Sharmila Tagore (2nd from left) presenting Outstanding Women Leader Awards to Priyanka Kumari, President, Katkamdag Gram Panchayat, Jharkhand and Tapaswini Nayak, Sarpanch, Bhagbatchandrapur Gram Panchayat, Odisha (3rd & 4th from Left). Others in the picture are: George Mathew (extreme left), Bidyut Mohanty and Ash Narain Roy (extreme right).

♦ 30th Anniversary Lecture by Ela Gandhi
♦ International Conference on Democracy
♦ India-Central Asia Ties
♦ Democracy Lecture Series by K. Satyarthi
♦ India-Myanmar Relations
♦ Women’s Political Empowerment Day
♦ Lakdawala Lecture by Benjamin Barber
♦ Discussion on Mary King’s Book
Benjamin Barber speaking on ‘Jihad vs McWorld’

Sharmila Tagore, The Goodwill Ambassador, UNICEF with Bidyut Mohanty
Ms. Ela Gandhi, grand-daughter of Mahatma Gandhi, peace activist and former Member of Parliament, South Africa delivered a special lecture to mark the 30th Anniversary of the founding of the Institute of Social Sciences (ISS) on 9th February 2015.

Ela Gandhi’s lecture focused on Mahatma Gandhi’s teachings about how to understand the multiple streams of his thought. Gandhiji evolved many ideas, she said, but these ideas were not scientifically tested or based on any theory. To understand them, one needs to employ a different research methodology.

Some of his ideas were developed and tested in the Phoenix Ashram, near Durban from 1904 onwards. Here, he experimented through engaging in manual work such as gardening, tilling and enriching the soil through making of compost. This was emphasized as an important part of education and learning to communicate these activities helped students to understand the philosophy of social equity, basic values, importance of respect for all kinds of honest work, difficulties faced by people living in different circumstances, and particularly the hardships faced by poor and deprived.

Speaking on women’s emancipation, Ela Gandhi stated that Gandhiji preferred to teach by example and not just by speeches or writings. Reared as “a typical male chauvinist”, it was around 1908 that he began to understand the importance of women’s status, due to their vulnerability to oppression and their inherent power. His interaction with powerful women...
Gandhiji preferred to teach by example and not just by speeches or writings. Reared as “a typical male chauvinist”, it was around 1908 that he began to understand the importance of women’s status, due to their vulnerability to oppression and their inherent power.

activists in South Africa such as Olive Schreiner, a renowned writer, Millie Polak, his secretary, Schelsin, and others, raised his awareness about the subjugation of women or the patriarchal system. This consciousness made him see that “men and women are two sides of the same coin” as he described it. True to his habit, he immediately put these ideas into practice, encouraging women in the Ashram to participate in the struggle for human and political rights. In 1913, African women organized marches to protest against the ‘pass laws’ in the province of Orange Free State, which restricted freedom of movement, primarily of black men and women, between settlements and between urban and rural areas. Taking a lead from this demonstration by powerful activists such as Charlotte Maxeke of the Bantu Women’s League, Gandhiji found it logical to exhort Indian women to demonstrate against injustices. A potent issue erupted in 1913, when the court ruled that traditional marriages were not recognized in South Africa. This triggered a massive protest by Indian women, who, by this ruling, would be regarded as concubines and their children as illegitimate. In order to vent their indignation, they decided to march across the provincial border defying the laws that prohibited the movement of Indian people in South Africa from one province to another without a permit. Their march grew into a huge demonstration as men joined them and others went on strike in solidarity at various plantations in Natal.

The African women’s marches in Orange Free State, meanwhile, drew hundreds of women and resulted in a temporary relaxation of the pass laws. Their protest was an early precursor to the Great March. In 1956, over 20,000 women marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria, braving prohibitory orders and police intimidation while earning the admiration of the African National Congress and establishing the legitimacy of non-violent mass protest against injustice. Ela Gandhi said these strides in the political emancipation of women in South Africa...
The 30th Anniversary Lecture by Chief Guest Ela Gandhi

should be considered an important area of study today.

Another important work of Gandhi was the empowerment of rural communities. For instance, spinning wheel was introduced as a symbol of India’s pre-colonial indigenous industries and as a means of livelihood through the production of cotton yarn.

Gandhi’s Gram Swaraj was based on the idea of ancient self-governing village republics. It inspired movements for local self-government in many parts of the post-colonial world. For this to be revived, she said, there are three important pre-requisites: educated and competent people, a clear government hierarchy, process and procedures which people can learn, gain access to and seek services from and honesty of the elected representatives. Ela Gandhi felt that the social sciences could research these ideas, practices and highlight the efficacy of governance structures that genuinely empower people.

Anand Sharma, former Union Minister for Commerce, Industry and Textiles and deputy leader of the Opposition (Rajya Sabha), said in his presidential address that there are very few countries that have had a history so intertwined as India and South Africa and an understanding is deeply rooted through shared experiences of freedom struggles, icons, and heroes. Speaking on Gandhiji’s work and the ideals, he said that to be a Gandhian is very difficult and the most challenging task. If one takes steps in that direction, it would make each one of us a better human being and make the world perhaps a more peaceful and happy place.

He said that one of the biggest challenges that modern societies face are new technologies and the explosion of Gandhi’s Gram Swaraj was based on the idea of ancient self-governing village republics. It inspired movements for local self-government in many parts of the post-colonial world.
knowledge and science arising within societies which are neither equitable nor just. It was felt that in order to correct the social asymmetries and gross economic disparities that have emerged, we must connect to the message of the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, and to the works of Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela, who were firm believers in what Gandhiji stood for.

George Mathew, Chairman, ISS, spoke about the journey of the Institute of Social Sciences since it was registered on 28 August 1985. He explained that, at that time the idea of “power to the people”, based on the Gandhian ideal of Gram Swaraj, was a rallying point for many intellectuals, activists and concerned citizens. It resulted in the Institute’s pioneering work in advocating strong rural and urban local government institutions.

All those who supported the Institute wanted it to be an independent institution which will grow as a think tank and gave us power and courage to fight against several anti-people issues. It was, indeed, a difficult and strenuous task, especially as far as the finance was concerned. But many friends, bilateral and multi-lateral organizations, including the UN agencies and the World Bank, and the Union and State governments came forward with support at critical times.

Ash Narain Roy thanked the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung India Office for their support in organizing this special lecture.
An International Conference on “Strengthening Democracy in Asia: Inclusion, Participation and Rights” was organized by the Institute in cooperation with the World Movement for Democracy (WMD) and the Asia Democracy Network (ADN) at the India International Centre (IIC) during 23 - 24 March 2015. More than 250 delegates from India and abroad participated in the conference. His Holiness, the Dalai Lama graciously inaugurated the event and expounded on the life and work of George Fernandes, an outstanding trade union leader of independent India, a former Union Minister of Railways and Defence.

In his welcome address, George Mathew, said: “Today is a special day for all of us as we remember the legacy of an outstanding leader, who fought for the rights of labour from his native town of Mangalore in the state of Karnataka and rose to attain national and international esteem.” In addition, this day is very special, as the martyrdom day of Bhagat Singh, national hero of India and the birthday of socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia.

He also shared memories of His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s visit to the Institute on 19 November 2010 to unveil the portrait of George Fernandes, drawn by the exiled Burmese artist Sitt Nyein Aye. George Fernandes, who had been an ardent supporter of the Tibetans’ quest for self-determinism, was a friend and a fund raiser for ISS since its inception. On that occasion, His Holiness had delivered the Institute’s silver jubilee lecture, on ‘A Human Approach to World Peace’.

Anselmo Lee (Republic of Korea), Co-Convener, ADN, in his introductory remarks stated that the year 2015 was a period of paradigm shift for the development community. The Millennium
Development Goals (MDGs) created in 2000 were coming to an end and the international community revolving around the UN was deliberating on what was then called the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This conference, being held in this historical context, revolved around the core values of human rights, development and democracy.

Melinda Quintos de Jesus (Philippines), former Steering Committee Member, WMD, said that the democratic process calls for both patience and persistence. She said “cross border solidarity, learning about critical issues together, making elections not just free and fair but also providing meaningful choices for national leaders.” She went on to stress that it was not just the protection of human rights that is important but also its defenders.

Carl Gershman, President, National Endowment for Democracy (NED), recalled the fact that the conference was themed on the impassioned struggle of George Fernandes for political freedom and socio-economic justice as well as on the strengthening of democracy throughout Asia. He also talked about His Holiness Dalai Lama appreciating George Fernandes and his struggle better than anyone else and in a lighter vein mentioned a conversation wherein His Holiness stated that he was George Fernandes’s spiritual brother.

Lobsang Sangay, Sikyong, Central Tibetan Administration, highlighted former Defence Minister of India George Fernandes’s long time friendship with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people. He said “George Fernandes is a rare human being, for he is one who stands true to his beliefs and remained unchanged whether in government or outside of power.” He recalled how Fernandes personally intervened to help release Tibetans, who were rounded up and kept in custody by police for protesting against a visiting Chinese dignitary in Delhi in the 1990s. He, further, added that George Fernandes believed Tibet is not just an issue for the Tibetans alone but has larger impact across South and South-East Asia, given its strategic location and the environmental significance of the Tibetan plateau, as the source of all the major rivers in the region.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama began his inaugural address by praising the life and works of George Fernandes. He said “this is a special gathering. I appreciate how each one of you is committed not only to your own well-being, but to taking care of others. On this special occasion, we remember my old friend George Fernandes, who, even after becoming the Defence Minister continued to maintain a simple and austere way of life based on self-reliance. He was sympathetic to Tibet and the Tibetan cause, right from the start and never missed an opportunity to speak up for them. His face will remain in my heart until I die and I’ll remember him even into my next life.” He also spoke about secularism in India and the importance of freedom which is essential for human beings, as it promotes creativity.

Ash Narain Roy proposed the vote of thanks at the end of the session. He described His Holiness Dalai Lama as the embodiment of compassion, peace and love and mentioned that “though we have the trappings of democracy, in many countries institutions are without authority.” He quoted Larry Diamond on how “the advance of freedom across the world is swinging in the wrong direction” and pointed to a democracy recession that is visible in big swing states. However, Roy was of the view that the deliberations over the two-day conference would lead to fruitful engagement and progress.
The conference had various panel discussions and special sessions spread over two days. The discussions focused on three themes:

1. “Strategies to promote democracy among marginalized workers,” organized by the Solidarity Center and presided over by its Director of Asia Regional Programs, Timothy Ryan.

