathew, in his welcome address, said that “this lecture series has undoubtedly been a high point in the Institute’s journey, for it includes a galaxy of world renowned figures: Amartya Sen, Mahbub-ul-Haq, Muhammad Yunus, Justice Albie Sachs, Noam Chomsky, Bhikhu Parekh, Romila Thapar, I.G. Patel, Anthony Giddens, Joseph Stiglitz and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam”. He further said that “as far as the Institute is concerned, Dr. Lakdawala was more a friend, philosopher and guide than Chairman for more than seven years. He taught us, how not to traverse a trodden path, till his untimely death in 1992”. He also said that “Hon’ble Ms. Helen Clark, with her academic background as Professor of Political Science in the University of Auckland, and more than three decades of public life with three consecutive terms as the Prime Minister of New Zealand, has been engaged widely in policy development and advocacy across the international, economic, social and cultural spheres”.

Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Hon’ble Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy, Government of India, presided over the lecture. In his presidential address he said that “the theme of today’s lecture is very relevant in the present global context. Equity and Sustainability are the two major issues that confront the world today. Equity is all about the basic fairness and is generally assessed in terms of parity, utilitarianism and distributive justice. In our societies poverty alleviation, improved income distribution and equal treatment to all sections of society are generally seen as key aspects of equity. Sustainability is another equally important dimension of human development – the 1987 Brundtland Report defined sustainability as meeting the needs of the present without...
Twelfth D.T. Lakdawala Memorial Lecture

Since 1990, the baseline date against which we measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of poverty.

compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. He further said that “as Union Minister for New and Renewable Energy, I am particularly involved with an area which is likely to make a profound impact in making our societies more sustainable and at the same time also address the issues relating to equity and human development. Access to modern and affordable energy services and increasing the share of renewable energy in our energy mix are just two such areas. We, in India, have been making concerted efforts to address these issues in a systematic manner”.

Ms. Helen Clark in her lecture said that “my topic today focuses on the importance of equity and sustainability as drivers of human development. It is important to acknowledge at the outset the significance of India’s contribution to the concept and discipline of human development. One of India’s own sons, Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen has made and continues to make a seminal contribution to the human development paradigm”.

She further said that “since 1990, the baseline date against which we measure progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), hundreds of millions of people have been lifted out of poverty. The world is within reach of seeing every child enrolled in primary school, and many fewer lives are being lost to hunger and disease. The global population as a whole is healthier, wealthier and better educated than ever before. Yet the aggregate and average figures also disguise some inconvenient truths: that ending poverty is a vast and unfinished agenda; and that inequality is increasing in many countries. The multiple crises which have gripped the world in recent years have exacerbated these challenges, and have shown our planet’s economic, social, and eco-systems to be under considerable stress”.

She also said that “just as development cannot be only about economic growth, nor can sustainability be only about protecting the environment. Development must be people-centred, promoting rights, opportunities, choices, and dignity. Yet for it to be sustained, the eco-systems on which life, human and otherwise, on this planet depends, must be sustained too... Income growth has been associated with
deterioration in key environmental indicators, like the level of greenhouse gas emissions, soil and water quality, and forest cover; income distribution has worsened at the country level in much of the world, even with the narrowing of gaps in health and education achievement; a rising HDI for any particular country, does not always lead to equitable outcomes for all in that country.

Ms. Clark further elaborated that “equitable and sustainable human development can be supported by drawing together relevant innovation, knowledge, capacity, and experience from around the world, and leveraging south-south and other forms of co-operation for increasingly effective development results. Implementation of the new Partnership Framework Agreement between India and UNDP will contribute that. The India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) trilateral development initiative to promote south-south cooperation and exchange, is another example of how knowledge and expertise can be shared to promote equitable and sustainable development and poverty eradication. More south-south, north-south and triangular co-operation is needed”. She also emphasized that “progress towards the Millennium Development Goals must be accelerated and sustained; triple-win policy and programming are the way forward; governance matters; finance for development should be revisited and expanded and leveraging knowledge and innovation will deliver sustainable development results.

Dr. Ash Narain Roy proposed vote of thanks. In his address, Dr. Roy said that “India has done well to create equity and sustainable development but it could have done better. India has shown the political will to fight poverty and inequity and to lay the foundation of an inclusive society. The robust economic growth of the past two decades or so has lifted millions out of poverty. Child survival has also improved considerably.”

Equitable and sustainable human development can be supported by drawing together relevant innovation, knowledge, capacity, and experience from around the world, and leveraging south-south and other forms of co-operation for increasingly effective development results.
Our challenges are overwhelming, daunting. But we can overcome these challenges by pooling resources, solutions, in partnerships, without exclusions.

Asia’s Rise or Fall: Challenges and Opportunities

The Institute of Social Sciences organized the Thirteenth D.T. Lakdawala Memorial Lecture on “Asia’s Rise or Fall: Challenges and Opportunities” on 4 December 2013 at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library Auditorium, Teen Murti Bhawan, New Delhi. The lecture was delivered by Dr. Jose Ramos-Horta, former President of Timor-Leste and Nobel Laureate. He is presently United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Representative and Head of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS).

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Hon’ble Minister of State for Human Resource Development, presided over the lecture.

In his welcome address, Dr. George Mathew said that “Dr. Lakdawala’s advocacy of decentralized planning strengthened the vision of Institute of Social Sciences to specialize in the field of decentralization, local government and empowerment of the marginalised”.

Dr. Mathew thanked the United Nations Development Programme for supporting this year’s lecture. He said that “the Institute has a long association with the UNDP and has conducted several research projects and programmes with the UNDP support”.

Dr. Jose Ramos-Horta, in his Lakdawala Memorial Lecture said that “being a founding-father of my country, I beg your indulgence to allow me to share with you the challenges and developments that are taking place there. Timor-Leste remains a success story in Asia.... 10 years on, we are proud that the latest UNDP Human Development Report accords Timor-Leste a HDI for 2012 that jumped to the value of 0.576, placing our country in the medium human development category; at independence in 2002 it was 0.375.

While our democracy is young and therefore imperfect, nevertheless Government and opposition have found common ground on key strategic priorities for the country and have been able to
work together to consolidate peace and national reconciliation, creating an enabling environment for sustainable development. We are living in times of great challenges in much of the world but also of hope and optimism for our peoples and our continent”.

He further said that “our challenges are overwhelming, daunting. But we can overcome these challenges by pooling resources, solutions, in partnerships, without exclusions...Asia must further develop partnerships with the US and the EU, technological powerhouses and large economic areas that have much still to contribute to global solutions. As we enter the second decade of the 21st Century, Asian economies have become the powerhouse of global economy. China, the Republic of Korea, India and Indonesia have been growing at annual rates of between 6 and 10 percent for sustained long periods. The economies of China, Korea, Japan and India put together already account for over 14 trillion dollars of annual GDP. I believe that time has come for Asia to lead and guide the world while navigating the challenges of the 21st Century”.

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, in his presidential address said that “I am confident that I speak for all of us in the audience when I say that we were inspired and provoked in equal measure hearing Dr. Ramos-Horta’s lecture today. His are no words of an armchair theorist. They derive their force and worth from his relentless efforts to restore democracy and peace in Timor-Leste. As you all are aware, Dr. José Ramos-Horta worked extensively to create a human rights network to voice the struggle and concerns of the Timorese on a global platform. He was in exile for a greater part of three turbulent decades before Timor-Leste gained independence from military rule. He used this time to advance dialogues and deliberations, and mobilise efforts to restore peace in his home country. As a former official of the United Nations (UN), I distinctly remember the efforts of Dr. Ramos-

Dr. José Ramos-Horta worked extensively to create a human rights network to voice the struggle and concerns of the Timorese on a global platform
Horta in garnering support for his nation when he became the youngest person to address the UN and his own compelling advocacy which eventually culminated in the UN resolution that led to the independence of Timor-Leste. He was a crucial global face of, and voice for, the struggle of the Timorese people. Dr. Ramos-Horta’s lifelong efforts were duly acknowledged by the world when he was conferred the Nobel Peace Prize in 1996 along with his fellow Timorese Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo “for their work towards a just and peaceful solution to the conflict in East Timor.”

Dr. Tharoor further said that “Dr. Ramos-Horta’s lecture today gave us an insight into the everevolving complexities in Asia and what the world and Asia can learn from each other. The trajectory of Timor-Leste exemplifies the journey of many Asian nations. In the 20th century, the majority of Asian nations sought emancipation from foreign colonial rule or homegrown brutal autocracies. A few of the countries, including India and Timor-Leste, turned into democracies while many others chose to follow a very different path. However, all these nations were bounded by common factors of a fragile economy, abysmal demographic indicators, daunting gender disparity, and precarious foreign relations. However, many Asian nations have toiled hard to convert these problems into potential opportunities....Dr. Ramos-Horta has championed the cause of unity in Asia (advocating setting up an Asian Fund for Sustainable Development and a 30-year Asian Road Map for Human Development) to further increase the cooperation between the Asian nations and between Asia and other regions of the world. He is one of the pioneering advocates who focused on realigning the strategies of the Asian nations to fully capitalise on the opportunities and successfully face the challenges of the 21st century”.

Dr. Santosh Singh, Senior Research Officer, Institute of Social Sciences, proposed vote of thanks.
Nineteenth Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

The Nineteenth Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations on the theme “Panchayats, Women and Health for All” was held on 24, 25 and 26 April 2012 at Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, New Delhi.

More than 550 elected Panchayat Representatives from 20 states participated in the Celebrations. The UN Women extended all support for this year’s programme. For the Institute of Social Sciences, this year’s meet of Panchayat women members was special because two-thirds of the Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) who came from different parts of the country were members of the Gram Panchayats. Sarpanches, block level Panchayat members, Zilla Panchayat members, Self Help Groups (SHGs) members, Panchayat Secretaries, DRDA personnel, and members of civil society organizations also participated and invigorated the three-day deliberations. The State Governments of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Goa, Tamil Nadu and Sikkim sponsored elected women representatives for this national event.

Health related subject like sanitation, safe drinking water, shelter etc., are the responsibility of Panchayats as per 29 subjects of the 11th schedule. Moreover, Government of India has declared the Twelfth Five-Year Plan as the plan for the health to achieve inclusive growth by reaching out to the excluded communities with equitable and affordable health care facilities with cashless treatment.

Youth Development). Topic: Women’s Empowerment at the Local Government level in India

Mr. Yadu Chandran, Central University of Kerala. Topic: Land Inequality in Kerala

Ms. Deepti Ann Joseph, Marian College Kuttikkanam, Kerala. Topic: Migrant women as paid domestic workers: Their working conditions struggles and Rights

Ms. Ashly Thankam Abraham, Marian College Kuttikkanam, Kerala. Topic: Urban Migration and Child Labour

Mr. Nafas K.N., Marian College Kuttikkanam, Kerala.
Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

The year 2012 marks the end of the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) which was launched in 2005. In this Flagship scheme the Panchayats have a major role to play in planning, implementing, monitoring and coordinating the health related schemes. A major issue is: Will India be able to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2020 by reducing maternal mortality, infant mortality, and the burden of many other new and old diseases? The theme was all the more important for women Panchayat members as, women are always expected to take care of health and other related issues both in private and public spheres.

