Award winning women panchayat leaders: Shyama Bai, Manju Joshi, (centre) along with (L to R) Sapna Sharma, Santosh Singh, George Mathew, Louis Georges Arsenault, Rebecca Tavares, Ash Narain Roy and Bidyut Mohanty

- Ambedkar and the Fate of Indian Democracy
- Bhutan Delegation Visit
- Chinese Delegation Visit
- Women’s Political Empowerment Day
- Knowledge Exchange Programme
- Yemeni Delegation Visit
- Kerala’s Growth and Equity: Way Forward
- Look East Policy
A.M. Shah (C) releasing the Book “Inside-Outside” written by B.S. Baviskar and D.W. Attwood at the Institute on 11 April. From left: George Mathew, Partha Nath Mukherji, Tulsi Patel and Anand Chakravarti

Conference on Empowering Community of Democracies in Seoul (24-25 November). H.E. Maria Lessner (Centre); Anselmo Lee, Carl Gershman (1st and 2nd from right) and George Mathew (2nd row 4th from left)
Dr. Ambedkar and the Fate of Indian Democracy

Dr. Ambedkar said “Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life”.

Dr. Ambedkar and the Fate of Indian Democracy

Democracy in India has “neither perished nor flourished”, said Development Economist Jean Dreze while delivering the lecture on ‘Dr. Ambedkar and the Fate of Indian Democracy’ at the Institute of Social Sciences (ISS) on 6 December.

The Democracy Lecture Series was instituted by the Nirman Foundation in 2013. Dr. Shyam B. Menon, Vice-Chancellor, Ambedkar University presided over the lecture. Dr. George Mathew, Chairman, ISS, in his opening remarks highlighted the importance of the day as the 59th Mahaparinirvana Diwas of Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Mathew thanked Professor Bhikhu Parekh, Fellow of the British Academy and Labour Member, House of Lords, and the Nirman Foundation for instituting this lecture series at the Institute. He underlined the scope of the lecture by quoting Dr. Ambedkar from his last address to the Constituent Assembly on 25th November 1949. Dr. Ambedkar had said “Political democracy cannot last unless there lies at the base of it social democracy. What does social democracy mean? It means a way of life which recognizes liberty, equality and fraternity as the principles of life”.

The lecture that followed saw repeated mention of the idea of social democracy as envisaged by Dr. Ambedkar and the current state of social and economic democracy in India.
Dr. Ash Narain Roy, Director of ISS, talked about Dr. Ambedkar’s contribution to the inclusive nature of Indian polity and the need for the society also to become inclusive. Dr. Roy, while discussing the problems of disparity and inequality, talked about the lack of empowerment of the poor, Dalits, Adivasis and women in our society. However, he stressed that democracy “is not without Utopia”.

Dr. Jean Dreze captivated the audience with his thought-provoking talk on the hopes and frustrations of Dr. Ambedkar while creating the Indian democratic set up. Dr. Dreze highlighted primarily how Dr. Ambedkar would have been dismayed at the state of democracy today and yet not been appalled. This, he said, was because the final democratic set up agreed upon by the Constituent Assembly was far from Dr. Ambedkar’s own dream for the country and was more a compromise to reach a more agreeable solution. While steering clear of the Gandhi-Ambedkar debate, he observed how even though India has achieved a certain state of political democracy, ‘ideal democracy’ could not be achieved due to inequalities in the society.

Even though India has achieved a certain state of political democracy, ‘ideal democracy’ could not be achieved due to inequalities in the society.

Dr. Dreze explained how democracy envisaged by Dr. Ambedkar was a mode of associated living requiring the people to commit to rationality and scientific discussion and that morality and ethics had to play a significant role in shaping a democratic society. Talking about the personal ideology and dreams of Dr. Ambedkar, Dr. Dreze further elucidated how Babasaheb had envisioned, for the country, a much more socialist constitution containing aspects like state ownership of land and collective farming. Most of these socialist ideas of Dr. Ambedkar are reflected in the Directive Principles of State Policy that, though not justiciable, provide the framework for the functioning of every government in the country.

Prof. Shyam B. Menon in his Presidential address reminded the audience that it was exactly 36 years after Dr. Ambedkar passed away that the demolition of Babri Masjid happened. In more sense than one, this event was one of the major challenges that the Indian democracy had to face in recent decades. Reflecting on the phrase "fate of Indian democracy" in the title of the lecture by Jean Dreze, Shyam Menon wondered whether the incredible inequality that characterizes the Indian society isn't indeed the genetic predisposition that explains most ills of India's democracy. That greater access to technology among ordinary citizens actually leads to their increasing vulnerability as electorate to propaganda and marketing by media is also a matter of concern, according to him.
Bhutan Delegation Visit to India

The Institute of Social Sciences in association with the World Bank organized the visit of a high-level delegation from Bhutan to Delhi from 16 to 24 February. The delegation comprised senior officials from the Ministry of Works and Human Settlement, Government of Bhutan and it was part of a World Bank-financed Bhutan Urban Development Project in Thimphu. The project aimed at developing infrastructure in the northern areas of Thimphu as well as supporting the Royal Government of Bhutan to strengthen the systems and capacities for municipal finance and management. Some of the activities like computerizing tax records, strengthening budgeting and accounting and putting in place comprehensive performance and financial reporting systems were the project objectives.

The Bhutanese team was interested to learn about the lessons during implementation, the issues faced, critical success factors and outcome in the following reform areas:

- Accounting reforms: Reform from the present cash based accounting system to accrual based accounting
- Revenue Mobilization: Methods of optimization of tax assessment and collection mechanisms to augment revenue.
- Budget Management: Budgeting process to support budget and expenditure control.
- Financial Management: Financial management rules and procedures to bring about accountability and transparency.
- Process improvement: Implementation of processes for better citizen services and planning included improvements based on IT implementation and capacity building.

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Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

The Institute of Social Sciences in cooperation with UNICEF and ActionAid India, organized the 21st Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations on 24-25 April at the Institute on the theme: Panchayats, Women and Right to Food.

More than 150 elected women panchayat leaders from 15 States - Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi (NCR), Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal - participated in the celebrations.

The inaugural session began with invocation: a song of hope and aspirations by women panchayat leaders from Rajasthan.

Welcoming the elected women representatives, Ash Narain Roy, Director, ISS, said that women produce more than half of all the food that is grown. They gather wood, fetch water, bring fodder and yet their work goes unrecognized.

In his introductory remarks, George Mathew, Chairman, ISS, observed that women in panchayats face a lot of inter-caste violence. Nonetheless they are marching ahead.

Guest of Honour, Rebecca Tavares, Representative, UN Women Multi-Country Office (India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka), congratulated the elected women panchayat leaders for not only being the numerically largest in the world (15 lakhs), but also for their role as “change agents”. She drew attention of women panchayat leaders towards India being home to the largest number of hungry and malnourished people. Panchayati Raj Institutions and their representatives have the potential to address these problems by better vigilance and monitoring mechanisms.

Louis George Arsenault, Country Representative of UNICEF, in his inaugural address commended provisions for women’s political empowerment.
of the National Food Security Act, including the provision for subsidized food and nutritional security to the people and specific entitlements for women and poorest of the poor. However, he described as “revolutionary” and “a way forward”, the new definition being given under this Act to the head of the household - the eldest woman, who is not less than 18 years of age for getting the ration card. He further said that UNICEF supports the Government’s efforts to address high rates of malnutrition in India through the Right to Food.

Outstanding Women Panchayat Leaders Award

In 1999, the Institute of Social Sciences instituted the Outstanding Women Panchayat Leaders Award to recognize the struggles, aspirations and achievements of women panchayat leaders. The award includes a citation, plaque and a cheque. Two women panchayat leaders: Manju Joshi, Sarpanch Sirka East Gram panchayat, Ramgarh District, Jharkhand and Shyama Bai sarpanch, Posta gram panchayat, Sidhi District, Madhya Pradesh were honoured for their excellent all-round work in their panchayats and for their extraordinary leadership.

