

Single Window Service Centres

Indo-German
Social Security Programme
(IGSSP) Karnataka



Karnataka, the state leading India's Information Technology boom, has an estimated 28 million workers. As per the 2011 census, about three-quarters of them work in the unorganised sector. Even though social security schemes exist for unorganised workers, a vast majority of them are unable to access the benefits as awareness levels are low and the processes to enrol in multiple schemes is complicated.

To address the gap in access to social protection, starting in 2009 the government of Karnataka set up Worker Facilitation Centres (WFCs) on a pilot basis in five districts of the state. Germany's federal enterprise Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) supported the Department of Labour of the Karnataka government to establish 250 such centres.

These centres are an instrument under the Indian government's Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 and serve as a single window for unorganised workers to avail social security benefits. Based on the success of the pilot project, the state government has decided to set up 900 such centres, now named Single Window Service Centres (SWSCs). They will be located in one *taluk* each (administrative block within districts of Indian states) of all 30 districts of the state.

Background

Due to India's federal structure, social security is delivered through numerous schemes promoted and administered by different government agencies. This makes the delivery system complex and fragmented. To simplify access to social security for unorganised workers, who also have low levels of literacy, and to improve coordination for better awareness of the schemes, the government of Karnataka initiated Worker Facilitation Centres (WFCs). These were set up with the support of GIZ, under the ambit of the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act.

An independent study was undertaken jointly by the Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC) and Oxford University to assess the impact of the WFCs regarding information on and access to social security benefits among unorganised workers in the pilot areas. The study revealed success both in generating awareness and offering better access to social security schemes for the target population.

The Karnataka government's new initiative to establish Single Window Service Centres (SWSCs) is a multi-departmental exercise supported by GIZ's Indo-German Social Security Programme (IGSSP) in Karnataka. The SWSCs are embedded in the existing local government structure, with *Gram Panchayat* (village council) Secretaries in rural areas and Community Organisers in urban wards acting as facilitators. These community facilitators identify unorganised workers in the area, raise awareness on available social security schemes and assist eligible workers in enrolling for the schemes.





improving access to social security through the concept of Single Window Service Centres

Contributions by the Indo-German Social Security Programme – Karnataka

SETTING UP SINGLE WINDOW SERVICE CENTRES

The project provides technical and procedural support to the state Department of Labour to optimise the SWSC concept. This includes establishing local-level implementation structures, defining quality control standards and designing a customised Management Information System to track beneficiaries and monitor progress of the SWSCs.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The project offers technical knowhow to conduct impact assessment of the Single Window Service Centres in improving access of unorganised workers to social security schemes.

CAPACITY BUILDING

IGSSP in Karnataka provides capacity building measures at different levels.

Together with the Administrative Training Institute of Karnataka (ATI), it supports development of training modules for key government officials. It also conducts training of trainers who equip facilitators and other stakeholders for implementation of the SWSCs.

COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS RAISING

The project develops appropriate Information – Education – Communication (IEC) materials to raise awareness amongst workers. It also prepares information to publicise the SWSCs over mass media channels such as the internet.

SOUTH-SOUTH EXCHANGE AND BILATERAL LEARNING

The project shares its experience on the SWSCs with policy makers by facilitating studies, south-south exchange visits, workshops and seminars on the theme.

Achievements

- In the pilot phase, the Worker Facilitation Centres (WFCs) improved awareness of social security schemes amongst unorganised worker households by 13 percent and access to schemes by 15 percent.
- More unorganised workers accessed contributory social security schemes, which usually have a lower uptake, as compared to non-contributory schemes.
- Even though communities were not homogeneous in terms of economic or social status, literacy levels or assets, the facilitators reached out to all unorganised workers in their area.
- Based on success of the WFCs in the pilot phase, the Government of Karnataka is now establishing 900 Single Window Service Centres (SWSCs) in all districts of the state.
- IEC materials including five short films, six radio jingles, brochures and bill boards have been developed and are ready for use by the state government.
- The website on SWSCs in Karnataka (<http://sws-karnataka.org/>) has been launched. Its aim is to build awareness amongst families who employ unorganised workers, as also to be a general source of information on the programme.
- The SWSC concept has been shared at national and international fora, including a technical workshop on Integrating Social Policies and the Delivery of Social Protection Floors organised by ILO in Siem Reap, Cambodia, a regional conference on Delivering Social Protection to Unorganized Workers in Bangalore, India and a Regional Policy Dialogue on the Role of Social Protection in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

Access to social security through Worker Facilitation Centres (WFCs)

75% of applicants (129,385) gained access to social security

Over 64% (173,043) submitted applications

268,433 unorganised workers identified



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