



Talk: Nuclear Energy, Democracy and Sedition

Speaker:

Arati Chokshi, Karnataka secretary of People's Union for Civil Liberties, & Atul Chokshi, Indian Institute of Science (IISc)

Date / Time:

April 26, 2012 - 2:00pm

Venue:

Room 307, Third Floor, Pixel B, APU

Abstract:

On April 26, 1986, the world stood shocked when the catastrophic nuclear accident occurred at Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine (then officially Ukrainian SSR). Many such 'accidents' in the recent times have led many to re-think the 'cost' of such nuclear power plants. This 'cost' goes beyond critical examination of the financial viability of nuclear energy and raises important questions of radiation-related health-effects, nuclear accidents and disasters, and environmental costs. While countries such as Germany are phasing out nuclear plants, India is among those countries planning to set up a large number of new nuclear plants, claiming it to be the unavoidable route to meet energy needs.

The setting up of nuclear plants without the consent of local communities has also led to the formation of several people's movements in places like Kaiga, Jaitapur and Koodankulam. These movements are inextricably linked with issues of displacement, loss of livelihood, health and safety. The state has gone on the offensive, and has attempted to suppress these movements through various means. Thousands of peaceful protestors have been slapped with charges such as "sedition" and "waging war against the state". It is the context, that one must examine the question of what democracy really means, when it comes to the nuclear question.

A Note on the Speaker:

Arati Chokshi is the Karnataka secretary of People's Union for Civil Liberties. Previously, she has held faculty position at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics. She completed her doctoral studies from University of California, Los Angeles, worked with NASA, Princeton University and California Institute of Technology prior to returning to India. To know more about nuclear energy <http://araticchokshi.blogspot.in/>.

Atul Chokshi is a professor in the Materials Engineering Department at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc). Atul got his Ph. D. from University of Southern California and was faculty at

University of California, San Diego before we returned to India in 1994. He has published articles in Current Science, raising critical questions on GM crops and Nuclear Energy.