Bidyut Mohanty, Head, Women’s Studies, observed that the level of under-nutrition is very high among the children and also a large number of women are malnourished. The Right to food offers opportunities for the panchayats to end the hunger, under-nutrition and malnourishment.

The plenary, working groups, special sessions spread over two days, focused on various aspects of right to food, challenges facing food security, role of panchayats, mid-day meal scheme, anganwadis, Public Distribution Scheme etc.

Nikhil Dey, Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sanghathan (MKSS), Rajasthan, an activist in the forefront of the Right of Food campaign discussed various clauses of the National Food Security Act- 2013.

Two women panchayat leaders: Manju Joshi, Sarpanch Sirka East Gram panchayat, Ramgarh District, Jharkhand and Shyama Bai sarpanch, Posta gram panchayat, Sidhi District, Madhya Pradesh were honoured for their excellent all-round work in their panchayats and for their extraordinary leadership.
He pointed out that the National Food Security Act has abolished the distinction between the BPL and APL beneficiaries. He also advised the women leaders to take advantage of Right to Information Act and get information regarding the amount of foodgrains coming under public Distribution Centres, Mid Day Meal and Anganwadis.

The inputs from eminent speakers: Santosh Mehrotra, Director General, Institute of Applied Manpower Research (IAMR), New Delhi; Rita Sarin, Vice President and Country Director, The Hunger Project; Sejal Dand, National Advisor to commissioner appointed by Supreme Court for Right to Food Case; Anand Chakarvati, SK Dey Chair Professor, Institute of Social Sciences; Joy Elamon, CEO Inter-cooperation; KB Saxena, visiting professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi; Sonali Mukherjee, researcher, ISS; Bharat Dogra, senior journalist; Swati Narayan, Independent Social Policy Specialist; Sangita Dhal, Associate Professor, Kalindi College; Kamal Nayan Kabra, Malcome Adisheshiah Chair Professor, ISS; Babita Verma, Associate Professor, Lakshmi Bai College; and Vijayalakshmi Nanda, Associate Professor, Miranda House; were appreciated by the women panchayat leaders.

George Mathew, Chairman, ISS chaired the Valedictory Session and Peter E. Kenmore, Representative, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) gave the valedictory address. Peter Kenmore explained the significance of the global campaign called ‘Zero Hunger Challenge’, which encompasses five major aspects: First, the effective functioning of grievance systems and the role of the Central parliament in the implementation process. Second, proper nutrition, health and sanitation for children. Third, establishment of separate committees for food, preservation of natural resources, fisheries etc. Fourth, the active role of women in such institutions and fifth, achieving 100 per cent increase in income and productivity of marginal farmers. Peter Kenmore discouraged food wastage which is a common practice and encouraged food self sufficiency within the producing state itself.

The two-day conference concluded with the national anthem.
Seminar on Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act, 1993 Amendment Committee Report

The Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi & Bengaluru, in co-operation with the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Government of Karnataka, organised a seminar to discuss the recommendations of the Report of the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Amendment Committee-KPRAAC, appointed by the Government of Karnataka, for strengthening the Panchayat Raj system in the State.

The programme was held at the Conference Hall of the Vidhana Soudha on 12 November. More than 300 elected representatives of rural and urban local governments, researchers, activists, academics, scholars, government officials and civil society organisations participated in the programme.

Shri Gangaram Bagadia, Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Government of Karnataka delivered the welcome address. He stated that for the department of RDPR the deliberations of this seminar is a big step forward.

Shri H.K. Patil, Honourable Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Government of Karnataka inaugurated the seminar. In his inaugural address, Shri. H.K. Patil underlined the importance of strong Panchayat Raj. He pointed out that in a democratic system it is important to discuss relevant issues and find out ways to effectively implement the Panchayat Raj Act. He further maintained that with the proposed amendments, decision making power would be given to the people at the grassroots level.

Minister Patil praised the mission of The World Bank and their support for In a democratic system it is important to discuss relevant issues and find out ways to effectively implement the Panchayat Raj Act.
building a strong Panchayat Raj system in the State. Shri. H.K. Patil specially thanked Mr. Michael Haney, Operations Advisor of The World Bank for taking keen interest in the Bank project and this programme.

In his introductory remarks, Dr. George Mathew became nostalgic while sharing his feelings and ideas of Shri Ramkrishna Hegde, Shri Abdul Nazir Sab, and later Shri M.Y. Ghorpade, who were great source of inspiration in 1980s for the people deeply concerned with strengthening decentralisation and Panchayati Raj in the country. He observed that under the leadership of Shri Siddaramaiah, Honourable Chief Minister and Shri H.K. Patil, Honourable Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, the State is taking a big step forward to implement the 73rd Constitution Amendment.

Mr. Michael Haney, Operations Advisor, The World Bank congratulated the Government of Karnataka for its mission to take forward the idea of Panchayat Raj and said that the recommendations put forward by the Committee were in line with the views of the World Bank. He commended the inclusive approach that puts priority on bringing women the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes into the governance.

Shri K.R. Ramesh Kumar, Chairman of the Panchayat Raj Act Amendment Committee stressed the importance of identifying priorities in the governance structure. He cautioned that the word “Adhikara” (Power) needs to be used carefully as the term denotes more responsibilities than power.

Shri K.R. Ramesh Kumar requested the Honourable Minister to table the Amendment at the Winter Session in Belagavi next month and get it passed. He assured that the proposed amendments would make the upcoming local government elections in May 2015 free and fair. He thanked the World Bank on behalf of the people of Karnataka for the financial assistance the Bank is giving to strengthen the local government system in the State.

Shri C. Narayanasmwamy Chairman, Core Committee of the Panchayat Raj Act Amendment Committee and former Member of Parliament focussed on the history and background of the Panchayat Raj system in Karnataka. He praised the solidarity and harmony among the members of the Committee.

Shri F.H. Jakkappanavar KPRACC member proposed the vote of thanks.

Smt. Nandana Reddy, Member, Core Committee, Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act Amendment Committee, presented the highlights of the Report.

Shri M.R. Srinivas Murthy, Chairman, Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission and Former Principal Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Government of Karnataka, while commending the Committee for its work, requested to ensure that all elected members and officials respect and follow the laws which would lead to progress and stability of the Panchayat Raj system in Karnataka.

Dr. N. Sivanna, Professor, Ramakrishna Hegde Chair at the Institute of Social and Economic Change said that the term of office should be based on performance indicators rather than time-limit. He suggested that social audit should be taken seriously.

In the afternoon the interactive session was lively with excellent feedback on the recommendations of the Committee.

Shri Jagadish S. Shettar, Leader of Opposition in Karnataka Assembly and former Chief Minister of the State was the Chief Guest of the Valedictory
Session. In his Valedictory Address, Shri Shettar said that the Committee chaired by Shri K.R. Ramesh Kumar has brought out a conclusive report. It has several sections which need to be debated. He highlighted the need to discuss the recommendations across the State. While assuring his unstinted support to this Amendment, he said that it is the responsibility of the State government to introduce the Bill in the Assembly at the earliest. He assured that with unanimous support of all the political parties, the Bill would be passed.

In his closing remarks, Dr.George Mathew specially underlined and praised the passion and involvement of people from various sectors, including the representatives of Panchayats and civil society organisations in the day long programme. He concluded with the slogan:

"Namma Panchayat, Namma Bhavishya (Our Panchayats, Our Future)"
The Institute of Social Sciences organized a Panel Discussion on “Kerala’s Growth and Equity: Way Forward” on 9 January at Speaker’s Hall, Constitution Club, New Delhi. Shri Oommen Chandy, Hon’ble Chief Minister of Kerala was the Chief Guest. The Guests Speakers were: Shri Ramesh Chennithala, Shri S. Ramadorai, Shri. T.K.A. Nair, Shri. K.C. Joseph, Shri. Shibu Baby John, Shri K.M. Chandrasekhar, Dr. Shekhar Shah and Dr. George Mathew. The programme was attended by academics, intellectuals, civil society activists, students and media persons.

The programme began with the documentary “A Midas Touch”, directed by Dr. Babu Gopalakrishnan, Director, C-Dit, based on the “Janasamparka Paripadi 2013” (Mass Contact Programme). Mass Contact Programme of Kerala was the recipient of the UN Public Service Award for the year 2013”.

