



## Annual Conference

Indian Health Economics and Policy Association

# New Paradigms in Health Economics and Policy

Organized by  
Institute of Economic Growth



# Indian Health Economics and Policy Association



## About IHEPA:

IHEPA is a professional body registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1960. The need to have a formal body that would serve as a platform for discussing and sharing intellectual ideas pertaining to the Indian health sector was strongly felt by a group of like-minded health economists and policy experts. The IHEPA has been created to enable economists and other social science researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to exchange, deliberate, and discuss key issues and strategies in the health sector in India as well as globally.



## Vision:

A vibrant and dynamic association that encourages and facilitates the exchange and sharing of knowledge, ideas and experience among researchers, policymakers and practitioners working in and on the health sector.



## Objectives:

To offer a platform for learning, knowledge-sharing and networking to all those interested in contributing towards a more equitable and efficient health sector. To bridge the gap between research and practice by bringing together researchers/academicians and policymakers, both national and international.

IHEPA welcomes young scholars and researchers, grassroots practitioners, the private sector and community-based organizations to become part of the organization, so that all views and experiences can be heard, debated and imbibed, if found useful. While an Indian association, IHEPA would equally like to reach out to the international community of researchers, experts, managers and policymakers, and include them in its fold to make it into truly global association.



## About IEG:

The Institute of Economic Growth (IEG) is an autonomous, multidisciplinary Centre for advanced research and training. Widely recognized as a Centre of excellence, it is one of India's leading academic institutions in the fields of economic and social development. Its faculty of about 20 social scientists (economists, demographers and sociologists) and a large body of supporting research staff focus on emerging and often cutting-edge areas of social and policy concern. Many past and current faculty members are internationally renowned and award-winning scholars.

IEG's research falls into nine broad themes: agriculture and rural development, environment and resource economics; globalization and trade; industry, labour and welfare; macro-economic policy and modelling; population and development; health policy; and social change and social structure. In addition, the Institute organizes regular training programmes for the trainee officers of the Indian Economic Service and occasional courses for officers of the Indian Statistical Service, NABARD, and university teachers. The Institute's faculty members supervise doctoral students from India and abroad, provide regular policy inputs, and engage with government, civil society and international organisations. Over the years IEG has hosted many renowned international scholars, including Nobel Laureates Elinor Ostrom and Amartya Sen, and others such as Ronald Dore, Yujiro Hayami, Jan Breman and Nicolas Stern. Since 2022, in joint partnership with the Ministry of Finance, IEG organizes the Kautilya Economic Conclave, a leading conference on global economic issues. Founded in 1952, by the eminent economist V.K.R.V. Rao, IEG's faculty, Board of Directors and Trustees have included a wide range of distinguished intellectuals and policymakers.

## Conference Theme:

### New Paradigms in Health Economics and Policy

The Institute of Economic Growth is organizing the 12th Annual Conference of the Indian Health Economics and Policy Association (IHEPA) from January 22nd–23rd, 2025 at India International Centre, New Delhi. The theme of the conference is “New Paradigms in Health Economics and Policy”, reflecting the evolving landscape of health research and policymaking in response to emerging global challenges.

In recent times, the field of health economics has undergone significant transformation, requiring new approaches to address complex healthcare issues. The conference serves as a platform for interdisciplinary discussions on emerging areas of health policy, including innovative healthcare financing models, the role of technology in healthcare delivery, nutrition security, and gender equity in health systems.

Bringing together experts, scholars, policymakers, and practitioners from diverse disciplines, the conference aims to facilitate collaboration in research, identify key policy concerns, and develop creative solutions for improving population health. It also focuses on the integration of data-driven decision-making and evidence-based policy formulation to ensure the effectiveness of health interventions.

### Objective of the Conference:

The primary objective of the conference is to foster open discourse and interdisciplinary collaboration in health economics and policy. It seeks to:



Through meaningful discussions and knowledge-sharing, the conference aims to contribute to the advancement of health economics research and its application in evidence-based policymaking.

## IHEPA – Office Bearers

### **President:**

Udaya Shankar Mishra

### **Vice President:**

Sunil Nandraj

### **Secretary:**

William Joe

### **Treasurer:**

Manisha Karne

### **Joint Secretary:**

Salim Shah

Reshmi Sengupta

### **Members of Governing Council:**

Mayanka Ambade

Rudra Narayan Mishra

S K Godwin

Sunil Rajpal

Vinod B Annigeri

## IHEPA – Previous Conferences

1st	Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi
2nd	Institute of Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru
3rd	Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economic, Pune
4th	Department of Economics, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur
5th	Institute of Development Studies, Kolkata
6th	Pondicherry University, Pondicherry
7th	Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation, Thiruvananthapuram
8th	National Institute of Science and Education and Research (NISER), Odisha
9th	Online (COVID-19)
10th	Online (COVID-19)
11th	FLAME University, Pune
12th	Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi



## Conference President

Dr. Purnima Menon is Senior Director for Food and Nutrition Policy. She also serves as Acting Director for Transformation Strategies (as of January 2025). In this dual role, Dr. Menon works closely with IFPRI's Director General and IFPRI's research unit directors to manage IFPRI's global research strategy.

