



ISST Newsletter

This ISST newsletter seeks to provide information about research and action programmes being conducted by the institute. At present the newsletter is only available on our website. Suggestions are welcome.

The Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), a non-profit non-governmental organization, was set up as a society in 1964 and registered as a Trust in 1980. ISST attempts to bridge the gaps between research, action and policy

debate, with a focus on issues concerning the poor, especially women. ISST, positions itself at the interface between research, action and policy.

Ongoing Projects at ISST

Gender Network Project

MIMAP – Gender Network (Phase III)

A Regional Gender Network in South and South East Asia, with Special Reference to Gender Dimensions of Macro Economic Reforms

The *International Seminar on Gender under Economic Reforms* (held at the Hotel Jaipur Palace, Jaipur, India from 1st to 4th February 2006) was the concluding seminar of the Gender Network Project, which brought together several gender researchers from partnering organizations to present the results of their studies carried out under the IDRC sponsored program ‘Gender Network’. Renowned scholars from India and abroad were present and gave their suggestions on the issues investigated under the research agenda of the GNP. The Keynote speaker Prof. Nanak Kakwani (International Poverty Research Centre, Brazil) presented his first work on gender “Pro-

Poor and Pro-Gender Growth” which focused on women’s contribution to household income. After this there were four presentations from the on-going research on Gender and ICTs by Sri Lanka, Vietnam and India. Centre for Women’s Research, Sri Lanka presented their findings on “ICT and Gender in Sri Lanka”, Institute of Economics, Vietnam spoke on their research “Gendered Impacts of Information and Communication Technologies in Vietnam”, ISST, India presented the major findings and policy implications of the project “A Gender Impact Analysis of Project Akshaya in Kerala”. ISST’s study observed gender-differentiated experiences of Akshaya

entrepreneurs. Prof. Malavika Kapur introduced the ‘Computer Literacy for Disadvantaged Children and Adolescents’ (CLDCA) Project being carried out by ISST under the ‘Gender and ICT’ research module of the Gender Network. The second day had a round of presentations by Fabio Soares of International Poverty Centre, Brazil on “Gender Bias and the MDGs: The role of Growth and Distribution” (written by Nanak Kakwani, Swapna Mukhopadhyay and Fábio Soares), Prof. Suresh Tendulkar and Prof. Swapna Mukhopadhyay on “Gender Disparities in the Labour Market: An Analysis of NSS data”, Dr. Dileni Gunewardena from Sri Lanka on “The Gender Wage Gap in Sri Lanka”, Dr. Marzia Fontana from IDS, Sussex presented her paper “Gender in economy-wide models”, Mrs. Nurun Nahar Begum from Bangladesh Academy of Rural Development (BARD) on “Coping with Poverty by Gender and Age”. Two PEP researchers Dr. Rizwana Siddiqui and Dr. Selim Raihan respectively from Pakistan and Bangladesh could not attend the seminar, but their papers were presented by others on their behalf. On the third day a panel discussion titled “Gender in Kerala” was organized. The panel began with the introductory comments by Prof. Swapna Mukhopadhyay. In the first presentation, Prof. Irudaya Rajan of CDS displayed the flip side of the positive indicators as well as some emerging disturbing trends in Kerala. The next presentation was by Prof. Swapna Mukhopadhyay on “Gender Ideologies, ‘Status of Women’ and Mental Health Indicators: A case study of Kerala”. After this Dr. J. Devika and Ms. Avanti Mukherjee presented their paper, “Re-forming Women in Malayalee Modernity:

A Historical Overview”. Dr. Jayanti Basu of Calcutta University, presented her paper, “The Kerala Enigma: Some inputs from Kolkata”. “Utopia and Dystopia in Kerala”, was presented by Dr. Sharmila Srikumar, IIT, Mumbai.

On the last day of the seminar, Prof. Vijay Vyas of IDS, Jaipur chaired a Round table discussion on Action Research Policy Triad in Gender Studies with Lakshmi Lingam, J. Devika, Navsharan Singh and Nanak Kakwani. The presentations were followed by a discussion participated by several others presented in the seminar. In his concluding remark, Prof. Vijay Vyas told that movements are not only about protest and dissent but also about advocacy and the latter can be equally powerful. Research need not be policy-oriented and indeed is about coming up with alternatives, posing questions and so on. Some research have greater relevance for movements or policy or even the public than others, but it does not diminish the overall utility of research. Policy in terms of only the State would narrow down interventions from actors other than the state and hence there is the need to re-conceptualize policy in broader terms. The linkages between a broader idea of movements, of policy and of research that is not necessarily oriented towards policy are as follows: Bring people from these three arenas to start a dialogue which is a step towards consensus building, which need not necessarily be an agreement on everything or even a greatest common measure but is definitely a pre-requisite to open each others mind. Further, the participation of the community is very relevant to ensure the content of policy and to sharpen the nature of research.

Development Gateway

ISST is the guide to one of the pages, Gender and Development, (<http://www.developmentgateway/gender>) of the Development Gateway portal which has the objective to foster an environment where exchange of information and knowledge can take place. ISST has contributed the highlight 'Online Education and Gender – Innovation and Extended Outreach' which is currently on display. The highlight speaks of the ways in

which online education can be different from traditional modes of teaching or self-study and how gender biases in society get reflected in the domain of online education as well. ISST had also interviewed Dr. Eva Rathgeber, joint Chair of Women's Studies, University of Ottawa/ Carleton University regarding this issue.