Dr. George Mathew in his welcome address said that “Since the inception of Institute of Social Sciences, one of the states the Institute took up for serious study and research was Kerala. “We received enormous support for our work from political leaders, professors and intellectuals”.

“The State of the States” term initiated by India Today in 2003 is recognized internationally since development initiatives are approached through a highly scientific way with social science research criteria. Of course, Kerala has been accredited as the Number One State earlier too, but in December 2013 when it topped with the title: “Kerala Model of Development balances growth with equity”, we in the Institute decided that it must be deliberated upon and see how the State could take it forward.

Shri K.M. Chandrasekhar, Vice-Chairman, Kerala State Planning Board, in his address said that “If we look at the various parameters that we have, the present seems to be the favorable situation, just the right kind of atmosphere in which the state can take off into the future and that is the whole purpose of the perspective plan 2030, which was taken up as directed by the Chief Minister and it has been taken up with the help of the National Council of Applied Economic Research of which Dr. Shekhar Shah is the Director General. The Growth figures, in the last two years have been significant compared to the rest of the...
Kerala’s Growth and Equity: Way Forward

country during 2012-2013. We grew at 8.24% as against the GDP of India which is about 5%. Per capita income grew at 7.52% compared to the all India figure of 3.7%. This followed a similar growth of about 7.96% during 2011-2012. Now if we look at literacy, we have 94% literacy in Kerala as compared to all India’s 72% with very high female literacy also”.

Dr. Shekar Shah, Director-General, National Council of Applied Economic Research said that “To the state planning board for having invited in CIIR to, for the first time in this country developed a twenty year perspective plan for a state had its inflection point. It can go a number of different ways and has had dramatic achievement but it now faces a challenging future. To grapple with the future and try to understand Kerala’s strengths, its challenges, what it has going for it, what it must create”.

Shri. K.C. Joseph, Hon’ble Minister for Rural Development, Government of Kerala, while addressing the audience said that “The main purpose of the mass contact programme was to bring the government close to the common man and to fill the gap between the Government and the governed. Those sections of society on the margins have got a confidence that there is somebody to take care of them to attain their grievances and find a solution for that. Kerala is projected as role model of development; take into account our main achievement in human development index. The Kerala model of development is widely praised by everyone including Dr. Amartya Sen, Noble Laureate”.

Mr. Shibu Baby John, Hon’ble Minister for Labour, Government of Kerala, in his address said that “When we talk about Kerala’s model of development, along with the growth that we achieved in Kerala, our highly skilled work forces have migrated to different parts of India and the World. Actually unconfirmed statistics say that there are equal number of Keralites living outside Kerala as in Kerala”.

Shri Ramesh Chennithala, Hon’ble Home Minister of Kerala, emphasized that “Kerala model is unique and it has been appreciated all over the world. We are all proud of Kerala’s development. Kerala model is well appreciated by the world community and we cannot live in complacency. We are proud of our achievements but Kerala needs more emphasis in the national and international context. Our world is changing, India is changing, and we cannot sit idle and say that in the past we achieved everything. The new generation definitely wants change. The new generation wants a different Kerala model. The earlier Kerala model has lost its shape and lost its colour. So I feel that when we are discussing about the development issues, first of all we have to think about the people, we have to think about the vulnerable sections of the society”.

Shri S. Ramadurai, Chairman, National Skill Development Agency, in his address
Development means not only economic development but also political, social and, above all, human development. We want the state, the society and the individuals to grow to their full potential. We want everyone to share the process and the fruits of development.

Shri T.K.A Nair, Advisor to the Prime Minister of India, in his address said that “The additional statistics which I add is taken from a KPMG report where the total increase in workforce in Kerala by 2020 is expected to be 12 million including exit and Interpol movement. Close to 20 million people will have to be trained and skilled by the year 2020. When you look at these statistics, the potentials are absolutely critical and the need of the hour is to make the employment an indicator of performance, livelihood as an indicator of performance, social impact as an indicator of performance”.

Shri Oommen Chandy, Hon’ble Chief Minister of Kerala, in his special address said that “It is a rare opportunity for me to sit in the midst of a distinguished panel of economists and persons in key positions who determine our economic policies. I am also very happy that we are discussing Kerala’s Growth and Equity: The Way Forward. This is a subject most close to my heart. The motto of our government is “Development and Care”. Development means not only economic development but also political, social and above all, human development.
We want the state, the society and the individuals to grow to their full potential. We want everyone to share the process and the fruits of development. I do realize the fact that competition is necessary to bring out the best from a person and I am also aware of the fact that like most of us assembled here are that inbuilt competition and free enterprise alone cannot guarantee an all inclusive development. Any strategy of growth which leaves a sizeable section of people out of it is not likely to last for long. Any enterprise which exploits the presently available resources beyond their capacity to sustain is also not likely to last for long. The policies that the state must adopt should therefore not only lead to equitable distribution of wealth amongst the current generation but also such equitable distribution amongst the current and future generations….Kerala model of growth is widely appreciated by all including Prof. Amartya Sen. Even though we are facing new generation problems, going by the achievements in education, macro economy, agriculture, consumer market and investment over the last year. Kerala emerges the most important improving big state overall in the latest rankings given by India Today”.

Dr. Ash Narain Roy proposed a vote of thanks. He said that “We are living in an era where pessimism seems to have become new realism. In our own country, we have come to a stage where only the pessimists are regarded as intellectually serious. Most of the seminars and discussions today, one sees more sound than light. This discussion has been a breath of fresh air. Unlike some other states, Kerala’s turnaround is for real; it is not a hype spun by spin doctors. Kerala’s growth story has never been a passing comet; it has all along been a shining star. Kerala has created an exemplary narrative of inclusion and empowerment. It has done India proud. In fact often when we address international seminars, we have sought to hide India’s not so shiny story under the cover of the Kerala model”.

Any strategy of growth which leaves a sizeable section of people out of it is not likely to last for long.
Sixth BRICS Summit Expectations from Fortaleza Meeting

The Institute of Social Sciences organized a day-long conference on “Sixth BRICS Summit: Expectations from Fortaleza Meeting” on 7 July at the India International Centre, New Delhi. The discussion revolved around three key issues—BRICS Partnership for Development, Inclusive Growth: Sustainable Solutions and Foreign Policy and Post-Western World. The participants in the discussion included diplomats, academics, journalists and civil society representatives.

Dr. Ash Narain Roy in his welcome address, said that BRICS has come to mean a practice of politics for people who refuse to be bossed about by superior powers. The world, today, is not multipolar; it is multiplex.

BRICS has come to mean a practice of politics for people who refuse to be bossed about by superior powers. The world, today, is not multipolar; it is multiplex.

Mr. Carlos Duarte, Ambassador of Brazil, laid emphasis on BRICS rise despite global economic meltdown by maintaining that BRICS today boasts of a $15 trillion economy which constitutes about 21% of the global GDP. IntraBRICS trade too has shown a remarkable growth. It has registered a ten-fold increase in the past 10 years. He also threw light on the increasing institutionalization of BRICS in the form of regular meetings at various levels. Ambassador Duarte also referred to the development challenges like rising inequality, poverty etc that BRICS nations must address. To him, the meeting that together by complex forms of restraint and interdependence. Thanks to the growing clout of BRICS, the conventional metanarrative of the world powers has become inadequate, if not misleading.
Prime Minister Narendra Modi will have in Brasilia with South American heads of state and government is a great opportunity for India to strengthen ties with the region, putting them on a higher pedestal.

Mr. Roman Babushkin, Head, Foreign Policy Section, Russian Embassy, in his address said that the gaze of the world is falling on BRICS because of their surging economies. China is about to become the number one economy, Russia has stabilized economically, decreased its debt and leveraged its natural resources while Brazil and India have comparatively high GDPs and a large middle class to uphold economic growth. At a time of economic integration and globalization, BRICS’ bargaining power vis-à-vis WTO, IMF and other global institutions is growing. Mr. Babushkin underlined the need for BRICS to consolidate its position and further work towards a common vision on critical international issues.

