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Institute of Social Studies Trust, (ISST)

is a non-profit, non-governmental organization head quartered in New Delhi, India. It was set up as a society in 1964 and registered as a Trust in 1980. ISST's overall aim is research for social change with focus on work and well-being from a gender perspective. In recognition of its work, ISST has been conferred NGO Consultative Status by the United Nations.



Photo Credit: Jasmeet Khanuja

The ISST newsletter seeks to provide information on research and action programs being conducted by the institute. The newsletter is available on ISST's website: <http://www.isstindia.org/>

Ongoing Projects

Balancing Unpaid Care Work and Paid Work: Successes, Challenges and Lessons for Women's Economic Empowerment Programmes and Policies

India

The project, 'Balancing unpaid care work and paid work: successes, challenges and lessons for women's economic empowerment programmes and policies' is being carried out by ISST in India and Nepal. In India, data has been collected from the selected states of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh to study MGNREGA and SEWA respectively. A mixed methods approach was used wherein, survey, participatory tools for groups, and qualitative interviews for case studies were conducted to understand social organisation of care, barriers to women's economic empowerment, and the ways by which programmes and policies can provide support in unpaid care work so as to optimise, share, and sustain women's economic participation. Data collection has been completed in India and we are on our way to analysis.



Photo Credit: *Jasmeet Khanuja*

Nepal

Similarly in Nepal, ISST has recently completed data collection in the two selected districts of Jumla and Surkhet. The team has been studying the Karnali Employment Program (KEP) as its state programme in Jumla district and Oxfam's Enterprise Development Program (EDP) in Surkhet district of Nepal. For the study, data was collected in the form of 200 household surveys, participatory tools and 32 in depth household case studies from 4 sites across 2 districts in Nepal. The survey was undertaken by the Nepal Peacebuilding Initiative (NPI) in the aforementioned districts.

Feminist Analysis of Social and Solidarity Economy Practices: Views from Latin America and India (Swiss Network of International Studies)

ISST is a principal partner of a research project entitled, "Feminist Analysis of Social and Solidarity Economy Practices: Views from Latin America and India" funded by Swiss Network of International Studies (SNIS).

Solidarity Economy is not commonly used in the Indian context. However, feminist movement based on the principles of solidarity economy has already been consolidated in several Latin American countries for quite some time now. On the other hand, in India, there is a long standing tradition of women's movements combining "struggle" and "development". Though the term "solidarity economy" is not used, basic principles of solidarity economy could be observed in some of these movements in India too. In addition to everyday practical support (such as care and

health services, popular education, micro-finance, cooperatives of producers or artisans, management of common resources, etc.), these initiatives engage in various lobbying activities with local governments, employers (when they can be identified), governments, trade unions and sometimes international organizations. Given the prevalence of informal labour in India, social protection is a major issue. SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association-India) is one of the best-known examples, but many other initiatives exist, both in rural and urban areas, in various sectors of the economy. Unlike Latin America, where “solidarity economy” is formally recognized and institutionalized through specific public policies, these initiatives don't come under a common umbrella and rather promote sectoral or territorial approaches. Looking at these contrasted institutional contexts and strategies will be added values of using a comparative approach. The proposed project hypothesizes that to be truly transformative SSE needs to also address the reorganisation of social reproduction, integrating the political goals of gender equality and more equitable power relations.

ISST has selected SEWA Kerala as a case study following a brainstorming session with experts on Indian versions of feminist solidarity movement. SEWA Kerala accepted ISST's offer and allowed ISST to study the organization from the perspective of solidarity economy. In January, Rajib Nandi from ISST attended the kick-off workshop in Geneva. Partners from Latin America and India joined the workshop and presented their prospective case studies. In March Rajib Nandi and Shiny Saha joined another workshop in Pondicherry to discuss the

methodology to be adopted in Indian case studies. The field work has just begun in Kerala.

Gender and Economic (GEP) Policy Discussion Forum

The Gender and Economic Policy (GEP) Discussion Forum is a series of conferences organized by ISST in association with Heinrich Boll Stiftung/ Foundation (HBF). The nineteenth GEP Discussion Forum was held on May 5th, 2016 on 'Maternal Health and Maternity Entitlements in India'.