The opening session of the three-day Women’s Political Empowerment Day programme began with a lot of fanfare on April 24. In her welcome address Dr. Bidyut Mohanty, Head, Women’s Studies, ISS described how important April 24 as a historical day for Women’s Political Empowerment. Dr. Mohanty briefly recollected that it was on this day in 1993 that the 73rd Constitutional Amendment became a part of the Indian Constitution and which gave a new lease of life to the Panchayats.

Ms. Rita Sarin, Country Representative, the Hunger Project, India, chaired the first session. Welcoming the Panchayat members, she observed that on this day in 1993 women acquired a constitutional status in the third-tier of governance. Since then women have started working efficiently in the Panchayats.

Ms. Shradha Chauhan, Sarpanch, Kheda Panchayat, Alwar District, shared her views on health, sanitation and environment. Toeing the footsteps of Gandhiji she equated health with happiness. According to her, one gets happiness if and only if one has control over his/her body and mind.

In his address, Mr. Suraj Kumar, Head, Governance Programme, UN Women referred to two pledges - to achieve universal primary health care and women’s representation in Panchayats. The first one was a worldwide pledge which is known as...
Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

Alma Ata Declaration or health for all. It was signed in 1978 in Kazakhstan. It was pledged to achieve the health for all within a span of ten years. The second one was made in 1993 to strengthen the Panchayats, and to enhance the women’s participation in local government more effectively. The second one is India specific.

Prof. K.B. Saxena, Council for Social Development, New Delhi, said that the Indian government’s decision was a historic and revolutionary step. No other country has taken such a step to bring women in large numbers from the societal fold to the political fold by the stroke of a pen. Secondly it is also revolutionary because women have taken charge of developmental work of the villages in addition to the household work. This has provided some space for women.

Ms. Renu Wadhera, Senior Advisor, Royal Norwegian Embassy said that whenever she meets an elected women representative, she acquires energy and strength. She wondered whether the elected women representatives took up health issues at all, especially at the Gram Sabha.

Prof. Kamal Nayan Kabra, Malcom-Adseshiah Chair, ISS, chaired the plenary session. Ms. Madhulika Banerjee, Department of Political Science, Delhi University and Ms. Natasha Das, a freelance cancer specialist, gave presentations about alternative systems of treatment.

In the second part of the session two doctors from Los Angeles, U.S., Ms. Meeta Patnaik and Ms. Ria Banerjee, gave demonstrations about how to use the easily accessible tele-health kits to diagnose the nature of common diseases such as blood pressure, diabetics, etc.

The inaugural session was held on 25 April 2012. Dr. George Mathew, in his welcome address, highlighted the developments since the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. According to Dr. Mathew now millions of women in India are entering public life and wherever they have freedom and power, remarkable changes are taking place.

Mr. Aslak Brun, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Chief of Mission, Royal Norwegian Embassy, addressing the inaugural sessions, complimented India for its effort to deepen democracy by reserving seats for women in the local government, which has resulted in women taking active part in economic, political and legal spheres on equal footing.

Ms. Anne Stenhammer, Regional Programme Coordinator, UN Women, in her address pointed out that the concept of women’s political empowerment must reach every woman in the country. An elected woman must see to it that the girl child’s right is honoured by sending her to school, and a little money is saved to look after the health of the family and a small road can be built to take the surplus harvest to the nearest market.

Ms. Fredrika Meijer, Representative, UNFPA, was happy about the theme as health of the nation depends on women’s empowerment. Meijer described the introduction of NRHM as “innovative” since it has introduced a real bottom up approach to health matters. It has given a lot of emphasis on the village health sanitation and nutrition committee.

Honourable Union Minister for Panchayati Raj and Tribal Affairs, Shri V. Kishore Chandra Deo delivered the inaugural address. He acknowledged the central role of Panchayat women in the areas of health. Referring to the women’s quota being raised by the several states to 50% he cautioned that a mere increase in numbers may not bring real empowerment of women. He drew the attention towards two conflicting trends - while some women are really guided

ISS Interns

2013

International

Dr. Aaron Schneider, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana. Topic: Fiscal Federalism in India and Brazil

Ms. Kelsy Utne, Salem State University Massachusetts, USA. Topic: Towards Global Goals: Assessing Self-Assessment Practices of Primary Education NGOs

Ms. Ina Elisabeth Ruber, B.A Sociology, University of Mannheim, Germany. Topic: Current Trends of Social Inequality

Ms. Aditi Malik, Visiting Research Scholar, Northwestern University, USA. Topic: Caught in Cycles of Conflict: Electoral Alliances and Temporal Variations in Ethnic Riots in Kenya and India

Mr. Francesco Obino, London School of Economics. Topic: “Voice Legitimacy in post-aid World Politics: International Development NGOs and their Decentralisation in India”

National

Ms. Chaynika Naveen, University of Michigan. Topic: Capacity Building for the Promotion of Labor Rights for Vulnerable Groups of Workers


Mr. Abdullah A Rahman, Tata Institute of Social Science. Topic: Women and the Evolution of Panchayati Raj Institutions

Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

by their male family members, other don’t listen to men any longer. He said we have to deal with both these situations. He said that the Government of India celebrates April 24 as Panchayat Diwas by giving encouragement to the states, for making Panchayats more effective. To encourage states to devolve more powers, the state governments are given awards on 24th April in Delhi.

This year four Panchayat women leaders: Ms. Shashi Kiran, Member, Zilla Parishad, Lahaul and Spiti, Himachal Pradesh; Ms. Puniben Rajpura, Sarpanch of Makassar Gram Panchayat in Surendranagar District, Gujarat; Ms. Manisha Gadve, Sarpanch of Kodoli Panchayat (Devgarh block) in Kolhapur district of Maharashtra and Ms. Parbati Patra, Pradhan of Jaynagar Gram Panchayat of Purba Medinipur District of West Bengal received awards for their exemplary work by the honorable minister. The award giving ceremony began with the screening of a documentary on the achievements of the awardees since 1999.

Dr. Varsha Das, Former Director, National Gandhi Museum, addressed the valedictory session. She said that health should be treated in a holistic way in which both mental and physical healths are included. In order to substantiate her point she quoted Mahatma Gandhi from his book The Health Guide, in which he wrote that, “only that man (woman) can be said to be really healthy who has sound mind in a sound body. The relation between the body and the mind is so intimate that if either of them goes out of order the whole system would suffer.” By man he also meant women as well, she observed.

Earlier, Dr. George Mathew, while introducing Dr. Varsha Das to the audiences, requested the EWRs to convene the Gram Sabhas regularly, because it is the assembly of the third-tier government system and sarpanches are the ‘chief ministers’ of their Panchayats. If they fail to convene Gram Sabha regularly, the collectors and panchayat secretaries would undermine their authority.

On 26 April, the Elected Women Representatives from the work areas of UN Women: Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh met at the Institute to deliberate on the challenges faced by them while working in the Panchayats and steps to be taken to override them. ■
Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

Twentieth Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations
The Institute of Social Sciences organised the Twentieth Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations on 22-23 April 2013, in collaboration with the National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW), UNICEF, ActionAid and Institute of Rural Research and Development (IRRAD), at the Constitution Club of India, Rafi Marg, New Delhi. Over the two days, participants deliberated on the theme: "Panchayats, Rights and Survival of the Girl Child".

The programme was attended by more than 400 elected women panchayat representatives from 18 States and one Union Territory, self help groups, mahila panchayat members, government officers, other social workers and NGO partners. The delegates were sponsored by various State governments and NGOs. It led to practitioners of local governance, eminent scholars and activists, contributing towards the richness of the event with their grassroots experiences and thoughts on the role of Panchayats in the empowerment of women and the future of the girl child.

Dr. Ash Narain Roy while delivering the Welcome Address, stated that women, being the epitome of ahimsa, have become essential parts of the new geometry of power that democracy helped create in India. Numerical abundance of children in India must not become a burden due to pervasive malnutrition but should become the source of hope and progress.

Dr. Bidyut Mohanty, Dr. George Mathew, Smt. Krishna Tirath, Mr. Louis Georges Arsenault and Ms. K. Ratna Prabha joined the women representatives by waving the flag “50:50 - Women in Governance, Get the Balance Right”
Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

Ms. Krishna Tirath, Hon’ble Minister of State for Women and Child Development, appealed to the women delegates from across the country not to tolerate injustice and harassment under any circumstance.

The voice of women that is feeble and helpless today must change to become louder, forceful and effective. She also highlighted the effort of National Mission for Empowerment of Women in the emancipation and self-realisation of women in India. She talked about the upcoming scheme of 'Ahimsa Messenger' and informed that twenty elected women representatives launched this movement for legal empowerment of women. They will be called Peace Ambassadors.

During the inaugural ceremony, the Minister honoured Ms. Nayana Patra, Baruan Gram Panchayat, Odisha, Ms. Shushma Bhadu, Dhani Miyan Khan Gram Panchayat, Haryana, and Ms. Sudha Manirathinem, Nattarmangalam Gram Panchayat, Tamil Nadu, as "Outstanding Women Panchayat Leaders 2013" with cash awards, citations and plaques for their exemplary contributions towards the development of their respective Panchayats.

Mr. Louis Georges Arsenault, Country Representative of UNICEF, said that women's empowerment begins with the emancipation of girl children, who will always be the best investment the country can make. He also reminded delegates that the progress in status of women has not been commensurate with the economic growth of the country and, for this, representation of women must be as strong in State Legislatures and the Parliament as it is in the Panchayats. He reminded the participants that empowerment must begin with education, nutrition, health and welfare of the nation's children, especially the girl child.

Dr. George Mathew emphasised that the onus fell on the shoulders of women leaders and citizens in the panchayats to usher in a new era of change and empowerment, while ensuring dignity of the girl child. Dr. Bidyut Mohanty, Head, Women’s Studies, ISS delivered the vote of thanks. She pointed out that the women present in the meeting would be inspired by the presence of the Hon'ble Minister because, it would encourage them to break the glass ceiling and reach Parliament. Secondly, her response at the clarion call to save the girl child sheds a ray of hope for the bright future of the girl child. In thanking the country representative of UNICEF, she praised their efforts to highlight the plight of the girl child who has been excluded from the high growth of Indian economy.

The two-day event comprised a series of talks by several eminent personalities who are actively involved in the effort to empower women and the girl child, whether through NGOs or the state machinery. These sessions were interspersed with topical films, testimonials and opportunities for participants to share experiences. Poetry recitals and the singing of folk music added further colour to the sessions. These poems and songs filled the lawn of the Constitution Club of India with
Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

a spirit of hope, optimism, and courage.

Ms. K. Ratna Prabha, Additional Secretary and Mission Director, National Mission for Empowerment of Women, delivered the Special Address where she laid out before the participants the challenges of integrating the marginalised sections of the society into the process of governance. Not only do society and reforms. More specifically, he said that each police station should have a women cell to look after women's issues. As a result the police station related violence would decrease.

Dr. George Mathew expressed his happiness at being able to successfully celebrate the Women’s Political Empowerment Day since 1994. This celebration, every year from then on, has made an enormous impact on women’s participation in public life and on their meaningful leadership at various levels of the Panchayats. He led the participants in a pledge to fight against all odds for the protection and empowerment of the girl child and to remind each other to take inspiration from the slogan, "Yes, We Can".

Dr. Santosh Singh, Senior Researcher, ISS gave the Vote of Thanks, bringing the memorable two-day celebrations to a worthy conclusion.