Mr. Mark Reynhardt, Counsellor, South African High Commission, referred to the key points that emerged from the eThekwini Declaration issued at the end of the fifth BRICS summit in Durban in 2013. The Declaration reaffirmed BRICS’ commitment to the promotion of multilateralism and central role of the UN. It also talked about intraBRICS solidarity and the group’s shared goal to contribute to global peace, stability, development and cooperation. Though BRICS is primarily dealing with economic issues, political issues too are being discussed increasingly by the BRICS leaders. Global issues like climate change, terrorism and growing inequality in the world will be high on the BRICS’s agenda. Like in Durban, Fortaleza too will come out with Action Plan, said Mr. Reynhardt.

Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia, Director-General, Indian Council of World Affairs, delivered the keynote address. Ambassador Bhatia began by presenting a balance sheet of BRICS’ achievements and shortcomings pointing to the wide gap between its critics and advocates as well as notable discrepancies between projection and reality. He also referred to the divergences among five member-states, despite their brave, continuing endeavours to forge unity, coordination and cooperation.

Dr. George Mathew in his vote of thanks, underlined the need for BRICS countries to become a knowledge base for other countries of the Global South. It is for these countries to ensure that South-South cooperation becomes meaningful and not just rhetoric.
Strengthening Civil Society and Good Governance

The Institute of Social Sciences in collaboration with the International Republican Institute (IRI), USA, undertook a study tour of the academics, journalists, lawyers and other professionals from China and administrative officials from IRI to India, namely to Delhi and Rajasthan from 11 to 19 April. This was part of the ongoing programme both the institutions have been engaged in on the theme “Strengthening Civil Society and Good Governance.” The study tour had the primary objectives to understand the various facets of Indian democracy, the election process, decentralized and participatory developmental initiatives taken at the local government level in India as also to interact with key policy makers, practitioners and stakeholders.

The delegation consisted of Mr. Li Fan, Founder Director, World and China Institute (WCI), Beijing; Ms. Li Wenzi, Editor, Leaders Magazine, Beijing; Mr. Wu Hongwei, Lawyer, Hai Ming Law Firm, Beijing; Mr. Chen Bing, Chairman, Home Owner’s Congress Association & Proprietor’s Committee, Beijing; Mr. Liu Shengmin, Secretary-General, Home Owner’s Congress Research Association, Shanghai; Ms. Wang Chunhui, Research Associate, World and China Institute (WCI), Beijing; Mr. Adam King and Mr. Jeffrey Phillips, representatives from IRI, Hong Kong.

Dr. George Mathew and Dr. Ash Narain Roy welcomed the delegates at the Institute. Dr. Ash Narain Roy briefed them about the Institute, its vision and mission. Then he made a detailed presentation on the topic “Democracy is India’s Manifest Destiny”. Dr. Roy referred to the three Ds of Democracy i.e. Debate & Discussion, Dissent and Decision. Explaining the Indian democratic experiences, he said: “The Indian model is to become economically fit through democracy whereas the East Asian Model is to become economically fit for democracy.” Elaborating the
statistical data regarding the Indian election process, Dr. Roy said: “India has 814.5 million eligible voters today whereas the number of eligible voters in 2009 was 713 million; there are about 930,000 polling booths in 2014 as against 830,866 in 2009. Almost 1.1 million electronic voting machines were being used for the 2014 Parliamentary Elections, and about 5 million civil staff members were engaged in conducting the polls.

Mr. S.D. Sharma, former State Election Commissioner, Government of Jharkhand who spoke about the role of the Election Commission in conducting the elections. He said that the free and fair conduct of elections is “one of the largest, most complex exercises of collective action in the world”.

Dr. George Mathew called the progress made by India towards empowering the local government system including the quota system for women and other under privileged section “a silent revolution”. As Dr. Mathew explained, India today elect 32,01,227 members to the local governments. He further said that “People’s participation in providing good governance at grassroots level involves them in village development planning, resources mobilization, providing cash, kind or labour for local development and increase the sense of responsibility in people for managing their affairs”.

The delegation went to three election campaign offices in Jaipur and witnessed the campaigns of different political parties. The delegation also visited University of Rajasthan and interacted with some students from the departments of Political Science, International Studies and European Studies. Prof. Asha Pande, Director, International Cooperation Cell, University of Rajasthan, explained about the functions of the International Cooperation Cell. Mr. Ashok Pande, former State Election Commissioner, Government of Rajasthan spoke about India’s constitutional democracy. Mr. Pande said that “India is a constitutional democracy with a parliamentary system of government and at the heart of the system is a commitment to hold free and fair elections. The pillars of free and fair elections are (a) an independent judiciary, (b) an independent Election Commission of India, (c) strong set up of political parties, (d) a free and fair fearless press and electronic media, and (e) civil society organizations”.

The delegates assembled at the Institute for debriefing session. Besides the team members, Dr. George Mathew, Dr. Ash Narain Roy and Mr. Debraj Bhattacharya, Chief Executive Officer, Association of Local Governments of India (ALGI) were present who responded to their queries and doubts. All the delegates were very impressed with their visit and interactions in Jaipur with academics, political party leaders and civil society representatives. ■
Study Programme to India on Federalization and Decentralization

The Institute of Social Sciences organized the study programme of a high level Yemeni delegation to India from 4 to 9 May. It was funded by the World Bank’s ‘Yemen Decentralization and Local Governance Initiative’ to support Yemen’s political transition while specifically supporting the implementation of the outcomes of Yemen’s National Dialogue Conference (NDC).

The delegation consisted of the following members: (1) Mr. Abdulkader Helal, Mayor of Sana’a and head of the delegation, (2) Mr. Wahid Al Rasheed, Governor of Aden, (3) Mr. Mohammed Ahmad AlHaj, Secretary General of the Local Council, Taiz, (4) Mr. Abdullah AlShater, Deputy Minister for Planning, (5) Dr. Mohammed Hamoud AlHammadi, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Local Administration, (6) Mr. Mohammed Qahtan, Islah Islamic Party, (7) Ms. Um Al Khayr Al Saadi, NDC Member and (8) Mr. Hussein Hamoud Al Ezzi, Head of Political Affairs, Ansar Allah Party.

The presentation on “Democracy is India’s manifest destiny” by Dr. Ash Narain Roy consisted of slides briefing the team about the historical and contemporary links India shared with Yemen. Dr. Roy during the presentation said that the oldest mosque in India was established by Arab traders in 629 AD during the time of Prophet Muhammad and stated that Islam was accepted peacefully as against the belief that Islam was adopted as a result of invasion. The basic federal structure in India was explained to the team. Dr. Roy stated that the Indian model focused on becoming economically viable through democracy whereas many others in Asia sought to become economically fit for democracy. The speaker concluded emphasizing the role of the three D’s in Indian democracy; Debate, Dissent and Decision.

The presentation in the second session was by Mr. S.D. Sharma, former State Election Commissioner of the state of Jharkhand. His focus was on “Election role of the three D’s in Indian democracy; Debate, Dissent and Decision.”
process in Local governments”. A background summary of the election processes at the State and Centre was presented by him. The significance of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments was also discussed which changed the grammar of Indian democracy.

The session by Prof. O.P. Mathur, specialist on urban finance, presented an overview of the urban local bodies focusing on their functions and financial aspects. He discussed the composition of the various urban local bodies, their powers and their responsibilities.

The following three sessions looked at the Indian Federal structure in detail. Prof. Balveer Arora and Dr. Rekha Saxena enlightened the team about the concepts of division of power, the parliamentary system in the country and about the various central and state committees appointed to oversee the working of the Indian federal system over the years. Prof. Arora spoke about the salient features of Indian federalism in global perspective.

The team had queries on the composition of the houses of parliament, the difference between the urban and rural local governments and how the census is taken in the country.

The presentation by Dr. George Mathew provided the delegates with the background to the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the role of the panchayats as the de facto third tier of government in the federal structure, their roles and responsibilities and the challenges that they faced.