Photo Credit: Jasmeet Khanuja

The panel comprised of four speakers: Ms. Sejal Dand from ANANDI who spoke on labouring women and women's labour in the context of maternity rights; Ms. Dipa Sinha from the Ambedkar University, Delhi talked about the issues and challenges with respect to maternity entitlements in the National Food Security Act; Ms. Subhalakshmi Nandi from UN Women presented her views on some of the heteronormative biases in law and policy on realising parental entitlements; and Dr. Abhijit Das from the Centre for Health and Social Justice, New Delhi discussed maternal entitlements in the

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framework of 'programming to address social exclusion'. The session was chaired and moderated by Dr Vandana Prasad from the Public Health Resource Network who even shared her views and recommendations on the topic.

Maternal health and maternity entitlements across different sectors in India were discussed in great detail by the speakers. The outcomes of development schemes supported by the central and state governments were highlighted and critiqued thereafter. The arguments presented by the panellists along with the comments and contributions from the audience brought forth some recommendations on policy design and implementation that aimed at strengthening gender equality in terms of maternity protection and work-family policies by safeguarding maternal and child health before, during and after the child's entry into the family.

Completed Projects

SEWA Bharat Project Evaluation

ISST undertook project evaluation to assess impact of SEWA Bharat project on strengthening financial inclusion of women in the informal sector, setting up youth resource centres to conduct trainings for skill development and enhancement, and capacity building in order to tap market opportunities. The study was conducted in three districts of Rajasthan namely, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner and five districts of Bihar namely, Munger, Bhagalpur, Kathihar, Purnia, and Patna.

ISST used elements of SALT approach to facilitate a participatory workshop prior to the data collection process in both Bihar as well as Rajasthan. The workshop engaged SEWA staff and community members in identifying evaluation questions, stakeholders for data collection and other information valuable to evaluation process. This process facilitated reflection of workshop participants on the project and build ownership around evaluation findings.



Photo credit: *Rituu B Nanda*

The evaluation adopted a mixed method approach by using both qualitative and quantitative methods. Questionnaire surveys, in-depth interviews, skype interviews and FGDs were conducted with different stakeholders including women of credit societies/SHGs, trainees and ex- trainees at the different SEWA Youth Resource Centres, members of SEWA Bharat at both the district and state level.

SEWA has followed a holistic approach in empowering the women by encouraging savings, providing loans, linking women to services to reduce their financial expenditure. The project

has helped SEWA Bharat to expand its work and strengthen various institutes promoted by it.

Self-Assessment Tool and Manual for Domestic Workers



Photo Credit: *Rituu B Nanda*

ILO invited ISST to develop a self assessment tool for domestic workers. The self-assessment framework will help domestic workers track their own progress over a period of time. The community life competence process has stimulated domestic workers to own and thereby respond to their issues and thus, strengthen the work of Trade unions based in Delhi, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. Trade unions have found value in the SALT approach to engage with domestic workers and have started using them in their work. They intend to train their staff working in the field with domestic worker community. For details, please click: <http://aidscompetence.ning.com/profiles/blogs/trade-unions-doing-salt-re-familiarizing-with-the-community>

Meanwhile, ILO team is in the process of finalizing manual on the approach and self-assessment tool.

Informal Construction and Domestic Work: Collaborative Research on Institutional Influences in Job Quality

ISST collaborated with Dr. Rina Agarwala (Associate Professor, Department of Sociology at the Johns Hopkins University) on a 5 country comparative study on informal construction and domestic work to expand knowledge on how informal workers organise and to help guide policy-making and organizational development in informal domestic and construction work around the world. As the local collaborator, ISST undertook detailed qualitative study on domestic work in India to examine (1) the job quality, including objective measures such as pay and hours, as well as more subjective and process measures such as degree of voice across the industry, and (2) the organizing strategies, demands, and targets of workers in the industry. The research examined the institutional factors structuring the relevant labor markets and influencing job quality, with a particular focus on the role of worker organizations. The findings from the study were recently presented at the third International Sociological Association Forum on sociology, held from July 10-14, 2016 in Vienna.

