

STORIES IN NUMBERS

Storytelling and Data Interpretations

3-Day Residential Workshop

02nd - 4th June 2026 | New Delhi

Concept Note

Every rupee that doesn't reach a village has a paper trail. Every corporation that poisons a river has filed documents with the government. Every scheme that fails communities leaves a record in a budget, an audit, a tender. The evidence of power's failures is hiding in plain sight, in public databases, government portals, and corporate filings that are technically open to everyone and practically accessible to almost no one.

This is not an accident. Complexity is a barrier. Jargon is a barrier. The sheer volume of data, and the absence of anyone to teach you how to read it, is a barrier. And so the people with the most at stake, the activist on the ground, the community worker in the field, the organiser building a case against a corporation or a government, are also the people least equipped to use the evidence that already exists.

This workshop is built for them. Over three days, participants learn to read budgets and track whether public money reaches the people it was meant for. They learn to navigate corporate records, cross-reference open databases, and find the story, or the case, that the numbers are telling. They learn to present data as evidence, and evidence as narrative, in ways that create pressure and demand accountability. Not as journalists. Not as researchers. But as citizens who know how to use what is already theirs.

The larger ambition is simple but serious. India's civil society is vast, passionate, and close to the ground. What it often lacks is the language that power speaks, the language of data, of evidence, of documented proof. This workshop is one attempt to close that gap. Because when the people most affected by bad governance and corporate impunity can read the records, interrogate the numbers, and tell the story with evidence in hand, accountability stops being a demand and starts becoming inevitable.

Objectives

The workshop aims to:

- Build participants' ability to access and interpret public data sources.
- Develop skills to analyse financial and policy-related datasets.

- Enable participants to track the flow of money across government and private systems.
- Strengthen the ability to identify gaps between claims and reality.
- Equip participants to translate complex data into clear, compelling narratives.

What Participants Will Learn

- A practical understanding of how to read government budgets, going beyond headline numbers to track whether allocated funds reach intended schemes and communities
- The ability to interpret audit reports and government records, and identify gaps between what was promised and what was delivered
- Skills to navigate corporate records, understand basic accounting forensics, and identify red flags in private sector operations
- Familiarity with open data sources, including government databases and international financial institution (IFI) datasets
- Hands-on experience in cleaning and analysing datasets, including the use of pivot tables and basic data tools
- An understanding of how to choose appropriate visualisations to communicate data effectively to different audiences
- The ability to identify stories within datasets and public documents, and develop them into structured narratives
- Techniques to combine data with human stories, ensuring that evidence supports and strengthens the narrative
- A grounding in ethical and responsible storytelling, including accuracy, clarity, and accountability

The workshop is designed as a hands-on, practice-oriented learning space.

Sessions will combine:

- Conceptual inputs from investigative and data journalism
- Guided walkthroughs of datasets and public records
- Practical exercises using real-world data
- Group-based story development
- Discussions on ethics, law, and editorial responsibility
- Participants will work directly with datasets across themes such as public finance, corporate accountability, and climate finance, and will be encouraged to engage critically with both the possibilities and limitations of data.

Participants will explore how to:

- Shape complex data into narratives that are clear, credible, and impactful
- Lead with the human dimension, while grounding stories in evidence
- Build arguments that hold up not just emotionally, but factually and ethically

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

- Develop confidence in engaging with datasets that previously felt inaccessible
- Gain practical tools to investigate and interpret data-driven issues
- Produce initial data-backed story ideas or outputs
- Build a stronger understanding of how data can be used to hold power to account
- Most importantly, participants will leave with a shift in perspective, seeing data not as abstract or intimidating, but as a powerful and accessible way of understanding and communicating truth.

Target Audience:

The workshop is designed for journalists, researchers, and civil society practitioners who work with data in some form but want to go deeper, into sharper analysis, stronger storytelling, and more accountable public interest work.

Note:

- A Certificate of Completion will be provided to participants who successfully attend the works
- The primary language of the workshop will be English.
- Participants will be charged a nominal fee of ₹3000, which partially covers accommodation and food expenses during the workshop.
- Travel costs will need to be borne by participants themselves.
- Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted via email. Payment details will be shared with shortlisted participants upon selection.
- Participants are required to bring their own laptop for the workshop.

Organised by: Centre for Financial Accountability

Knowledge Partner: The Reporters Collective