Strengthening Information and Resource Centre activities at ISST's field office

From the experience of the project on 'Ensuring Public Accountability through Community Action' ISST feels a need to provide a space for dialogue and sharing information with activists, slum residents and others concerned in different ways with issues related to service delivery, urban development *et cetera*, on a regular basis. This project is being undertaken in association with IDRC. ISST at present has undertaken these kinds of activities more systematically. The broad areas of these activities focus on Health, Public Distribution System and Right to Information and issues related to Education and Schooling. A *workshop on Right to Information and Public Distribution System* was held at the ISST field office from 27th to 30th January 2006, in this regard. With around forty participants from east Delhi, the workshop focused on issues like Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens, History of Public

Distribution System and Essential Commodity Act, problems people face while drawing ration from the Fair Price shops (FPS), Role of the Food Inspector (FI) and FSO (Food Supply Officer), Details of the Cards, concept of the public audit, face to face interaction of the participants with the officials of the food supply department, participants were taught how to write an application to the Food Supply Department, how to use RTI Act along with making field visits. There was another *workshop on Education* on 22nd to 24th March 2006 which discussed significance and meaning of education, practical information on the organizational structure of education in Delhi, schemes and provisions for the underprivileged, open schooling and vocational training, the 22% reservations for underprivileged children in Delhi and so on. A play *Kuch to pucho ji* was performed by the children of the ISST community centre.

Social Protection for Home Based Workers in South Asia

This project is being carried out in South Asia and South-East Asia. The final workshop of the project Action-research for Social Protection of Home based workers in South Asia was held in New Delhi from 22nd -24th February 2006 at the India International Centre. It was attended by all the HomeNets in the South-Asia region, representatives from the Labour Ministries of the countries (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka), insurance companies and insurance regulatory authority from India, the research co-coordinator of HomeNet South-east Asia and other organisations interested in labour issues. The conference discussed the current status of women home based workers engaged in the South Asian

informal economy and focused social protection policy attention towards them. The conference also arrived at a future plan of action for HomeNet South Asia (HNSA) and its partners across the region as part of a strategy to improve conditions for home-based workers (HBWs). HomeNet was initiated as a network organization of women HBWs promoted by UNIFEM and SEWA. Thus, the conference served as an excellent platform for interaction between members of HNSA and with other stakeholders such as government officials, exporters, insurance providers and policy makers. The qualitative and quantitative findings from the study were presented at the workshop.

ILO Study on National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

A study, sponsored by the ILO, has been undertaken by ISST on the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The study area is one district in each of the following four states- Rajasthan (Sirohi), Madhya Pradesh (Dhar), Karnataka (Gulbarga) and Orissa (Sundergarh). The sample districts fall in the list of 200 districts selected at the national level for the implementation of NREGA. A quantitative household survey preceded by a qualitative study has been completed in each of these districts except Orissa where data collection is on.

In Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa grass root organizations *Doosra Dashak*, SEWA and THREAD helped in carrying out the study. In Karnataka the study was carried out by ISST staff with local help. The study intends to address issues like availability of employment opportunities to households in the last year, level of awareness among the household members about NREGA, the extent to which *panchayats* have been active in dissemination of information, preparation of job cards and so on.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' SEMINAR – ISST BANGALORE

As an effort in the larger endeavor of proactively appreciating the contributions of the sizable international student community in Bangalore, the Institute of Social Studies Trust is organizing a series

of seminars on issues which are currently of importance to several of the countries, particularly developing ones, represented by this student body. These presentations would also simultaneously showcase the

skills, resources and opinions of this diverse student body, and introduce them in a positive way to the larger Bangalore community. Such presentations would build solidarity and understanding about common problems in different countries, and variations of the problems from country to country and differing responses to the same. The first of these seminars was held on March 18, 2006, and as a follow-up to International Womens' Day the theme was "The Status of Women in

my Country". Ten students representing nations as diverse as Bahrain, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Iran, Uganda, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Belgium, Uzbekistan and Nepal made their presentations. They touched on the social and economic conditions of women in their countries. A brief and enthusiastic discussion followed the seminar and there was a general consensus among participants and the audience to welcome more seminars like that.

OUTREACH PROGRAMME OF ISST

ISST is carrying out its programme "Saheliyon Ki Bari" in Basti Vikas Kendra, Nehru Camp N H 24 since the year 2000. The programme adopts a holistic approach towards achieving sustainable development of the people of the whole community. The focus is mainly on dissemination of information and facilitating support to the benefit of the people. In this regard workshops on PDS and Right to Information, Access to education had been organized recently. Admissions and enrollments in public schools under the 20% freeships for economically underprivileged children have been availed for 29 children this academic session by ISST. Field workers of

ISST have helped people to register the birth of their children and informed them of the procedure to do the same and 18 children were registered for birth certificates. 13 parents were also helped by ISST to obtain income certificates from SDM. There are also ongoing campaigns to spread awareness regarding the RTI, PDS and ration facilities. To provide children a glimpse of the outside world, ISST has programmes which help them improve on certain skills like computer education, dramatics and also has library facilities for them. All these facilities are available at the ISST field office at West Vinod Nagar.

Staff News

Shrayana Bhattacharya joined ISST as a Research Associate on 1st February 2006.

Manjishtha Banerjee joined ISST as a Consultant on 1st February 2006.

Workshops/Seminars Conducted by ISST

23rd January 2006 : The sixth session in the series of talks under the Gender Policy Discussion Forum, jointly organised by Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST) and India Habitat Centre (IHC). Speakers: Dr.

K.P.S. Kannan, Member, National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector and Prof. Aasha Kapur Mehta, Professor of Economics, Indian Institute of Public Administration.

27th – 30th January 2006: Workshop on PDS and Right to Information at the ISST community centre.

1st - 4th February 2006: International Seminar on Gender under Economic Reforms held at the Hotel Jaipur Palace, Jaipur.

22nd -24th February 2006: Workshop of the project Action-research for Social Protection of Home based workers in South Asia was

held in New Delhi from at the India International Centre.

27th February – 10th March 2006: Computer Education and Training Workshop by NIPSTEC for the ISST staff at ISST, New Delhi.