2. “Urbanization and the challenges of local political leaders in engaging citizens,” organized by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and moderated by its Vice President, Shari Bryan.

3. “Adaption and Innovation: youth approaches in building democratic processes,” Chaired by Tom Garrett, Vice President for Programs, moderated by IRI.

The sessions touched upon a range of issues that include rights of marginalized workers, ways in which local political leaders are promoting citizens’ voice in the process of addressing urbanization issues in the region’s largest cities, and case studies of innovative youth approaches to building consensus, informing policy and improving representation across the region.

Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, Manish Sisodia, was the guest speaker at the second session of the panel discussion. He highlighted how in 2011 the people of Delhi got together in their quest for a movement against corruption which resulted in the creation of a new political party of common people – Aam Admi Party (AAP). AAP is the product of the pain the poor had been enduring due to pervasive corruption in governance.

His Holiness quoted Larry Diamond on how “the advance of freedom across the world is swinging in the wrong direction” and pointed to a democracy recession that is visible in big swing states.
The panel discussions were followed by a special session in which Kailash Satyarthi, 2014 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate said that a democratic world or an inclusive society or an inclusive economy would be impossible if hundreds and thousands of children in the world are denied education and used as a source of cheap labour. “If people do not raise their voice against denial of education to children, it shows democracy is weak, it is a sign of failure of democracy,” he added.

The second day began with a panel discussion on the following themes:

- “Inclusive Economic Development: Promoting Women’s Entrepreneurship in South Asia” organized by the Centre for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) and chaired by Marc Schleifer, Regional Director, Eurasia and South Asia.
- “Resource Extraction, Land Disputes and Marginalized Communities” organized by the Asia Democracy Network and moderated by Corinna Lopa, Regional Coordinator, South East Asian Committee for Advocacy.
- “Right to Information and Freedom of Expression” organized by the Asia Democracy Network and moderated by Henri Tiphagne, Chairperson, Forum - Asia.

The three sessions discussed, in detail, the challenges and opportunities facing women entrepreneurs in South Asia and the linkages among women’s economic empowerment, inclusive growth and democratic strengthening and impacts and struggles on marginalized communities in Cambodia, India, Tibet and Sri Lanka and their responses to those challenges, besides civil society responses to the challenges in Mongolia, Indonesia, Nepal and India. Participants proposed methods for effective strengthening the responses through international solidarity and cooperation in Asia.

At the valedictory session on 24 March, Han Dongfang, former Steering Committee member of WMD, a trade unionist, spoke on the importance of workers’ rights and collective bargaining at the workplace as imperative to the foundation of a successful democracy and laid emphasis on the need for genuine employee engagement within the realm of participatory inclusion.

Henri Tiphagne, former Steering Committee Member, ADN, spoke of South Asia as being important for the
tenets of democracy in many contexts. Recalling the steering committee meeting of ADN and round table gathering prior to the conference, he talked about the sense of hope that such a conference would instill with regard to the challenges faced by proponents of democracy world over. He went on to invoke Jayaprakash Narayan and George Fernandes in stating that India would not have been where it is today if it wasn’t for the perseverance exercised by such stalwarts.

Richard Gupwell, Chairman, Jeevika Trust (London) and Vice Chairman, European Institute of Asian Studies, spoke about his long association and friendship with George Fernandes. George Fernandes had been a great source of inspiration for him when Gupwell served as political advisor to the Socialist Party Group in the European Parliament for 20 years from 1976 onwards.

Yashwant Sinha, former Minister for External Affairs, Government of India, was the Chief Guest at the Valedictory session. In his address, he stated that democracy is a virtue that should not be imposed by external players, even though democratic countries may face their share of struggles. He focused on the ongoing situation in the Middle-East, where people of the region would show the leading nations how counter-productive their ongoing policies are. Sinha also mentioned that uniform standards towards democracy must be taken at the international level by influential nations and referred to the continuing presence

A democratic world or an inclusive society or an inclusive economy would be impossible if hundreds and thousands of children in the world are denied education and used as a source of cheap labour.
Uniform standards towards democracy must be taken at the international level by influential nations and referred to the continuing presence of military dictatorships, being granted the status of legitimacy, by virtue of their acceding to circumstantial needs of leading nations.

Ash Narain Roy while summing up the key points of the two-day conference said that “Democracy is a daily plebiscite” and thanks to citizen’s mobilization, governance has moved beyond the governments.

Secretary General of Community of Democracies

Maria Leissner, Secretary-General of the Community of Democracies (CD) visited the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, on 30 March 2015. She interacted with the ISS faculty members, scholars, and members of civil society organizations on issues related to democracy in the region. The Community of Democracies is an inter-governmental coalition of over 100 democratic countries set up in the year 2000 with a permanent secretariat in Warsaw, Poland. It aims to strengthen democratic norms and institutions globally.

Those present in the interactive session included ISS faculty members - Anand Chakravarti, S.K. Dey Chair Sankar Sen, Head, Human Rights Department, Shripal Jain, Editor, *Panchayati Raj Update*, and Santosh Singh, Senior Research Officer, Marcus Holknekt, Second Secretary, Embassy of Sweden, Rd. David Boyes, Convener, North-East India Forum Against Racism, Venkatesh Nayak, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiatives, Raj Liberhan, former Director, India Habitat Centre, S.D. Sharma, Senior Fellow, ISS and former Jharkhand State Election Commissioner and O.P. Mathur, Senior Fellow, ISS, and the interaction...
revolved around the following subjects:

- Democratic issues in India with special reference to its positive as well as negative impacts.
- Increasing women’s participation in decision making through democratically elected local government institutions.
- Need for strengthening municipal governance through democratic processes.
- Issues relating to the Right to Information (RTI) law, and how RTI as a movement has strengthened the democratic system.
- The need for creating a Democracy Fund, for promotion of democracy globally.
- How vibrant democracy has helped in achieving new goals in the field of Human Rights in India.
- The diversity existing in the eight states of North-Eastern India and the role of democracy in protecting the rights of all, and
- The conduct of free and fair elections in backward or disturbed regions of the country.

George Mathew emphasized that local government activism and democracy at the village council and municipal level are vital to keep the Indian democracy vibrant. He said that the local democracy is very strong in India, paving new avenues for development in rural and urban areas.

Maria Liessner appreciated the contributions of all participants and stated that the working of democracy in India is a great achievement. Local democracy and functioning of democratically elected local governments are key issues to be discussed in international fora.

Working of democracy in India is a great achievement. Local democracy and functioning of democratically elected local governments are key issues to be discussed in international fora.
Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

Women’s Political Empowerment Day was organized at the Institute during 24 – 25 April 2015 on the theme, “Elimination of all forms of Violence against Women: Role of Panchayats.” The event witnessed the participation of more than 300 elected women panchayat members from 20 states, which included the district panchayat members sponsored by the Government of Uttarakhand. Experts on the local government system of Nepal also attended the conference. The inaugural session began with an invocation by Jagori, a voluntary organisation working on women’s issues.

Sharmila Tagore, a noted actor and Goodwill Ambassador of UNICEF inaugurated the conference. She stressed that there should be zero tolerance to domestic violence. She advocated that the incidences of violence should be discussed in the Mahila Sabha or Gram Sabha. Speaking on the issue of domestic violence, she observed that there was zero tolerance to domestic violence. Besides, he wondered as to why violence persists against women even though they themselves are an epitome of ‘Ahimsa’ as Gandhiji had visualized them.

George Mathew, Chairman, ISS greeted the elected women representatives and wondered about the reasons behind the existence of violence against women despite progress on several fronts. He urged all the women to start a campaign at the village, block, district, state and national level, and passionately stated that with such a campaign “we can end violence soon.”

Ash Narain Roy, Director, ISS, in his welcome address, highlighted the bond between the elected women representatives and Institute of Social Sciences. He observed, “violence is not unique to India alone” and emphasized that violence against women manifests itself in various forms and magnitude and is widespread particularly amongst women, dalits, tribals and other marginalized sections of the society.
nothing masculine about a man beating his wife. Further, she added, “Today I appeal to you to take up a very important issue which is plaguing us today and that is domestic violence. You must put an end to domestic violence. You play an important role here. For all the women in your panchayat, you are a ray of hope.” She condemned the patriarchal mindset as it restricts the mobility and freedom of the women in society. She urged all the panchayat leaders to act firmly to stop violence against women in their respective villages and underlined the need to include men in their endeavors.

Sharmila Tagore, during the inaugural session, presented the awards to Priyanka Kumari, the President of gram panchayat, Hazaribagh, Bihar, who ensured drinking water supply to all the households and progressively worked to secure women’s rights and to Tapaswini Nayak, tribal Sarpanch from Mayurbhanj, Odisha, who contributed in improving the lives of tribal communities in her village by utilizing money given through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

Bidyut Mohanty, Head of Women’s Studies, ISS, proposed vote of thanks.

Kavita Krishnan, Secretary, All-India Progressive Women’s Association, Today I appeal to you to take up a very important issue which is plaguing us today and that is domestic violence. You must put an end to domestic violence. You play an important role here. For all the women in your panchayat, you are a ray of hope.
Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

Keynote Address: Rita Sarin (left) and Kavita Krishnan (right)

For many women, violence has been a part of their lives and during these discussions they learnt that it should not be tolerated. They resolved to take the lessons from the conference to their villages, work place and home to end violence against women.

Rita Sarin delivered the keynote address in which she elaborated on the factors leading to structural violence on the lines of caste, class, ethnicity and patriarchy. She observed that from time immemorial, violence has been perpetuated against dalit women and takes various forms such as discrimination in terms of wage rates and access to basic services. She urged all the women present to lead struggles against the patriarchy, social discrimination and narrow mindedness to get liberated. Rita Sarin, Country Director, Hunger Project, presided over the session and discussed different aspects of CEDAW and highlighted the role of elected women representatives to create awareness among other women of the area.

The address was followed by a question and answer session, wherein panchayat representatives shared their experiences about their problems, the relentless struggle faced by them and their achievements. They also shared their experiences of successfully experimenting with forming women’s group to tackle various forms of violence against women. Some women also emphasized the need to inculcate value and moral-based education to boys and girls.