The valedictory session was chaired by Dr. Mohini Giri, Chairperson, Guild of Service who called upon the women delegates to be courageous amidst all adversities.

Dr. Satish Agnihotri, Director General, Defence Acquisition, Ministry of Defence delivered the valedictory address and shared his thoughts on the future of the girl child in India. He advised the women leaders present there to compel the candidates seeking votes from them to take the initiative in bringing about police

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Al-Mustafa International University (MIU), Iran and the Institute of Social Sciences on 5 January 2012 at New Delhi. Mr. Gholam Reza Mahadavi, Vice-Chancellor, Al-Mustafa International University was the Chief Guest.
President of India received first copy of the Status Book

The 737-page volume traces the history of rural local governments from the colonial period up to the present day.

Apart from an introduction which gives an overview of the Panchayati Raj system, the volume has special articles such as “Appraisal of Panchayats in Fifth Scheduled Areas”, “Panchayats and Women” and “Fiscal Decentralization”.

Thirty-five chapters have been written by academics and senior officials with inputs from the research team of the Institute of Social Sciences.

Each chapter on States and Union Territories contains socio-economic profiles with latest statistics on area, demography, economy, education, health, poverty, access to potable water, public distribution system, etc; District and Block level data; conformity Acts - strength, weakness, amendments, elections; devolution of powers; State Finance Commission - constitution, reports, present status; District Planning Committees - achievements and overall functioning and women’s participation.

The publication provides exhaustive data on Blocks/Talukas/Mandals and Districts along with maps, demographic data on the Districts and Blocks as also the socio-economic profiles of each State and Union Territory.
Vice-President of India released the Status Book

Hon’ble Vice-President of India Shri M. Hamid Ansari released the book “Status of Panchayati Raj in the States and Union Territories of India 2013” at the Vice-President’s Residence on 2 December 2013

Hon’ble Vice-President of India Shri M. Hamid Ansari released Status of Panchayati Raj in the States and Union Territories of India 2013

Vice-President of India Shri M. Hamid Ansari released the Status of Panchayati Raj in the States and Union Territories of India 2013, an encyclopedic publication of the Institute of Social Sciences, at a function held at the Conference Hall of the Vice-President’s residence on 2 December 2013.

Welcoming the guests, Dr. George Mathew, General Editor of the Volume said that “the book is the latest of our more than 250 publications which have created a knowledge base on critical areas of social sciences in the country in the development of our democracy. Of course, the most important areas of our concern have been decentralization, grass roots democracy, local government, women’s political empowerment and human rights”.

“This book brings together on one platform some of the best minds in the nation”, says Mani Shankar Aiyar in his Foreword.

This is the outcome of a teamwork by more than 50 scholars, researchers and local government practitioners from all over the country. Our objective was to gather as much information about the status and functioning of the panchayats in India as possible. It was indeed time consuming to collect and compile data from 28 states and 7 union territories.

In his presidential address, Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar said that “Dr. George Mathew and his Institute have done this remarkable job of finding experts for every state and every union territory to place before us the state of the panchayats in that state and that territory. And the story that emerges from this is that in the last two decades we have made panchayati raj ineluctable, irremovable and irreversible. That is a major achievement and it has happened only because the constitution amendments had given constitutional sanction, constitutional sanctity and constitutional safeguards to the institutions of panchayati raj”.

S.K. Dey Chair on Local Government

The Institute of Social Sciences established the S.K. Dey Chair in Local Government as a tribute to S.K. Dey, India’s first Minister for Community Development in Jawaharlal Nehru’s Cabinet and the first leader in Independent India who brought to the fore panchayati raj and sahakari samaj. In recognition of the Institute’s pioneering work in research and promotion of democratic decentralisation (Panchayati Raj) in India, the Ford Foundation gave a corpus fund for this Chair. Mrs. Purabi Pandey (daughter of S.K. Dey) and Mrs. Barouta Malhotra also contributed to the corpus fund of the Chair. Prof. Anand Chakravarti is presently the Chair Professor.

Prof. Anand Chakravarti taught Sociology at Delhi University till his retirement in 2006. He has done intensive, village-based, fieldwork on local-level politics and agrarian class relations, culminating in the publication of two monographs: Contradiction and Change: Emerging Patterns of Authority in a Rajasthan Village and Social Power and Everyday Class Relations: Agrarian Transformation in North Bihar.
In the year 2012 the Human Rights Wing of the Institute of Social Sciences conducted three days’ training programmes for women police officers on the topic “Self-Development and Conflict Management” at Central Detective Training Schools at Chandigarh from 22 to 24 February 2012 and at Kolkata from 14 to 17 August 2012. The female trainees who came from different parts of the country participated enthusiastically in the programme. The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) sponsored this training programmes for women police officers.

While releasing the Book the Hon’ble Vice President Shri M. Hamid Ansari said that “in a country of our size and diversity there is no option but to devolve governance to the local levels in order to deal with myriad local issues and services, which need local solutions and delivery, with active participation of the intended beneficiaries. He further said that “the Panchayati Raj system is founded on the tenet of decentralisation. This refers, according to a definition offered by the UNDP, to the restructuring or reorganization of authority so that there is a system of co-responsibility between institutions of governance at all tiers in accordance with the principle of ‘subsidiarity’, thus increasing the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance, while increasing the authority and capacities of sub-national levels”.

Shri Hamid Ansari further said that “it also offers a formula for achieving the required change through a three dimensional approach of political will, people’s awareness and building healthy conventions and traditions, backed by constitutional and legislative measures. In turn, local governments are expected to contribute to key elements of good governance, such as increasing people’s opportunities for participation in economic, social and political decisions, assisting in developing people’s capacities, and enhancing government responsiveness, transparency and accountability”.

The Vice President took note of the unprecedented widening of the democratic base of the Indian polity. Apart from the number of elected representatives is the unparalleled increase in the number of women and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in both rural and urban local bodies. This bodes well for the inclusion and empowerment of the marginalised and deprived sections of society. Despite the challenges of ‘proxyism’, women representatives have performed exceptionally in the local bodies, in terms of leadership, integrity, responsiveness and sensitivity. The projection in this study is that after 10 to 15 years, women may occupy more than 50% seats in all three tiers of the Panchayati Raj system. This is heartening.

Shri Ansari also expressed his concern on the role of the State Governments in terms of recognising the jurisdiction of local bodies and devolving financial and human resource powers to them. Some reports about it make disturbing reading. Failures on this count could have far reaching implications not only for the Panchayati Raj Institutions but also for other levels of governance, given the electorate’s expectations on participation and accountability.

Dr. Bidyut Mohanty, Head, Department of Women’s Studies, Institute of Social Sciences, proposed a vote of thanks.
India-Brazil-South Africa Local Governance Forum (IBSA LGF)  
“Deepening Democracy Through Local Governance”

The Institute of Social Sciences in cooperation with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, organised a two-day meeting of the India-Brazil-South Africa Local Governance Forum to discuss “Deepening Democracy through Local Governance” on 8-9 April 2013. Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Minister for New and Renewable Energy, Government of India inaugurated the programme at the India International Centre. The deliberations took place in the context of geopolitical shifts and a growing clamour for the redistribution of power.

H.E. Carlos Duarte, the Ambassador of Brazil, and Mr. Mark Reynhardt, Minister Councillor of the South African High Commission, stated in their opening remarks that the IBSA countries are global players with extensive geopolitical influence, and their common direction and agenda will be reaffirmed at the forthcoming summit.

Hon’ble Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah, implored delegates to remember that democracy is a fragile gift that must be safeguarded. Only by building the basic structure of local democracy together, can we ensure that the edifice of democracy remains intact. Mr. Dinesh Bhatia, Joint Secretary, Multilateral Economic Relations, Ministry of External Affairs, in his welcome address, encouraged IBSA states to devolve powers, ensuring inclusive growth, and inclusive democracy.

Dr. Ash Narain Roy, welcoming the delegates, affirmed that decentralisation has meant a new “architecture of governance”, and that India, Brazil and South Africa, have a role to play by sharing best practices of democracy and development, both amongst themselves and with other members of the developing world. Dr. M.A. Oommen, Emeritus Professor, ISS, in his keynote address emphasised that democracy is about more than just regular, free and fair elections, and involves issues of social justice and fairness, which come about through public reasoning.

Dr. Partha Nath Mukherji, Emeritus Professor, ISS, presiding over the first thematic session, suggested that it was pertinent to understand the socio-cultural

In the year 2012 a number of seminars and training programmes were conducted by the Human Rights Wing of the Institute of Social Sciences for the police officers at various Police Academies and Institutions for their sensitization. There were talks and interactions on human rights norms, community policing, criminal justice system, gender sensitization and police accountability etc. Programmes were conducted at the CRPF Academy at Gurgaon on 12 January, at IIPA Gurgaon on 15th January, at Kolkata on 20 January, at Delhi on 9 March, at Kolkata on 13 March. The project was sponsored by Jamshedji Tata Trust.
milieu of countries while studying federal systems. Dr. Rama Naidu, Executive Director of the Democracy Development Programme in Durban, spoke of the role that human dignity should play in development, and asked delegates to keep this idea central to local democracy. Mr. Davi Horrle Santos of the Ministry of Cities in Brazil discussed Brazil’s anti-poverty strategies, such as the successful Bolsa Familia programme, and argued that IBSA's democratic nature inspires other countries, meaning the grouping can demonstrate practices of good governance and poverty-reducing policies.

Prof. Balveer Arora, Chairman of the Centre for Multilevel Federalism, ISS, offered an enlightening comparison of the three IBSA countries. Mr. S.M. Vijayanand, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, spoke about the different poverty intervention strategies adopted by the Government of India. Ms. Caitlin Wiesen, the UNDP Country Director, emphasised that the challenge of poverty is still gargantuan. Mr. B.D. Ghosh, Senior Fellow, ISS, and Mr. Sandile Sithole, Executive Director of the Community Law and Rural Development Centre in South Africa, presented cases of poverty reduction strategies in West Bengal and South Africa, respectively.

Prof. K.C. Sivaramakrishnan, Senior Fellow, ISS, and Chairman of the Centre for Policy Research, presented an overview of the lack of progress in India’s decentralisation, particularly in the urban context. Mr. Amitava Tripathi, former Indian Ambassador to Brazil, spoke of his experiences in Brasilia on the eve of IBSA’s creation. Ms. Lise Grande, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, focused her Valedictory Address on the rise of the Global South, pointing out that since the end of the Cold War, great strides have been made in reducing poverty. Governments of the Global South have placed a renewed emphasis on health and education services, developed innovative poverty reduction schemes, and engaged strategically with the rest of the world.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. George Mathew spoke of the need to establish an International University on Local Governance. He proposed that this university be based in South Africa, with chapters in India and Brazil.

In the year 2013 the Human Rights Wing of the Institute of Social Sciences conducted on the topic “Self-Development and Conflict Management” at Central Detective Training Schools at Hyderabad 2 to 4 January, at Jaipur from 4 to 7 February, at Ghaziabad at 18 to 20 March, at Chandigarh from 25 to 28 March, at Jaipur from 19 to 21 July, at Chandigarh from 29 to 31 July, at Kolkata from 6 to 8 August and at Ghaziabad from 26 to 28 September. The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) sponsored this training programmes for women police officers.
Empowerment of Women in Panchayats: The Road Ahead

The Institute of Social Sciences in cooperation with the University of Kashmir organized a landmark conference of elected women panchayat representatives of Jammu and Kashmir in Srinagar on 28-29 September 2013 on the theme “Empowerment of Women in Panchayats: The Road Ahead”. This was the first such meeting to be convened since the halqa panchayat elections were held in 2011 with great public enthusiasm despite militant threats.