The delegation was invited to the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) where they had an enlightening discussion with Prof. Mohammad Aslam, Vice-Chancellor, who is a specialist on Indian federalism and local governments. The vice-chancellors and other high level officials and academicians were also present on the occasion. During the discussions the Mayor of Sana’a was very keen to see that a distance-learning initiative like IGNOU be established in Yemen.
Mani Shankar Aiyar, former Union Minister, Government of India, speaking on Local Government System

The delegation visited the Haryana Institute of Public Administration (HIPA) in Gurgaon, Haryana. The delegation spent over three hours discussing issues of local government administration, the role of training institutes and the challenges they faced in implementing programmes. The Director-General of HIPA, Mr. R.S. Dalal and other senior faculty briefed the team about their work and addressed their questions.

Following this, the delegates had a field visit to the Gram panchayat (village council), Gomla, in the state of Haryana. Here the team interacted with the elected representatives of the village and the lady president of the village council.

The final day of the programme, the delegation was addressed by Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, Member of Parliament and Former Union Minister for Local Governments, Government of India. Mr. Aiyar highlighted that development and progress of the poor were the two main aspects required for any nation to prosper. He also dwelt on the state of civil services in the country today and on the problems that are faced by the poor and marginalized due to the funds not reaching them.

The final session was the presentation by Mr. S.Y Quraishi, former Chief Election Commissioner of India. Mr. Quraishi explained in detail the procedures involved in the process of conducting elections in the country which involved high levels of personnel deployment and meticulous planning. He mentioned that 99 per cent success is not acceptable but a 100 per cent flawless election is very important. Election commission were also explained.

The delegates had questions relating to the voting methods that were adopted and the financial angle of holding frequent elections amongst others.
Look East Policy

Look East Policy: India and Myanmar Pitching for Greater Connectivity

The Institute of Social Sciences and Burma Centre Delhi, organized a conference on “Look East Policy: India and Myanmar Pitching for Greater Connectivity” at the Institute on 4 August. This conference was supported by Heinrich Boll Stiftung.

In his welcome address Dr. Ash Narain Roy said that “The Look East Policy, enunciated by the Narasimha Rao Government, marked a new defining moment and a long-term strategic shift in India’s foreign policy. India recognised the strategic and economic importance of Southeast Asia with which it had historic trade, cultural and civilizational ties. The LEP was not just an external economic policy blueprint or a journey of openness and global economic integration, it marked a strategic shift in India’s vision and its place in the comity of nations. This visionary policy created a new framework for deepening economic, political, cultural and people-to-people ties between India and Myanmar, in particular. Thanks to the Look East Policy, India’s gaze is now falling on Southeast and East Asian region”.

In his inaugural speech Dr. Ajay M Gondane, Joint Secretary, Border Connectivity, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, said that “In keeping with the high priority that India attaches to enhancing connectivity between ASEAN and India and the emphasis on regional connectivity, the Ministry of External affairs, Government of India now has a full-fledged Border Connectivity division. Connectivity has become a new buzzword in academic thinking as well as bureaucratic circles. Today key instruments in support of connectivity are in place in the form of...
enhanced means of transport and communication. And if these means are available today, then what is lacking and what is the gap that needs to be filled in is something that all must ponder”.

While delivering the Keynote Address, Ambassador Rajiv K. Bhatia, Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs and former Ambassador of India to Myanmar said that “In the beginning of the initiation of Look East Policy, the then Prime Minister of India P.V. Narasimha Rao in his address in Singapore in 1994, did not use the term “Look East.” Instead, he used the term “Asia – Pacific”. Later in the 1990s, India shifted its focus on East Asia and the Pacific. Until then there was no Look East. In a sense the term Look East policy was not coined by the Government of India. It is a term framed by the media, and later used by the diplomats. Eventually it came to be widely used by everyone”.

Dr. Walter Fernandes, Director of Research, Animation and Research Centre, Yangon, spoke about the Relations between Divided Tribes, NE India and Western Myanmar. He said that “The Cross-Border study was meant to look at the nature of relations between the divided communities particularly in the context of the partial opening up of Myanmar. The tribes have been in contact with each other during the decades of division but the official attitude to the links has changed according to the political situation of the countries. The study is based on the conviction that apart from the official structures and tribal communities also civil society groups can play a role in maintaining good relations between peoples divided by an international boundary”.

Professor Baladas Ghoshal, Director (Academics) Society for Indian Ocean Studies, while addressing the audience said that “When the democracy uprising of 1988 broke out in Myanmar its impact was immediately felt in India. Among the proximate neighbours of Myanmar, it was India alone that officially followed a clear-cut policy as regards supporting the democracy movement”.

Mr. C.S. Kuppuswamy, Consultant with the South Asia Analysis Group spoke about India’s Development Cooperation Projects in Myanmar.

Salai Isaac Khen, Founder and Executive Director of the Gender and Development Initiative-Myanmar, in his address said that “According to Dr. Thant Myint U, Myanmar is where China meets India. Literally, ‘where China meets India’ can be understood that China initiates. It doesn’t mean that India doesn’t have a role in Myanmar geopolitically, however, in current reality China plays a much significant role in Myanmar and Myanmar is quite difficult to escape from China’s big brother policy. In terms of economic investment, India is much behind than China”.

Dr. Sanjay Pulipaka, Fellow at the ICRIER-Wadhwani Chair in India-US Policy Studies; Dr. Srikanth Kondapalli, Professor in Chinese Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, spoke about the China Factor in India-Myanmar Relations. The other speakers were: Dr. K. Yhome, Fellow at Observer Research Foundation, a New Delhi-based public policy think tank; Rahul K Bhonsle, Founder Director of Security Risks Asia; Sithu Aung Myint, Senior Journalist, Myanmar; Mr. K. Filip Sumi, Senior Journalist and Columnist based in Dimapur, Nagaland; Mr. Lalremruata, Director, Zo Indigenous Forum, Mizoram and Mr. Kabi Gangmei, Director of Asia Pacific Baptist Aid (APBAid).
Knowledge Exchange on Decentralization and Local Governance Strengthening Programmes in India

The Institute of Social Sciences in cooperation with the World Bank facilitated the learning, sharing and transfer of good practices on local governance and decentralization across states in India at a knowledge exchange event from 28-30 August in the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The overarching objective of this knowledge exchange was to improve implementation and delivery of government programs and projects, through sharing knowledge, good practices, implementing “know how” and learning in a systematic and efficient manner. The idea was that future programs would evolve with the participation of other states that would be keen to share their experiences on decentralization and local governance in India. The program provided a platform for the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan to come together to discuss and debate innovative approaches and the challenges they faced in implementing development programs. The objective thereby, being to be able to design future projects quickly and efficiently to meet the needs of the states. The gathering comprising elected representatives, development officials and practitioners clearly articulated immediate needs of their respective states focusing mainly in the area of strengthening and institutionalization of both rural and urban local governments. A needs assessment report covering the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan was prepared focusing on local governments and it was distributed to the participants before the workshop took place.

The Knowledge Exchange Programme was inaugurated by Mr. K.M. Chandrasekhar, Vice- Chairman, State Planning Board, Government of...
Knowledge Exchange Programme

Faculty News

George Mathew

International Conferences/ Workshops

- Attended East Asia Institute (EAI) and Asia Democracy Network (ADN) organized conference on Empowering Community of Democracies at Seoul, South Korea from 24 to 25 November

National Conferences/ Workshops

- Attended a seminar on “Social Science Research Environment in Puducherry: Challenges and the Way Forward” at Puducherry from 19 to 20 November. This seminar was organized by Regional Centre Puducherry
- Attended the seminar on “Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act Amendment Committee Report” at Bangalore on 12 November
- Attended a seminar on “Knowledge gaps assessment, prioritization of baseline studies and identification of suitable institutions to undertake the aforementioned for the GEF-UNDP-Gol Munnar Landscape project” at Dehradun on 15 September. This seminar was organized by UNDP
- Delivered the Keynote address at the training programme for teachers on the theme: Socialization of the Teacher at Thiruvananthapuram on 24 March

Kerala. Dr. George Mathew, Chairman, Institute of Social Sciences presided the knowledge exchange activities. He laid down the basic idea of creation of a knowledge base and moving towards the exchange of knowledge that was crucial for development. Mr. Abdu Muwonge, Senior Economist and Task Team Leader for this Knowledge Exchange Programme, World Bank welcomed the participants and stated that the knowledge exchange programme was part of a series of peer to peer learning of good practices that the Bank was facilitating through the Department for International Development (DFID).