The plenary, thematic sessions and open house discussions were spread over two days focusing on the following aspects: Gender related Acts and the role of panchayats, violence faced by women in panchayats, violence against women panchayat leaders in the society, perception of violence by the panchayat leaders, challenges faced by women in panchayats, relevance of CEDAW and violence-related Acts in India.

The deliberations and inputs from eminent speakers like Sanghamitra Acharya, JNU; Sunita Reddy, JNU; Nagendra Prasad Rijal, Chairman of Sakcham; Uma Chakravarthy, a feminist thinker; Sehjo Singh, ActionAid; Seema Gaikwad, VSO, New Delhi; Savita Singh, IGNOU, New Delhi; Sushma from Vidarva, Maharashtra; Suparna Ganguli, Senior faculty in SIPRD; Pravleen from Jagori; Srijana Ghemire, Government officer working on local Governments, Nepal; Avneet Kaur, Lecturer, Indraprastha (IP) College, Delhi University; and Babita Verma, Associate Professor, Lakshmibai
Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

Women’s Political Empowerment Day Celebrations

Valedictory Session: Imrana Qadeer (left) and Shaleen Rakesh (right)

College, Delhi University, were appreciated by the women panchayat leaders, civil society members and media persons as informative and educative. For many women, violence has been a part of their lives and during these discussions they learnt that it should not be tolerated. They resolved to take the lessons from the conference to their villages, work place and home to end violence against women.

The two-day programme concluded with a Valedictory Session on the theme: Emerging Issues on Violence against Women in the Twenty-first Century and Role of Panchayats.

Shaleen Rakesh, Executive Director, VSO, New Delhi chaired the session and briefed about the activities of VSO and asked various NGOs to establish links with global campaign to promote political empowerment of women.

Imrana Qadeer, Visiting Professor, Council for Social Development, New Delhi, elaborated on health-related violence women face throughout their life cycle because of their inferior social and economic status. He emphasized that as women leaders, they can only redress that anomaly which still persists in the rural setting.

George Mathew, in his closing remarks, thanked all the participants, who attended the sessions from various parts of the country and Nepal. He remarked that one of the most significant outcomes of this year’s programme is the resolution to launch a nation-wide campaign to combat violence against women which will be launched from every panchayat in the country.

One of the most significant outcomes of this year’s programme is the resolution to launch a nation-wide campaign to combat violence against women which will be launched from every panchayat in the country.
The Institute of Social Sciences in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and the Research and Information Systems for Developing Countries, New Delhi organized a two-day Seminar on “Towards India-Central Asia Economic Cooperation” during 11-12 June 2015. In the inaugural session, Sachin Chaturvedi, DG, RIS, welcomed the participants. In his special remarks, Ash Narain Roy, Director, ISS opined, “Geography is often the mother of history. India and Central Asian countries are bound by both history and geography. It was geography which brought India and Central Asia closer in the past. But our neglect of the region was also due to geography and, of course, lack of strategic vision.” He quoted historian David Thelon, “the challenge of history is to recover the past and introduce it to the present.” He stressed that this is exactly the challenge before us and this seminar will hopefully address this challenge. Further, he described that India’s ties with Central Asia as a partnership of the willing. The goal that India may be seeking today perhaps doesn’t exist but that could exist tomorrow.

Shri Navtej Singh Sarna, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs, delivered the keynote address. The Ambassador Shyam Sharan, Chairman, RIS chaired the inaugural session.

Various aspects of India’s ties with Central Asia were deliberated under broad thematic sessions like, Trade and Investment Linkages; Role of Regional Multilateral Frameworks; Development of Entrepreneurial Partnerships and Agendas for Economic Development; and Innovation and Technology Transfer Collaboration Opportunities.” Those who addressed the two-day seminar included Shanbhu Kumaran, Joint Secretary, Eurasia Division, MEA; Ashok Sajjanhar,
former Ambassador of India to Kazakhstan; Maya Sooronbaeva, Adviser, Public Association International Issik-Kul Forum Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan; Ikromov Jovid Zafarovich, Senior expert of Strategic Research Centre under President of Tajikistan; and Laura Yerekesheva of Suleimunov Institute of Oriental Studies, Almaty, Kazakhstan. Academics, strategic thinkers, trade experts and former diplomats and senior diplomats of Central Asian countries in India laid emphasis on Central Asia’s growing significance in India’s foreign policy. Ambassador Rajiv Sikri delivered the valedictory address.

Against the background of long history of Indo-Central Asian interactions, the deliberations focused on current and future developments. Many speakers observed that cooperation with Central Asia is followed by India’s foreign policy of the previous decade and is rooted in strategic concerns for India’s growing energy demand. The Central Asian countries are rich in natural resources and interested in keeping up their relatively high economic growth rates. The geopolitical concerns such as the instability in the region and growing Chinese influence called for an intensified cooperation. There was a general consensus among the participants that all partners would benefit from closer economic and diplomatic ties with India. To achieve this, a dual strategy should be followed by Indian policy makers. On the one hand, to promote bilateral and regional trade and investment and on the other, to expand India’s commitment to regional and multilateral trade frameworks such as the Eurasian Economic Union and Shanghai Economic Cooperation with Central Asia is followed by India’s foreign policy of the previous decade and is rooted in strategic concerns for India’s growing energy demand.
Cooperation. At the same time, the Central Asian countries are seeking to expand cooperation with India as part of their ongoing transition from Soviet planned economy towards a healthy private sector. This presents a valuable window of opportunity for India to share its technical know-how, such as the development of small and medium enterprises and other types of technology transfer among companies. India could play a leading role in addressing the region’s challenges in technological development and act as both a capacity-builder and a role model based on its own successful development after independence.

The seminar was an initiative to further stimulate India’s activities in the area by providing an assessment of the most beneficial sectors of mutual cooperation, especially in the economic and trade fields. In addition to key issues of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, technology partnerships, etc. the possibility of setting up a digital platform for statistical data and other information on Central Asia was explored. The platform could help highlight strengths and opportunities that invite Indian companies (including considerable number of start-ups seeking innovative technology partnerships), industry organisations, and other actors seeking to expand their cooperation with the region. This would meet the demand for comprehensive and easily accessible data and knowledge about Central Asia in India. The event showcased Central Asia’s growing significance in India’s foreign policy, as Ambassador Rajiv Sikri concluded in his valedictory address.
The Institute of Social Sciences, in cooperation with the Council for a Community of Democracies (CCDs), Washington D.C., organised a workshop on “Education for Democracy” on 25-26 June 2015 at ISS, New Delhi. The objective of the programme was to strengthen relationships and networks among civil society organizations, media practitioners and other champions of democracy.

The workshop comprised participants from USA, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Nepal, India and South Korea including Rebecca, Senior Program Officer, CCD, Steven Wagenseil, Acting President, CCD, Zanaa Jurmed, Director, Centre for Citizens Alliance, Mukti Rijal, Director of the Institute of Governance and Development, Nepal, Indira Rajaraman, Member, Thirteenth Finance Commission, Government of India, M. Aslam, Vice-Chancellor (IGNOU), Padma Angmo, Deputy Secretary, Election Commission of India, Hyung Sik Shin, Korea Democracy Foundation, Korea, Sajia Behgam, Afghan Women Skills Development Center, Afghanistan, Balveer Arora, Chairman, Centre for Multilevel Federalism, ISS, Raj Liberhan, Former Director, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, Noor Mohammad, Senior Advisor, Election Commission of India, George Mathew, Chairman, ISS, S. D. Sharma, Senior Fellow, ISS and O.P. Mathur, Senior Fellow, ISS.

Visit of Mr. Onno Ruhl
The Institute of Social Sciences welcomed Mr. Onno Ruhl, Country Director of the World Bank in India in July 2015. He was previously the director for operations, services and quality in the South Asia Region of the World Bank and joined the Bank in 1993 as country officer for Moldova and Armenia. He has since held various positions within the World Bank in East and Central Asia as well as Africa. He was the Country Director for Nigeria and prior to that the country manager for the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He also held the position of leading private and financial sector development specialist in the Africa and Europe and Central Asia regions. During that period, he provided leadership in creating and financing the African Trade Insurance Agency (ATI).

Prior to working in the Bank, Ruhl was with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and was also the alternate director on the board of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency. He started his career teaching economics in Alkmaar, the Netherlands. Ruhl held informal discussions on the Bank’s work in India.

Interns
International
Ms. Lucila Planich, Torcuato  Ditella University, Argentina
Topic: Women’s Studies

National
Ms. Poonima Jacob, Stella Maris College, Chennai
Topic: India’s Act East Policy
Ms. Shradha Davis, Stella Maris College, Chennai
Topic: Arab Spring
Ms. Flowerlin K Aby, Stella Maris College, Chennai
Topic: India’s Reservations on the rise of China
Ms. Medha Raju, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad
Topic: Rise of India as a Major Global power
Ms. Deeksha Sharma, Ambedkar University, Delhi
Topic: Gender Equality in the Middle East
Ms. Sukriti Kalra, GGDSD College, Punjab University
Topic: Analyzing GDP Led Growth
Lecture on the Roots of Citizen Welfare in India: Reflections on Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal

The Centre for Multilevel Federalism, ISS organized the SK Dey Chair for Local Government lecture on ‘The Roots of Citizen Welfare in India: Reflections on Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal’ at ISS on 12 August 2015. Rahul Mukherji, Associate Professor in the South Asian Studies Programme, National University of Singapore (NUS) and concurrently Head of Research at the university’s Institute of South Asian Studies, delivered the lecture.

Balveer Arora, SK Dey Chair Professor, ISS, welcomed Rahul Mukherji and elaborated about the SK Dey Chair at the Institute. George Mathew presided over the lecture.

Rahul Mukherji pointed out the need for interrogating the state in India for understanding the politics of welfare. The sub-national state, the evolution of ideas within its technocratic elite and political commitment are quintessential for understanding the governance architecture favoring the poor.

He also highlighted the importance of the relationship between the political executive and the bureaucracy by examining successful land reforms under Operation Barga in West Bengal and the varied implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh.

He argued that the centrality of the sub-national state does not render grassroots politics irrelevant in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. He insisted one needs to understand the relationship between the lower local bureaucracy and local governments (panchayats) to explain variation in implementation in more and less successful re-distributive schemes in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. An interactive session followed the lecture.
“Save Childhood, Save Democracy”

Kailash Satyarthi, Child rights activist and Nobel Peace Laureate, delivered the third lecture in the Democracy Lecture Series initiated at the Institute of Social Sciences by Nirman Foundation on 21 August 2015. The session was presided over by Lord Bhikhu Parekh, Fellow, British Academy, and Labour Member of the House of Lords, U.K.