The meeting was co-sponsored by the United Nations Development Program’s India office and the Planning Commission of India. The University of Kashmir extended academic and logistics support. Several hundreds of elected women representatives of panchayats (EWRs), women activists from different districts of the state, scholars, legal luminaries and political leaders participated in the conference.

The conference aimed to examine the current situation of women elected representatives, discuss how they could effectively function as leaders and decision makers in public life, document cases of successful leadership, create awareness about the importance of their role in panchayats, and deliberate on ways and means to ensure good governance at village level.

The Inaugural Session commenced with rousing songs by the girls of Rahat Ghar, a home for children orphaned by conflict in the state. Prof. Nilofer Khan, Dean, Department of Student’s Welfare and Director, Women’s Studies Centre, Kashmir University and Ms Shamima Raina, Senior Vice-President, Jammu & Kashmir Mahila Congress, welcomed the delegates and guests.

Quoting Iqbal’s inspiring verse on Kashmir - ”The earth whose dust conceals the fire of the chinu in its conscience can never go cold, nor ever lose its self respect” - Dr. George Mathew spoke of Institute’s commitment to make Jammu and Kashmir one of the priority states in its work of promoting democratic local governance.

The UNDP Deputy Country-Director Alexandra Solovieva congratulated the
Empowerment of Women in Panchayats: The Road Ahead

Panchayat women and said that global evidence shows that progress towards development goals is undermined "if opportunity and justice are not universally accessible to all sections of society. Due to inherent power imbalances, women are more prone to such exclusions".

The chief guest, Mr. Ali Mohammad Sagar, Minister for Rural Development and Panchayats, in his inaugural address stated his government's plans for devolution of powers and finances to panchayats.

Groups of elected members met the Minister to voice their grievances directly to him and these interactions were well reported in the press.

Planning Commission member Dr. Syeda Hameed in her address said that the panchayats were at this point of time the most important sector in government, the one that was actually going to make a difference to the state.

Mr. A.R. Rather, Minister of Finance & Ladakh Affairs, Government of Jammu and Kashmir complimented the ISS for holding this timely conference. He recalled the provisions for women's empowerment spelt out in a separate chapter in the 'Naya Kashmir' Manifesto put together by Sheikh Abdullah, founder of the National Conference party which now runs a coalition government in the state.

Mr. Rather gave some practical advice to the assembled Panchayat members: to work with honesty and dedication in their panchayats, accept the most bitter criticism with equanimity, tolerate all forms of adversity and non-cooperation.

Nazrana-e-Khusro: In the evening, Urdu litterateur Begum Zakia Zaheer and Dr. Syeda Hameed presented a scintillating recital of compositions by the 13th century poet-mystic Amir Khusro, sung by Rene Singh.

The Valedictory function witnessed the culmination of the two days of aspirations, enthusiasm, energy, emotions and hard work that the women who had gathered there had put in. Prof. Talat Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor Kashmir University, while enumerating the key objectives of the conference in his introductory remarks, succinctly captured this mood. Moved by the enthusiasm of the elected women representatives as well as that of the students and faculty of the university, he assured future cooperation of the university for similar academic research and endeavors.

The Governor of Jammu & Kashmir H.E. Mr. N.N. Vohra, who is Chancellor of Kashmir University, was the chief guest of the valedictory function. In his address the Governor said, "Women have to play a vital role if the State has to achieve speedy progress and prosperity."

He called upon the women Panchayat representatives to take keen interest in their new role and contribute meaningfully to ensure the effective implementation of welfare and development programmes in the villages. Quoting constitutional provisions, which support the
Empowerment and rights of women, and the decentralization of powers, the Governor stressed the need for increasing awareness among women Sarpanchs and Panchs so that they are fully aware of their rights and duties. The Governor complimented the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, and the University of Kashmir and their collaborators for organizing such a Conference on an extremely important theme and for bringing elected women representatives from remote districts to Srinagar.

Prof. M. Aslam, Vice-Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University, delivered the Valedictory Address. He spoke extensively about the varied aspects of women empowerment and the need for further strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions in the State. He spoke of the numerous innovative training modules developed by him and his colleagues in IGNOU for capacity building of panchayat representatives, including many which were specially formulated for semi- or non-literate panchayat members.

Ms. Seema Khajuria, Additional Advocate General, Jammu and Kashmir felicitated the elected women representatives who had stood up to contest the elections against great odds, including threats to their lives in the 2011 panchayat elections.

Dr. George Mathew while addressing the gathering, confessed that the occasion had made him emotional as both Panchayati Raj and the state of Jammu and Kashmir were close to his heart.

Prof. Nilofer Khan proposed a vote of thanks, bringing to a close a unique event that brought University faculty and students, independent research scholars, political party workers and leaders and media persons together with grassroots elected women local government members for the first time in the history of Panchayati Raj in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.
The Institute of Social Sciences organized a Roundtable on Reviewing 25 Years of Indo-Sri Lanka Accord at the Seminar Hall of the Institute on 28 July 2012.

**RTI and its ethical challenges: All citizens are equal, but some are more equal than others**

The Institute of Social Sciences organized its first lecture under the Democracy Lecture Series instituted by the Nirman Foundation. The inaugural lecture was delivered by Ms. Aruna Roy, social activist and prominent leader of the Right to Information Movement on “RTI and its ethical challenges: All citizens are equal, but some are more equal than others” at Abdul Nazir Sab Hall of the Institute on 17 September 2013.

While welcoming the Chief Guest, Dr. Ash Narain Roy, recalled the seminal work of Arunaji and the Mazdoor Kissan Shakti Sangathan. “What a difference the RTI has made in our life and what bigger difference it will make if we succeed in taming the political class which is hell-bent on undermining it”, Dr. Roy added. He also maintained that thanks to the pioneering efforts of Arunaji and others, “the genie is out of the bottle and the humble citizens have started resorting to the RTI which has given a new meaning to democracy”. Dr. Roy also warmly welcomed Lord Bhikhu Parekh and recalled his famous observation, “no culture is perfect or represents the best life. We benefit from a critical dialogue with other cultures”.

Speaking on this occasion, Dr. George Mathew, said that “democracy is the most discussed and debated subject today. It is the best form of government in contemporary world. It has found worldwide acceptance. And yet, as Prof. Bhikhu Parekh says, no discussion of the definition and measurement of democracy today can be satisfactory unless it is grounded in and informed by a full appreciation of the inescapable reality of cultural pluralism. This cultural pluralism is best reflected in India than any other country”.

Dr. Mathew quoted a write-up on Ms. Aruna Roy from the *Time* magazine which appeared in May 2011. It says “starting from a tiny village in the deserts of Rajasthan in the 1980s, Aruna Roy began a long campaign to bring transparency to India’s notoriously corrupt bureaucracy. Its signal achievement is the 2005 Right to Information (RTI) Act, a law that has given the nation’s poor a
RTI and its Ethical Challenges

powerful tool to fight for their rights and has influenced similar measurers in other countries. It has also inspired thousands of RTI activists, who have exposed everything from land scams to bank embezzlement to the misuse of public funds meant for the poor. Roy doesn’t just condemn a broken system; she changes it.”

Ms. Aruna Roy said that the Right to Information has facilitated the narrowing of the gap between precept and practice in our public and private lives. It has provided a framework where all of us are encouraged to participate more overtly in politics and governing ourselves. It has shown us that in this vast democracy what we do, can, and does matter.

It is open secret, said Ms. Roy, that the powerful and the well connected exercise great influence on opinion and policy in our country. It is a matter of debate as to what and whom the mainstream really consists of. Nevertheless it is true that there is a great divide in perceptions at the two ends of this pyramid. At the top, there seems to be a balance sheet obsession.

According to Ms. Aruna Roy, the ethical norms of a democratic society should be determined through continuous debate and discussion. If we are concerned about the falling moral standards, rampant corruption, the arbitrary exercise of power, the failure of public officials and representatives to discharge their duties, we all first need to get involved in understanding what our own duties are.

Further elucidating her view, Ms. Aruna Roy said that the very first duty of every citizen is to be active participants in evolving and enforcing ethical standards for ourselves individually and collectively: of determining the ethical standards of our democratic polity. Ethics itself being the scientific basis for determining the right and wrong in governance, cannot be left to the whims and fancies of the ruling elite. We also need to understand that as citizens in a democracy it is our responsibility to be involved with politics. If we abdicate our responsibility, we will be victims of a peculiar perversion: we will be held responsible for the acts of people we despise the most.

In his speech Lord Bhikhu Parekh said that “democracy in India is facing a threat and is almost at the verge of being killed. Dissent is integral to the idea of democracy. In India, we have a 2,000-year-long tradition of debate right from the Vedic time. But there is no serious debate happening on a number of critical issues. This in itself is a threat to our culture of debate and democracy,” said Lord Parekh.

According to Lord Parekh, “during past few decades, the quality of public deliberation at all levels has suffered a dramatic decline. Parliament meets for far fewer days. Even when it meets, there are regular interruptions with members rushing to the Well of the House, leading sometimes to the suspension of the day’s proceedings and the wiping out of the vital question hour. As a result, bills of momentous importance are sometimes passed without careful scrutiny,” he said.

Lord Parekh strongly maintained that the elected representatives are expected to act rationally not on a whim or by consulting a soothsayer, and to choose a course of action best supported by evidence and argument. Public deliberation by itself is not enough either. A government might allow it, but that does not make it a democracy if people have no power to replace it or hold it accountable. Democratic politics is institutionally mediated, and representative institutions are at its centre, he concluded.
Democratization in Burma: Challenges and Prospects

The Institute of Social Sciences organized a two-day national seminar on “Democratization in Burma: Challenges and Prospects” from 18-19 May 2012 at Abdul Nazir Sab Hall, Institute of Social Sciences. Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Member of Parliament and former Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India inaugurated the programme.

In his inaugural address he said: “When the generals in Rangoon (now Yangon) suppressed the popular uprising of 1988, overturned the results of a free election overwhelmingly won by Aung San Suu Kyi’s National League for Democracy (NLD), shot students and arrested the new democratically elected leaders, leaving NLD leaders and party workers a choice of incarceration or exile, the Government of India initially reacted as most Indians would have wanted it to. For many years, India was unambiguously on the side of democracy, freedom and human rights in Burma – and in ways more tangible than the rhetoric of the regime’s Western critics.

This was troubling enough to policymakers in New Delhi, who were being painfully reminded of their own vulnerabilities to a determined neighbor. But the clincher came when large deposits of natural gas were found in Burma, which it was clear would not be available to an India deemed hostile to the junta. India realized that its rivals were gaining ground in Delhi’s own backyard while New Delhi was losing out on new economic opportunities. The price of pursuing a moral foreign policy simply became too high.