22nd – 24th March 2006: Workshop on Access to Education at the ISST community centre

Workshops/Seminars Attended by ISST

Ratna M. Sudarshan

Meeting of the Working Group on Informal Economy Research and Statistics (WIRES), January 9, ISST.

‘Improving the outcomes of education for pro-poor development’, CORD and University of Cambridge, January 11.

Gender Network Conference, Feb 1-2, Jaipur.

‘Reaching safe motherhood: some contributions from small case studies’,

CORD and University of Edinburgh, February 10, 2006.

Shrayana Bhattacharya

3rd February 2006: Book Release, GDN, Urban city and Governance, West Bengal.

24th February 2006: Seminar on Community Identity and Well Being organized by IHD at the India International Centre.

8th March 2006: Seminar on Women and Leadership organized by FLO at India Habitat Centre.

‘Baseline study of Parivartan project’, Mahila Housing Trust, Ahmedabad 17 February.

Policy Dialogue Conference on ‘Social Protection for Home Based Workers in South Asia’, HomeNet South Asia and ISST, 22-24 February.

XXIIIrd SARO Lecture, Dr. Fred Carden, Director, Evaluation Unit, IDRC, Ottawa "Changing Practice: Using Evaluation for Organizational Change." 24th March 2006. Monitoring, evaluation and capacity building workshop for NREGA, UNDP and Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India, 31 March 2006.

25th March 2006: Afternoon with Amartya Sen at the India International Centre.

Jyotsna Sivaramayya

February 11, 2006: ‘Reaching safe motherhood: some contributions from small case studies’, CORD and University of Edinburgh.

22nd -24th February 2006: Workshop of the project Action-research for Social Protection of Home based workers in South Asia.

Rajib Nandi and Vishal Goyal

29th March 2006: Intel's Rural Community Launch at Pragati Maidan.

Mallica

27th January 2006: Book Release on District Report Cards on Education at NIEPA.

Manomohini Dutta

8th March 2006: Seminar on Women and Leadership organized by FLO at India Habitat Centre

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

Coordinated by Manomohini Dutta



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Ongoing Projects at ISST

Gender Network Project

MIMAP – Gender Network (Phase III)

A Regional Gender Network in South and South East Asia, with Special Reference to Gender Dimensions of Macro Economic Reforms

The third phase of MIMAP – Gender Network Project, which has been investigating the impact of economic reforms from a gender perspective, is on the verge of its completion. Three reports have been submitted so far: (1) “Gendered Impacts of the Development of Information and Communications Technologies in Vietnam” by the Institute of Economics, Vietnam; (2) “Gender and Poverty: A Qualitative Assessment in Selected Rural Areas of Pakistan” by Pakistan Institute of Development Economics; and (3) Information and Communication Technologies by Centre for Women’s Research, Sri Lanka. The Network is expecting the rest of the

reports from the respective research teams soon.

Vigyan Prasar has published a book “Information and communication Technology (ICT) and Gender” written by Swapna Mukhopadhyay and Vinay B. Kamble. This publication is the first step in an attempt to synergize the efforts of the Department of Science and Technology and Vigyan Prasar in particular with non-governmental organizations to address, through innovative uses of ICTs, a pervasive social problem in the country: that of gender discrimination. The idea for a publication of this kind came out of the debates and discussions that took place

during a National seminar on ICT convened by Gender Network last year. A report on that seminar has also been published by the journal Gender, Technology and Development.

Gender Network is currently in the process of finalizing a book on the status of

women in Kerala. The proposed book will explore the status of women in Kerala from three important perspectives: statistical overview, historical overview and gender and mental health in Kerala. The book will be published by the Social Science Press, New Delhi.

Development Gateway

ISST was the guide to one of the pages, Gender and Development, (<http://www.developmentgateway/gender>) of the Development Gateway portal which has the objective to foster an environment where exchange of information and knowledge can take place. ISST has contributed the highlight

‘Whose City? Migration as a Gendered Process’ which is currently on display. The highlight speaks of how the process of migration affects women and how they are placed in the receiving societies, which in an attempt to become world class cities turn hostile towards migrants. The project has ended on June 2006.

Social Protection for Home Based Workers in South Asia

The project ‘Action- research on social protection for home-based workers in South-Asia’ which commenced in May 2004 concluded in June 2006. This action-

research was carried out in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The research brought out the common issues faced by home-based workers in region.

Documentation of Case Studies of Home Based Workers in India

ISST has started the project on ‘Case Studies of Home-Based Workers’ which will aim to document the nature and types of home-based work about which very little is known or there is little information in the particular States. This study will be carried out in parts of Bihar, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. A methodology workshop

was held in the UNIFEM South-Asia Regional office, New Delhi in this regard. The workshop discussed the methodology for carrying out the study in sectors of home-based industry and time frame of the project. The study intends to undertake a visual documentation (video-film) of the home-based industry.

ILO Study on National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

ISST has completed a study titled Women and NREGA sponsored by ILO. The study

aims to analyse NREGA from the perspective of issues as participation of

women in the NREGA, strengthening of rural infrastructure through creation of durable assets, regeneration of natural resources that would provide the livelihood resource base of local rural economy, etc. For the purpose of data collection four states were identified and one district in each state was selected. The districts were taken from the list of two hundred districts where NREGA had already been implemented. The four districts studied are Sirohi in Rajasthan, Dhar in Madhya Pradesh, Gulbarga in Karnataka, Sundargarh in Orissa. ISST partners on the study included Doosra Dashak, Sirohi; SEWA MP, and THREAD, Orissa. The study reveals that the proportion of eligible men and women are roughly the same, but in Rajasthan it is seen that 70-80% of workers on the EGA sites are women and facilities like crèche and sheds were not provided. A very high level of illiteracy was found among the female between the age group of 7-20 years. The highest

illiteracy was reported in Gulbarga (68%) followed by Sirohi (67%), Dhar (61%) and Sundargarh (52%). The level of mobilization among the villagers has been studied through their affiliation with the membership groups. The maximum number of affiliation is reported in Dhar district-18% are members of self help groups and 77% are members of SEWA. For rest of the group the trend is as follows- Sundargarh (62%), Gulbarga (29%) and Sirohi (23%). As far as awareness about NREGA is concerned, in Sirohi 50% of the sample came to know about the scheme through word of mouth and in Dhar it is 30%. In Sundargarh, 80% said they got to know from others. In Gulbarga all but one respondent said that this information had come from *sarpanch*. The project findings were presented and discussed at a workshop organized by the ILO on June 5.

