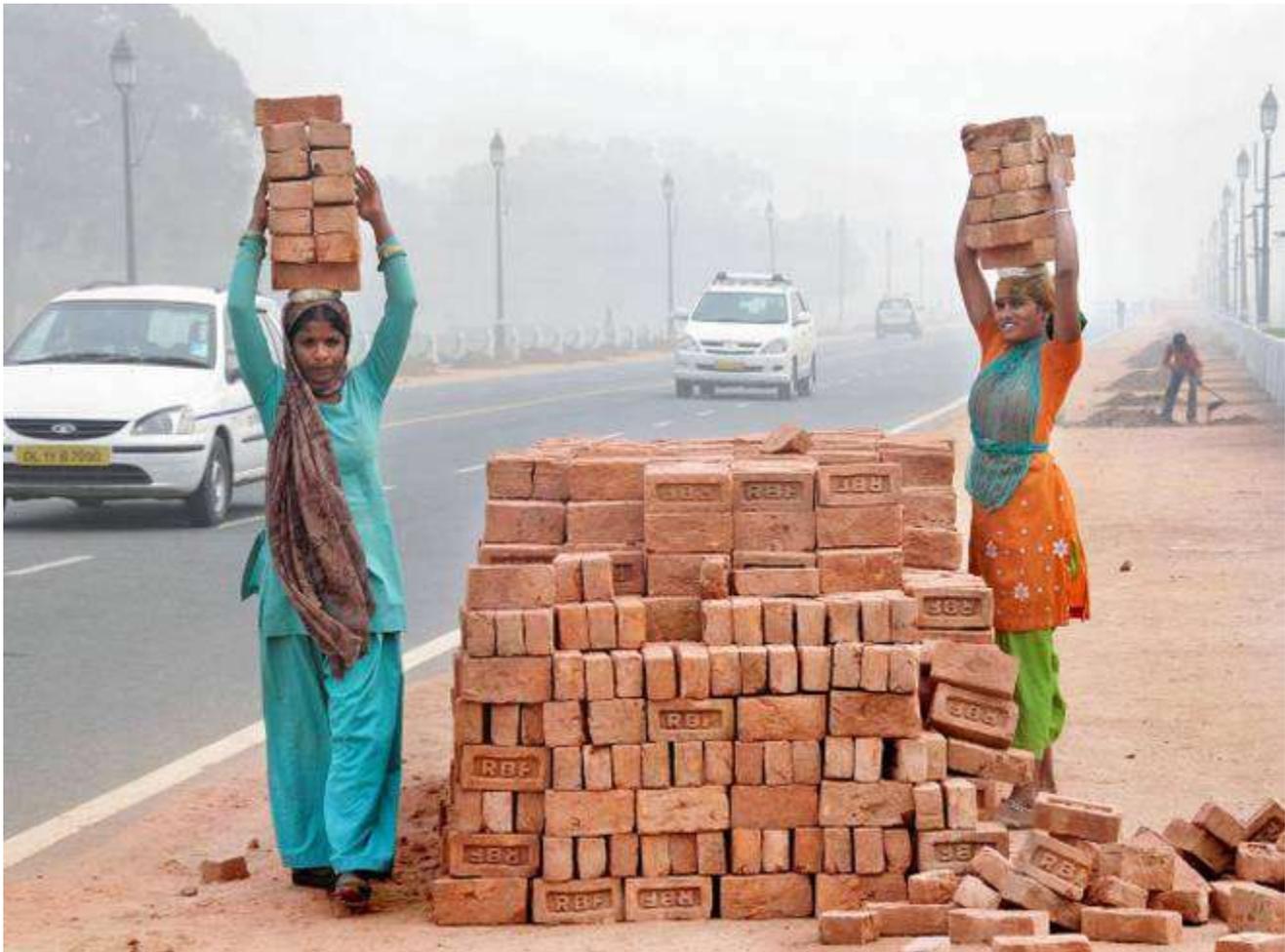


## Creating knowledge in social sciences

July 30, 2012 17:54 IST

Updated: July 30, 2012 17:55 IST



Pressing concern: Among the study themes of the Govind Ballabh Pant Social Science Institute, Allahabad, is the lot of workers in the informal sector.

**GUIDANCE PLUS The Govind Ballabh Pant Social Science Institute, Allahabad, maintains a national perspective on socioeconomic development with an interdisciplinary approach.**

The Govind Ballabh Pant Social Science Institute was established in 1980 as a constituent of the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). It became part of the University of Allahabad in 2005.

The institute, located at Jhusi in Allahabad (Website: [www.gbsssi.nic.in](http://www.gbsssi.nic.in)), aims at creating knowledge in the field of social sciences. Researchers in this field confront the emerging challenges in a continuously changing society. Developing critical approaches to studies on social phenomena, garnering empirical evidence and constructing a dialogical engagement with policymaking are parts of research.