So New Delhi turned 180 degrees. When Pakistan’s President Musharraf travelled to Myanmar in 1999 to celebrate his country’s new relationship with his fellow generals, India’s then foreign minister Jaswant Singh soon followed. The increasingly forlorn resistance operations from Indian soil were shut down in the hope of reciprocation from the Burmese side. And New Delhi sweetened the Burmese generals’ tea for them by providing both military assistance and intelligence support to their regime in their never-ending battles against their
Democratization in Burma: Challenges and Prospects

own rebels. India’s journey was complete: from standing up for democracy, New Delhi had gone on to aiding and enabling the objectives of the military regime. Monks were being mowed down on the streets of Yangon in 2006, the Indian government called for negotiations, muttered banalities about national reconciliation and opposed sanctions. New Delhi also sent its oil minister to negotiate an energy deal, making it clear the country’s real priorities lay with its own national economic interests, ahead of its solidarity with Burmese democrats.

(At the same time, Indian diplomats intervened discreetly from time to time on behalf of Suu Kyi, though their effectiveness was limited by New Delhi’s unwillingness to alienate Rangoon). All this was in fact perfectly understandable. Any Indian government’s primary obligation is to its own people, and there is little doubt that the economic opportunities provided by Burmese oil and gas are of real benefit to Indians. India does not have the luxury of distance from Myanmar; there is also the strategic imperative of not ceding ground to India’s enemies on its own borders. One inescapable fact of geopolitics remains; you can put your ideals on hold, but you cannot change who your neighbours are. India’s government therefore cannot be blamed for deciding that its national interests in Burma are more important than standing up for democracy there.

And yet, paradoxically the gradual opening up of Myanmar following the 2011 elections and the installation of a general-turned-civilian, Thein Sein as president, may offer New Delhi some measure of vindication.

India’s privileged relationship with the junta in Naypyidaw also allowed it quicker humanitarian access than the United Nations and other international relief agencies enjoyed following the devastation caused by Cyclone Nargis in May 2008.

India cannot and should not seek to outdo China in appeasing the military junta. Its natural instincts lie with the Burmese democrats, Aung San Suu Kyi and the former students for whom it has, over the years, shown its support. With Washington signaling a willingness to take Naypyidaw’s political openness at face value, the stage is set for the region’s democracies, especially India, to open Burma’s windows to the world. China will be watching closely”.

Dr. George Mathew presided over the inaugural session. Dr. Ash Narain Roy delivered the welcome address. Dr. Tapan K. Bose, President, The Other Media, New Delhi proposed vote of thanks.

- Key note presentation on Decentralization – The South Asian Experience in Islamabad on 28 June 2012. This conference was organized by the World Bank on “Development Dialogue on Local Government”
- Attended the Conference on “South-South Exchange on Local Governance and Decentralization Tunisia, Libya and Yemen” and made a presentation on “Political Challenges of Decentralization” in Istanbul from 26 to 27 June 2012.
- Attended World Movement for Democracy’s (WMD) Seventh Assembly at Lima, Peru from 14 to 17 October 2012
- Made a presentation on “Local Development, Technology and Inclusion” at Bogota, Colombia on 18 October 2012
- Attended the Conference on “Federalism, Regionalism and Territory” in Rome, Italy from 19 to 21 September 2012

Seminar on “Democratization in Burma: Challenges and Prospects”:
A section of the Audience
Gram Sabha and Good Governance

The Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi in association with the Government of Kerala organised a one-day national conference on “Gram Sabha and Good Governance” in New Delhi on 20 April, 2012. The conference discussed the theme in four sessions on the sub themes of: 1) Gram Sabha and Participatory Democracy, 2) Towards a corruption free society – the role of Gram Sabha, 3) Voice and choice for the people and 4) Special session on Kerala’s experience in new democratic initiatives. The special session held at Yuva Kendra auditorium, Chanakyapuri, Delhi discussed on the central theme of ‘Kerala’s new democratic initiatives’ expressing the forum’s admiration at Kerala’s social development and democratic practices.

Mr. Chandrashekhar introduced the topic under consideration and shed light on the direction in which Kerala government was moving with respect to local self governance. Pointing at the importance of consultation with stakeholders and the public in framing policies, he emphasized that Planning in Kerala was a result of consultations more in the lines of consultations done for the Twelfth Five Year Plan prepared by the Planning Commission of India.

The documentary called “Touching the Soul” captured the imagination of the audience providing a glimpse of the humanitarian and humane efforts of the government in reaching out to the people in need. The documentary comprehensively captured the essence of the various new efforts of the Government in enriching democracy, transparency, accessibility and accountability.

Dr. George Mathew, while welcoming the various dignitaries on the dais, commented on the vision of the Chief Minister of Kerala to direct the evolving State towards a stable, secure as well as...
economically and socially prosperous future. He placed before the floor the idea of centrality of Gram Sabha in the development of a State.

Mr. Oommen Chandy, the Chief Minister of Kerala, attributed the success of his government’s programs to the collective effort of people’s representatives as well as the people themselves. He exhorted the people to uphold democracy and live by the tenants of honesty and transparency.

Shri Jairam Ramesh, Union Minister of Rural Development, commented on the exemplary work ethics of Shri Oommen Chandy and proceeded to marvel at the commendably healthy political culture of Kerala.

Eminent economist Dr. M A Oommen noted that his accessibility, healing touch and prodigious memory constitute the winning character of the Chief Minister. He pointed out the ineffectiveness of state bureaucracy in certain respects, which is the reason why the Chief Minister himself had to address to routine matters of social security.

Mr. K.C. Joseph, Minister of Rural Development, Government of Kerala, said that Mass Contact Programme has given the common man confidence. He said that the leadership of the Chief Minister is the strength and inspiration of the government.

Union Minister Shri Jaipal Reddy traced the history of democracy in India and said that the survival of democracy is the result of the work of its political workers. Kerala, known for its democratic initiatives, has had many great and ethical political leaders of whom Shri Oommen Chandy stands out as an icon of tireless service, transparency and honesty.

Dr. Ash Narain Roy proposed a vote of thanks.

Mr. Jaipal Reddy, Hon’ble Union Minister for Petroleum, released the book: *Boundless Access: Kerala’s Tryst with Governance*, giving the first copy to Prof. M.A. Oommen. Also seen Mr. Oommen Chandy and Mr. Jairam Ramesh

- Participated in the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) Research Colloquium at Uganda Management Institute, Kampala, Uganda from 13 to 14 May 2013

- Participated in the Seminar on “Inclusive Growth, Poverty Reduction and Human Security” organized by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) and National Research Council Thailand (NRCT) at Central World, Bangkok from 24 to 26 August 2013

- Attended the Founding Assembly of the Asia Democracy Network (ADN) and the 3rd Seoul Democracy Forum (SDF) on the theme “Peace, Development and Development in Asia” at Olympic Park Hotel, Seoul from 20 to 24 October 2013

**National Conferences/Workshops**

- Attended the Project Launch on “Study of Women Victims of Crime in Kerala” at Thiruvananthapuram on 1 August 2013

- Delivered the 20th M.A. Thomas Memorial Lecture on the theme “Power to the People: The Sociological Conundrum” at Ecumenical Christian Centre, Bangalore on 16 August 2013
Meeting to Remember Vaclav Havel and His Legacy

The Institute of Social Sciences organized a meeting on 7 March 2012 to remember the legacy of Vaclav Havel in promoting democracy in Eastern Europe and its worldwide impact. Chief Guest Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, Member of Parliament and former Union Minister addressed the gathering along with His Excellency, the Ambassador of Czech Republic Mr. Miloslav Stasek. Mr. Juraj Petruska, Counsellor & Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the Slovak Republic was also present. Experts on Eastern Europe, academicians, representatives from civil society organizations and students from Jawaharlal Nehru University and Delhi University participated in the meeting.

All participants observed a minute’s silence before the meeting started, to pay homage to the great champion of democracy.

In his welcome address Dr. Ash Narain Roy said that Vaclav Havel’s essay on ‘The Power of the Powerless’ became a mantra for all those who were struggling in Eastern Europe against the tyrannical rule.

In his presidential address Dr. George Mathew said that “as advocates of democracy, we were very keenly observing the developments in 1970s and 80s in Eastern Europe. In the mid-70s we were also extremely concerned about Indian democracy. Vaclav Havel was a beacon to all struggling people for freedom and democracy”.

The Ambassador of the Czech Republic, Mr. Miloslav Stasek, said that India was one of the first countries that President Havel visited. He expressed his happiness about the rising popularity of Havel in India and elsewhere. Havel, he said, was greatly impressed by Mahatma Gandhi and his principle of non-violence.

Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar spoke eloquently of the man who fought valiantly against the repressive Communist regime through his writings and thus provided intellectual leadership to all those democratic forces in Eastern Europe who were struggling to come out of the Stalinist yoke. He recollected how India as leader of the non-aligned world exemplified the third way which more than 100 newly independent countries found it relevant to stay out of the Cold War camps.
Study Tour of the Elected Representatives of Local Governments from Bangladesh to Kerala

The study tour of the elected representatives of local governments and officials from Bangladesh to Kerala was jointly organized by Strengthening Democratic Local Governance (SDLG), Dhaka and the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi from 11 to 16 January 2012. The objectives of the study were to understand various dimensions of the decentralized and participatory developmental initiatives taken at the local government level in Kerala; interact with key policy makers behind the local government system to learn particularly on financial management and revenue generation, participatory planning and budgeting, service delivery and monitoring. There were 20 delegates who participated in this exposure visit.

The delegation had interactions with Mr. S.M. Vijayanand, Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala and Director, Institute of Management in Government; Ms. Sarada Muraleedharan IAS, Executive Director, Kudumbashree, Government of Kerala; Mr. Jacob Easow, Senior Town Planner, Government of Kerala and Mr. Baiju K., Deputy Town Planner, Government of Kerala; Prof. M.A. Oommen, Professor Emeritus, Institute of Social Sciences and Justice M.R. Hariharan Nair, former Judge, High Court of Kerala and former Ombudsman for Local Self Government Institutions, Government of Kerala.

The delegation visited the Venganoor Gram Panchayat, one of the best panchayats in Kerala, especially regarding poverty eradication, women empowerment and promoting communal amity. The panchayat has rewritten the conventional development paradigms and focused on welfare activities such as schemes for children and indigent old with the support of Kudumbashree.

The delegation also visited Nedumangadu Block Panchayat. They discussed the functioning of block panchayats and enquired about how the block panchayat president being elected. They also asked the staff about any challenges they face during the implementation of the project. In a reply to the question the staff of the Panchayat said that they have so far not come across any political intervention while implementing the project.
Tradition and Modernity: Changing Dimensions

The Institute of Social Sciences, in collaboration with Al-Mustafa International University, Qum, Iran, organized a seminar on “Tradition and Modernity: Changing Dimensions” on 3 November 2012 at the Abdul Nazeer Sab Hall of the Institute.

While delivering the key-note address Dr. T.K. Oommen (Padma Bhushan and Professor Emeritus, JNU) said that the “tradition is both an asset and a liability”. He observed that “to a large extent the success of a modernising society depends on its ability to convert the assets in its tradition to contemporary advantages and to reject the liabilities which are obstacles in its social transformation. Both the traditional and modern values of India have assets and liabilities embedded in them. And one should consciously opt for a judicious combination of assets both in the traditional and modern values in a consistent fashion to secure the most appropriate mix. Once again, we are at a new set of problems. What is the most appropriate mix? I can only assert that there is no mix which is universally appropriate; appropriateness will have to be defined contextually. The context is provided by the historicity of a society, and its present existential conditions. We must recognize that a democracy innate to India cannot admit possessive individualism”. Dr. Oommen also said that “Traditional principles of allocation of roles and distribution of resources were based on hierarchy.”

