

## Workshop on **People's Health and Public Policy**

organised by

Institute of Development Studies Kolkata, Pratichi Institute, Society for Health and Demographic Surveillance and Asian Development Research Institute (Patna)

on

*17-18 July 2014*

The workshop on *People's Health and Public Policy* organized by the Institute of Development Studies Kolkata (IDSK), Pratichi Institute, Society for Health and Demographic Surveillance and Asian Development Research Institute (Patna) on 17 and 18 July 2014 at IDSK discussed the various aspects of health care in India and the state of West Bengal with special emphasis on public health. The first day of the workshop devoted to the presentations of 11 research papers drawing on extensive primary surveys, and subsequent discussions on the papers. On the second day a panel of distinguished academicians, government representatives and policymakers as well as health activists and practitioners deliberated on a number of problems related to the health sector as well as the ways in which these problems could be remedied. The speakers of the panel discussion included Jean Dréze, Visiting Professor, Department of Economics, Ranchi University, Dilip Ghosh, Former Special Secretary, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of West Bengal, Shashi Panja, Minister of State in charge of Women, Child Development and Social Welfare, Abhirup Sarkar, Professor, ISI and Chairman, State Finance Commission, West Bengal, Punyabrata Gun, Shramajibi Swasthya Udyog, Modhumita Dobe, professor and Head, All India Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, Kolkata. The discussion was chaired by Ashokendu Sengupta, Chairperson, *West Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights (WBCPCR)*. The assembly was concluded with a lecture by Professor Amartya Sen and came out with the following major points:

1. India's health policies suffer from the neglect of the promotion of protective health care over emphasizing clinical care.
2. Despite a general lack of provision of public health wherever such facilities provide a modicum of care, people in general and the disadvantaged in particular tend to avail of such care.
3. But one real concern seems to be that going against the lessons learnt globally India's health care vision seems to be veering towards greater reliance on commercial healthcare at the expense of publicly provided universal health coverage.
4. The forum is a modest but sincere attempt towards initiating a much required public discussion and debate on these critical aspects of health care in India such that the politics of silence regarding these fundamental issues of human development - a regrettable phenomenon in India - is challenged through research as well as action.

A brief report on Professor Sen's lecture published by *The Telegraph* is given below:

# The Telegraph

## SEN ON HEALTH CARE



Nobel laureate Amartya Sen on Friday stressed the need for the "psychology of responsibility" during a lecture on "People's Health and Public Policy" at the Institute of Development Studies Kolkata in Salt Lake.

"Responsibility is a bigger thing than accountability. The society cannot run without responsibility," the economist said during an interaction with the media after the lecture in which he explained how countries have over the years given importance to ensuring universal health care.

Sen's lecture was part of a two-day workshop on "People's Health and Public Policy".

Sen hailed the "remarkable achievements" in health care in states such as Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Tripura.

"We live in an imperfect world. We cannot eliminate the difference in medical care between the rich and the poor. But we can eliminate the unavailability of good medical care for everyone," Sen said.

Picture by Sanjoy Chattopadhyaya