George Mathew welcomed Kailash Satyarthi and recalled his close association with him since the late 1970s. He said local communities and local Government, especially the 2,50,000 rural elected local bodies in India - the Panchayats - could become the epicenter of activism for abolishing the shame of child exploitation in our society.

A human rights activist since his youth, Kailash Satyarthi is the founder of Bachpan Bachao Andolan (Save Childhood Movement) in India. In the 1980s, he left a comfortable career in electrical engineering to work for the rights of children, particularly those from poor homes, who work as child labourers in India and elsewhere, and those who suffer unspeakable oppression in war zones around the world. He began his lecture with graphic descriptions of the situations which children face, giving examples drawn from different parts of the world, where girls had reportedly been taken hostages, subjected to sexual abuse and resold for less than the price of a packet of cigarettes, and where small boys, who were given guns and told to shoot were buried alive if they couldn’t do it. Similarly, in Africa, children working in cocoa bean production had no idea what they were processing or what chocolate, the delicious and lucrative end product, was. In India, in several cities, he had met children, who had been forced into jobs like stitching footballs – for World Cup tournaments – or embroidering bridal costumes and accessories for the rich, without access to first aid, medical treatment or schooling while companies and retailers selling their products make huge profits. Child workers were preferred as a cheap source of labour who can be coerced to work overtime, kept under control and can easily be sexually exploited.

He emphasized that it was ironical that around 168 million children in the world are victims of the child labour trade while 200 million adults in the world are jobless.

Satyarthi learnt from his early experience that the power of anger could be converted into a positive force to change the world for the good and specially to help those children who labour and have no voice.

It was ironical that around 168 million children in the world are victims of the child labour trade while 200 million adults in the world are jobless.

Satyarthi learnt from his early experience that the power of anger could be converted into a positive force to change the world for the good and specially to help those children who labour and have no voice.
Lord Bikhu Parekh delivering the Presidential Address

He also described the practical problems he had faced in freeing the children while dealing with multiple agencies in national governments and multilateral bodies. For rehabilitation of rescued child workers in India, one has to go through nine government departments like labour, health, education, women and child development, etc., and take the help of five UN agencies, which is truly a cumbersome process.

Satyarthi spoke of setting up a Global Policy Institute, which could work on holistic policies, encompassing all aspects of a child’s development process.

Satyarthi spoke of setting up a Global Policy Institute, which could work on holistic policies, encompassing all aspects of a child’s development process. He had received support for this idea from many scholars as well as from the Prime Minister and President of India. He expressed the urgent need for young people from better off families, academicians, and activists to get involved in the mission to ensure protection of child rights – “to bring a smile to each child’s face in our country.”

Lord Bhikhu Parekh, in his presidential address, underlined the urgent necessity of eliminating child labour. He reiterated the need for the kind of transformative anger that Satyarthi spoke about - anger, shame and guilt because we must feel ashamed about the plight of poor, exploited children we see around us. Democracy is not about elections, it is also about outcomes and here ‘outcomes’ refer to equal opportunity for all children to realize their full potential, overcoming the limitations of social backgrounds and economic class.

Ash Narain Roy proposed the vote of thanks. In an interactive session after the lecture academicians, activists, diplomats and young scholars participated enthusiastically.
Gandhian Non-violent Struggle and Untouchability in South India: The 1924-25 Vykom Satyagraha and the Mechanisms of Change

The Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi in association with Oxford University Press hosted the launch of the book titled *Gandhian Non-violent Struggle and Untouchability in South India: The 1924-25 Vykom Satyagraha and the Mechanisms of Change*, by Mary E. King, who worked at the centre of the U.S. Civil Rights movement led by Martin Luther King Jr. The event was organized at Constitution Club, New Delhi on 12 September 2015. She is presently the Professor of Peace and Conflict studies at the UN - affiliated University for Peace in Costa Rica and a Distinguished Rothermere American Institute Fellow of the University of Oxford, U.K. The book was released by Smt. Meira Kumar, Former Speaker of the Lok Sabha (Lower House of Parliament) India.

In his opening remarks, Ash Narain Roy welcomed the esteemed panelists and participants who attended the book launch. He said the myth and perception that non-violent means of resistance always wins with the stoniest of hearts has been demolished through the book. Roy opined that it is no ordinary book but a compelling piece of original research.

In her address, Smt. Meira Kumar mentioned how her father, Jagjivan Ram, a former Union cabinet minister of India was denied entry at temples due to caste discrimination. While adding to the prevailing religious-cultural inequities, the need for inclusive justice was highlighted by Smt. Meira Kumar.

The three distinguished panelists included Prakash Karat, Member, Polity Bureau, Communist Party of India (Marxist) and T.K. Oommen, Emeritus Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University along with Meenakshi Gopinath, former Principal, Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi.

During his talk, Prakash Karat elucidated on the historical origins of political decisions exercised by leaders during the post-independence era which has had detrimental impact on the societal fabric something that has been further exacerbated through religious overtones. He opined that the Vykom Satyagraha was a landmark event for social justice in...
South India and that the significance of the struggle is well brought out in the book by Mary King. He highlighted that the historical notion of Hindu orthodoxy undergoing a conversion during the Vykom struggle has been negated by King, and ended his remarks saying that the book not only gives new information but new ideas to those who read it. He ended by saying that the fight for social justice is not over and there exists an unfinished democratic revolution.

T.K. Oommen in his address jovially stated that the Vykom Satyagraha is like a classic wherein it is a book whose title is familiar to everyone but very few have read it. He stated that one has to profusely thank Mary King for her efforts in bringing out fresh insights of the Vykom resistance movement. In analyzing the Vykom Satyagraha, she has involved the micro and macro issues of the same without ignoring their assets and liabilities.

Meenakshi Gopinath eloquently spoke about King’s background in being an advocate for peace throughout the world which has been an inspiration for many. She went on to speak about the various facets of social injustice prevailing in the country that warrants attention from all stakeholders concerned.

Mary King stressed on the role of creating institutions and their relevance in civil resistance. She emphasized on the role played by armaments in contemporary political governance. She spoke at length about how the idea of working on the subject was initially nurtured through the support of ISS in India. She mentioned that Institute of Social Sciences is her second home and about the support from Dinoo Mathew, presently a doctoral candidate at the University of Peace and how Costa Rica has been invaluable in her efforts for over 10 years. She concluded by stating that there needs to be a second wave of investigation and research in the realm of non-violent resistance and democratic uprising.

George Mathew moderated the session. Prasun Chatterjee, Commissioning Editor, Oxford University Press proposed the vote of thanks. The event was supported by The Kerala Centre, New York and was attended by eminent citizens that included academics, civil society activists along with members of the diplomatic corps in New Delhi.
The Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, in collaboration with Heinrich Böll Foundation and Burma Centre Delhi, organised a conference on “India-Myanmar Relations: Looking from the Border” on 28-29 September 2015.

The objective of this conference was to bring together the various stakeholders from India and Myanmar to explore and interact on the various facets of engagement between the two countries. The discussions revolved around three main sub-themes: India’s Act East Policy, Issues and Perspectives in India-Myanmar Relations and Border Trade, Security and Trans-Border Militancy.

A.N. Roy in his welcome address said that the 21st century is witnessing constant tremors of a tectonic shift in global power relations. The centre of the world is shifting to east. The power within the geographical landscape is shifting from the Atlantic world to the Asia-Pacific. The Asia-Pacific is itself witnessing a tectonic shift. If the US is re-booting its policy towards Asia, Japan is articulating its policy in terms of the “Democratic Security Diamond” and we are all familiar with China’s “Maritime Silk Road”. India, therefore, has to respond to this new reality. Hence, the “Act East” policy.

Speaking about the sub-title of the seminar “Looking from the Border” he said that “we are living in intensely paradoxical times. While borders are becoming more permeable in some parts of the world, they are becoming reconstructed in many other parts of the globe. He stated that the walls and fences create only a false sense of physical security. Walls make the ‘other’ invisible and that the Invisibility breeds ignorance and creates a new dimension of fear – the fear of other. Borders must not be allowed
Participants at the two-day Conference

India’s Act East Policy is not a replacement of the Look East Policy, but it is the consolidation, extension, expansion and diversification of India’s policy to accord a high degree of importance in South East Asia and East Asia. While the earlier component of the policy emphasized on economic cooperation between India and South-East Asia, now the accent is on strategic cooperation.

In terms of geographical spread, he said, “Look East Policy focuses considerably on ASEAN and in our context on sub-ASEAN relationship. Now, the focus should be to emphasize more on the extra ASEAN side of the canvas which, as we have noticed in the last 18 months, a great deal of attention being paid to China, Japan, Australia, South Korea and Pacific Island states. This is not to reduce or diminish the importance of ASEAN but, it is to say that India’s world view is expanding and therefore the conception of India’s eastern policy is also expanding.”

“India’s Act East Policy doesn’t have only one pillar but two pillars, one is the North-East India and the second pillar is the rest of India. Here, we are looking at the complete relationship and therefore whether it is Orissa, Chennai, Mumbai and the rest of India they also need to play their part in India’s Act East Policy just as a place of significance is accorded to the North-East Region (NER). When it comes to Act East Policy, India has two eastern neighbours, Myanmar and Bangladesh and we should keep Bangladesh at the back of our mind for a broader scope.”

Tapir Gao, former Member of Parliament from Arunachal Pradesh, described Myanmar as “the heart of ASEAN.” He expressed the hope that a new era in India-Myanmar relations would dawn. However, he urged the civil society, media and other stakeholders to help provide a clear blueprint as to how the North-Eastern Region can act as the game changer. Lian Bawi Thang of Chin Human Rights Organization welcomed India’s engagement including in the Kladan Multi-modal Project, but also called for transparency. Ting Oo from Arakan Rivers Network drew the attention towards people’s apprehensions about land confiscation.