Internal Project Presentations

Social and Solidarity Economy

The first ISST Internal Project Presentation was held on 12 May 2016 at ISST. This meeting was attended by the staff, Ms Ratna Sudarshan (Trustee and former Director of ISST) and Shalini Sinha (WIEGO), as an external person. The

presentation was made by Dr. Rajib Nandi (Office in-charge) and Ms. Shiny Saha (Research Associate) on the ongoing project entitled **Feminist Analysis of Social and Solidarity Economy Practices: Views from Latin America and India.**

The presenters gave an introduction to Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE) –focusing on its context, understanding, relevance and growing global importance. The SSE concept has increasingly become popular amongst the labour movements and researchers and policy makers in several Latin American countries. The UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Social and Solidarity Economy (TFSSE) recognizes SSE as an alternative model to for addressing the economic, social and environmental integrated approaches of sustainable development. A possible definition of SSE in the Indian context could be defined as any collective that has transformative goals and is aiming at resisting/challenging oppressive relations and sustaining over time. This research aims to address these gaps in SSE research and policies from a feminist perspective. It will contribute to both the empirical evidence base and to theoretical debates on social reproduction.

After reviewing secondary literature, the ISST team has decided to study SEWA Kerala for this particular research. The team shared the research questions and the methodology of the study and presented their research design. The presentation was well received and suggestions were further made by the team and others on further readings and inputs for strengthening the study.

GrOW: India

ISST had its second internal presentation on 7th June. The presentation was on the GrOW project - **Balancing unpaid care work and paid work: successes, challenges and lessons for women's economic empowerment (WEE) programmes and policies.**

The India team - Mubashira Zaidi and Jasmeet Khanuja- shared the preliminary findings from the field work conducted in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh (MP). The presentation was attended by ISST staff members accompanied by Ratna Sudarshan (Trustee and former Director of ISST), Sudeshna Sengupta and Shubhika Sachdeva (Alliance for Right to Early Childhood Development/ Mobile crèches) and Subhalakshmi Nandi (UN Women).

The team started with discussing the main research question i.e. how WEE policies and programmes can take unpaid care work into account in order to enable women's economic empowerment to be optimised, shared across families and sustained across generations. Drawing from the field experiences, they shared that the unpaid care work was primarily carried out by women in these sites and that the paid work did not always result in reorganisation of care responsibilities. Instead women were reorganising their own time to accommodate both paid and unpaid work, which was leading to further stress and time poverty. In the absence of alternate full time childcare arrangements, majority of women felt that child care facilities are critical at work sites and if provided it would

benefit them immensely. The presentation was followed by discussion on the role of the state and non state programs in creating an enabling environment for women.

Outreach Programme of ISST

ISST's community outreach program started in 2001 with the intent to reach out to children and youth in the slums and resettlement colonies, which had gained reputation for being involved in crimes and illegitimate activities. In the beginning, two slums Sonia camp, Nehru camp and a resettlement colony, West Vinod Nagar were identified in East Delhi (Trans Yamuna area). In the year 2006, Delhi Police provided a space to the Community Center (now known as the Saath Center by the children and youth of the community) to start a Youth Resource Centre inside of Kalyanpuri Police Station. Ever since then the ISST Community "Saathi" Center has been providing a safe and enriching space for children and young adults in realizing their full potential.

Some of the key projects being run at the Community Centre are the Bachpan Program (providing a wholesome development for an enriching childhood) which is supported by Wipro Care, the Youth Resource Center (providing computer and skills training), the RTI desk (for people of the community to redress their grievances), and a fully functioning library run by the volunteers from the community itself. The Center has also mobilized women domestic workers from the community earlier on as part of the SDTT project for the same.

Series in Feminist Evaluation

Series in Feminist Evaluation is a series of publications by ISST to generate and widely share information on the values, ethics, methods, tools and approaches of feminist evaluation in a range of domains.

A Resource Pack on Gender Transformative Evaluation

Third in the *Series in Feminist Evaluation* is *A Resource Pack on Gender Transformative Evaluation*. The resource pack is a truly collaborative effort by a wide group of participants brought to the table at the 'Engendering Policy through Evaluation: Uncovering Exclusion, Challenging Inequities and Building Capacities' project workshops.

The Resource Pack intends to fill the gap in the literature on what constitutes gender transformative evaluations, not just from a theoretical perspective, but from a practical perspective of doing evaluations, using the rich information gathered by the project over four years.

