

**A WORKSHOP
FROM THE
PEOPLE'S
PERSPECTIVE**

DEMOCRACY

DATA



HEALTH

**VENUE (AND ORGANIZER):
AZIM PREMJI UNIVERSITY
(BANGALORE)
MAY 21 - 22**

For Dreze and Sen (2002), democracy includes “widespread actual participation of people, including the most disadvantaged”. Citizenship education therefore requires a deep understanding of the concerns and difficulties that marginalised communities face in securing services essential to their well-being. Healthcare services constitute an important aspect of living. We need to address several questions: What role do communities have as active and participating citizens in improving healthcare services? What educational needs arise in this context? And specifically, does an ability to work with data have a role in fulfilling such educational needs? We need to explore the contours of community knowledge related to healthcare provision, and to examine its relation to formal knowledge.

Such an exploration forms the core of the data citizenship initiative taken up by Tamil Nadu Science Forum (TNSF), a volunteer platform for a statewide people’s science movement. TNSF has been active in people-led initiatives to improve health services since the 1990s in multiple districts in the state of Tamil Nadu. TNSF volunteers have acted as mediators between the community and state-run health services in the area of reproductive health and infant care, providing support to women and children.

As a part of this study, we have been working with two marginalized communities, one in Ambur district in a village close to the highway, where tannery is the main source of livelihood, and the other, an agorcultural village in Tirupattur district. A team of 20+ TNSF volunteers have been interacting with the community on their understanding and attitudes to healthcare services. The volunteers are a mixed group of men and women, of different ages, with a range of educational qualifications, from those who have completed school to those who have a university degree. They hold different occupations, as teachers in regular schools or night schools, workers in government welfare schemes, etc. A few are college students. Their involvement in TNSF activities is voluntary and without any remuneration.

This workshop, titled "Data, Health and Democracy: From the People's Perspective" (conducted in Tamil) is planned principally as enrichment and capacity building for these volunteers. The objectives of the workshop are to deepen the participants' understanding of the role official data plays in the political economy, empower them with access to information (using RTI), help them to construct surveys that elicit information and narratives in a participatory manner, and to help them familiarise with the use of technological tools for accessing data, recording and updating data.

A WORKSHOP

Day 1:

Opening Address (9:30 - 10 AM): Tamoghna Halder

Data and Political Economy (10 - 10:45 AM): R Ramanujam

Tea Break

Open Interaction with Participants (11:00 AM - 12:30 PM)

Lunch Break

Right to Information (History, Scope and Guidelines to file):

Jeyasundari S

Tea Break

Technology for the People (3:00 - 5:00 PM): Sriranjani

Ranganathan

Day 2:

Designing a Survey (9:00 - 10:30 AM): Raghav Chakravarthy

Health Insurance Schemes in Tamil Nadu (10:45 AM - 12 Noon): Ravi Subramaniam

Lunch Break

Citizenship and Data (1:30 - 2:15 PM): R Ramanujam and Ravi Subramaniam

Open Discussion on Data, Public Health and Democracy (2:30 - 3:00 PM): Led by Manicka Muniraj

Closing Address (3:00 - 3:30 PM): R Ramanujam

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