The institute maintains a national perspective on socioeconomic development with an interdisciplinary approach. Often emphasis is given to problems of Uttar Pradesh. The institute systematically disseminates research findings to be used by government agencies and institutions with social concerns.

The areas of focus include development planning and policy, environment, health, population, rural development, community welfare, poverty alleviation, land reforms, culture, governance, and democracy.

The institute has a Museum of Ethnography and Development, envisaged as a 'living' museum depicting cultural and sub-cultural facets of contemporary community life with special focus on tribal groups.

The institute maintains ties with several organisations such as the Planning Commission, UNICEF, the World Bank, the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, the International Labour Organisation, the Department of Science and Technology, the Indian Council of Medical Research and the Union and the State Ministries.

#### Centres of research

There are six centres of research, which focus on specific areas: The Centre for Development, Planning and Policy focusses on the social and economic dimensions of development. It develops both theoretical and applied research. The Centre also seeks to provide critical and enabling perspectives on national economic development. To achieve this, the centre augments its technical resources through continuous collaboration with economists and policymakers at national and international levels.

The Centre for Democratic Processes and Institutions studies political institutions and processes. It analyses the institutional context of politics and the process of mobilisation of different sections of society into organised politics. Election campaign strategies, strengthening political support and inter-party differences as well as inter-party alignments are studied. Special emphasis is laid on the study of institutions for democratic decentralisation.

The Centre for Population, Environment and Health conducts research on critical linkages among population growth, environmental degradation and increased exposure to health risks. The findings are passed on to planners and policymakers.

The Centre for Power, Culture and Change works with expanded notions of “democracy” that includes democratisation of society and of institutions that are not confined to the State and its organs. Studies are done on trade unions, civil society organisations and community-based empowerment initiatives. Research on the modern State vis-à-vis in its colonial and postcolonial forms is also being carried out.

The Centre for Human Development aims at competence building among individuals and participatory development that ensures social harmony. Poverty in money is not the only handicap people face. They desire for a long and healthy life. They want to be literate and educated. They may crave for their own entrepreneurship. The centre studies these aspects.

The Centre for Rural Development and Management runs an MBA (Rural Development) programme. It also houses a Technology Innovations Laboratory. Through these initiatives, the centre aims at bridging the gap between the globalised world and our villages. The lab and its four rural centres help students relate their classroom theory with real-life situations.

#### Informal sector

The institute studies the nature and quality of life of people engaged in the informal sector and those in the marginalised and deprived sections of society. Ways and means to improve their lot are identified and suggested. It may not be wise to apply the gifts of technology blindly; such application should be culturally consonant. How various political institutions can be made to play positive roles in helping healthy social changes is also studied. The gap between social reforms and the benefit gained by the stakeholders has to be filled. Further, the institute tries to make the language and idiom of the findings easy for the common man. This move assumes relevance in the context of erudite dissertations remaining totally Greek to the real beneficiaries.

Evaluation of various rural development programmes and steps to make them more effective is another area of study and analysis. The pace of economic development has to be augmented. Macro-level approaches have to be meshed with the micro level for transforming social policies into action.

## Research

The institute offers doctoral and post-doctoral research work with ICSSR fellowship to the scholars. The University of Allahabad awards the D.Phil. degree. The institute provides a few short-term post-doctoral fellowships as well. The scholars get opportunities for interaction with visiting scholars and researchers with significant attainments. The following are the disciplines to which students are admitted for doctoral programmes:

Economics, Commerce, Education, Management, Business Administration, Psychology, Political Science, Public Administration, Sociology, Social Work, and Social Anthropology.

Postgraduates with at least 55 per cent marks who have cleared the National Eligibility Test or M.Phil. can apply for the Centrally Administered Doctoral Fellowships awarded by the ICSSR. Those with two years' research experience or with at least two articles published in professional journals in Social Sciences will be considered for these fellowships.

Doctoral fellows can work on live projects undertaken by the institute. There are regular programmes that train and acquaint research fellows in different epistemological and methodological issues.

Some of the topics of research undertaken are:

Outcomes of organisational capital.

Forced migration of workers.

Role of microfinance in poverty eradication among women.

The economics of regulation and pricing in the telecommunication industry.

Size-differential in agricultural land holding and its impact on productivity.

Impact of leather industry on environment.

Expectation, future market, and macro economy: an econometric analysis of Indian economy.

Reproductive health of Chamar women: an anthropological study.

Microfinance and women empowerment.

Strategy for human development in tribal areas.

Peasantry and the politics of land reforms.

Forest resources and the living pattern of forest-based people in Orissa.