Others who addressed the seminar included Preet Mohan Singh Malik, former ambassador of India to Myanmar, Sanjoy Hazarika, journalist, W Nabachandra Singh, president of Indo-Myanmar border traders’ union, KhinMaung Win of Democratic Voice of Burma and Axel Harneit-Sievers, director, Heinrich Boll Stiftung.
Lecture by Vice-President of Costa Rica

Inclusion of Women in Costa Rican Society

The Institute of Social Sciences in association with the Embassy of Costa Rica hosted the Vice-President of Costa Rica, H. E. Ana Helena Chacon Echeverria. Her Excellency gave a lecture on ‘Inclusion of Women in Costa Rican Society’ to an audience comprising members of the diplomatic corps and activists from civil society organizations, faculty and students of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and a delegation from Amity University on 9 October 2015.

Ash Narain Roy welcomed Her Excellency and spoke of her achievements in governance within the political framework of Costa Rica while elucidating on her role both as a fearless crusader and a stormy petrel. He said that her work has been aimed at improving response mechanisms and raising awareness about domestic violence, sexual exploitation of minors, gender equity, juvenile justice and human trafficking. She has also been active in the fields of sustainability, decentralization and social responsibility. In his concluding remarks, he mentioned about the Government of India’s initiative to frame the country’s first comprehensive charter on women’s entitlement, which would hopefully go a long way to push the polity towards a more inclusive governance.

Moderating the proceedings, S.P. Ganguly, former professor at JNU, stated that there is a distinct lack of mutual awareness when it comes to studying realities in India and Costa Rica. Congratulating the meeting organizers, he Government of India’s initiative to frame the country’s first comprehensive charter on women’s entitlement, which would hopefully go a long way to push the polity towards a more inclusive governance.
said that while ideas of cooperation are usually discussed between high-ranking Government officials, real cooperation happens in small enlightened corners such as the ones they were all gathered in ISS for. Real synergy of cooperation can be found between the polities of two regions, namely, representatives of national governance and members of civil society, where academicians, researchers, activists and students can actively participate. Ganguly spoke at length of the human development index in Costa Rica and its commitment to environmental sustainability programmes.

In her address, Her Excellency Ana Helena Chacon Echeverria briefly spoke of the geographical setting of Costa Rica, a country of less than five million population, located between Nicaragua and Panama. She said the challenges for women in Costa Rica are pretty much the same as for women in India and went on to say that her foremost goal is to end extreme poverty amongst women. Echeverria threw light on a significant aspect prevalent in Costa Rica where, even though there is a high degree of human development, nearly 45% of households living in extreme poverty are headed by women. She further explained the causes for such disparity which have been detrimental to the equal status of women, including factors like certain dominant sections of the society being really conservative, with progressive reforms being stalled owing to orthodox perspectives on matters of divorce and abortion.

She mentioned how women are conventionally programmed as per social norms to be groomed in housekeeping and culinary skills while men are expected to be better educated and engage in remunerative work. Finally, she emphasized that knowledge can change society and where information is autonomous in form and spirit, genuine women’s empowerment can take place. Her Excellency ended her address by thanking the participants and adding that a dialogue with different stakeholders is what she is keen to initiate and sustain.

George Mathew proposed the vote of thanks wherein he expressed his gratitude to Her Excellency for throwing light on ground realities of both the society and social life in Costa Rica. He spoke of a global comparison in the 1980s wherein two countries, Costa Rica and Sri Lanka, along with one state of India, namely, Kerala, were declared by the United Nations as having low income but a very high quality of life, thereby grabbing the world attention. Mathew also mentioned his experience during a visit to Costa Rica in 2006 for a meeting at the United Nations University of Peace where he said there was relatively very little policing and literally no military presence, yet a strong foundation of safety and security for its citizens.

In the discussions that followed, the Ambassador of Peru mentioned that the President of the National Council of Science and Technology in his country was a woman and so are a significant majority of board members. He went on to state that Costa Rica is an example for the whole world. The High Commissioner of Guyana congratulated Her Excellency on her ascent to the office of Vice-President and opined that the economic independence of women is the crux of the issue of inclusion of women in all spheres of social and political life, drawing on the example of Grameen Bank in Bangladesh to substantiate his point.
A discussion on the book *Breaking Through: India’s Stories of Beating the Odds on Poverty*, authored by Meera Mitra was organized at the Abdul Nazir Sab Hall of ISS in New Delhi on 27 November 2015. The discussants were columnist and writer Gurucharan Das, former Union Minister and Member of Parliament, Mani Shankar Aiyar, and the author herself, who is a sociologist and former CEO of Proctor & Gamble, India.

Welcoming the gathering, George Mathew recalled how Meera Mitra used to visit the Institute for relevant materials in its archives and for the ongoing studies in local governance and Panchayati Raj. Institute of Social Sciences facilitated her initiative by providing linkages with its local governance networks in remote areas to understand the transitions that women have been able to achieve in their leadership capacity at the local level. Since 1995, the Institute celebrates April 24th as Women’s Political Empowerment Day, a celebration, in which, awards are conferred on outstanding women elected members. One of Mitra’s field study – ‘SanjoKol in Bundelkhand region’ got the award after the collaboration with the Institute.

Meera Mitra, while thanking the Institute of Social Sciences for organizing the discussion, said that she felt honored that two of India’s eminent leaders from completely diverse perspectives, Mani Shankar Aiyar and Gurucharan Das, were present to discuss the themes in her book. “We have a lot of numbers based data with initiative by providing linkages with its local governance networks in remote areas to understand the transitions that women have been able to achieve in their leadership capacity at the local level. Since 1995, the Institute celebrates April 24th as Women’s Political Empowerment Day, a celebration, in which, awards are conferred on outstanding women elected members. One of Mitra’s field study – ‘SanjoKol in Bundelkhand region’ got the award after the collaboration with the Institute.

Meera Mitra, while thanking the Institute of Social Sciences for organizing the discussion, said that she felt honored that two of India’s eminent leaders from completely diverse perspectives, Mani Shankar Aiyar and Gurucharan Das, were present to discuss the themes in her book. “We have a lot of numbers based data with initiative by providing linkages with its local governance networks in remote areas to understand the transitions that women have been able to achieve in their leadership capacity at the local level. Since 1995, the Institute celebrates April 24th as Women’s Political Empowerment Day, a celebration, in which, awards are conferred on outstanding women elected members. One of Mitra’s field study – ‘SanjoKol in Bundelkhand region’ got the award after the collaboration with the Institute.

Meera Mitra, while thanking the Institute of Social Sciences for organizing the discussion, said that she felt honored that two of India’s eminent leaders from completely diverse perspectives, Mani Shankar Aiyar and Gurucharan Das, were present to discuss the themes in her book. “We have a lot of numbers based data with initiative by providing linkages with its local governance networks in remote areas to understand the transitions that women have been able to achieve in their leadership capacity at the local level. Since 1995, the Institute celebrates April 24th as Women’s Political Empowerment Day, a celebration, in which, awards are conferred on outstanding women elected members. One of Mitra’s field study – ‘SanjoKol in Bundelkhand region’ got the award after the collaboration with the Institute.

Meera Mitra, while thanking the Institute of Social Sciences for organizing the discussion, said that she felt honored that two of India’s eminent leaders from completely diverse perspectives, Mani Shankar Aiyar and Gurucharan Das, were present to discuss the themes in her book. “We have a lot of numbers based data with initiative by providing linkages with its local governance networks in remote areas to understand the transitions that women have been able to achieve in their leadership capacity at the local level. Since 1995, the Institute celebrates April 24th as Women’s Political Empowerment Day, a celebration, in which, awards are conferred on outstanding women elected members. One of Mitra’s field study – ‘SanjoKol in Bundelkhand region’ got the award after the collaboration with the Institute.

Meera Mitra, while thanking the Institute of Social Sciences for organizing the discussion, said that she felt honored that two of India’s eminent leaders from completely diverse perspectives, Mani Shankar Aiyar and Gurucharan Das, were present to discuss the themes in her book. “We have a lot of numbers based data with initiative by providing linkages with its local governance networks in remote areas to understand the transitions that women have been able to achieve in their leadership capacity at the local level. Since 1995, the Institute celebrates April 24th as Women’s Political Empowerment Day, a celebration, in which, awards are conferred on outstanding women elected members. One of Mitra’s field study – ‘SanjoKol in Bundelkhand region’ got the award after the collaboration with the Institute.

Meera Mitra, while thanking the Institute of Social Sciences for organizing the discussion, said that she felt honored that two of India’s eminent leaders from completely diverse perspectives, Mani Shankar Aiyar and Gurucharan Das, were present to discuss the themes in her book. “We have a lot of numbers based data with
We have a lot of numbers based data with respect to poverty, poverty ratios, poverty lines and recent official data which states that between 2004-05 and 2011-12, 137.8 million persons had come out of poverty. The book aims to look behind the numbers to understand what processes might have been at play in overcoming poverty and poverty scenarios. A quarter of a century since ‘economic liberalization’ and well over half a century since the Constitution came into force, these factors had opened up several opportunities. The book, she said, is mainly about those who had grasped those opportunities with some modicum of success. However, despite the optimism on the ‘success’, the stories show the tremendous gaps and roadblocks that remain, even in the best of cases. The struggle, she said, is on the one hand about the poor straining to participate in free market processes in terms of getting property rights, security, credit, markets, information, skills, and the means to engage effectively in economic activities, and on the other, about the poor being able to redeem their social entitlements outlined in the Constitution. The transitions have been neither smooth nor straightforward.

Commenting on the book’s themes, Mani Shankar Aiyar estimated that the poor and the vulnerable across India together comprise 70 per cent of the country’s population. One small setback like a major illness or family distress could very easily push a vast number of those who are counted above the poverty line, back below it. Given this state of affairs, he said the ‘poverty line’ should be renamed as ‘destitution line,’ and alternately, it should be broadened to a band, since those large numbers who were just above the line were often extremely vulnerable. The country must invent a system that promotes success among those who are unsuccessful, instead of depending on exceptional citizens among the poor to succeed by beating the odds. However, Aiyar said that from his experience of government, the Ministry of Finance was concerned with successful Indians rather than unsuccessful ones.