Strengthening Information and Resource Centre activities at ISST's field office

From the experience of the project on 'Ensuring Public Accountability through Community Action' ISST feels a need to provide a space for dialogue and sharing information with activists, slum residents and others concerned in different ways with issues related to service delivery, urban development *et cetera*, on a regular basis. This project is being undertaken in association with IDRC. ISST at present has undertaken these kinds of activities more systematically. The broad areas of these activities focus on Health, Public Distribution System and Right to Information and issues related to Education and Schooling. A *workshop on Right to Information and Public Distribution System* was held at the ISST field office from 27th to 30th January 2006, in this regard. With

around forty participants from east Delhi, the workshop focused on issues like Fundamental Rights and Duties of Citizens, History of Public Distribution System and Essential Commodity Act, problems people face while drawing ration from the Fair Price shops (FPS), Role of the Food Inspector (FI) and FSO (Food Supply Officer), Details of the Cards, concept of the public audit, face to face interaction of the participants with the officials of the food supply department, participants were taught how to write an application to the Food Supply Department, how to use RTI Act along with making field visits. There was another *workshop on Education* on 22nd to 24th March 2006 which discussed significance and meaning of education,

practical information on the organizational structure of education in Delhi, schemes and provisions for the underprivileged, open schooling and vocational training, the 22%

reservations for underprivileged children in Delhi and so on. A play *Kuch to pucho ji* was performed by the children of the ISST community centre.

Revisiting Education 2006

ISST has undertaken the study named 'Revisiting Education' by which it seeks to explore the current state of elementary education amongst disadvantaged children in India. The study is being sponsored by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The project aims to trace significant changes in the delivery of primary education for children in the States of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Himachal

Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh over the last ten years. It also looks at the problems faced by parents, teachers and children in education and focuses on special issues of concern through qualitative case studies on issues like discrimination and violence, impact of decentralization and growth of private schools et cetera.

OUTREACH PROGRAMME OF ISST

ISST is carrying out its programme "Saheliyon Ki Bari" in Basti Vikas Kendra, Nehru Camp NH 24 since the year 2000. The programme adopts a holistic approach towards achieving sustainable development of the people of the whole community. The focus is mainly on dissemination of information and facilitating support to the benefit of the people. The programme covers women, children and men in the community on a non partisan basis. A *Resource Centre for Adolescents and Youth* is being formulated by ISST to be started. The activities in this Centre would be coordinated by the ISST field office. A *Discussion Group* of the youth in the slums and resettlement colonies has been formed recently which meets once a month and discusses various issues of concern to them. Admissions and enrollments in public

schools under the 20% freeships for economically underprivileged children have been availed for 47 children this academic session by ISST. Field workers of ISST have helped people to register the birth of their children and informed them of the procedure to do the same and 20 children were registered for birth certificates. 25 parents were also helped by ISST to obtain income certificates from SDM. There are also ongoing campaigns to spread awareness regarding the RTI, PDS and ration facilities. To provide children a glimpse of the outside world, ISST has programmes which help them improve on certain skills like computer education, dramatics and also has library facilities for them. All these facilities are available at the ISST field office at West Vinod Nagar.

Staff News

Manomohini Dutta left ISST in June 2006.

Uday Pal joined ISST as a regular staffer in April 2006.

Workshops/Seminars Conducted by ISST

9th June 2006 : ISST-IHC Gender Policy Forum. The topic for discussion was 'Gender Sensitivity and Health' with Dr. Ritupriya and Dr. Lester Coutinho as speakers. **Dr. Ritu Priya**, spoke on '**Gender Sensitivity & Health: Balancing the Discourse from a Public Health Perspective**'. Dr. Ritu Priya highlighted the major policy implication in the area of public health. She critically evaluated the major government programmes on health service and delivery from a gender perspective. **Mr. Lester Coutinho**, spoke on '**Gender and Reproductive Health: The Policies of Reproduction and Choice**'. Mr. Coutinho's presentation was based on his field experiences in different parts of India. He initiated a debate on modern contraceptive techniques, use and needs by common Indian women. Both Dr. Ritu Priya and Mr. Lester Coutinho expressed their reservation regarding major health policies of government in general and some of the government sponsored family planning programmes in India in specific.

29th-30th June 2006 : Methodology Workshop on documenting Home Based Work held at the UNIFEM South Asian Regional Office.

Workshops/Seminars Attended by ISST

Ratna M. Sudarshan

WIEGO General Assembly, 21-23 April; 'World Class Cities and the Urban Informal Economy: Inclusive Planning for the Working Poor', School of Development Studies, University of KwaZulu Natal, Street Net International, and WIEGO, 24-25 April. Durban, South Africa.

Ninth Meeting of the Expert Group on Informal Sector Statistics (Delhi Group), New Delhi, May 11.

Productive Strategies for Poor Rural Households to participate successfully in Global Economic Processes: India Country Workshop, ODI, New Delhi 12 May 2006.

Presented 'Social Protection for Home based Workers in South Asia' at workshop on Ford Foundation Programme on Social Protection in Asia, 14-17 May 2006, Bangkok.