Mr. K.M. Chandrasekhar in his inaugural address highlighted the achievements and challenges of Kerala’s decentralization and institutionalization of the local government reforms. He noted that decentralized planning in Kerala was an area in which successive governments, irrespective of political affiliation, have been focusing continuously and trying to build up and strengthen the panchayati raj system in a way in which it was envisaged in the Constitution.

Ms. Farah Zahir, Senior Economist, World Bank in her address mentioned that it would be interesting to see where the various states had reached in terms of milestones in their decentralization agenda since the landmark 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments. Ms. Zahir reiterated that the knowledge exchange was a platform where the challenges, innovations and achievements could be shared and here the Bank was in the role of a knowledge provider and in future one could have a larger number of states joining such events.

The highlight of the knowledge exchange event was Shri Oommen Chandy, Honourable Chief Minister of Kerala taking time to grace the event on the opening day. In his introductory statement, Dr. George Mathew said that Shri Oommen Chandy was the Chief Minister who attended a ward sabha in his own village, participating for more than two hours while a woman panchayat president was conducting the ward sabha meeting. The audience applauded when it was mentioned that the Chief Minister was awarded the United Nations award for better public service in 2013 for improving effectiveness, efficiency and quality of public service in the state. The Chief Minister provided a brief summary on the steps taken by his government towards strengthening of local governments in the state, highlighting the initiatives of the kudumbashree and ashraya programmes which are empowering women and the destitute sections of the society.

The Honorable Minister for Panchayats, Dr. M.K. Muneer had an hour-long interactive discussion with the participants. Many issues relating to women’s empowerment and the initiatives that the government had taken to strengthen and institutionalize the local government system were touched upon. The minister said that the present government was focusing on the issue of safety of women, children and the elderly and as a result many gram panchayats had formed networks across the state in this regard.

The programme concluded with a field visit to Manickal Grama Panchayat in Vamanapuram Block in Thiruvananthapuram. The gram panchayat president and other elected representatives and officials welcomed the delegates and a presentation was made on the functioning of the panchayat.
Centre for Multilevel Federalism:
Special Lecture Series and Speakers at ISS in 2014

- **Ms. Aditi Malik**, PhD Candidate in Political Science at Northwestern University, USA. Theme: “Political Coalitions and Communal Conflict: Explaining Electoral Violence in Kenya and India” 14 January
- **Prof. Carlos Miguel Herrera**. Theme: “Social Counter-Powers in Western Constitutional Law” 21 January
- **Prof. Sudha Pai**, Centre for Political Studies, JNU. Theme: “Political Competition in the Heartland: Emerging Patterns in Uttar Pradesh” 28 January
- **Prof. Sanjay Kumar**, Director, CSDS. Theme: “Analysing Assembly Elections 2013: Beyond Numbers” 4 February
- **Prof. Dipankar Gupta**, Centre for the Study of Social Systems, JNU. Theme: “India Waiting: The Citizen Elite and the Call of Democracy” 18 February
- **Dr. Manisha Priyam**, Political Analyst and LSE India Coordinator on State and Panchayat Elections in India. Theme: “Bottom up Perspectives to Indian National Elections” 4 March
- **Prof. Philip Oldenburg**, Political Scientist, Oldenburg, University of Chicago. Theme: “Narendra Modi as Prime Ministerial Candidate: Implications for Election Analysis”, 1 April
- **Prof. L. N. Sharma**, Patna University. Theme: “Candidates and Campaigns: Lok Sabha Elections in Bihar” 7 April
- **Prof. Adnan Farooqui**, Jamia Millia Islamia. Theme: “Renomination of Candidates: Internal Procedures of Indian Parties”, 22 April
- **Mr. Saroj Giri**, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi. Theme: “Good Governance: Post–ideology in Indian Politics Today” 29 April
- **Dr. E. Sridharan**, Political Scientist. Theme: “Pre-electoral Coalitions and Post-election Possibilities”, 6 May
- **Mr. Navin Chawla**, former Chief Election Commissioner of India. Theme: “GE 2014: Elections and Democracy”, 12 May
- **Mr. Sandeep Shastri**, Political Scientist. Theme: “What Really Mattered to Voters in the Lok Sabha Polls”, 13 May
- **Dr. Philip Oldenburg**, University of Chicago, and Mr Gilles Verniers, Research Affiliate at the Centre for Human Science. Theme: “The Verdict: First Lessons” 20 May 2014
- **Mr. H.K. Dua**, Theme: “Danger: When an Institution Crosses its Limits”, 21 October
- **Dr. E. Sridharan**, Political Scientist. Theme: “Is the Era of Coalitions Over?”, 28 October

- **Ash Narain Roy**

- Attended a seminar on “The future of Bay of Bengal Potentials and Challenges for Enhanced Cooperation between Bangladesh, India and Myanmar” at New Delhi from 3 to 4 March. This seminar was organized by FES New Delhi.
- Attended an International Conference on “Deepening Democracy through Participatory Local Governance” at Thiruvananthapuram from 19 to 21 January. This conference was organized by the Government of Kerala.
- Chaired a session of Forum for Indian Development Cooperation seminar, IRS, 18 January
- Addressed two workshops in Yemen on federalism on gender and on federalism and foreign policy, 1-6 February
- Presented a paper on Constitution Making in Federal Systems in Sana’a, February 25 - March 2
- Participated in the panel discussion on “Minority Matters”, Ramjas College, Delhi University, 25 March
- Presented a paper on “Cultural Diversity: The Indian Narrative” at Third Nishan Forum on World Civilizations, Shandong University, Jinan, China, 21 May
- Addressed the Federalism Training Program in Beirut, organized by Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung, 8-13 June
ISS Regional Centers

Bhubaneswar

Action Projects

PACS Grant Project
Since 2011, 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. 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 and Achievements
The major focus of the project during 2014 was (i) to ensure the follow-up of filing of applications under revenue and forest land (ii) to file the uncovered eligible land claims under revenue and forest land (iii) to involve Bhu-mitras in model village intervention (iv) special focus on model village intervention (v) hand hold support to GLRCs to conduct business on their own, to assess the position of GLRCs and to own-up the project for future sustainability. (vi) Strengthen organic linkage of CBOs from Gram Panchayat level to district level (vii) strong lobby with government for collaboration programmes (viii) Convergence with MNREGA

Filing and follow-up of applications of forest land under FRA
Revenue department at district administration of Mayurbhanj has initiated to complete village wise IFR and CFR process. Sub-collector, Udala in Mayurbhanj district requested ISS to facilitate the process within the project area. In Keonjhar district, PA/ITDA asked WOSCA (network partner of ISS) to cooperate field level government employees in facilitating IFR and CFR process in project area. With full support from revenue and forest department in Mayurbhanj and Keonjhar districts respectively, ISS was able to submit 1478 of IFR applications out of which 1385 were verified at the SDLC level during 2014 and 53 persons received patta under IFR. Regarding CFR, out of 245 forest villages, 63 claim process have been completed at village level, 84 submitted to SDLC and 66 claims have been submitted to DLC for final approval. Among people who received title under IFR during last two years of intervention, 76 of them have utilised their individual forest land for various purposes under NREGA convergence programme like land development for agriculture, cashew plantation, pisciculture, tasara (silk) cultivation, mushroom cultivation etc.

Filing and follow-up of applications of revenue land
Suo-motto initiative taken by the revenue department of Keonjhar district for survey and settlement and ISS including network...
partner’s participation in the process is a great achievement for reaching the project milestones. Non-partition of land continued for years together. It is very difficult to settle. But people are hopeful now due to government intervention under Survey and Settlement Act 2012. They had lost confidence in getting separate title in partition cases. Due to intervention of ISS and network partner WOSCA, more partition cases could be identified, collected and filed. A total of 7318 applications have been submitted under partition cases of OLR Act 1960 (19-1-c). Similarly applications for homestead landless (238), agriculture landless (33) have been submitted. Out of which, 12 cases of homestead landless verifications are completed. A total of 42 homestead land and 11 agriculture land patta have been received by the applicants.