Dr. Ash Narain Roy in his welcome address said that “civilisations are not static. The concept has an older pedigree dating to Toynbee and Spengler. Later Benjamin Nelson injected a dose of dynamism into civilizational analysis with his idea of inter-civilizational encounters: people beg, borrow or steal what is covered or admired across civilisations. How this took place over millennia is known. Indian culture appears to be uncommonly gifted to take on board new ideas and adapt to them”. Dr. George Mathew delivered the Presidential Address.
Local Self-Government: The Unfinished Agenda

The Institute of Social Sciences in association with Common Cause, organized a seminar on ‘Local self-government – The Unfinished Agenda’ on 28 March 2012 in order to underline the importance of empowerment of local communities in improving the quality of governance.

Shri Kishore Chandra Deo, Union Minister of Panchayati Raj and Tribal Affairs, was the Chief Guest at the inaugural session of the seminar. Prof.K.C. Sivaramakrishnan, Former Secretary to Government of India and Chairman & Research Professor, Centre for Policy Research, delivered the keynote address.

In his welcome address, Shri Kamal Kant Jaswal, Director, Common Cause, stressed the urgency of empowering and enabling local communities to take charge of their destinies and assume the responsibility for realisation of their development goals. In his opinion, the inadequacy of outcomes in various centrally planned development programmes and the poor quality of human interaction at the points of contact with a distant administration tend to exacerbate the innate impatience of a young population.

In his keynote address, Prof. K.C. Sivaramakrishnan spelt out a comprehensive strategy for actualising the Constitutional scheme mandated by the 73rd and the 74th Amendments. He observed that major changes in governance take place only when prompted by a clear vision and a determined leadership. The purpose of the 73rd and the 74th Amendments was to widen the funnel of participation and empowerment of the people. Though the amendments resulted in an enormous arithmetical surplus in terms of expansion of the pool of elected representatives, this surplus was offset by a serious political deficit.

In his inaugural speech, Shri Kishore Chandra Deo reviewed the state of Panchayati Raj in the country and eloquently delineated his vision and


Federalism in Brazil and India: Situating the Local Governments in Local Governance A Global Perspective, edited by B.S. Bavisker and Ash Narain Roy, Publication

BlackSwan, Hyderabad (2012).
Local Self-Government: The Unfinished Agenda

Division, Govt. of India, New Delhi. (2012).

- ‘Devolution and the Inclusion of the Excluded; paper presented at the workshop on “An Assessment and Analysis of Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) in Kerala” at M.G University, Kottayam on December 2012.

Book Review

- Abhijit V. Banerjee and Esther Duflo’s ‘Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty’, Random House India, Mathrubhumi weekly, October 2013

Bidyut Mohanty

- Organized Women’s Political Empowerment days 2012 and 2013.
- Coordinator of the Project: A Study of grassroots Democracy in India : Women in Panchayati Raj

perspective on democratic decentralization. He noted with satisfaction that with the coming into force of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution, the imperative of holding regular elections has become justiciable. This acts as a check on the propensity of state governments to defer the elections to local bodies, though there have been some notable exceptions. The Minister assured the participants that devolution of functions, functionaries and funds to Panchayats by the States is being monitored continuously.

The seminar had interventions from a distinguished panel of academics, practitioners and activists, including Dr. George Mathew; Prof. V.N. Alok, Associate Professor of Public Finance & Coordinator, Centre for Urban Studies, IIPA; Shri Joy Elamon, CEO, Intercoperaion Social Dev, India; Prof. M. Aslam, Vice Chancellor, Indira Gandhi National Open University; Ms. Nirmala Buch, former Secretary, Rural Development, Government of India; Ms. Rashmi Shukla Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, GOI, Mr. Prashant Bhushan, eminent public interest lawyer and activist; and Ms. Madhu Kishwar, Founder, Manushi Sangathan & Founder Editor, Manushi.

The final session provided a curtain-raiser to a forthcoming deliberation on ‘Alternate Paradigms of Democratic Decentralisation’. The highlight of the session was a thought-provoking presentation by Shri Prashant Bhushan, noted public interest lawyer and activist, on ‘Returning Power to the People – Towards a Participatory Democracy’. He underlined the shortcomings of representative democracy and made a strong plea for ensuring a truly participatory democracy by giving the people the final say not only in the formulation of development plans and mobilization and allocation of resources, but also in the formation of national policy and proposals for legislation through referendums enabled by information and communication technologies.
Interactive Session with Roberto Zagha

On 12 March 2012, Mr. Roberto Zagha, the World Bank Country Director for India, had an interactive session at the Institute of Social Sciences on the priority areas of the World Bank in its operations in India. These interactive discussions and consultations play a key role in providing ideas and talking points as the World Bank gears itself to prepare its next Country Program Strategy (CPS) for India. The previous CPS for India (2009-2012) focused on developing infrastructure in a fast-track mode and in concentrating development support to the seven poorest states. More than 20 eminent scholars, economists and thinkers as well as research faculty of the Institute participated in the programme.

Mr. Zagha, looked back over the last 65 years of the Bank’s long established relationship with India through financial investments and technical assistance. He reminisced that the first loan for India was in 1949 for the railways sector and from then on the country has been one of the largest borrowers from the World Bank. India is also one of the largest users of the International Development Association (IDA) window of the World Bank that provides interest-free credits on concessional terms and grants for development programs.

There was an active exchange of views and ideas on the priority areas of World Bank with senior faculty members of the Institute, professors from Jawaharlal Nehru University and Delhi University and Research Scholars. Prof. Kamal Nayan Kabra, Malcolm Adiseshaiah Chair, Institute of Social Sciences, chaired the session.

Mr. Roland Lomme, Governance Advisor, World Bank India, participated in the discussion.

Dr. George Mathew welcomed the participants and gave a brief account of the cooperation between the World Bank and the Institute of Social Sciences.

Archana Ghosh

Research Studies

- Coordinated the project on “Social Impact Assessment of Kolkata Environmental Improvement Project (KEIP- Phase 1)” sponsored by the KEIP under Kolkata Municipal Corporation.
- Involved from March 2013 in coordination of a study on “Children of Migrant Poor in Kolkata-
Centre for Multilevel Federalism: Special Lecture Series and Speakers at ISS in 2012

- **Prof. James Manor**, School of Advanced Study, University of London. Theme: “Centralization of Power and Decentralization of Resources”, 17 January
- **Prof. Odette Louiset**, Professor in the Department of Geography, University of Rouen, France. Theme: “The Cultural Geography of Capitals in Federal India: Case study of Hyderabad, Situating Chandigarh and Bangalore”, 14 February
- **Dr. Mira Kandar**, Senior Fellow at the World Policy Institute in New York and a Member of the Editorial Board of World Policy Journal. Theme: “India’s Federalism: A Help or a Hindrance to Sustainable Development”? , 21 February
- **Prof. Imtiaz Ahmad**, Political Sociologist and former Professor at the Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Theme: “Multiculturalism and Federalism”, 10 April
- **Dr. Sandeep Shastri**, Political Scientist who is the pro-Vice-Chancellor of Jain University at Bengaluru and the Director of its Centre for Research in Social Sciences and Education. Theme: “South Sudan: Democracy, Federalism and Nation Building”, 17 April
- **Prof. Navnita Chadha Behera**, Professor of International Relations at the Department of Political Sciences, University of Delhi. Theme: “From a Policy ‘Lag’ to a ‘Lack’ of Policy”, 21 August
- **Dr. Paranjoy Guha Thakurta**, Independent Journalist and educator. Theme: “Future of Federal Coalitions in India”, 04 September
- **Dr. E. Sridharan**, Academic Director of the University of Pennsylvania Institute for the Advanced Study of India (UPIASI) in New Delhi. Theme: “Coalition Politics in India in Theoretical and Comparative Perspective”, 20 November
- **Prof. Gurpreet Mahajan**, Professor at the Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Theme: “Cultural Diversity and Federalism”, 18 December

The Human Development Perspectives” sponsored by UNICEF, West Bengal Publications

- Wrote a joint paper on “Trends in Urbanization and Environmental Concern- Status of Sanitation Services in Urban West Bengal” for the Annual Conference on Urbanization Trend Environmental Concern of the Centre for Urban and Economic Studies, University of Kolkata held on 17 August 2012
- Jointly with Madhulika Mitra contributed an article in the Blog - Exploring Development, on Trend in Urbanization and Status of Basic Amenities in Urban West Bengal - A District Level Analysis on 5 April 2013
Centre for Multilevel Federalism

Centre for Multilevel Federalism: Special Lecture Series and Speakers at ISS in 2013

- **Dr. Indira Rajaraman**, Member, Central Board of Directors, Reserve Bank of India and Member, Technical Advisory Committee on Monetary Policy. Theme: “Economic Reform in a Multilevel Federal Setting”, 22 January
- **Dr. Eric Leclerc**, Associate Professor (HDR) in Geography at the University of Rouen and a member of ERIAC EA 4307. Theme: “Tracing Multiple Identities: The Indian Diaspora in Cyberspace”, 12 February
- **Prof. Jean-Luc Racine**, Emeritus Senior CNRS Fellow at the Centre for South Asian Studies. Theme: “Pakistan: Federalism and the Challenge of Governance”, 26 February
- **Dr. Kalowatie Deonandan**, Associate Professor of Political Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, Canada. Theme: “The Governance of Natural Resource Extraction and Multilevel Federalism: Implications for Resource Communities in Canada”, 19 March
- **Dr. Satyajit Singh**, Associate Professor, Department of Political Sciences, Delhi University. Theme: “Unfolding the Political in Decentralisation: Village Forest Councils in Uttarakhand”, 2 April
- **Prof. Zoya Hasan**, Professor of Political Science, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Theme: “The National Commission for Minorities: Mandate and Limitations”, 16 April
- **Prof. Neera Chandhoke**, Former Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi. Theme: “The Governance of Natural Resource Extraction and Multilevel Federalism: Secessions, Self Determination and the Federal Solution”, 23 April
- **Prof. Rekha Chowdhary**, Professor of Political Science, University of Jammu. Theme: “Peace Building in Kashmir Today: Problems and Issues”, 13 August
- **Dr. V.N. Alok**, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Public Administration. Theme: “Panchayats in India: Comparing Devolution Across States”, 3 September
- **Dr. Aaron Schneider**, Leo Block Chair, International Studies at the

Seminar

- Participated in the IBSA seminar organized by the Institute of Social Sciences in Delhi on 8-9 April 2013 on Deepening Democracy through Local Governance

B. D. Ghosh

Participation in Projects

- Study on Devolution of Powers and Functions to the Panchayats in nine States of India
- Study materials for Training in Panchayati Raj in India
- Planning and Governance Consultant in a World Bank aided Government of West Bengal Project on Annual Performance Assessment of gram panchayats
- Knowledge Community for Children in India

Dr. George Mathew and Dr. Ash Narain Roy with the participants of the Roundtable on Reviewing 25 Years of Indo-Sri Lanka Accord held at the Institute on 28 July 2012
University of Denver. Theme: “The Political Economy of Tax: Class Alliances and Political Institutions in India and Brazil”, 10 September

Dr. Ashok Acharya, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Delhi University. Theme: “Accommodating Diversity: Groups in India’s Constitution”, 17 September