Presented ‘Gender sensitive macroeconomics and public policy’ at workshop on Social Services: Towards Universal Coverage and Transformation for achieving the MDGs, UNICEF ROSA, IRC and UNRISD, Kathmandu, 24-25 May 2006.

Presented ‘Gender and Food Security’ at training programme, Action Aid India, Delhi 6 June.

Presented ‘Women and NREGA’ at IHD seminar June 23.

Rina Bhattacharya and Manjistha Banerjee

27th April 2006: Women’s Property Ownership : A study of the process and impact of receiving titles to house in the Districts of Karnataka, held at IHC, New Delhi.

Rajib Nandi

24th-27th April 2006: Gender and ICT: Gender Evaluation Methodology (GEM) Workshop held in New Delhi.

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Coordinated by Manomohini Dutta



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research, action and policy debate, with a focus on issues concerning the poor, especially women. ISST positions itself at the interface between research, action and policy.

Projects at ISST

Gender Network Project

MIMAP – Gender Network (Phase III)

A Regional Gender Network in South and South East Asia, with Special Reference to Gender Dimensions of Macro Economic Reforms

Regional Gender Network Project, coordinated by ISST and sponsored by International Development Research Centre is on the verge of its completion. The project has already completed most of its research studies done under the following modules: Poverty and Gender; ICT and Gender; Gender Training and Gender Modelling; Growth, Inequality and Gender. Gender Network has finalized a book titled '*Enigma of the Kerala Woman: The Failed Promise of Literacy*' edited by Prof. Swapna Mukhopadhyay.

This book consists of research carried out on various aspects of gender relations in Kerala by scholars from a range of social science disciplines under the Gender Network Project. The introductory chapter provides an overarching framework for the individual studies. The rest of the papers in the book collectively seek to provide an answer to the enigma of the Kerala woman. The book is going to be published by the social Science Press, New Delhi.

Documentations of Case Studies of Home based Workers in India

ISST is documenting a few case studies of home-based work in India for Homenet

India and UNIFEM, New Delhi. The study intends to focus on the nature and

conditions of work in the selected trades; social and economic insecurities faced by the workers in these trades. The study is also trying to identify key areas where policy changes and action is required. ISST is carrying out this research with grassroots organizations working with home-based workers in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Bihar. ISST research

team has already collected data on box making at Lucknow, appliqué work at Rampur, zari-zardosi in Bareilly, bidi rolling in Samastipur, mala, flute and chappal making in Patna and embroidery work in Patiala. As a part of dissemination strategy, a documentary film is being made on these trades and the women in these trades.

Evaluation of STEP Projects

ISST has received a grant from DWCD (Department of Women and Child Development) to review the STEP (Support for Training and Employment of Women) scheme all over India with inputs from all the projects in different sectors and states to assess whether the projects have been able to empower women through these projects. The project began in July 2006. Review of the projects was done on the basis of the data provided by the ministries. After doing a preliminary review of the data and methodology, a workshop was held to sort out issues focusing on selection of sectors and projects. A questionnaire has been

prepared at ISST to be used in the survey of the beneficiaries. ISST research team interacted with the officials of recipient NGOs and the beneficiaries, selected for the review. ISST completed the review of two STEP grants, implemented by Thirumala Education and Social Welfare Society, Karnataka and Bisnouli Sarvadaya Gramdyog Sewa Sansthan, New Delhi. The first organization is managing a STEP grant to develop Goat houses for 500 rural women and the second organization in New Delhi is supposedly providing training and support to a couple of hundred of women in handicrafts development.

Revisiting Education 2006

ISST is conducting a study named 'Revisiting Education' to capture the significant changes in the delivery of primary education for children in the states of Bihar, Chattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh over the last ten years. Moreover, the study intends to explore perceptions of parents, teachers and children about their problems and about the impact of changes. A large cross-sectional survey

has been designed along with a few qualitative case studies. The survey is being conducted both in the schools and the households, on a sample of 125 randomly selected villages in the selected states. In all, information will be collected from at least 250 formal government primary schools, and 125 upper primary sections. The study is supported by the International Development Research Centre, Canada.

Women and the NREGA: Implication for Migration, Decent Work and Gender

In this study, it has been proposed to track the progress of the EGA (Employment Guarantee Act) in a few selected sites for a course of one year with a view to understanding the interaction between EGA, local development, decent work and migration with special focus on gender concerns. The second aspect of the proposed research is capacity building through discussions and workshops. The study also will analyze the impact of the NREGA on the local economic development, migration, skills, development path for women,

occupational health and safety concerns and other decent work elements. The study is being carried out in two villages from selected districts in each of the two states of Orissa and Rajasthan. The study is based on observations, interviews with officials and panchayat members and community members. A household survey will also be conducted to address the issues relating to women's reproductive work and the impact of the increased participation in paid work by women. The project is being sponsored by ILO.

Research Support to National Commission on Unorganised Enterprises

ISST is managing a grant from the UNDP for research support to the commission on unorganized enterprises. Activities undertaken under this project will seek to

fill gaps in existing information and otherwise strengthen the research activities of the Commission.

Women's Work through Magnifying Glass

ISST has undertaken a research project to assess women's paid work force participation rate in urban Delhi across income strata and the reasons behind their decision to work or not to work.

ISST is collaborating with the ILO to conduct a survey in Delhi which can throw light on the extent, nature and

constraints on women's work in a contemporary urban situation, and explore further the dynamics of female labour demand and supply in a particular section of people. The on-going survey, designed to net in informal economy work, attempts to provide an estimate of women's labour force participation.

Impact of the *Sahbhagi Yojana 2* Support Project (SY2SP), Ahmedabad

ISST has provided inputs to SEWA Academy, Ahmedabad in an attempt in an impact study of the *Sahbhagi Yojana 2* Support Project (SY2SP) for Mahila

Housing Trust. The study tried to assess the impacts of the parivartan project being implemented in the five selected slums in the city of Ahmedabad. Apart from

assessing the direct and indirect impact of the Parivartan Project on the residents of the study area, the study also assessed the role of the CBOs and their interactions

with local governance which would help in implementation and development of such programmes in future.

