

'Good, independent data can help govt. frame policies better'

Much of the policies are bereft of data packing, says Minister Thiaga Rajan

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Much of our politics today is shaped and built on differences in philosophies, values and approach, but what gets lost in that process is finding out whether any of the outcomes are fully achieved, said Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan.

"What gets lost is whether we achieve any outcomes. If we look at the attention paid to results, outcomes of policies, it is miniscule. Much of our policies are bereft of data packing or thorough analysis. An institution like the Madras Institute of Development Studies (MIDS) could add a lot of value to the right government with the right kind of mindset, and connectivity at the right time of process," he said.

He was speaking at the launch of the book "Economic Policy in COVID-19 Times" and its Tamil translation "Perunthottrum Poruladhaara Kolgaiyum", edited by P.G. Babu, Director, MIDS, on the MIDS campus here on Tuesday.

The book reflects on the immediate impact of COVID-19 on the lives, livelihood and policies in Tamil



Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Palanivel Thiaga Rajan releasing the book 'Economic Policy in COVID-19 Times' in Chennai on Tuesday. ■ S.R. RAGHUNATHAN

Nadu. Among other issues, food security, affordable housing and infrastructure development post the pandemic and the role of the State and the Panchayat Raj institutions to aid social development were also examined.

Mr. Thiaga Rajan said a disconnect between intent and outcome among all levels of government was common. But what would really help the government was if that gap could be bridged with good and independent data, it could help frame policies.

"The irony is that we have several thousand employees

in the department of Economics and Statistics. I do not know what they do. So far I have not benefited from it in any way," he said.

J. Jeyaranjan, vice chairman, Tamil Nadu State Planning Commission, said one of the main problems faced by the government was the lack of availability of data. "Data is collected by the State agencies for the Union government and it is taken away from us and by the time it comes back to us, it becomes irrelevant and useless," he said.

Mr. Jeyaranjan said the State government departments must go in for collect-

ing their own data sets, make them available as early as possible and work in close collaboration with institutions such as the MIDS, which has the capacity to analyse the data and provide a summary of it quickly.

Proposal for support

N. Gopalaswami, Chairman, MIDS, said the institution would be submitting a proposal, seeking financial support from the Tamil Nadu government since the Indian Council of Social Science Research suddenly changed the funding pattern, which affected the institution badly in the last two years.