



## YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

### *Guwahati Carnival to Promote Peace and Harmony in North-East India*

**Guwahati, Assam:** IGSSS participated in the 'Guwahati Carnival 2014', organised by several student bodies and associations to promote peace and harmony among the ethnic tribes towards building a conducive socio-cultural atmosphere in the region. Youths from Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland, Assam and Tripura participated in the event.

The chief guest Mr. Prithibi Majhi - Minister of Revenue and Disaster Management, Labour and Employment, Tea Tribes Welfare, Assam said, "peace building programmes are significant towards bringing the varied ethnic groups under one platform. It gives us an opportunity for exchange of dialogues, interactions between communities, eases communal tensions and creates hope for development, much needed for the



thriving of the state which is otherwise marred by conflicts and political struggles."

The Guwahati Carnival initiated discussions on promoting entrepreneurship among the youth. During the interaction Tourism was identified as a possible area that could be explored as an entrepreneurship opportunity which can lead to business development and revenue generation in North-East. Cultural representations from different communities such as Naga, Kuki, Dimasas, Assamese, Manipuri, Karbi, Puroik and Nishi were held through rock concerts, traditional songs and dance.

## HEALTH

### *Health Awareness Programme in Remote Odisha*

**Kendrapara, Odisha:** IGSSS in collaboration with VARRAT NGO organised a Health Camp in Kulasahi Village of Kendrapara district, Odisha. Dr. Laxmipriya Das, Medical In-charge - Tulasidiha Primary Health Centre spoke about the importance of Health and Hygiene aspect. Around 141 patients from the surrounding villages were provided with medicines and necessary health advice.

## Workshop on Organic Farming



**Vadodara, Gujarat:** A workshop on the importance of Organic Farming was organised and was attended by 26 people comprising of community members and representatives of partner organisations. During the programme, the ill effects of fertilizers and pesticides on agricultural production were discussed. Additionally some good methods of cultivation such as the usage of vermin compost and herbal pesticides were also shared with the farmers. The participants were also provided with information on various Government schemes.

## International Women's Day Celebrated in Sheopur District, Madhya Pradesh

**Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh:** IGSSS along with its partner organisation VAMA celebrated the International Women's Day in Sheopur district, Madhya Pradesh. 300 women from the community participated in the event. Ms.Sarita Ananth, the sarpanch of the village, spoke about the benefits of various Government run welfare schemes such as Widow Pension, Janani Suraksha Yojana, MGNREGA and Mid Day Meal Scheme. She also cited about few other programmes designed particularly for women and child development. Discussions were held on the importance of women's involvement in Self Help Groups (SHGs), an essential step towards their self reliance. Besides, the women were encouraged to actively participate in governance and play a constructive role in village development. The programme ended with a street theatre on 'Violence against Women'.

### STORY FROM FIELD



## Sky Calling

"It is only men whose name you find on everything - on properties, house, land, all assets and even on the cooking utensils. We women will write ours on the whole sky and... here we are... beginning from our own homes and village."

A bride of a traditional Dalit family is usually expected to be a simpleton. She may well be endowed with reading and writing skills and has a mind of her own, but such virtues are carefully overlooked. And this was precisely the story with Neeruben from Vadodara, Gujarat. Despite all her qualifications and capabilities, she was expected to be entangled with the rigmarole of daily life. Initially she complied.

However, often she would go to wash clothes and utensils in the village pond; she would meet the other women of the village. Amidst, manifold discussions revolving their lives, the women would speak about fruitful discussions on savings and SHG formation held during meetings conducted by a non profit organisation called IGSSS in their village. Neeruben too wanted to attend the meetings but her in – laws would not relent. They would cite that it is not preferable for married women to meet some outsiders from cities. Also the family feared that these outsiders will flee with their hard earned money. But owing to persistent home visits by IGSSS team members and other village women, the in – laws relented and Neeruben took the first step towards understanding creating her own identity.

She along with 17 other members of the group formed an SHG. Due to her education qualification which was the highest in the group, Neeruben was chosen as the secretary. She along with other members of the group received various trainings on entrepreneurship and social issues. As Neeruben grew in confidence, she started taking keen interest in the milk cooperative of the village. She along with other Dalit women, who were selling milk to the cooperative, started monitoring the entitlements they were supposed to receive. They could smell a foul play and soon they found out that the milk cans and the cattle-feed that they were entitled to, were not delivered to them, the former sarpanch had siphoned many other entitlements of the Dalits. She along with other dalit women of the village started voicing for their rights and also met the concerned functionaries demanding action. Even during the whole struggle she was subjected to severe humiliation, name calling and also character assassination, she did not relent. Eventually, justice was meted and they were successful in getting their entitlements.

Moreover, Neeruben also received training on tailoring with the support of IGSSS. Her tailoring shop keeps her in good stead with a supplementary income of some Rs.3500 per month. Neeruben’s courage and efforts towards village development has also won over the confidence of her in – laws and husband.

Today she says, *“Kem amaarey chhodvu...aam pun baddhey bhaiyo nu j naam hoy.... ghar, jameen, milkat....tyaan sudhi ke vaasano opar pun temno j naam! Amey benoaa khaas asmaanpar amaaro lakhsoon. Saruaat amaarag harne gaamthi karsoon”* (It is only the men whose name you find on everything - on properties, house, land, all assets and even on the vessels. We women will write ours on the whole sky and here we are, beginning from our own homes and village.)