

## **Internal Seminar**

### **Curiosity and questioning among school-age children**

#### **Dharmavarapu Chandrika**

#### **TIFR-Hyderabad**

Curiosity is a basic human drive and its origins date back to our evolutionary history. It is fundamental to cognition and learning. In early childhood, exploratory behaviour and questioning indicate a child's curiosity. Researchers in the field show that the process of questioning and seeking answers is how children build their early knowledge base. However, evidence suggests that student's questioning wanes in schools, thus depriving them of their most powerful tool of learning.

Sawaliram 2.0 provides a framework to investigate questions asked by school-age children. There are currently 4000 questions in the repository of which 900 questions, from the TCIS - UoH school outreach program and from some Tribal Ashram Shalas in Maharashtra, were analysed. We look at what subjects interest these young minds and the contexts that elicit questions. We draw insights from the school outreach program to establish the conditions that encourage questioning among students and also characterise their questions by the type of information requested. Between grades 6 to 12, most of the students' spontaneous questions came from biology (especially human physiology) and physics (especially astronomy and light). Their questions were often stimulated by everyday phenomena and life experiences, strangely, not from their textbooks! We find curiosity alive and well among students. This analysis of questions has implications for parents, teachers, educators, curriculum developers who engage with children and shape their educational experience.

***Wednesday, Nov 27<sup>th</sup> 2019***

***2:30 PM (Tea/Coffee at 2:00 PM)***

***Seminar Hall, TIFR-H***