Prof. Carlo Carboni, Professor in Economic Sociology at Universita Politecnica delle Marche (UPM). Theme: “Italian Elites, Ruling Classes and EU Multilevel Governance”, 24 September

Prof. Rajeev Bhargava, Director, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies. Theme: “Should Indian Federalism be called Multinational?”, 15 October

Prof. Partha S. Ghosh, Senior Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Theme: Cross-Border Migrations, Foreign Policy and Federalism: The South Asian Experience”, 22 October

Prof. Jagpal Singh, Professor of Political Science, INGNOU. Theme:


Prof. Niraja Gopal Jayal, Professor, Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University. Theme: “The Rival Representational Claims of Parliament and Civil Society”, 26 November

Dr. Polly Datta, Lecturer in Economics at IIT Ropar. Theme: “Disbursing Resources to the States in India (1990-2012) The Raghuram Rajan Formula in Perspective”, 3 December

Prof. Prakash C. Sarangi, Professor of Political Science, University of Hyderabad “Economic Reform and Bargaining Federalism in India”, 10 December

Dr. Scott Moore, Post Doctoral Research Fellow at Harvard University, “Federalism and Water Resource Management in India: A Comparative Perspective”, 17 December

Mr. Roland Rich, Executive Head, United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) is delivering the lecture on Dignity Through Democracy and Human Rights on 29 March 2012. Also seen Mr. T.K.A. Nair, Advisor to the Prime Minister of India

Center for Multilevel Federalism

(KCCI) internship programme, 2012

- Status of Panchayats in the States and Union Territories of India
- Preparation of Case Studies on the Best Performing Panchayats under PEAIS in 2011-12 in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and West Bengal
- Study on Panchayat Election of West Bengal 2013
- Study Tour of Bangladeshi Team to learn the Panchayat System of West Bengal

Publications

- ‘Legitimacy and Accountability of NGOs: Issues and Options’ in K.B. Saxena, Monoranjan Mohanty, Sumit Chakravarty (Eds), A Fistful of Dry Rice: Land, Equity and Democracy, Aakar Books, Delhi, 2012
- “Communal Violence in the Federal System: The Case of Muzaffarnagar”, 29 October
- Prof. Sonja Walti, Department of Public Administration and Policy, American University, Washington. Theme: “Conceptualizing the Impact of Federalism and Multilevel Governance on Policy Performance”, 12 November

- Prof. Partha S. Ghosh, Senior Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library. Theme: Cross-Border Migrations, Foreign Policy and Federalism: The South Asian Experience”, 22 October
- Prof. Jagpal Singh, Professor of Political Science, INGNOU. Theme: “Should Indian Federalism be called Multinational?”, 15 October
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- Prof. Prakash C. Sarangi, Professor of Political Science, University of Hyderabad “Economic Reform and Bargaining Federalism in India”, 10 December
- Dr. Scott Moore, Post Doctoral Research Fellow at Harvard University, “Federalism and Water Resource Management in India: A Comparative Perspective”, 17 December

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ISS Regional Centers
Kolkata
Activities in 2012

UNICEF Internship Programme
ISS Kolkata in partnership with UNICEF Kolkata hosted the Knowledge Community for Children in India (KCCI) Summer Internship Programme 2012. Four interns each from USA, Argentina, U.K. and India joined the programme. The programme started in May 2012 and continued till July 2012. Mr. B.D. Ghosh was the Coordinator of the programme and Mr. Debraj Bhattacharya and Mr. Dilip Kanti Chaudhuri were involved in it.

The study was aimed to understanding the realities of decentralized planning through an analysis of the multi-tiered system in Purulia, West Bengal. The study also tried to provide an analysis of the institutional and social inefficiencies that might be leading to inadequacies within the PRI system. Hura block of Purulia district was chosen for the study and from there two GPs were selected on the basis of self – evaluation score.

Annual Performance Assessment under Institutional Strengthening of Gram Panchayats (ISGP)
This was a consultancy project provided by Mr. B.D. Ghosh to Sutra Consulting Pvt. Ltd. for annual performance assessment of the gram panchayats selected for the World Bank funded ISGP project of Government of West Bengal. The project started in May 2012 and continued till October 2012.

The Institutional Strengthening of Gram Panchayat Project (ISGPP) was initiated after an agreement between the World Bank and Panchayat and Rural Development Department, Government of West Bengal in July 2010 with an aim at improving service delivery and governance in rural and peri-urban areas. Overall 1,000 GPs were selected across 9 districts of West Bengal. The objective of the assignment was to provide an independent and impartial mechanism to assess whether or not the GP was eligible for accessing the ISGP Grant in the financial year 2013-14 following the assessment done between May-September 2012 on the performance of the GP during 2011-12. Information was collected through surveys and interviews with the GP staff, PRI members, and village leaders. The study identified several areas for improvement, including transparency, accountability, and efficiency in service delivery.

Kamal Kabra
Books/Articles/ Lectures/ Papers

- Guest-Edited the journal Denouncement (A magazine on national scenario) on the special issue on “FDI in Retail: The Continuing Debate” (March-April 2012) and contributed (i) Guest Editor’s Introduction, “(ii) FDI in Retail Trade: Hurting People where it Hurts Them Most”, (iii) “Trade in India: Recent Structural and Institutional Changes and their Policy Implications”, (iv) “Alternatives to FDI in Retail”.

- Published “Appropriate Development – People First” by ISS, 2012


- Articles on the Union Budget in Tathya Bharati, Yojana and Yuwa Samvaad.
collected from all 1,000 GPs selected for ISGP

Study of Devolution to PRIs in Nine States of India

The project funded by UNDP was conducted from July to August, 2012. This study tried to analyse the status of devolution (in terms of functions, functionaries and finance) to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) in nine states of India, namely, Assam, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. Mr. B.D. Ghosh was the Coordinator of the project and Ms. Madhulika Mitra and Mr. Debraj Bhattacharya were attached to it.

Though all the states under the study fulfilled the mandatory requirement of the constitution but lack of political will to decentralize was also found at the same time. The panchayats were functioning like before within the framework of what may be called ‘permissive functional domain’. Thus the whole issue of devolution to panchayats stands on a slippery ground. In some states, such as Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra, panchayats are comparatively more active than those in other states. Based on the observations, the study has recommended a broad outline of UNDP’s future programmes on decentralization.

Un-organised Business in Kolkata

The project was conducted in collaboration with the Institute of Liberty and Democracy (ILD), Peru and conducted in December 2012. ILD is a non-profit organization of Peru, involved in research and executing projects aimed at the development of strategies, norms and mechanisms necessary for a peaceful and planned transition towards a social market economy and the benefit of those who are currently informal. The above...
mentioned project was a part of the comparative study in this regard between Lima in Peru and Kolkata in India. Ramiro Rubio was the main Researcher of ILD of this project.

The field work was conducted in nine locations in Kolkata and one location in Haora city. Ms. Madhulika Mitra and Mr. Dilip Kanti Chaudhuri were involved in this project.

Activities in 2013

Urban Studies

Social Impact Assessment of Kolkata Environmental Improvement Programme
ISS Kolkata conducted the Social Impact Assessment of Kolkata Environmental Improvement Programme (KEIP) at the behest of KEIP Cell of Kolkata Municipal Corporation. It started in January 2013 and the final report was submitted in July 2013. The objective of the project was to understand the lessons learnt from the project and identify shortfalls of the first phase of the project. All the five components, namely, sewerage and drainage, slum improvement, canal rehabilitation, re-settlement and solid waste management were covered under the projects. Ms. Archana Ghosh was the coordinator of the project and Ms. Madhulika Mitra, Mr. Debraj Bhattacharya and Mr. Dilip Kanti Chaudhuri were involved in it. A team of six persons worked in the field along with the core team.

Children of Migrant Poor in Kolkata
Recognizing the need for research within the broader domain of internal migration in India and especially on the condition of migrant children in Kolkata, the Kolkata office of ISS collaborated with UNICEF office of West Bengal to conduct the research project. The project started in April 2013 and the final report has to be submitted in March 2014. Ms. Archana Ghosh was the Coordinator of the project and Ms. Madhulika Mitra, Mr. Debraj Bhattacharya and Mr. Dilip Kanti Chaudhuri were involved in it. The study focused on the poor families who have migrated to the city of Kolkata during the last ten years with special emphasis on the condition of children within the population.

Project on Panchayat

Terminal Evaluation of Capacity Development of Local Governance (CDLG)
The project was conducted in collaboration with Inter Co-operation Social Development India. It was the terminal evaluation of UNDP supported MoPR’s Capacity Development of Local Governance (CDLG) Project (2008–12). On behalf of ISS, Mr. B.D. Ghosh provided the consultancy. The evaluation was done in a participatory manner on the basis of CDLG’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, results/impact and sustainability. Multiple methods, sources and tools were used in the study through a multi-disciplinary team. The sources of data were both secondary as well as primary. The primary data was collected from different sources using different methods such as direct observation, Focus Group Discussions, and Key Informants interviews (KIIs). The project covered seven CDLG states of Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Case Studies of Best Performing Panchayats
The project was funded by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. It started in April 2013. The objective of the project was to develop case studies of best performing panchayats identified by the government.
through Panchayat Empowerment Accountability Incentive Scheme in 2011–2012, highlighting their best practices. Mr. B.D. Ghosh is the Coordinator of the project and Ms. Madhulika Mitra, Mr. Debraj Bhattacharya and Mr. Dilip Kanti Chaudhuri are involved in it.

**Panchayat Election of West Bengal 2013**
The study was conducted by Mr. B.D. Ghosh after the 8th panchayat election of West Bengal which was due in the month of May 2013 and finally was held in July 2013. The study focused on the following aspects:
- Conflict between the State Election Commission (SEC) and the state government
- Judicial intervention in the holding of panchayat election
- The scope, power and the role of the SEC
- Violence in election
- Verdict of the voters: analysis of election results.

**Study Tour of Bangladeshi Team to West Bengal**
A 15 member team from Bangladesh visited West Bengal to learn the panchayat system of West Bengal in September 2013. It was a part of the larger study tour of them in India. The tour was supported by Bangladesh Hunger Project and the West Bengal chapter was organized by ISS Kolkata. The team comprised of the officials of Hunger Project Bangladesh working on local government and three Chairpersons of Union Parishad of Bangladesh.

**Bhubaneswar**

**Research Study**
Research study on “Implementation Status and Gap between Provisions and Practice of PESA Act in three Tribal dominated States of India (Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand and Odisha; A Comparative Diagnostic–Cum-Evaluation Study” funded by Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Research and Training Institution (SCSTRTI), Government of Odisha with effect from November 2011 and the report was submitted to SCSTRTI, Government of Odisha on 18 July 2012. The report was prepared by Shri. K.K. Patnaik and Dr. P.P. Patnaik.

**Action Project**
ISS, Bhubaneswar is implementing one action project (PACs programme) with a network partner WOSCA on “Improve Access to Land of Socially Excluded Communities for Livelihood Security in Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj District of Odisha” funded by DFID, U.K. Government with effect from 15 September 2011. The purpose of the project is to improve access to land of socially excluded communities for livelihood security in Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj district of Odisha.