Creating 21 model villages addressing land related issues
ISS is in the process of creating 21 model villages. The concept of model village is to address all the land and forest related issues and to ensure access of basic needs of people. Villages were identified on the basis of maximum concentration of socially excluded households. The process of intervention has started with identifying issues in every model village based on household survey. ISS facilitated meeting with village CBO members at village level including GLRC members, FRC members, Bhu-mitra cadre, CFR cadre and other village leaders regarding the basic objectives and characteristics of model village intervention.

Characteristics of a model village are also specified. As proposed in original proposal, ISS would address all land and forest related issues in all the 21 identified model villages. Apart from land and forest related issues, other issues like drinking water facility, household latrines/sanitation, access to health and education facilities through awareness generation, NREGA work, RSBY enrolment and other basic services facility are addressed. It has been proposed to give award to the best model village during final year of intervention in state level convention. This would encourage people to make their village as best model village. Re-enforcement of project process and implementation particularly in model villages would influence uncovered neighboring villages/Panchayats/Blocks.

Trained Bhu-mitra (cadres) actively involved in project activities
Some of the Bhu-mitras (cadres trained on RI/Amin training course) are engaged in govt/pvt assignments. The remaining Bhu-mitras are actively involved in PACS project activities. A total of 9 Bhu-Mitras facilitate in filling up and submission of applications. For instance during survey and settlement in Keonjhar district, Bhu-Mitras took responsibility in collection and submission of applications in model villages. They also coordinate meetings in villages. This would help in assisting the villagers for future sustainability since they are local natives.

CBOs empowered
ISS constituted CBOs at different level starting from village to district level. During, first year of intervention, all the 350 village level CBOs, 50 GP level, 6 block level and 2 district level CBOs were formed. The head of the CBO/CBO Federations mostly belong to SEGs. There is organic linkage among the CBOs from village to districts. At village level a 5 members committee was constituted. These committee members are General Body members of their respective Gram Panchayat Level Land Rights Committee (GLRC). From among them a 25

ISS Regional Centres

Research Projects Directed and Reports Submitted

Membership of Major Commissions
- Member, State Level Audit Advisory Board, Government of India (2012-2014)

International Conferences Organised
- International Conference on Deepening Democracy through Participatory Local Governance (ICODD), held during January 19-21 at Hotel Samudra, Kovalam, Trivandrum and presented the keynote address on ‘Deepening democracy and local governance in Kerala: Issues and Challenges’ on 19 January

Conference/Seminars: Paper Presented
- National Seminar on Major Issues in Centre - State Financial Relations” on 23 & 24 October and present a powerpoint presentation on ‘Local Governments in the fiscal space of Indian Federalism: Towards more rational arrangements’ at U C College, Aluva.
- Member of the Drafting Committee of the MoPR Memorandum to the FC-XIV, MoPR, Government of India.

Memorial Lecture
- Growing Inequality in Kerala: Critiquing the Policy Choices of the State 4th I S Gulati Memorial Lecture
delivered on 1 December at the Banquet hall, Government Guest House, Thycaud, Thiruvananthapuram

Papers Published/Presented (Select List)

- “Local Governments and the Inclusion of the Excluded: Towards a Strategic Methodology with Empirical Illustration” working paper published by Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum
  
  Bidyut Mohanty

- Wrote background paper for 2014 Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations and the same has been published in the journal edited by the women wing of CPI members committee was constituted. Sarapanch is the chairperson of GLRC. All total 50 GLRCs have been functioning. GLRC has been a very effective instrument in identifying, assessing different land and forest related issues on its own and now needing only formal facilitation.

  In fact, it is now in a position to conduct its own business like formulation of agenda, issue of notice, placing agenda subject in fixed meetings, raising different issues, addressing, discussing and debating on issues, maintaining records of resolution before forwarding to Block level Committee. This is a distinct improvement in their approach to self-rule, self-governance and shows path towards sustainability of the project goals and objectives. Taking the above indicators in view, ISS graded 50 Gram Panchayat Level Land Rights Committee. It is found that 50% of GLRCs are strong, 30% average and 20% weak.

  ISS has also constituted 6 Block Level Land Rights Committees (BLRC) consisting of 25 members each and 2 District Level Land Rights Committees (DLRC) consisting of 25 members each.

  Top up Project-RSBY

  ISS, Bhubaneswar is implementing a Top up Programme as additionality to PACS grant project on Accessing and utilizing Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) through informed & assertive community in three districts of Odisha” from 1st April 2013.

  The objective of the RSBY is to provide protection to the BPL households from financial liabilities arising out of health problems. The scheme provides for access to hospitalization and health care through a cashless process, covering up to five members of the insured family, it opens the doors for a range of treatments through empanelled private and government Hospitals.
Activities undertaken

- Campaign for promotion of messages for RSBY card enrollment
- Awareness Building of the beneficiaries and community on the benefits of card holders
- Exposure visits of the CBO representatives to the RSBY hospitals
- Sensitization meeting with the hospital authorities
- Creation and strengthening of RSBY Sahayak Kendra
- District Consultation on RSBY planning and Strategy Development
- Meetings with grievance redressal Cell
- Documentation of good practices

Project Achievements

- No of enrolment under RSBY-40041
- No of smart cards used (benefited) under RSBY-9075

Top up Project-FRA

ISS, Bhubaneswar is implementing a Top up Programme as additionality to PACS grant project on “Ensuring Resource & Livelihood Rights of Socially Excluded Communities through effective implementation of FRA” funded by PACS since 1st Oct 2013. ISS in partnership with three CSOs (THREAD, DISHA and VICALP) in four districts of Odisha namely Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Sundargarh and Jharsuguda. The following are the activities and achievements of ISS exclusively in Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj district.

- For intensive intervention and to speed up CFR process under FRA, cadre at GP level have been created by providing two days training on CFR process. At ISS level, all total 100 cadres comprising of 2 persons from each GP received training on FRA and CFR claim process starting from village boundary mappings to gramsabha meeting and submission at SDLC level. They have been involved in the process.
- To disseminate information with regard to IFR, CFR claim process and Forest Rights Act, IEC materials and posters were prepared and distributed.
- Under FRA top up intervention, 127 FRCs were reconstituted and 5 newly formed.
- To enhance the capacities of FRC members in claim process, a one day training programme was organised at Panchyat level. All total 2500 members have been capacitated on CFR claim process and their role and responsibilities in the process.

Research Project

Study of Grassroots Democracy in India: Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions in Odisha

ISS has undertaken a research study on ‘A study of Grassroots Democracy in India: Women in Panchayati Raj Institutions in Odisha’ in Rayagada and Mayurbhanj districts of Odisha effective from Oct 2013.

Objectives of the study

- To assess the quality of elected tribal and dalit female representatives, in selected Gram Panchayats in two districts of Odisha, in planning and executing different welfare schemes meant for women in general and for SC and ST in particular vis-à-vis male panchayat leaders. In this case we will not only focus on the Panchayats, but also the Gram Sabhas.
- To assess formal and informal spaces of participation that exist to facilitate decision making process in which women are most excluded; such as family matters, sending girl children to school and health care facilities etc.
- To evaluate the causes and consequences of women’s and also in the Mainstream.
- Presented a paper on Social Movement and Women
- Visiting Faculty in the New School of Social Sciences, New York
- Delivered lecture in CWDS and Election Commission of India
- Assisted in preparing a documentary film on Grassroots women leadership evidence from Tribal districts of Odisha and completed the case studies of 14 elected women representatives from the selected districts
- Received a literary award called Kabi Samrat Upendra Bhanj Award for the latest travelogue in Odia.

