

Report

Face to Face Training Session India HPSR Fellowship Program - Cohort 2021

30 August – 4 September 2021



Contact

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This report titled 'Face to Face Training Session – India HPSR Fellowship program' has been developed by Health Systems Transformation Platform (HSTP) and the partner(s) to share the summary of proceedings of this training session.

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Objectives

Health Systems Transformation Platform (HSTP) is a not-for-profit organization based in New Delhi, India. Our mission is to enable policymakers and researchers in the Indian health systems to generate and utilize evidence for improving health outcomes and financial protection. We work in the areas of health policy, service delivery, financing, and health policy and systems research in partnership with Indian & Global researchers/ institutions.

Anchored by HSTP, the India Health Policy Systems & Research (HPSR) Fellowships program aims to build capacity of mid-career public health professionals for strengthening health systems through evidence-based policymaking. This blended training program is spread over a period of 18 months. Details [here](#). The fellowship is organized in collaboration with WHO Alliance for Health Systems and Policy Research, Institute of Public Health Bengaluru, Achutha Menon Centre for Health Systems Studies, The George Institute of Global Health - India, Nossal Institute of Global Health, Institute of Tropical Medicine Antwerp, & India Health Systems Collaborative.

Launched in January 2021, the fellowship trains 20 fellows every year. The online phase for Cohort 2021 was completed in June 2021. The Face-to-Face training session was organised from 30 Aug - 4 Sept 2021 in New Delhi. The aim was to organise an in-person interaction with peers and faculty to strengthen the concepts taught in the online phase and allow fellows to reflect, refine & explore the paradigms of their research question further. This report provides the summary of learnings from the proceedings. (Detailed agenda is in page 5).

The sessions were facilitated by N Devadasan, Dorothy Lall, Sumit Kane, Prashanth NS, Rakhal Gaitonde, Upendra Bhojani, Diljith Kannan, Devaki Nambiar & Surekha Garimella. A session on understanding policy interface for evidence-based decision making in health was organized with Ms Arti Ahuja (Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare). Training focussed on strengthening research proposals, developing well-crafted research questions, theoretical frameworks, dimensions of power in policymaking, HPSR methods, effective policy engagement & ethical considerations of the research study. This was organised through peer learning activities, group work, presentations, discussions, and lecture sessions by faculty.

We are grateful for guidance and contribution of the HSTP Board, HSTP & ACCESS Health International Management, faculty & experts who participated and shared their insights. We are grateful to Ms. Arti Ahuja, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare for sharing her valuable insights into policy making and engaging in a policy interface session with the fellows of Cohort 2021.

Special thanks to HSTP colleagues for their continuous support - Rajeev Sadanandan, Sridhar Gudthur, K Rahul S Reddy, Shilpa John, Diwakar Gautam, Peter Parekattil, Baiju Paul & M Rugma.

- Training began with an overview of the attributes of a well-crafted research question (RQ). The fellows worked in groups to review each other's research questions in light of these attributes, and shared constructive feedback. Discussion highlighted appropriate use of words in framing a RQ, context of RQs; implications for RQs & its impact on policy, evolution of the RQ over time, policy analysis & discourse; narrowing down ambitious and broad questions, rooting RQs in some social problem, narrowing down the scope of study based on resources and data available, retaining scope to change the nature of question & including equity dimensions. RQs were further strengthened by including health systems, systems thinking & equity lens. Advancing the RQ, transformative value of research and critically engaging with literature was explored.
- Each day the fellows presented their revised RQ after incorporating feedback from peers & faculty. Key terms & concepts of research process - recognition of different ontologies & epistemologies, the relation between these methods were discussed. Various paradigms such as positivism, interpretivism, realism and pragmatism along with the qualitative & quantitative enquiries were discussed. The importance of conceptual, analytical & theoretical frameworks was highlighted. The fluidity in the paradigms was acknowledged by the fellows.
- A session was organized on understanding the policy interface. A conversation with Ms. Arti Ahuja, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, detailed upon various means & processes by which government articulates its policies. The discussion highlighted importance of evidence-based research & its different facets such as data analysis, programmatic inputs & monitoring systems that are brought together on a single platform.
- Sessions on stakeholder analysis and the concept of power explored the various sources, dimensions & expressions of power in the policy making process were discussed. Analysis of policy was also taken up and the fellows worked together on a case study to identify the main actors, their sources, spaces & levels at which they exercised power. Strategies to conduct an effective search for relevant documents and ways of analysing policy documents for the research were explored.
- Methods for HPSR - mixed-methods, Participatory Rural Appraisal, Case Study, conducting in-depth interviews and writing effective proposals including detailed budgeting were discussed at length.
- The session on engaging with policy makers emphasized the importance of developing relationships with government actors as well as defining knowledge translation & various agenda setting, policy development or implementation factors. The importance of ethics & safeguarding in HPSR was highlighted during the sessions. Necessity & need for ethical considerations that affect all aspects of a research study reflecting in its rigour was also discussed in detail.
- On the final day, the fellows presented their modified research proposals incorporating learnings & feedback received during the face-to-face session.

Next Steps

Robust scientific research and evidence synthesis is fundamental to evidence-based policy making in India. At the core of this are the Indian researchers and policy makers. We value their contribution to current understanding of the Indian health systems. To enable transformation and lead the system on the path towards universal health coverage and achieving Sustainable Development Goals India needs enhanced research capabilities especially in conducting health policy and systems research. HSTP's program on enhancing capabilities is committed to continue conducting activities in this direction.