**Project Activities during 2012**
**Constitution of CBOs at Gram Panchayat level named Gram Panchayat level Land Rights Committee (GLRC)**
Five (5) members have been drawn from each existing FRC of 350 project villages of 48 GPs and constituted a General Body of GLRC of the concerned GP. Out of the total members constituted under General Body of GLRC, 25 have been selected consisting of representatives from the women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, other castes, physically handicapped, Sarpanch and other key stake-holders of the village as Executive Body members of GLRC. The Sarpanch is the Chairman of GLRC and represent in the Block Level Forum. Constitution GLRCs at GP
and village level could make the project easy to reach the people in addressing their issues relating to livelihood / entitlements/benefits. Also it would help in advocacy at GP level.

Creating cadre at GP level named Bhu-mitra
A local tribal youth from each select GP, willing to take training and interested to work for his/her Panchayat, were identified for providing training on different land related Acts/laws and given practical orientation on survey and settlement. All total 46 Bhu-mitras were given 3 months RI/Amin training which would reduce the problems of their respective GPs.

Radio channel programme
An interface programme among socially excluded group members, government revenue functionaries and local elected representatives was arranged for relay in order to generate awareness among the common as well as targeted communities. It relayed once in every quarter. The panel discussion would be on different land related acts, new circulars, acts, rules etc. exclusively for socially excluded groups, and about the method of filing of claim, entitlements and the process and procedure required to be adopted. The purpose of radio programme is to generate awareness among people of social excluded groups. Due to lack of awareness about the benefits provided under different government schemes, the deserving people are deprived of those benefits and also sometimes are exploited by the influential groups as well as by the government officials.

Lobby with government departments
A strong interface between government officials, stakeholders and people has been built by inviting government revenue and forest officials especially revenue inspectors, revenue supervisor, Tahasildar, forest ranger, WEO of the concerned area as the members of GLRC and BLRC. Tahasildars (revenue officer) assured to take up issues of people and agreed to meet people anytime on various issues. Meeting with district officials and lobby with government departments could make the project for smooth implementation.

Intensive intervention in project villages
Due to intensive intervention in 344 project villages, people benefitted in respect of their livelihood. A total of 1724 (homestead land) applications have been filed and 33 households received patta under Vasundhara scheme. Regarding agriculture land, 38 applications filed. Out of 571 applications filed for settlement of encroachment land under OGLS, 67 cases were settled. Similarly, 60
demarcation cases were settled under ‘Mo Jami Mo Diha’ scheme and 15 applications submitted under partition cases. Out of 3576 applications received for land under FRA (individual claim), 272 households received title, 34 applications from villages submitted for community claim, out of total claims, 248 households received work order under Mo Kudia, and 715 received work order under IAY. About pension benefits, 1 received widow pension and 3 received disabled pension.

Publication of Newsletter
A six monthly Newsletter named ‘Jeeban Jeebika Margadarshi (2500 copies) containing different land related Acts/Laws has been published and distributed among the target group. Distribution of newsletter could generate awareness among people regarding different land related Act/schemes. It has a good impact on the project.

Project Activities during 2013
The main focus of the project during 2013 was (i) creating cadres at different level for the sustainability of the project (ii) convergence with government programmes for smooth implementation of the project (iii) Advocacy through forums constituted under PACS project at GP level, block level, district level, state level and national level. The following are the major achievements during project intervention in 2013.

Cadre building among tribal youths in all project GPs
A total of 46 out of 48 GPs, cadres have been created. Out of 46 Bhu-mitras, 10 have been engaged in government assignment. Out of the rest 36 Bhu-mitras, 8 have been associated with the PACS field activities.

Mr. K.K. Patnaik, Regional Coordinator, ISS Bhubaneswar, is addressing the gathering in the District Level Women Convention at Mayurbhanj.

Cadre building among CBO Federation members (GLRC) in all project GPs
The cadre has been created among the GLRC executive body members who will further disseminate the message among the people of their respective villages. During this period, the entire 48 GP level cadre has been created by providing them...
training on different revenue and forest land related schemes, laws/provisions, PESA, NREGS, and RSBY etc.

Formation of CBOs
All the 350 village level CBOs, 48 GP level, 6 block level and 2 district level CBO Federations have been formed during this period. The CBOs consist of representatives from cross-sections of the community like (i) representative from PRI members (ii) FRC (iii) government functionaries (iv) SHG members (v) Media persons (vi) Health workers (v) Semi-government and NGO members. The head of the CBO/CBO Federations mostly belong to SEGs. The CBOs created under PACS are unregistered. But the CBOs maintain their own records like meeting resolution register.

SEGs received land rights
During intensive intervention in project villages, out of 671 applications filed under Vasundhara scheme for homestead land, 145 households received patta. A total of 146 households received agriculture land. Regarding settlement of encroachment land under OGLS, 44 cases have been finalised. As regards demarcation cases, 28 cases have been finalised.

SEGs received forest rights
Out of 4575 IFR applications collected, 57 hhs received IFR, 20 CFR cases finalised at DLC 114 applications for CFR filed out of which 20 applications finalised at DLC level, 290hhs received work order for house under Mo Kudia and 2 hhs received IAY house.

Collaboration with government programmes
In the process of lobby with government officials, ISS could get opportunity to collaborate with government programmes. Government department has issued letter of collaboration for undertaking CFR claim process under FRA in Saharapada, Jhumpura and Patna of Keonjhar district. The process is going on.

SEGs raised voice for their rights and entitlements
Radio channel programme has very good impact on dissemination of information regarding rights and entitlements of SEGs on land rights. Radio channel programme in two districts is organised in every quarter. People in the area can contact programme coordinators at their field offices or over telephone. Information

Seminars, Lectures and Papers
- Delivered lecture on “Role of NGOs in Prevention of Social Crime” on 1.3.2012 in the training course on ‘Social Crime Management’ conducted by Central Detective Training School, Kolkata, for Nepal Police Officers of the level of SI/Insp.
- Presented a paper on “Forms of People’s Participation in Urban Governance in India” in a national seminar on ‘Urban Development in India: Issues and Challenges’ organized by Department of Geography, Midnapore College, West Bengal on 22 – 23 March 2012
- Presented a paper on Trend in Urbanisation and Environmental Concern: Status of Sanitation Services in Urban West Bengal, jointly with A. Ghosh in a seminar on Urbanisation
about entitlements under different government schemes was also disseminated.

**Intensive intervention in model villages**

As proposed in the project, a model village from each select GP was selected for intensive intervention. Out of 48 villages, 21 was selected keeping population, number of households, and concentration of SEGs etc.

**Existing FRCs revisited**

Consequent upon 2012 Amendment Rule (Forest Rights Act), there was need to reconstitute existing FRC in regard to composition of social group. ISS reconstituted 38 FRCs and formed 6 FRCs newly.

**FRCs strengthened**

ISS strengthened all the 350 FRCs by organising one day training programme at GP level on FRA and role and responsibilities of FRCs.

**Awareness generation through newsletter**

Half yearly newsletter containing RSBY guideline published during this period. Apart from the above activities under PACS, two other projects are also undertaken (i) Accessing and utilizing Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) through informed & assertive community in three districts of Odisha” funded by PACS since 1st April 2013 (ii) Ensuring Resource & Livelihood Rights of Socially Excluded Communities through effective implementation of FRA” funded by PACS since 1st October 2013.

**Bangalore**

**Activities during 2012 and 2013**

Conducting Trainings and Undertaking Publicity Measures for Improvement of Birth Registration System in Karnataka, sponsored by Plan India, New Delhi.

The Institute of Social Sciences provided Professional Support Services Consultancy to the Saakshar Bharath Mission Project, Karnataka State Literacy Mission Authority, Government of Karnataka, Bangalore.

The Department of Public Libraries, Government of Karnataka entrusted the ISS, Bangalore to undertake study on Evaluation of Supply of Kannada Books by the Government of Karnataka. The study was completed and report submitted to the Department.

Research Project on Mainstreaming Youth in Local Governance in the selected Gram Panchayat of Bangalore Rural District, sponsored by Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development. The study was completed and submitted the report.

**Thiruvananthapuram**

**Ongoing Projects**

Comparative study of Kerala’s Participatory Planning and Porto Alegre’s Participatory Budgeting funded by Swiss Development Agency.

**Puducherry**

The Governing Body of the Institute of Social Sciences approved the
establishment of a Regional Centre in Puducherry. In response to the strongly felt need for an institute of excellence for social science research, advocacy, and outreach programmes in the Union Territory of Puducherry, Mr. V. Selvam, a native of Puducherry, initiated and established the Regional Centre at Radhakrishnan Nagar, Kathirkamam, Puducherry in October 2012.

The vision of the Regional Centre Puducherry is to evolve itself as a premier institution of excellence for social science research with an interdisciplinary approach, advocacy, and outreach programmes on the thrust areas of the Institute with a regional focus. The mission of the Regional Centre is to create informed public opinion, recommend policy and contribute to the discourses on participatory democracy, local governance, human rights and specifically to contribute to the discourse on development of Puducherry. Efforts are on at the Regional Centre to have its own publication, a lecture series, working papers series, internship programme, and orientation programmes in schools and colleges on the significance and career prospects of social sciences particularly for the students of Union Territory of Puducherry as part of the Centre’s core activities.

Mr. Selvam, who received his academic training in economics with an interdisciplinary approach, advocacy, and outreach programmes on the thrust areas of the Institute with a regional focus. The mission of the Regional Centre is to create informed public opinion, recommend policy and contribute to the discourses on participatory democracy, local governance, human rights and specifically to contribute to the discourse on development of Puducherry. Efforts are on at the Regional Centre to have its own publication, a lecture series, working papers series, internship programme, and orientation programmes in schools and colleges on the significance and career prospects of social sciences particularly for the students of Union Territory of Puducherry as part of the Centre’s core activities.

Mr. Selvam, who received his academic training in economics with an interdisciplinary approach in esteemed Central Universities like Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, University of Hyderabad, Hyderabad, and Pondicherry University, Puducherry, is coordinating the activities of Regional Centre Puducherry. ■
Photo Gallery

From left: Dr. George Mathew, Prof. T.K. Oommen, Prof. Yogendra Singh, Prof. Partha Nath Mukherji, Prof. T.N. Madan and Prof. I.P. Modi on the occasion of Remembering Prof. B.S. Baviskar at the Institute on 4 May 2013

George Mathew, Member, Steering Committee World Movement for Democracy (5th from L) with Carl Gershman, Melinda Quintos de Jesus, Francesca Bomboko, Inna Pidluska, Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell, Asma Khader, Art Kaufman and David Lowe at 7th WMD Assembly in Lima, Peru: 14-17 October 2012
Mr. Lodi Gyari, Executive Chair, International Campaign for Tibet, Dr. Madeleine Albright and Mr. Lalit Mansingh in a meeting at ISS Chairman’s Office

Prof. Anand Chakravarti, Chair Professor, S.K. Dey Chair in Local Government, delivering the Acceptance Lecture. From left: Dr. George Mathew, Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty and Dr. Ash Narain Roy
Photo Gallery

Dr. Theodore Piccone, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution delivering the lecture on "Rising Democracies & Emerging Global Order: Analysis of Trends & Drivers of Change" at the Institute on 9 October 2012

The Sri Lankan delegation with H.E. Prasad Kariyawasam, Ambassador of Sri Lanka at Sri Lankan High Commission during the programme organized by the Institute of Social Sciences in collaboration with The World Bank on 'Decentralization and Disability - Vulnerable Groups and Inclusion' 18 - 23 December 2013
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