Gurucharan Das congratulated Mitra for the extraordinary work she had undertaken for the book and said that some chapters dealt with topics of particular interest to him. He highlighted the stories which were related to aspirations and efforts for education amongst the poor, such as the one on Nazma, a poor minority community mother and her daily wage husband, who ensured that each of their five children received an education, irrespective of their gender. He also referred to the stories of entrepreneurial success in the informal sector, and the Jaipur case studies, which highlighted the constant maneuvering that had to be done, in order to circumvent roadblocks to economic freedom. Expounding on the ‘abysmal’ quality of school education in India, he pointed out that Indians had emerged at the 73rd position among 74 countries that took a simple international test. Despite crores spent on the Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and other such programmes, it was reported that only four per cent of teachers could pass an eligibility test. He ruled the fact that by focusing entirely on prescribed inputs without a word about output standards, the Right to Education Act had created ‘a corrupt inspection raj.’
A seminar was organized by Institute of Social Sciences, on 1 December 2015, at the India International Centre to discuss the strategic, geopolitical and sociological complexities in West Asia. The officials of several embassies and academics from think-tanks and universities were among the participants.

Kanwal Sibal, Former Foreign Secretary, in his keynote address revealed that his official discussions with leading US officials more than a decade earlier had made it obvious that they thought regime-change in West Asia would be as easy as reinventing the political and economic system in Germany had been after the Second World War.

In a succinct presentation of security implications, Brig. (retd.) Narinder Kumar of Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS) warned that wars on more than one front and wars between state and non-state actors, such as the ones that were being fought in Syria, could have grave implications for Central and South Asia too.

Senior journalist K.P.Nayar gave anecdotal evidence from his recent visit to Syria. Ambassador Shiv Shankar Mukherjee said the Russians had done more to improve the situation in Syria in one month than the West had in an year. Roman Babushkin, first Secretary of the Russian Embassy, gave a detailed exposition of the current situation, including details of how a Russian pilot was shot dead after having bailed out of his targeted aircraft.

Senior Syrian journalist Waiel Awwad presented pictorial evidence of how events had unfolded over the past few decades. Among other pictures, he showed one of a gun wielding Osama Bin Laden standing beside former US Secretary of State Zbigniew Brzezinski. Talking of the emergence of the ‘mobile terrorist’ in the recent past, Awwad stated the fact that 100,000 people had come “to liberate Syrians from other Syrians.”

Recent events had inadvertently allowed Russia to establish its own ‘no-fly zone’ over Syrian airspace, one of the participants pointed out.

Some of the key insights that emerged during a day-long intensive discussion on Syria and the emergent situation in West Asia were:

- “Syria’s de facto borders will never be the same, but having survived a critical phase this summer, President Assad is set to stay in place. Even a substantial section of Israeli policymakers would prefer him to an ‘unknown devil’, Assad’s continuance does not, however, spell peace.”
- “Control of pipelines that connect from the oil and gas fields to the southeast of Syria to the Mediterranean Sea, will continue to be a driving reason for global powers’ involvement in ‘multiple wars within a war’ in that region.”
- “Biased media channels have distorted global perceptions of the situation in Syria with blatantly false reporting.”
- “To view the situation there in simplistic Shia vs Sunni, Muslim vs Christian, West vs Russia or Iran vs Saudi terms is inadequate.”
The conventional notion of the Nation-State and Capitalism for governance is becoming obsolete. Hence, governance mechanisms need to adapt and evolve accordingly.

The D.T. Lakdawala Memorial lecture is organized annually by Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi. In his welcome address, George Mathew threw light on the contributions of late Prof. Lakdawala towards studying ways to alleviate poverty and social injustice. He also recalled the lectures delivered under the series in the past by eminent scholars and personalities such as Amartya Sen, Albie Sachs, Noam Chomsky, Mohammed Yunus and A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.

The Programme held on 14 December 2015 began with a video presentation of the previous lectures. Mathew recalled that the world-renowned trade unionist and former cabinet minister George Fernandes had suggested that Professor Lakdawala should be the first Chairman of ISS. Several distinguished luminaries including Vice-President Hamid Ansari and former Prime Ministers I.K. Gujral and Manmohan Singh have chaired the lecture in the past. Like earlier lectures in this series, Barber’s lecture was attended by diplomats, academics, civil society activists and students from across Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR).

The challenge of how to organize governance in an increasingly globalized world has become imperative. One of the few public intellectuals to have vigorously engaged with this challenge of political theory is Benjamin Barber, Senior Research Scholar at The Graduate Centre, The City University of New York. Taking forward the idea that the cities worldwide will associate with each other to shape the
Delivering the 14th D.T. Lakdawala Memorial Lecture at Mavalankar Hall, New Delhi

world of tomorrow, he founded a project to bring together a global parliament of mayors.

Barber had called on students and young scholars to take the lead to resolve global issues, echoing the theme of Stiglitz’s talk at the ISS in 2008: Crises Today and the Future of Capitalism. It was evident, Barber asserted, that the conventional notion of the Nation-State and Capitalism for governance is becoming obsolete. Hence, governance mechanisms need to adapt and evolve accordingly. The governments of cities could link up across the globe much more organically than nation states.

H.K. Dua, Former ambassador and Editor, in his presidential address spoke at length of how today’s challenges to the nation-state system are global in reach and impact. He agreed with Barber that cities must be the focal point of governance. Dua pointed out that immigration, among the various factors, is causing the European Union’s current fragility. He also pointed out that the threat posed by global multinational companies with great influence over law-makers and policy formulation, and covert influence over people’s minds.

Emphasizing the themes that are at the core of the ISS work, he stressed that power needs to be delegated to Panchayats (Village Councils) in India and that the seeds of global governance need to be sown with people as the centre of power.

Ash Narain Roy, proposing the vote of thanks, said that cities indeed have the potential to change the grammar of politics. He quoted Eleanor Roosevelt, former First Lady of the United States, that great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events while small minds discuss people.
Centre for Multilevel Federalism

Special Lecture Series and Speakers at ISS, 2015

- **Ajay Darshan Behera**: Professor at the Academy of International Studies, Jamia Milia Islamia University, New Delhi. He is also the Co-ordinator of the Centre for Pakistan at the Academy. **Theme**: "Insurgencies in the Northeast: From Conflict to Co-option" 20 January.

- **Lawrence Saez**: Professor in the Political Economy of Asia in the Department of Politics at the School of Oriental and Asian Studies, University of London. He is also co-director of the Centre on the Politics of Energy Security. He is also a visiting Professor at Sciences, Paris. **Theme**: "The Potential Budget Cycle and Sub-national Expenditures in Federations: Panel data Evidence from India" 3 February.

- **Lion Koenig**: Adjunct Faculty at the Centre for the Study of Law and Governance, Jawaharlal University and for the Centre for Culture, Media and Governance, Jamia Milia Islamia University, New Delhi. Associated Researcher at the South Asian Institute, Department of Political Science and at the Cluster of Excellence ‘Asia and Europe in a Global Context’. **Theme**: "Citizenship and Nation-building in India: Past Achievements and Future Challenges" 10 February.


- **Kamal Nayan Choubey**: Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science, Dayal Singh College, University of Delhi. **Theme**: “Forest Rights and Decentralisation: PESA, FRA and the Third Tier of India’s Federal Structure, “ 10 March.


- **Wilfried Swenden and Rekha Saxena**: Dr Wilfried Swenden is a senior lecturer of Politics at University of Edinburgh. Dr. Rekha Saxena is a Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Delhi. **Theme**: “From Central Planning to Team Building? State Grievances and the Demise of Planning Commission,” 31 March.

- **Govind Bhattcharjee**: A Civil Service Officer of 1986 batch, currently serving as Director General at the Office of Comptroller and Auditor General of India at New Delhi. **Theme**: “The Special Category States of India,” 7 April.

- **Om Prakash Mathur**: Senior Fellow at Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi. **Theme**: “Local Governments and Finance Commissions,” 14 April.


- **Rakesh Ranjan**: Advisor in NITI Aayog, Government of India, currently heading its division of Plan Coordination and Management and Housing and Urban Affairs. **Theme**: “NITI Aayog: A Case of Schumpeterian Creative Destruction,” 5 May.

- **Rana Banarji**: Joined Indian Administrative Service in 1972. Retired as a Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat in October 2009. Worked as a visiting Professor, Pakistan Studies Programme at the Academy of International Studies, Jamia Milia Islamia University, Delhi between January 2012 to 2015. **Theme**: “Internal Security in Indian Federation,” 18 August.

- **Mohan Guruswamy**: Head of Centre for Policy Alternatives, New Delhi and a Distinguished Fellow at the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi. **Theme**: “A Stateless Nation Ruled by a Gated Nation,” 22 September.

- **Mujibur Rehman**: Faculty Member of Dr. Narayanan Centre for Dalit and Minority Studies, Jamia Milia Central University, New Delhi. **Theme**: “Communalism in Postcolonial India,” 10 November.

- **Ian Greene**: University Professor Emeritus in the School of Public Policy and Administration and Master Emeritus of McLaughlin College. **Theme**: “How can Multi Level Governance Survive Dysfunctional Governance? The Case of Canada,” 20 November.
Bhubaneswar

**Action Project**

*Improve Access to Land of Socially Excluded Communities for Livelihood Security in Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj Districts of Odisha*

Institute of Social Sciences Bhubaneswar implemented a project funded by the Department for International Development (DFID), United Kingdom. The “Poorest Area Civil Society” (PACS) Programme, covered one of the programme mandates which was conducted from 15 September 2011 to 31 December 2015. The project covered 6 blocks, 50 Gram Panchayats (GPs), 350 villages and 54,954 households in two tribal districts of Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj.

The main purpose of the project was to improve access to land, improve livelihood security, empower through training the socially excluded communities (members of the Scheduled Tribes, Scheduled Castes, minorities, and women) and support to raise their voices for their rights and entitlements. A total of 38,734 households, covering a population of 2,45,909 directly or indirectly, were benefitted due to this project intervention. Pramila Prava Patnaik coordinated the programme in the capacity of Project Manager with a team of 33 members.

**Bhu-Mitra**

In order to make the project sustainable, one tribal youth from each selected GP was given 3 months’ residential training on RI/Amin Revenue officials’ course and the cadres were named as Bhu-Mitras. Capacity building of 46 Bhu-Mitras (RI/Amin Revenue officials on survey and settlement procedures and other aspects of land administration significantly reduced land related problems in their respective GPs.

**Model Villages**

Out of 350 villages covered under the project, Institute of Social Sciences successfully created 21 model villages through the process of intervention by identifying issues in every village based on a door-to-door household survey. The best model villages from each block were awarded during the final year of intervention (2015) at District Level Workshops organised in the respective districts. ISS also facilitated the process of convergence with NREGA and other programmes for assured livelihood of people. Besides this, a training programme was conducted for the Block Level Land Rights Committee (BLRC) constituted by ISS during PACS Project Intervention to strengthen BLRC members on convergence plan. Other social issues such as non-availability of drinking water facilities, lack of access to household latrines, basic education and health facilities have been identified and addressed.

