



REGIONAL COOPERATION NEWSLETTER – SOUTH ASIA
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GLOBAL UNEMPLOYMENT TO HIT RECORD HIGH DURING 2013

As per a report of the International Labour Organization (ILO), global unemployment will hit a record high in 2013. More than 197 million people world- wide are jobless and an additional 39 million have given up looking for work. With global growth stalling five years after the financial crisis, the number of jobless is expected to rise by 5.1 million this year. It is also predicted there will be a further 3 million newly jobless people next year. The ILO's report notes that global unemployment has risen by 28 million since 2007. ILO found that macroeconomic imbalances have been passed on to the labour market to a significant degree.

More job seekers have become discouraged, losing hope of finding a job and simply leaving the job market altogether, particularly in the developing world, with labour force participation rates falling dramatically. Developing countries continue to face major challenges owing to the high share of workers who are underemployed, poorly paid, have vulnerable job conditions and lack any access to social protection schemes. The ILO report also spotlighted the problem of youth unemployment with 73.8 million youth unemployed world- wide. It is estimated that an additional half million will join the ranks of the jobless this year. The global youth unemployment rate currently at 12.6% will rise to 12.9% by 2017. These trends will result in increase in the number of workers living below or very near the poverty line, with detrimental effects on the economy.

INVOLVEMENT OF SA REGIONAL COMMITTEE IN THE 2012-2016 GLOBAL PROGRAMME THROUGH GLOBAL OBSERVATORY

The Global Agenda for social work and social development for the period 2012-2016 was adopted in the joint International conference held at Hong Kong in 2012 by ICSW and its

partners—the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW). In November 2012 the three partner organizations decided to establish a new mechanism to monitor the implementation of the Global Agenda-- a joint Global Observatory working at the local, national, regional and International levels. The work of the Observatory will be carried out taking into consideration four key themes of the Global Agenda. The first theme to be addressed in 2013-2014 is “Promoting Social and Economic Equalities“, followed by the other themes: promoting the dignity and worth of people, working towards environmental sustainability and strengthening recognition of the importance of human relationships.

In December 2012 the ICSW South Asia Committee in association with Marian College of Social Work, Kuttikkanam, Kerala, India and the UNESCO New Delhi Office organized an International Conference on social development and social protection to discuss challenges existing in the area of social protection and a future action plan to promote the social protection floor initiative. Discussions were also held regarding potential partnerships in monitoring the Global Agenda and equality promotion. Some institutions tentatively expressed their willingness to join forces with other stakeholders in South Asia Region and participate in a monitoring and evaluation exercise, especially to gather evidence about activities of social workers, educators and social development practitioners in order to give visibility and creditability to their contributions and to promote further action.

India

1. Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai,
2. Rajagiri College of Social Work, Cochin ,
3. Marina College of Social Work, Kuttikkanam,
4. Social Security Association of India, Calcutta.

Sri-Lanka

Sri-Lanka School of social work (National Institute of Social work) Colombo

Nepal

Nepal School of Social Work , Katmandu

Maldives

Maldives NGO Federation

Through joint partnership with the above institutions, the ICSW SA regional committee will embark on evidence-building regarding equality promotion, while also preparing the ground for involvement of civil society organizations in SPF design and operation.

MONITORING OF SOCIAL PROTECTION PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

The Social Security Association of India in collaboration with the Department of Management Studies, Indian Institute of Sciences, Bangalore has carried out a survey of the merits and demerits of the “Employee Pension Scheme 1955”, a social protection programme introduced by Government of India for working people in the non-government sector that consists of over 60 million members. The pension can be received by a member if he or she has rendered eligible service of ten years or more and retires on attaining the age of 58 years. The pension fund under the scheme is created by the contribution of 8.33% by the employers and a contribution 1.16% by Government to be dispersed on a monthly basis.

The survey is based on grass-roots responses of the stakeholders by means of a well tested questionnaire across the country. The study has revealed several interesting and thought provoking observations detailed below.

1. The average age of the member pensioners is 61 whereas it is 53 for the widow pensioners .
2. 17% of ordinary pensioners have no schooling and for widow pensioners it is 53%.
3. 42% of the member pensioners are in a nuclear family and 56% a joint family
4. Widow pensioners have more dependents in their families and number of earning member limited to only one.
5. 48% of the member pensioners are not at all satisfied with the pension amount. 76% of the member pensioners feel that there is need for improvement and 25% pensioners feel that the pension schemes needs to be changed fully.
6. 52% of the member pensioners and 51% of the widow pensioners feel that monthly pension system has marginally helped them as a source of income. But 35% of the pensioners feel that pension amount has not at all helped them as a regular source of income.
7. 35% of the widow pensioners feel safe in the society being a pensioner.
8. The trade union pointed out that the pension scheme as been a useful tool in creating a social security net.

The Social Security Association of India has disseminated the survey results to all stakeholders and submitted their observations and recommendations to the government of India. The above findings reveal that even though the pension scheme in India has been a good tool in creating a social security net for the pensioners, many feel that the present pension scheme has not fully taken care of the security needs of the family. One positive note of the findings is that as members of the Pensioners scheme

they are proud to be covered and able to meet their minimum living standards. But viewed at the macro level, in most of the developing countries pensions reach only a minority of working force and unequal access to pensions is a long standing predicament. For detail contact Mr.B.N Som, Secretary General SAI Email: bn_som@yahoo.com

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

Third Child Friendly Asia Pacific International Conference in Nepal.

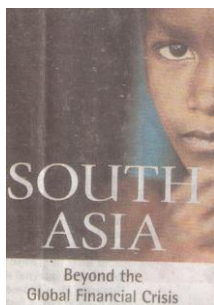
The Nepal School of Social Work and ENGAGE, in partnership with the Asia Pacific Child Friendly Cities Regional Network, are organizing the Third Child-Friendly Asia-Pacific International Conference from 27-29 June 2013 in Katmandu, Nepal.

Key conference themes include (1) Child Friendly Local Governance, (2) Child Protection and accreditation, (3) Child Friendly Learning Framework, and (4) Child Health, well-being and sustainability. For more information, registration and submission of papers, visit website :- www.childfriendlynepal.org.

BOOK REVIEW

South Asia beyond the global finance crises

Foundation Books has published a book, "South Asia Beyond the Global Financial Crisis", edited by Amitendu Palik.



This insightful book written in simple prose gives a strong message that South Asia is in urgent need of visionary leaders and fresh ideas because the region is at a historic crossroads. The edited volume, the product of a conference organized by the Singapore based Institute of South Asia Studies, includes some extremely insightful and thought provoking chapters especially by Mani Sankar Aiyar, Amitendu Palit, T.V.Paul Dilip Nachane and Rasul Bakhsh Rais covering various socio-economic developments in South Asia Region.

This book is available from Foundation Books 4381/4, Ansari road, Daryaganj New Delhi 110002.

ESCAP POLICY GUIDE BOOK FOR SME DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND PACIFIC

ESCAP has published a POLICY GUIDE BOOK FOR SME [Small and Medium-sized Enterprises] DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND PACIFIC.



This publication provides the basis for deliberations of policy formulations for SME development in the region; developing and refining the institutional frame work based on inter country experiences and cover issues like Enabling Business environment, Entrepreneurship, Financing, Business Development Services, Innovation technologies and Market Access. This book will serve as a training manual for entrepreneurs, educators and business associations for building up the capacity of SME's

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