

Health, Nutrition and Public Policies in West Bengal and Assam

Funding Agency: IDSK

Coordinator: Krishna Soman

In the beginning of 2004, with the help of eminent experts such as Dilip Mahalanabis, Senior Fellow of IDSK and Amitava Sen, a specialist on Child Health and Neonatology, IDSK launched a research programme on *Health, nutrition and public policies in West Bengal and Assam*.

Under this programme, research proposals from researchers, academics and health activists, focussing on health, nutrition and public policies in West Bengal were collected. After screening, ten proposals were selected and small research grants were offered to researchers to carry out their research. Krishna Soman of IDSK coordinated the programme.

After intensive discussions of the findings in three workshops and with the advice of a group of experts in these workshops, nine studies have been completed and researchers submitted their papers. Two of these papers have been published as Working papers of IDSK. The studies range from focussing on issues of health in the popular press to the measurement of the reasons for the high incidence of low birth-weight babies among the children born to Bengali women in public hospitals of Kolkata.

The subjects of the studies are listed below:

- A macro picture of West Bengal in respect of supply and utilization of public health facilities: Dhiraj Bandopadhyay.
- Recent changes in health policy and their problems: Rajashri Dasgupta.
- The socio-economic aspects behind the acceptance of and resistance against polio-vaccination: Jharna Panda.
- The role of self-help groups and voluntary organizations in promoting health, especially among women and children: Krishna Banerjee.
- The problems faced by women even when medical termination of pregnancy has been declared as a legal procedure: Krishna Roy.
- Analytical documentation of the success stories and best practices of the civil society organizations in public health care: Chittapriyo Sadhu.
- Health conditions of sex workers in Kolkata: Maitri Chakraborti and Durga Surekha.
- Maternal anthropometry and birth outcome among Bengalis in Kolkata: Samiran Bisai.
- Representation of public health in the print media: A survey and analysis: Swati Bhattacharjee.