**Workshops**

Two district level workshops were organized on 30 September 2015 in the conference hall of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Baripada, and 11 September 2015 in Keonjhar district, which was coordinated by network partner Women’s Organisation for Socio-Cultural Awareness (WOSCA) with the participation of more than 50 delegates in each district level workshop.

The objective of the workshop was to share four year activities and achievements under PACS Programme with government officers and other stakeholders. Awards were given to one village from each of the 6 selected blocks to encourage people for the development of villages. One solar light, two carpets (one for female members and one for male members of the village) and one certificate of appreciation was awarded to each selected model villages, which had a good impact on other villages. The committee members of awarded villages shared their best practices and impact of PACS-ISS intervention on their livelihood at the district level workshops.

**Faculty News:**

**Academic Activities**

Dr. George Mathew, Chairman, ISS New Delhi

- Presented a paper on: Democratic Norms and Good Governance in Local Government: The Case of Tripura State in India, at the Fifth Commonwealth Local Government Research Colloquium, organised by Commonwealth Local Government Forum at University of Bostswana, Gaborone, held on 15 and 16 June.
- Participated in the Civil Society Forum and VIII Ministerial Conference of Community of Democracies, from 22 to 24 July at El Salvador.
- Presented a paper on: Crafting State Nations: India’s Federalism as a case for Developing Democracies, at an international conference on Federalism and Decentralisation: Perceptions for Political and Institutional Reforms in the Philippines, organised by Konard-Adenauer-Stiftung Ltd., held on 4 and 5 September.
- Participated in the ISC meeting of Community of Democracies at Poland on 28 September.
- Participated in a High Level Event on: Civic Space, hosted by US and CD at United Nation Secretariat on 29 September.
- Gave a lecture on: Federalism and Democracy on 2 October at Wilfred Laurier University, Waterloo, Canada
- Spoke at the Plenary
ISS Regional Centres

Session – 1 on: Social Ecology vs Development: Responses from the State and Civil Society, organised by the Department of Sociology, University of Lucknow, on 13 and 14 October

- Participated in a conference on: Pakistan-India Legislators and Public Officials Dialogue on Sharing of Experiences on Governance and Democracy on 12 December in Dubai, UAE.

- Presented a paper: Power to the People and its Enemies, at M.N Srinivas Memorial Lecture, organised by the Indian Sociological society, at Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences, KIIT, University of Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

Dr. Ash Narain Roy, Director, ISS New Delhi

- Delivered a lecture at RIS for participants of ITEC/SCAAP program of the Ministry of External Affairs, 10 March.

- Delivered a lecture at YMCA for YMCA trainees on “Communitarian Democracy,” 10 March.

- Participated in the Donors’ Conference on Syria in Kuwait organized by the UN, 28 March - 1 April.

- Presented a paper on “Role of Regional and Multilateral Frameworks,” in a two-day international Conference on “Towards India-Central Asia Economic Cooperation,” organized by RIS and ISS, 11 – 12 June.

- Between June and December 2015, Dr. A. N. Roy lectured on various facets of

Women Convention

More than 100 women participated in the annual district level women’s convention held on 14 September 2015 in Keonjhar to discuss women related issues and government schemes.

Sustained Livelihood Activities

For sustained livelihood of Individual Forest Rights (IFR) title holders in the project area, ISS Bhubaneswar took initiative for the convergence programmes. Leaders were given training on various opportunities of livelihood like convergence of Forest Rights Act land with MGNREGA, skill development training under Deen Dayal Upadhyya Gramin Koushalya Yojana in the project area. As a result of repeated follow-up and intervention by ISS with the concerned officials and beneficiaries, 820 of IFR title holders of Socially Excluded Group households received work order of different convergence activities under MGNREGA, skill development training under Deen Dayal Upadhyya Gramin Koushalya Yojana, Biju Kudia Yojana ‘Mo Kudia’, ‘Mo Pokhari (pond)’, land development, land levelling, plantations etc. As a result of this exercise some of the beneficiaries are now reportedly earning more than Rs.20,000 to 30,000 per annum.

Achievements under PACS Programme

1,371 forest plots covering 465.48 acres of forest land inhabited by 722 SEG households were able to exercise their rights over land by making their IFR claims in Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj districts. Besides, 596 landless SEG households were supported homestead (508 Nos covering 203.4 acres) and agriculture (88 Nos covering 40.2 acres) land to claim and avail land rights under various state-level revenue land rights policies and are ensured with their legal securities.

Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Material

ISS Bhubaneswar prepared a half yearly Newsletter called Jeevan Jibika Margadarshi in Odiya, covering all relevant laws/acts/schemes which was widely distributed among the target group including key stakeholders. In addition, Odiya leaflets, covering all resourceful information and also handbooks on CFR were distributed periodically. Posters and wall paintings were also displayed in the villages to enhance awareness levels. Apart from that, all types of application forms were developed in local languages and printed.

At the end of the project period, ISS prepared a project document on the 4-year achievements, challenges and sustainability plan.

Documentary Film

The project team produced a documentary video film named: “A Ray of Hope” on socially excluded groups, showing on how they are deprived of their rights and entitlements, how they have been exploited by influential groups in the society, their rights and entitlements, the history of land administration and the activities ISS has undertaken to address the issues with some successful case studies linking to their sustained livelihood issues. This documentary was prepared in English for 12 minutes for wider circulation.

Website Development

Developed a separate website under PACS Programme funded by DFID, U.K. with the URL www.issbbsr.org.

Evaluation Project

Accessing Health Care

End-line evaluation of DFID/GPAF1 supported project was undertaken in two blocks of Kalahandi district. The project was implemented by Maha Sakti Foundation (MSF) with technical support from Micro-Insurance Academy since 2010-11. It is basically a Community Based Health Insurance (CBHI)
programme, with a view to increase financial literacy; enhancing life based financial security and providing a better future to the rural households. The project was evaluated by ISS Bhubaneswar in May and June 2015.

The purpose of evaluation was to review the project documents, to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of those who enrolled and who did not enroll in CBHI, the expenditure incurred by the patients and other financial hardships of the community to meet the treatment expenses and to suggest measures for effective implementation of the scheme.

The evaluation study covered 2 project blocks of Kalahandi district of Odisha - namely M. Rampur and Narla. A total of 2000 households comprising 1000 CBHI households and 1000 Non-CBHI households were selected for the purpose. A purposive random sampling was also adopted for all qualitative data collection. The evaluation report was submitted to Micro Insurance Academy, New Delhi. Dr. K. K. Patnaik was the project director and Dr. Pramila Prava Patnaik led the team of 21 field investigators including field supervisors and 5 data entry operators and one data analyst in the capacity of project team leader.

Thiruvananthapuram

Book in Honour of Prof. M.A. Oommen released

Development, Decentralization and Democracy, a collection of essays edited by Ash Narain Roy and George Mathew in honor of renowned economist M.A. Oommen was officially released by the Honourable Governor of Kerala, Justice P. Sathasivam on 13 October 2015 at a function in Muscat Hotel, Trivandrum, Kerala.

Amongst his rich and diverse credentials, Oommen has been a fellow at Yale University, USA, a Senior Fulbright Fellow, Honorary Fellow at the Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram and a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Rockefeller Foundation in 1969-70 with over several hundred academic publications to his name. He is presently Emeritus Professor with the Institute of Social Sciences and Regional Coordinator for its Thiruvananthapuram centre.

While presenting the book, Ash Narain Roy stated that the volume is a deeply challenging one for those who are engaged in development and grappling with issues that matter for equity and social justice. The volume is meant to be an enduring testament to the scholarship of Oommen who has spent a life-time researching on these themes.

Releasing the book, the Governor of Kerala stated that good economists should consider all sections of the society, especially those who receive less attention. The Director of Centre for Development Studies, Trivandrum and Kerala DGP T. Senkumar along with UNDP Advisor John Samuel were some of the other dignitaries present at the book release.

federalism in Biratnagar, Kathmandu and Nepalgunj as part of Forum of Federation’s project, “Consolidating Democratic Transition in Nepal.” These lectures were for Nepali political leaders, Constituent Assembly members, bureaucrats, civil society and women’s groups.

• Member of the Canadian Election Observer Mission in Sri Lanka, 8-19 August.
• Gave a lecture on “Federalism is an idea whose time has come,” National Law College, Kathmandu, 30 August.
• Presented summary of the volume, Development, Decentralisation and Democracy, edited by Ash Narain Roy and George Mathew, published by Orient BlackSwan, on the occasion of its release in Thiruvananthapuram, 12 October.
• Keynote Speech at La Martiniere College, Lucknow on “Rise of India and Future Challenges,” 7 November
• Delivered a lecture at RIS on “Rise of Global South,” 18 November.
• Presented a paper titled “Local governments in India are missing from IGR table,” Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, 7 December.
• Delivered a lecture on “Participation in Local Governments after 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments” at INGAF, 10 & 31 December for Afghanistan government functionaries.
ISS Regional Centres

Dr. Bidyut Mohanty, Head, Women’s Studies, ISS New Delhi

In a conference in Indonesia, she spoke on “Bandung Legacy and Women in Local Government System, Indonesia.” During her lecture she also showed a documentary on working of Grassroots Democracy and Women in Odisha. (WHERE ARE THE DETAILS (title, date, etc) OF THE CONFERENCE?)

S D Sharma, IAS (Retd.), Senior Fellow, ISS New Delhi

- Participated in the International Conference on Cooperative Federalism, National Perspectives and International Experiences held at New Delhi on 21-22 January 2016. The conference was organized by the Inter State Council Secretariat in collaboration with the Forum of Federations, Canada, The World Bank and UNDP.
- Addressed the Senior Functionaries of the Electoral Reforms Commission of Afghanistan on Election to the Local Governments in a workshop on Electoral reforms in Afghanistan held on 9-10 December 2015 under the aegis of the Election Commission of India.
- Participated in the Regional Conference on “The Use of Money in Politics and its Effects on People’s Representation” held at Delhi on 15-16 December 2015. The conference was organized by IDEA in collaboration with the Election Commission of India and

A National Seminar on Development, Decentralisation and Democracy, after the book release function, was organized at the same venue. Manoranjan Mohanty of the Council for Social Development, Rajan Gurukkal, former Vice-Chancellor of M G R University, John Samuel, Advisor, UNDP and K. N. Harilal addressed the seminar which was presided by Amit Shivan Ray, Director, CDS.