OUTREACH PROGRAMME OF ISST

ISST has been carrying out its community based programmes in two slum locations - Nehru Camp and Sonia Camp since the year 2000. The programme adopts a holistic approach towards achieving sustainable development of the people of the community. The focus is mainly on dissemination of information and facilitating support to the benefit of the people. The programme covers women, children and men in the community on a non partisan basis. Recently, ISST has extended its area of activities to Kalyanpuri, another location at east Delhi. A new centre has been inaugurated there in July 2006. Currently, the centre is working on non-formal education, RTI (Right to Information) Campaign and

computer training. A Resource Centre for Adolescents and Youth and a Discussion Group has recently been formed by the ISST Community Centre. The group meets once a month and discuss various issues of concern to them. In the first three meetings, the group has discussed on the topics like careers options for the youth, corruption in the society and education. Free admissions and enrollments in public schools for economically underprivileged children have been availed for 10 more children this academic session by ISST. There are also ongoing campaigns to spread awareness regarding the RTI, PDS and ration facilities among the slum communities.

Bangalore Office

ISST Bangalore office launched **Seethalakshmi Iyer Memorial Panel Presentations** on current research in the social sciences for undergraduate students. The series is an initiative to present exciting areas of current research in the traditional social sciences to undergraduate students. The first seminar in the series - 'Development Economics'

was held at Mount Carmel College on 20 September, 2006. Four presentations on contemporary issues were made by the students from different colleges of Bangalore. The seminar was attended by a large number of college going students from Bangalore, and its relevance was highly appreciated by them.

Staff News

Ms. Manjistha Banerjee left ISST in August 2006.

Ms. Manju Negi joined ISST Community Centre in August 2006.

Workshops/Seminars Conducted by ISST

14 July, 2006: Evaluation of the STEP: Methodology workshop, India International Centre, New Delhi

The workshop was conducted to decide on the methodology for the evaluation of the STEP programme. The workshop was attended by the officials from Department of Women and Child Development, researchers and experts in evaluation and monitoring of projects.

Writeshop: Social Protection in Asia, organized by IDS, Sussex and ISST at India International Centre. 22 - 24 September, 2006.

This writeshop forms a part of the programme of research on Social Protection in South and South-east Asia, working on Social Protection and related issues.

Forthcoming Events

IHC-ISST Gender Policy Forum

10 November, 2006 at 6.30 pm

Venue: Casuarina Hall, India Habitat Centre

'No Magic Bullet: Microfinance, Poverty Reduction and Women's Empowerment in South Asia' by Prof. **Naila Kabeer**, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex. Currently Visiting Scholar, International Development Research Centre, New Delhi. Discussant: Dr. Rohini Somanathan, Reader, Dept. of Economics, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi.

Workshops /Seminars Attended by ISST

Shrayana Bhattacharya

- ? July 7-9, 2006 : 'Boundaries of Security : Gender, Agency and the Collective', paper presented at the 15th Annual Conference on Feminist Economics, organized by International Association for Feminist Economics, Sydney, Australia.

Ratna M. Sudarshan

- ? July 20, 2006 : Study on HIV/AIDS, NCAER, New Delhi.
- ? July 27, 2006 : 'India: meeting the employment challenge', Conference on Labour and Employment issues in India. Organized by Institute for Human Development, New Delhi,
- ? August 19-21, 2006 : 'Voice as a Pathway to Women's Empowerment: reflections on the Indian experience', presented at Workshop on Regional Research

Programme on Pathways to Women's Empowerment, BRAC University and IDS Sussex, Dhaka.

- ? September 26, 2006 : Gender and Education – talk to participants of training programme on 'Incorporating gender concerns in public policy', IIPA, New Delhi.

Rajib Nandi

- ? September 22, 2006 : Meeting on 'Promotion of Discourse on Science, Religion and Development', organized by Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity, New York at Bahai House, New Delhi.

Send your comments and suggestions to rajib.isst@spectranet.com

Coordinated by Rajib Nandi

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ISST Newsletter

Vol.3

No.4

October–December 2006

This ISST newsletter seeks to provide information about research and action programmes being conducted by the institute. At present the newsletter is only available on our website. Suggestions are welcome.

The Institute of Social Studies Trust (ISST), a non-profit non-governmental organization, was set up as a society in 1964 and registered as a Trust in 1980. ISST attempts to bridge the gaps between

research, action and policy debate, with a focus on issues concerning the poor, especially women. ISST positions itself at the interface between research, action and policy.

Projects at ISST

Completed Projects

Gender Network Project

MIMAP – Gender Network (Phase III)

A Regional Gender Network in South and South East Asia, with Special Reference to Gender Dimensions of Macro Economic Reforms

The third phase of Regional Gender Network Project, coordinated by ISST and sponsored by International Development Research Centre, Canada has been completed in December 2006. The project has finalized all research studies done under the following modules: Poverty and Gender; ICT and Gender; Gender Training and Gender Modelling; Growth, Inequality and Gender. Researchers and organizations from several countries from south and south-east Asia including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Vietnam had joined this network. The Social Science Press, New Delhi is going to publish a book titled *'Enigma of the Kerala Woman: The Failed Promise of Literacy'* edited by Prof. Swapna Mukhopadhyay. This book consists of research papers on various aspects of gender relations in Kerala by scholars from a range of social science disciplines under the Gender Network Project. Apart from that, a few working papers will be brought out by the network in early 2007. All the reports and papers from the third phase of Gender Network will be made available at ISST's website soon.