Kamal Kabra

Meetings/Workshops

- Lecture on Political Economy of Development at Academic Staff College, Punjabi University, Patiala on 16 June
- Lecture on Inclusive Development organized by Doctors for Peace and Development, 8 March
- Delivered Keynote Address at GND University, Amritsar, “UGC Seminar on Social Development Programmes and Development”
- Lecture on Social Development and Globalization in India at Lifelong learning Centre, Delhi University
- Presented a paper on Qualitative Aspects of GDP Growth at Indian Political Economy
participation in influencing and making decisions.

- The role of Civil Society Organizations and Women’s collectives play in creating awareness and mobilizing women to participate in election processes and build skills upon their election.

- To assess the impact of the performance of the elected women representatives whose capacities were built by ISS from 1997 to 2001.

The study was conducted in two tribal dominated districts of Odisha namely Rayagada and Mayurbhanj (one located in the southern fringe and the other is the northern fringe) of the state. The sample study was confined to 10% of total blocks in each of these districts, i.e. 3 blocks out of 26 in Mayurbhanj and 2 out of 11 blocks in Rayagada district at random basis. For this purpose, 100% female headed Gram Panchayats and 50% male headed Gram Panchayats of the sample blocks were covered for personal interview. FGDs were conducted in 50% of the female- headed Gram Panchayats and 25% of the male headed sarpanches.

Preparation of study report is in the process. Case studies of select women Sarapanches were recorded for documentation in the form of hand book. One success case study is in the process of film documentation.

Puducherry

Social Science Research Environment in Puducherry: Challenges and the Way Forward

A two-day national seminar on “Social Science Research Environment in Puducherry: Challenges and the Way Forward’ was organised in collaboration with the Indian Council of Social Science Research, Southern Regional Centre (SRC), Hyderabad during 19-20 November. More than two hundred scholars, researchers, teachers, and students from Pondicherry University, Educational Institutions including the French Institute of Pondicherry in Puducherry and civil society representatives participated in the seminar. Prof. G. Krishna Reddy, Honorary Director, ICSSR-SRC, delivered the Key Note Address. Prof. Sukhadeo Thorat, Chairman, Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi, in his message (read out in the seminar by Dr. Pratima Dash, Lecturer, Tagore Arts College, Puducherry) stated, ‘I am glad that the Regional Centre Puducherry, Institute of Social Sciences holding its inaugural function and organising a seminar on Social Science Research Environment in Puducherry: Challenges and the Way Forward. I understand that the seminar would attempt to understand and document a few important aspects viz. the focus areas of research in Puducherry within the context of national development scenario, the environment existing for carrying out quality research, the factors that promote or impede quality research, whether research is sufficiently focused on development issues of Puducherry, infrastructure available, funding pattern, the problems researchers face in Puducherry, and so on. I wish the Regional Centre Puducherry and the seminar a great success’. The other prominent speakers at the inaugural function were Prof. D. Narasimha Reddy, ICSSR National Fellow, Council for Social Development, Hyderabad; Prof. JBG Tilak, Head, Department of Educational Finance, National University of Educational Finance and Administration, New Delhi; Prof. M.S.
Lalithamma, Dean, School of Education, Pondicherry University; While Mr. V. Selvam, Founder-Regional Director, Regional Centre Puducherry ISS delivered the welcome address, Dr. George Mathew, Chairman of ISS New Delhi delivered the Chairman’s address.

The resource persons of the seminar were: Prof. D. Narasimha Reddy, ICSSR National Fellow, Council for Social Development, Hyderabad; Prof. Valerian Rodrigues, Centre for Political Studies, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi; Prof. JBG Tilak, Head, Department of Educational Finance, National University of Educational Finance and Administration, New Delhi; Prof. Sankasala Mallesh, Vice-Chairperson, Telangana State Higher Education Council, Hyderabad; Prof. D. Sambandhan, former Dean, School of Social Sciences, Pondicherry University; Prof. M.S. Lalithamma, Dean, School of Education, Pondicherry University; D. R. R. Dhanapall, Chairman, Indian Institute of Public Administration-Puducherry Chapter; Prof. G. Palanithurai, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu; Dr. Jayaranjan, Institute for Development Alternatives, Chennai, Tamil Nadu; and Prof. Olivier Litvine, Director, Alliance Française de Pondichéry, Puducherry.

In the valedictory session, the special guest Prof. Olivier Litvine, Director, Alliance Française de Pondichéry delivered the valedictory address and highlighted the traditional relationship that evolved historically between France and India. Prof. Litvine further underlined the tremendous possibilities of future research activities in cooperation with ISS Regional Centre Puducherry. In his closing remarks, V. Selvam, Regional Director,
Participants of ToT workshop on Gender Skills for CISF Officers with George Mathew and Sankar Sen (Centre)

ISS Regional Centre Puducherry expressed his gratitude for the extraordinary help and support received from the scholars and academics from Pondicherry University; Educational Institutions located in Puducherry; ICSSR-SRC Hyderabad for its partial financial support and specially thanked Prof. G. Krishna Reddy, Honorary Director, ICSSR-SRC for the academic advice, suggestions, moral and all other support he extended; the eminent Professors from all over India; friends; and well wishers. He asserted that the Regional Centre Puducherry will be taking up people oriented social science research like the problems faced by fisher folk, minorities, history of Commune Panchayats and the current status of local governance, human development, social mobility, and so on with the advice and support of the Regional Centre’s Academic Advisory Committee of eminent scholars.

On-Going Research

- In the process of preparing a report on the material living conditions of dalit agricultural labourers in a village in Rohtas district (south-west Bihar). The report is based on a number of short field visits to the village conducted during 2001, 2007, 2009 and 2013

ISS Regional Centre Puducherry, (Forthcoming) ‘“If We Had Land, We Would be Human”: The Implications of Landlessness in a Bihar Village’, in Varsha Ganguly (ed.), Land Rights in India: Movements, Policies and Challenges. New Delhi: Routledge. (This forthcoming volume is the outcome of seminar on ‘Right to Land and its Potential for Social Transformation’, held at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla, from 11 to 13 June)
Family & Friends at the event “Remembering Dr. Manu N. Kulkarni” on 22 February. From left to right: S.S. Javali, Master Amogh Javali, Shweta Javali, Kirit Javali, George Mathew, Baligar, Sanjay Kulkarni. (Sitting from Left to Right) Shalini Javali, Vijayalaxmi Kulkarni, Geeta Athreya, Sheilu Shreenivasan and Master Nachiket Javali.

Margaret Abraham, President, International Sociological Association at the Institute (10 December)
K.C. Shivaramakrishnan (third from left) releasing the Book: *Development Dialogue* by Manu Kulkarni. From left to right George Mathew, V.P. Baligar and Sheliu Shrinevasan

Yemeni Delegation with Mani Shankar Aiyar, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) and former Minister for Panchayati Raj, Government of India
On December 2, the Institute organized a day-long discussion on “Rethinking India’s Foreign Policy: New Challenges and Opportunities”. The conference focussed on the following three main issues: (I) ‘India First’, a New Pillar of Foreign Policy, (II) Interface of Economic, Energy and Defence Sectors and (III) Engaging Global Players: Forthcoming visit of President Putin. The participants included Ambassador Ashok Sajjanhar, Roman Babushkin of the Embassy of Russian Federation, and senior journalists and academics.

Michelle Bekkering, Resident Country Director, International Republican Institute gave a lecture on April 2 on “Women’s Representation in Public Life”. Seated from left: George Mathew, Bidyut Mohanty, Michelle Bekkering and Ash Narain Roy
Rani Mullen, visiting professor at the Centre for Policy Research (from left) gave a lecture on “Elections in Afghanistan: Implications for India and the Region” on April 4. K.P. Vijaylakshmi of the Centre for Canadian, US and Latin American Studies, JNU presided over the lecture. Ash Narain Roy, Director, ISS welcomed the guest and introduced the theme.

M.K. Muneer (Centre), Hon’ble Minister for Panchayats, Government of Kerala addressing the gathering during a meeting on Knowledge Exchange on Decentralization and Local Governance Strengthening Programmes in India. Also seen George Mathew and Abdu Muwonge, World Bank Project Team Leader.
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