The Resource Pack has four chapters: an introductory chapter followed by a chapter on the principles and frameworks of gender transformative evaluations; a third chapter on methods and tools of gender transformative evaluations; and a fourth chapter on using a feminist lens with various evaluation approaches written.

Summary of a Recent Publication:

Locating the Processes of Policy Change in the Context of Anti-Rape and Domestic Worker Mobilisations in India

By Shraddha Chigateri, Mubashira Zaidi and Anweshaa Ghosh

This research seeks to address the question of when and why the state in India responds to women's claims making by foregrounding the mobilisations of women's groups on two issues: anti-rape laws and domestic work. In particular, it analyzes the relationship between women's claims making and laws and policies, especially focusing on the issues around which mobilisations take place, the processes and strategies of claims making by women's groups, and the processes through which the changes in laws and policies occur. The research addresses these concerns at both a national level, as well as two subnational levels, Gujarat and Karnataka. It also compares the differences and similarities in mobilisations, structural configurations, actors and coalitions between the two issue areas, and across the levels (national and subnational).

The research draws on Mala Htun and Laura Weldon's framework for analysing genderegalaritarian policy change as well as Nancy Fraser's analysis of needs interpretation, multiple publics and representation (Htun and Weldon 2007, 2010; Fraser 1989, 2009). It is a qualitative research study drawing on 62 interviews with key actors at both national and subnational levels, and an extensive resource of secondary material, which is particularly abundant on anti-rape mobilisations in India.

The report argues that state responses to women's claims making provide a complex and variegated picture of a non-linear, slow, sporadic and contingent process of policy change, with iterations and reiterations by women's groups met over a period of time by non-responses, intermittent gains, reversals and wars of attrition by the state. Domestic worker mobilisations have not had as long and consolidated a history as anti-rape mobilisations, which is reflected in the nature of state responses—with policy change and law reform in domestic work remaining sporadic and scattered, whereas there have been widespread reforms in anti-rape laws, albeit with as many reversals as gains. Apart from mobilisations by groups on issues, which have been a key factor for policy change, other factors such as champions in government, mass demonstrations and protests, the openness (or lack thereof) of the policy process, strength of networks are some of the other factors that determine when and why states respond to women's claims making.

Publications

1. Chigateri, S., & Saha, S. (Eds.). (2016). *A Resource Pack on Gender Transformative Evaluations* (Vol. 3). New Delhi: Institute of Social Studies Trust.
2. Chigateri, S., M. Zaidi and A. Ghosh. (2016). *Locating the Processes of Policy Change in the Context of Anti-Rape and Domestic Worker Mobilisations in India*. Research Report. Geneva: UNRISD. <http://www.unrisd.org/indiareport>.

POLICY BRIEFS

3. Confronting Violence Against Women: The Power of Women's Movements - UNRISD Policy Brief, March 2016
4. At the Crossroads of Class and Gender : Realizing Domestic Workers' Labour Rights - UNRISD Policy Brief, March 2016

Life in Delhi's Squatter Settlement: A Book Review

by Aditi Das

The Illegal City: Space, Law and Gender in a Delhi Squatter Settlement authored by Ayona Datta is an ethnographic study of the everyday life of slum dwellers in Delhi. Shifting her focus from the discourse on informality, that currently dominates much of the recent scholarship on slums, Datta uses gendered subjectivities and (il) legality as analytical registers to approach the discourse on slums. Subjective positionality, she argues, is an 'important criterion while encountering and negotiating law in everyday life and spaces' since these help in determining the interactions between 'public and private, legal and illegal, city and slum' (Datta, 2012).

The first part of the book, comprising four chapters, develops conceptually the relationship between law, gendered subjectivity and space, while the latter half of the book deals with the 'politics of space, law and gender in the illegal city'.

The book elucidates how law enters the everyday intimate spaces of home and family, and the ways in which people position themselves in relation to law. For those living under the daily threat of demolition of homes, their everyday negotiation of social difference reflects 'how the force of law intersects with and is transformative of gendered social relations' (Ellis, 2014). The book, thus, offers a much overdue contribution in fields of urban and feminist studies with 'law' as an important lens of analysis.

References

Datta, A. (2012). *The Illegal City: Space, Law and Gender in a Delhi Squatter Settlement*. Ashgate.

Ellis, R. (2014). Book Review. *Urban Studies*, 51(4), 848-859.

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