Case Studies of Homebased Workers in Bihar, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh

ISST has documented a few case studies of home-based work in India for Homenet India and UNIFEM, New Delhi. The study has focused on the nature and conditions of work in the selected trades; social and economic insecurities faced by the workers in these trades. ISST has carried out this research with grassroots organizations working with home-based workers in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Punjab. The trades covered in this research are: box making at Lucknow; appliqué work at Rampur; zari-zardosi at Bareilly; bidi rolling in Samastipur and Begusarai; mala, flute and chappal making at Patna and the embroidery work at Patiala. As a part of the dissemination strategy, a documentary film has been made on these trades and the women involved in these trades. Both the report and the film has been submitted to HomeNet India and UNIFEM in December 2006.

Ongoing Projects

Women's Work through Magnifying Glass

ISST is finalizing a research project on assessing women's paid work force participation rate in urban Delhi across income strata and the reasons behind their decision to work or not to work.

ISST has collaborated with the ILO and conducted a survey in Delhi which threw light on the extent, nature and constraints on women's work in a contemporary urban situation. The study has explored further the dynamics of female labour in terms of demand and supply in a particular section of people. The study also attempts to provide an estimation on women's labour force participation especially in the informal economy.

Evaluation of STEP Projects

ISST has received a grant from DWCD (Department of Women and Child Development) to review the STEP (Support for Training and Employment of Women) programme all over India. ISST has also been assigned to do concurrent evaluation of two STEP projects. ISST has already completed the evaluation of these two projects - one a goatery project implemented by Thirumala Education and Social Welfare Society, Karnataka and the second is a handicraft development project implemented by Bisnouli Sarvadaya Gramdyog Sewa Sansthan, New Delhi. The first organization is managing a STEP grant to develop Goatery for 500 rural women in Karnataka and the second organization in Delhi is supposedly providing training and support to a couple of hundred of women in handicrafts development. ISST research team had interviewed the officials of the respective organizations and the beneficiaries before submitting the reports to DWCD.

Revisiting Education 2006

ISST is conducting a study named 'Revisiting Education' to capture the significant changes in the delivery of primary education for children in the states of Bihar, Chattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Uttranchal, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh over the last ten years. Moreover, the study intends to explore perceptions of parents, teachers and children about their problems and about the impact of changes. A large cross-sectional survey has been designed along with a few qualitative case studies. The survey is being conducted both in the schools and the households, on a sample of 125 randomly selected villages in the selected states. In all, information will be collected from at least 250 formal government primary schools, and 125 upper primary sections. The study is supported by the International Development Research Centre, Canada.

Women and the NREGA: Implication for Migration, Decent Work and Gender

This study is being carried out in the selected sites of Orissa and Rajasthan, where the EGA (Employment Guarantee Act) has been implemented. The study is trying to understand the interaction between EGA, local development, decent work and migration with special focus on gender concerns through interviews with officials and panchayat members and community members. Capacity building through discussions and workshops is another objective of this project. The study also proposes to analyze the impact of the NREGA on the local economic development, migration, skills, development path for women, occupational health and safety concerns and other decent work elements. A household survey will also be conducted to address the issues relating to women's reproductive work and the impact of the increased participation in paid work by women. A questionnaire has been prepared and translated in Oriya and Hindi respectively for Orissa and Rajasthan. The project is being sponsored by ILO.

New Projects

Employment, Informality and Poverty: Comparative Research in China and India.

The overall objectives of the project is to foster greater understanding on issues of informal employment among Chinese and Indian scholars and practitioners. The specific objectives of the project are: to facilitate dialogue and intellectual exchange between Chinese and Indian participants through the conduct of a study tour in India and a workshop in Harvard; to establish a network of Chinese and Indian scholars and practitioners, including young researchers, for the development of research capacity and policy advice on the informal economy.

ISST is going to organize a workshop around the theme "Employment, Poverty and Informality: India and China" with a focus on informal employment and institutional

environments from 3-11 February, 2007 in New Delhi. The Chinese group will also make a short visit to SEWA in Ahmedabad during this period. This visit is being supported by the IDRC, Canada and organized by ISST.

OUTREACH PROGRAMME OF ISST

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Volunteers / Interns

The following people have worked or joined ISST as volunteers / interns :

Ms. Sonal Marwah, Canada.

Ms. Simran Kohli, Canada.

Ms. Sophie Woehling, Paris X University, France

Ms. Onam Sharma, Bhim Rao Ambedkar College, Delhi

Ms. Bhawna Sagar, Bhim Rao Ambedkar College, Delhi

Ms. Subh Sharma, Department of Social Work, Delhi University.

Visitors to ISST

Ms. Nina Kaysser, currently enrolled in a Masters programme, Passau University, Bavaria, Germany visited ISST to consult primary data, had been collected by ISST and other resources on gender and work for her M.A. dissertation.

Workshops/Seminars Conducted by ISST

10 November, 2006: **IHC-ISST Gender Policy Forum**, India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

The eighth session in the series of talks under the Gender Policy Forum invited Prof. Naila Kabeer, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex. Currently Visiting Scholar, International Development Research Centre, New Delhi. Prof. Kabeer made a presentation titled, '*No Magic Bullet: Microfinance, Poverty Reduction and Women's Empowerment in South Asia*'. Dr. Rohini Somanathan, Reader, Dept. of Economics, Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi played the role of the discussant on the occasion. The programme was attended by a number of academicians, policy-makers, students and activists from Delhi.

14 December, 2006: **ICTs as an Inclusionary Imperative – A Seminar on Gender and Information & Communication Technologies**, United Theological college, Bangalore.

ISST Bangalore held this seminar on Gender and Information and Communication Technologies. The seminar was intended to disseminate some of the work that ISST has done in this area, as well as to serve as a forum to learn from the experiences of other organisations working in this field. The Chief Guest for the seminar was the Secretary to the Government of Karnataka, Department of IT, BT & Science & Technology, Mr. M.N. Vidyashankar. Ms. Anita Gurumurthy, Executive Director, IT for Change (ITfC), delivered the keynote address on the occasion.