Kolkata

Research Projects

Evaluation of Capacity Building and Advocacy for Local Participatory Self Governance for Poverty Reduction through Information, Education and Communication

The Information Education and Communication (IEC) project was related to state programmes for poverty reduction with focus on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by utilization of IEC methods and materials and was sponsored by Lok Kalyan Parishad, Kolkata based NGO.

The project aimed at making an evaluation of the status of implementation of the project and achievement of its goals. Apart from review of secondary information and IEC tools, primary information through qualitative survey has been collected from rural areas of Birbhum, Purulia, Uttar Dinajpur and South 24 Parganas districts.

Multi-Drug Resistant Tuberculosis Patients of Adolescent Age Group in Kolkata

This study was sponsored by CARE, West Bengal. Presently, CARE is dealing with the Multi Drug Resistant Tuberculosis patients of West Bengal. This study tried to get a comprehensive scenario of the adolescent MDR - TB patients in Kolkata, a substantial section of patients belong to adolescent age group. The project focussed on family background of the patients, economic condition, educational status, treatment procedure, impact of treatment, stigma related to the disease, male-female disparity in terms of treatment and support etc.

Understanding Changes among Communities and Facilitating Community Action Plan in West Bengal

A Qualitative Study of Care’s Briddhi Project in Two Blocks of Purulia, West Bengal

CARE is implementing to improve the nutritional status of Severely Malnourished Children (SAM) through growth monitoring, behaviour change communication and strengthening of health and nutrition service delivery system, sponsored by CARE, India. ISS undertook the study to understand what changes are taking place and the value of these changes under the Briddhi project. The study was carried out through Focus Group Discussions applying most significant methodology.

Road to Life

A Qualitative study of one of CARE’s projects in Kotulpur block of Bankura sdistrict. CARE West Bengal is implementing with the help of PepsiCo and the study is on “Enhancing the Sustainable Farming Initiative through Gender & Nutrition (EnSIGN)”. Institute of Social Sciences Kolkata studied the changes occurred amongst the underprivileged women for promoting sustainable farming due to the intervention.

Events

Study Presentation on ‘Augmentation of Revenue Mobilization by GPs,’ sponsored by ISGPP Cell, Panchayats and Rural Development Department, Government of West Bengal.

Exposure visits of the delegates from Bangladesh

18 delegates from Union Parishads and Hunger Project, Bangladesh visited West
Bengal to study the local government system of the state. The study tour in West Bengal was organized by the Institute of Social Sciences Kolkata in August 2015.

**Governance at the Block Level - a research project on Block Development Officers was initiated by Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. Debraj Bhattacharya of Institute of Social Science Kolkata participated in this project.**

**Bengaluru**

**Project**

*Improving access to information of public schemes in backward districts in India*

Cesvi, in partnership with Rural Literacy and Health Programme (RLHP) and Institute of Social Sciences has initiated the project, which aimed to work with key stakeholders on a multi-sectoral level, to address the issue of poor access to public schemes and empowering people to access the public schemes in 5 backward districts of Karnataka (Bidar, Chitradurga, Davanagere, Gulbarga and Raichur).


The resource persons for the training programmes were specialists, academicians, government officials, SIRD trainers and agriculture specialists. The training programmes were organized by using participatory techniques, lectures, group discussions and documentary films, with approximately 30 to 40 participants in each programme. The participants were PRI representatives, Backward Region Scheme Support Group members, self help group members, anganwadi workers.

**Puducherry**

*National Seminar on Transgender People: Stigma, Violence, and Discrimination*

A two day seminar sponsored by ICSSR was organized by the department of History, Tagore Arts College, in collaboration with the regional centre, Institute of Social Sciences on 29-30 October 2015 at Convention-cum-Cultural Centre, Puducherry University. The seminar brought together more than hundred participants who drew insights into the issues transgenders face in contemporary Indian society.

Sandeep Kumar Dasari, Associate Professor and Head, Department of History, Tagore Arts College and convenor of the seminar delivered the welcome address. V. Selvam, Regional Director, Regional CentrePuducherry in his collaborator’s address observed that it would be an opportunity for us to correct the ‘historical mistake’ and include ‘transgender studies’ as part of our centre’s larger research agenda. It gives an opportunity to identify scholars of transgender studies, collaborate with them to further study and understand the issues of transgender, and see if the results of our study can form the basis of the policy formulations of the state in order to protect and enhance the welfare of the marginalized transgender…”

Selvam further elaborated that the Government of India and the state governments, except some states like culminated in the Delhi Declaration on Electoral Finance.

- Interactive session on ‘Codes of Conduct for Stakeholders’ (8 December 2015) in International Training Programme on ‘Capacity Development for Election Management (ITEC 4)’ under the aegis of Election Commission of India
- Interactive sessions on 29 December 2015 with High Level Delegation from Nepal on Elections to the Local Governments, Delimitation of Constituencies, Constitutional and legal framework in Nepal and way forward for conduct of Elections to the Local Governments. The interaction was organized by the Election Commission of India.
- Advisory support to Government of Jharkhand on setting up of ‘Centre for Good Governance’ in Jharkhand and also on Administrative Reforms and Implementation thereof as a formal Member of Committee constituted by Government of Jharkhand.

*Dr. Pramila Prava Patnaik, Research Officer, ISS Regional Centre, Bhubaneswar*

ISS Regional Centres

V. Selvam, Regional Director,
ISS Regional Centre,
Puducherry

- Attended a workshop on “Fiscal Federalism and its Impact on Economic Growth in Indian States: Role of Grants and Royalties” organised by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), New Delhi, 5 March 2015 and was a speaker on the topic “Exploring Options for Making Fiscal Decentralization more Effective in India.”

- Presented a paper on “Implementation of Rights of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act in the Union Territory of Puducherry: A Critical Assessment,” in the 38th Indian Social Science Congress, organised by the Indian Academy of Social Sciences and Andhra University, Visakhapatnam, India, 29 March - 2 April, 2015.

- Participated in Climate and Energy Consultation Programme: Selvam was one of the hundred invited participants from different States of India in The World Wide Views 2015 on Climate and Energy. A World-Wide Views Consultation Programme organised for India by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and coordinated by the Danish Board of Technology in collaboration with Missions Publiques and the French National Commission for Public Debate and co-initiated by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, New Delhi, 6 June.

Tamil Nadu, are yet to come out with policy formulations to protect and enhance the life, rights, and welfare of the third gender. V. Ramasamy, Principal, Tagore Arts College, Puducherry delivered the presidential address and Fr. Rajanayagam SJ, Dean, School of Media Studies, Loyola College, Chennai was the keynote speaker. Kalki Subramanian, Transgender Activist and Founder of Sahodari Organisation, Tamil Nadu spoke on the plight of transgender people in India.

The technical sessions of the seminar deliberated upon the issues such as persistence of stigma, violence and discrimination of transgender people in India; gender identity crisis and sexuality of transgender; multiple discrimination and marginalization of transgender at all levels in the Indian society; alienation from family and society; insecure life that transgenders face; forced sex work and begging; issues transgender children face at home, schools, and in society; absence of sex-education in the school curriculum; the sensitive issue of reservation to transgender population in education and employment; lack of reliable data on transgender population in India; and lack of government intervention and necessary policy measures to protect the life and enhance the welfare of transgender people. In the valedictory session, while Santhanam Prabhakar, Joint Director, Lok Sabha, delivered a special address, distinguished historian N. Rajendran, Chair, School of Social Sciences and Director of Nehru Studies, Bharathidasan University, Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu, delivered valedictory address. The convener Sandeep Kumar Dasari proposed vote of thanks at the end of the session. ■
Governing Body

Chairman
George Mathew

Treasurer
Jaya Jaitly

Executive Director/Secretary
Ash Narain Roy

Members
S.S. Meenakshisundaram
Ranjit C. Bhanu
Nirmala Buch
Rita Sarin
C. Narayanaswamy
Sudhindra Bhadoria
Sumit Chakravarthy
Meenakshi Gopinath

Director
Ash Narain Roy

Headquarters:
8 Nelson Mandela Road
New Delhi 110 070
Tel: 91-11-43158800, 43158801
Fax: 91-11-43158850
Email: issnd@issin.org, Website: issin.org

Eastern Offices:
Kolkata : CF-149, Sector I,
Salt Lake City
Kolkata 700 064
Tel: 91-33-23340233
Email: isscall1@dataone.in

Bhubaneshwar : Plot No.26,
Surya Nagar, Gopabandhu Square
Near NCC Officer’s Mess
Bhubaneshwar - 751 003
Tel: 91-674-2397792
Email:issbbsr@yahoo.com

Southern Offices:
Bangalore : No.9, 8th Main Road,
8th Cross, Malleswaram,
Bangalore 560 003
Tel/Fax: 91-80-23315017
Email:iss@bgl.vsnl.net.in

Chennai : AK-Block, Plot No. 32,33
10th Main Road, TAS Enclave
(Behind Sundaram Foundation Hospital)
Shanti Colony, Chennai - 600 040
Tel: 91-44-26125244, 26224157
Email:issmadras@vsnl.net

Thiruvananthapuram : TC - 4/2376
Vikramapurat Hills
Thiruvananthapuram 695 003
Tel: 91-471-2438405
Email:maoommen09@gmail.com

Puducherry : F-401, Akshaya Towers,
Plots: 7-10, MGR Street,
V P Singh Nagar, Mettupalayam
Puducherry - 605009
Tel: 91-7708703802
Email:selvamv73@gmail.com

Northern Office :
Patna : 102, Guldawdi Apartment,
Road No. 10
Indrapuri,
Patna – 800024, Bihar
Mobile: 9431878983
Email: snarayan1946@gmail.com
ISS NEWSLETTER
Numbers 42-43, January-December 2015

Editor
Ash Narain Roy

Editorial Team
S. Syamala, Krishnan Namboodiri, Sapna Sharma

Layout
Sanjai Sharma

Published by Ash Narain Roy for the Institute of Social Sciences, 8 Nelson Mandela Road, New Delhi 110070, India. Printed at Rashtriya Printers, 27/487 Zulffe Bengal, Dilshad Garden, Delhi - 110095. For private circulation only.