This workshop provided the opportunity for the India HPSR fellows, Cohort 2021 to interact with peers & faculty to strengthen the learnings carried over from the online phase. It also provided a platform to develop a collaborative network of health policy & systems researchers. By the end of this session, the fellows develop high value research proposals. These proposals will be screened by a scientific review panel of HPSR researchers. Fellows will now move to final phase of the program - the implementation & mentorship phase, where they will be mentored by national & international experts and conduct their research over a period of the next 12 months.

Agenda

Taj Ambassador, New Delhi
30 Aug - 4 Sep 2021

DATE	SESSION 1 9:00 to 10:30	SESSION 2 11:00 to 12:30	SESSION 3 13:30 to 15:00	SESSION 4 15:30 to 17:00	SESSION 5 17:30 to 18:30
MON 30.08.21	Welcome address – Rajeev Sadanandan Icebreaking session – N Devadasan	Types of RQs – Sumit Kane Critical Reading of RQs – Fellows (<i>Group Work</i>) – Sumit Kane & Dorothy Lall	Strengthening RQs by including health systems, systems thinking and equity lens – Prashanth NS & Bruno Marchal	Revision of RQ keeping HS / ST / equity in mind <i>Group work</i> - Tutors	Making an effective PowerPoint presentation – N Devadasan
TUES 31.08.21	Presentation of revised RQ – 5 fellows	Research Paradigms Matching RQ to Design & Methods – Sumit Kane & Dorothy Lall	Reflections/Exploring own paradigm of their Research Question – Sumit Kane & Dorothy Lall	Revision of Design and Methods keeping RQ and paradigm in mind <i>Group work</i> - Tutors	Interaction with a Policy maker Ms. Arti Ahuja, AS Health, MoHFW, GoI
WED 01.09.21	Presentation of revised RQ + Methods – 5 fellows	HPSR Methods 1 – Stakeholder analysis – Concept of power – Implementation gap – Rakhal Gaitonde	HPSR Methods 1 – Stakeholder analysis – Concept of power – Implementation gap - Rakhal Gaitonde	Revision of Design and Methods keeping RQ and paradigm and power in mind <i>Group work</i> - Tutors	Power Search using google - Diljith Kannan
THURS 02.09.21	Presentation of revised RQ + Methods – 5 fellows	HPSR Methods - Dorothy Lall	Writing a proposal + making a budget - N Devadasan	Revision of Design and Methods keeping RQ and paradigm and power in mind <i>Group work</i> - Tutors	Analysis of Policy Documents – Upendra Bhojani
FRI 03.09.21	Presentation of revised RQ + Methods – 4 fellows	Engaging with policymakers – Devaki Nambiar	Ethics and Safeguarding in HPSR – Surekha Garimella & Devaki Nambiar	Finalizing their proposal. Individual work with peer support	
SAT 04.09.21	Finalizing research proposal. Individual work with peer support	Finalizing research proposal. Individual work with peer support	Final Presentation to Peers	Final Presentation to Peers	

Participants

S. No	Name	Organization
	Fellows	
1	Akanksha Sonal	King George Medical University
2	Anika Juneja	Institute of Public Health
3	Ankita Mukherjee	The George Institute for Global Health India
4	Antony Stanley	Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences & Technology
5	Anuj Ghanekar	Urban Health & Climate Resilience Center of Excellence
6	Anupama Sanjeev	Ramaiah Public Policy Centre
7	Deepak Behera	Manipal Academy of Higher Education
8	Deepshikha Chhetri	The Ballot House (UK) India
9	Gitismita Naik	All India Institute of Medical Sciences
10	Harsha Joshi	India Primary Health Care Initiative Project
11	Jithesh Veetilakath	Government of Kerala
12	Mintu Moni Sarma	The Ant
13	Mohammad Hifz Ur	MM Medical College
14	Ponnambily Chandy	Chettinad College of Nursing
15	Rekha M Ravindran	State Health Systems Resource Centre
16	Sabu K Ulahannan	Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences & Technology
17	Sapna Mishra	Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences & Technology
18	Sunu C Thomas	Society for Health Information Systems Programmes
19	Tanu Anand	Indian Council of Medical Research
	Faculty	
20	N Devadasan	Institute of Public Health Bengaluru
21	Dorothy Lall	Independent HPSR Expert
22	Sumit Kane	Nossal Institute of Global Health
23	Prashanth NS	Institute of Public Health Bengaluru
24	Rakhal Gaitonde	Achutha Menon Centre for Health Systems Studies
25	Devaki Nambiar	The George Institute for Global Health India
26	Surekha Garimella	The George Institute for Global Health India
27	Upendra Bhojani	Institute of Public Health Bengaluru
28	Diljith Kannan	Indian Institute of Management Bangalore
	Facilitators	
29	Rajeev Sadanandan	Health Systems Transformation Platform
30	Shilpa John	Health Systems Transformation Platform
31	Rahul S Reddy Kadarpetta	Health Systems Transformation Platform
32	Sridhar Guduthur	Health Systems Transformation Platform
33	Diwakar Gautam	Health Systems Transformation Platform
34	Peter Parekattil	Health Systems Transformation Platform
35	M Rugma	Health Systems Transformation Platform
36	Baiju Paul	Health Systems Transformation Platform