The day was divided into 4 sessions of presentations and speeches, and ended with a panel discussion on gender issues in the ITeS industry. Founder and former Director of ISST, Smt. Devaki Jain chaired the inaugural session, and the three remaining sessions and panel discussion were chaired by Ms. Ammu Joseph (Journalist & Media Analyst), Ms. Ratna Sudarshan (Director – ISST), Dr. Meera Pillai (ISST) and Professor Vasanthi Srinivasan (IIMB) respectively.

Ms. Vijaya of Budikote in Kolar District, Studio Manager of the Namma Dhwani community radio project, assisted by Mr. Ramnath Bhat, made a presentation on how rural women were conceptualising and creating radio programmes that addressed local concerns. Ms. Asha Jayaraman made a presentation on TelNek, a project of Anchorage, which sought to give rural communities IT skills that enabled them to find employment in Bidadi, and check migration to Bangalore, while Ms. Mridula Swamy of ITfC addressed the issues of livelihoods and ICTs more broadly. The attempt to empower with appropriate IC technologies a home-grown grassroots movement was jointly presented by representatives from Mahila Samakhya Karnataka and ITfC. Dr. Rajib Nandi and Ms. Grace Fernandez made presentations on behalf of relevant projects from ISST.

The post-lunch session saw presentations by Ms. Ammu Joseph, eminent journalist, and Namita Malhotra, lawyer and media activist from the Alternative Law Forum, addressed the complex issues of media and censorship in the information society. The participants in the lively panel discussion that followed, involving representatives from the corporate world, were Professor Vasanthi Srinivasan (IIMB), Mr. Hemant Sharma (HR Head - SUN Microsystems), Nirmala Menon (Interweave), Geraldine Fernandez (OCWEN) and Prithvijit Ramachandran (Communications Trainer).

20 December 2006 : International Students' Seminars on Current Issues : HIV/AIDS in My Country – Challenges & Responses

The second in the series of seminars being organised by ISST for international students in Bangalore was held on the theme of 'HIV/AIDS in My Country – Challenges and Responses'. on the 20th of December, 2006.

The topic was selected from a pool of topics that the students had themselves suggested. There were 7 international student presentations, made by Jawed Nader (Afghanistan), Byomuhangi Kay Pontian (Uganda), İlker Çaken (Turkey), Torika Nyanga (Fiji), Nizla Naizer (Sri Lanka), Haithem Ali Saleh (Bahrain) and Hani Mohamed Qasim (Sudan). The presentations provided a range of insights into the issue of HIV and AIDS due to the diverse levels of prevalence of the disease and the responses in the different countries represented that were driven by the varying cultural and political conditions prevailing in each country.

A presentation on India was made by Asha Ramaiah, a prominent AIDS activist and founder of the Karnataka Network of Positive People. Her presentation focused on the issues of people living with HIV and AIDS and the work she was doing as a National Advocacy Officer for the Indian Network of Positive People. The floor was then opened for discussion on all of the preceding student presentations.

The final lecture for the day was delivered by Ms. Sonia Kandathil, an AIDS scholar with amFAR – the foundation for AIDS research. Her presentation, titled 'HIV/AIDS – New Prevention Technologies' was well-received and appreciated for its relevance and comprehensiveness, and was followed by an animated question and answer session.

Forthcoming Events

IHC-ISST Gender Policy Forum

23 January, 2007 at 6.30 pm

Venue: Casuarina Hall, India Habitat Centre

'Imported Wives and Desperate Bachelors: Social Consequences of female foeticide in Northern India' by Dr. Ravinder Kaur, Associate Professor, Department of Humanities

and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. Discussant: Dr. Nitya Rao, Lecturer in Gender Analysis and Development, School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia, U.K.

Workshops /Seminars Attended by ISST

Shrayana Bhattacharya

Presentation: 'Case Studies of Homebased Workers in Bihar, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh' at National workshop on Minimum wage for homebased workers, 5-6th December, UN-APCIT, New Delhi organized by HomeNet India.

Ratna M. Sudarshan

World Conference on 'Social Protection and Inclusion: Converging efforts from a global perspective', ILO, EC and Govt of Portugal, Lisbon, October 2-3, 2006.

Expert Group meeting on Health Financing by Local Bodies, Nirman Bhavan, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, November 10.

Strengthening State Plans for Human Development: Brainstorming Workshop on MDG based Poverty Reduction Strategy, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research and UNDP, Mumbai, December 12.

Gender as an Inclusionary Imperative – A Seminar on Gender and ICTs, ISST Bangalore, December 14.

Conference on Applied Economic Research in Independent India, NCAER Golden Jubilee celebration, December 17.

Presentations:

'Social protection, Informal Economy and Globalisation', presented at workshop on Globalisation and the State, NFI, October 6-7, 2006.

Keynote Address on Gender and Economics in India, delivered at the 89th Annual Conference of the Indian Economic Association, Kurukshetra University, December 27.

Rajib Nandi

Presentation: 'Case Studies of Homebased Workers in Bihar, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh' at National workshop on Minimum wage for homebased workers, 5-6th December, UN-APCIT, New Delhi organized by HomeNet India.

Presentation: “Gender and ICTs: Findings from the Gender Network Project”, at Gender as an Inclusionary Imperative – A Seminar on Gender and ICTs, 14 December, 2006”, Bangalore, organized by ISST Bangalore.

Grace Fernandez

Presentation: “Women Call Centre Workers in India”, at Gender as an Inclusionary Imperative – A Seminar on Gender and ICTs, 14 December, 2006”, Bangalore, organized by ISST Bangalore

Send your comments and suggestions to rajib.isst@spectranet.com

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