

Delhi recorded lowest minimum temperature in decade at 2.4 degrees celsius on January 11, 2014. IGSSS is running a winter campaign for the homeless people providing breakfast and dinner, sleeping bags and wind cheaters. A Night Vigil team is periodically visiting homeless shelters and other areas to provide emergency services.

## Ministry of Textile to set up Design Studio for Handloom Weavers in Varanasi

**Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh:** It is indeed a very happy new year for handloom weavers in Varanasi. The Ministry of Textile is setting up a Common Facility Centre and Design Studio in the city under the Handloom Cluster Development Scheme for the handloom weavers. The centre will provide state-of-the-art innovative design development training to the weavers and other stakeholders. The Centre will also take up dissemination of information on latest handloom technology.

The handloom industry in Varanasi is reeling due to inadequate promotional strategies, improper wage structure for weavers and apathy towards promotion of Handloom Mark. The Centre under the aegis of Ministry of Textile will look at addressing the issues of weavers at district and state level.

The Ministry is also planning to set up a Marketing Centre which will promote handloom products in both domestic and international markets. It will study the market trends and analyse consumer behavior which will be shared among the stakeholders to create market oriented products. Handloom Mark in every woven product will be implemented to ensure



authenticity of the products and thereby attracting more buyers.

The State Alliances for Rights, Empowerment and Livelihood (SAREL) Network, a forum set up by IGSSS under its livelihood initiative, has been advocating the issues of weavers for a long time. SAREL Network along with social activists and other likeminded organizations played a critical role to guide Government to make weaver friendly policies and create infrastructure to support their livelihood.

## Guiding Youth to Make Informed Career Choices Through Counseling

**Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh:** A Career Guidance and Counseling workshop was organised for Youth under the SMILE Programme. The youth spoke about their concerns regarding limited career opportunities in the state, to which it was cited that there are various scholarship schemes available through which they can explore across the country. This will expose them to new learning and help them understand diverse culture. The workshop also highlighted scope of pursuing vocational training and entrepreneurship opportunities which the youth can take up as per their interests. Detailed information of such training and opportunities was shared during the workshop.



## For Kalakanhu Success is Organic

A story from Kalahandi on how organic farming is helping farmers produce better yield

**Kalahandi, Odisha:** Kalakanhu Goud is jubilant with his harvest this year. A major contrast in his life is brought about since he shifted from fertilizer based farming to the traditional methods of agricultural farming. A year back, he was using chemicals and pesticides in his crops and every time the yield would vary. Due to the fluctuating production, he could sell only a minimum portion in the market and every time the earning would show a downward trend. The depleting economic scenario was also impacting his family. He was forced to withdraw his children from school. The situation was not so different for the other families in the village;

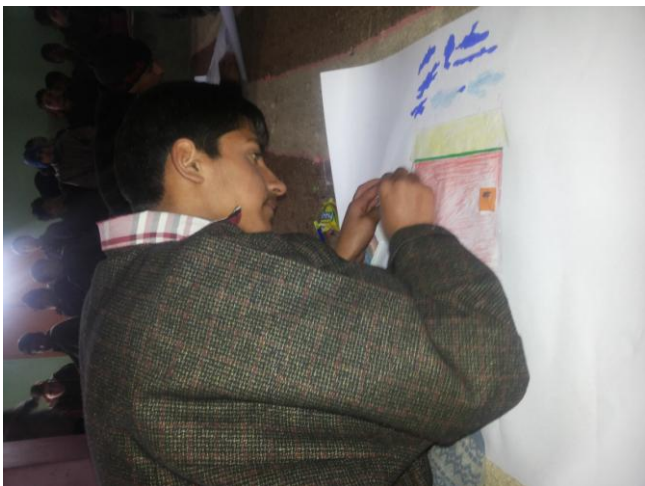
they were in no position to afford medical treatments of their family members.

In Khetupada village of Kalahandi district a training workshop on agricultural practices was organised by IGSSS. The villagers were informed about the drawback of pesticides and other chemicals on crops and their adverse impact on the entire production cycle. The methods of organic farming and its benefits were demonstrated and explained to the villagers. They were trained to use and apply vermin compost. With initial reluctance farmers like Kalakanhu Goud gradually adopted the methods of organic farming and produced a good yield. At present 20 farmers in Khetupada are practicing organic farming and producing better crops.

## Kashmiri Students Painting Knowledge with Brushes

**Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir:** In a bid to provide alternative expression platform to the children of its tuition centre, the Khomaine Youth Group organised a painting competition in Gound-i-Nowgam village of Kashmir. The youth group, part of IGSSS initiative, is running a tuition centre free of cost and is reaching out to 700 students of marginalized families in the vicinity.

This initiative was welcomed by the students and especially girl students as they do not get such opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities in their schools.



The village is prone to water shortage and related issues and this was an innovate approach to make the students aware of using water judiciously. The students were also made conscious about the importance of rain water harvesting.

The painting competition gave an opportunity to the students to play with colours and a forum to encourage their creative and exhibit their talent. It also came to the fore that such kinds of events are not held in both government and public schools in the area.