## Distinguished Personality

Dr. Shamika Ravi is currently a member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, and Secretary to Government of India. Previously, Dr. Ravi was Director of Research at Brookings India, Vice President Economic Policy at Observer Research Foundation and Non-Resident Senior Fellow of Governance Studies Program at Brookings Institution. Her research focuses on economics of development including areas of Finance, Healthcare, Urbanization, Gender Equality, and Welfare and Poverty.



# 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

Indian Health Economics and Policy Association

## New Paradigms in Health Economics and Policy

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### Inaugural Session

#### Opening Remarks by Prof. Udaya Shankar Mishra



**Prof. Mishra** emphasized the rapid evolution of IHEPA as a platform bridging academia, policymakers, and development professionals. He highlighted the importance of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their dual policy approaches: Provisioning (government resources, schemes, and incentives) and Enabling (creating an environment where these resources function effectively). He stressed that research serves two primary purposes—identification and intervention—urging the research community to strategically balance both to build a healthier India.

#### Introductory Remarks by Dr. Suresh Sharma

**Dr. Sharma** reflected on the lessons from COVID-19, emphasizing the urgency of strengthening healthcare access, leveraging technology for better outcomes, and improving health financing. He highlighted the Population Research Center's role in identifying health-related issues and evaluating government programs to enhance policy effectiveness.



## Welcome Address by Prof. Chetan Ghate



Prof. Ghate outlined the major themes of the conference, including innovative health financing, social determinants of health, and digital health solutions. He stressed the significance of nutrition-focused interventions as a critical component of public health policy and the need for stronger interdisciplinary research.

## Special Address by Dr. Zoya Ali Rizvi

Dr. Rizvi discussed the emerging paradigms in health economics and policy in response to global health challenges, technological advancements, and demographic shifts. She underscored key lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic, advocating for flexible, resilient health policies. She also highlighted the dual burden of undernutrition and overnutrition, emphasizing the need to create an enabling environment for reproductive-age women, adolescents, and children. Lastly, she stressed the importance of cross-sector collaboration, recognizing that achieving last-mile healthcare coverage requires the joint efforts of governments, civil society, and private sectors.



Paradigms in  
Economics and Policy

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IHEPA for  
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New Parad



## Special Address by Major General Prof. Dr. Atul Kotwal



Prof. Kotwal elaborated on the seven building blocks of a strong health system, adding community processes to the WHO's six existing components. He stressed the need for accessible, affordable, equitable, and safe healthcare. He also reviewed India's five major national health programs, including tuberculosis elimination, vector-borne diseases, mental health, and trauma care. He highlighted the importance of public-private partnerships in strengthening healthcare delivery, citing the Ayushman Arogya Mandir initiative as a game-changer in primary healthcare expansion and screenings.

## Special Address by Dr. Shamika Ravi

Dr. Ravi discussed India's major public health initiatives, particularly Ayushman Bharat, as a pivotal step toward universal health coverage. She pointed out systemic market failures in healthcare, particularly in disease prevention and healthcare consumption patterns. She underscored the need for data-driven policies and robust institutional frameworks to sustain health financing and service delivery.





## Pre-Conference Workshops

As part of the pre-conference activities, two parallel workshops were conducted at the Institute of Economic Growth and Shri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi. These workshops aimed to equip participants with essential research and analytical skills, ensuring that they could apply these techniques effectively in their respective domains.

### Workshop 1



**Workshop 1:**  
Introduction to R for Social Scientists

**Number of Participants:**  
29

**Venue:**  
Institute of Economic Growth

This hands-on workshop introduced participants to the basics of R programming, widely used in statistical and econometric analysis. Led by experienced instructors, the session covered fundamental programming concepts, data handling techniques, and visualization methods using packages such as ggplot2. Attendees learned how to conduct exploratory data analysis, statistical modeling, and hypothesis testing. Through interactive exercises, participants were able to apply these techniques to real-world datasets, enhancing their ability to work with large-scale survey data.

## Workshop 2



### Workshop 2:

Research Using the Household Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES)

### Number of Participants:

59

### Venue:

Shri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi

This session provided an in-depth understanding of the Household Consumer Expenditure Survey (CES) conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO). Using Stata as the primary analytical tool, facilitators guided participants through the processes of data extraction, merging unit-level data, and conducting statistical analyses. Key topics included understanding sampling design, applying appropriate weights, and generating policy-relevant insights. The workshop also featured case studies on expenditure patterns, poverty assessment, and nutrition trends, allowing participants to develop practical skills in handling large-scale economic data.





## Plenary Session

### Plenary Session I: Policy Priorities for Achieving SDGs in Women and Children

Chair: Prof. Udaya Shankar Mishra

Speakers: Dr. Shweta Khandelwal, Puja Marwaha, Dr. Hemang Shah, Narendra Kumar

This session focused on the policy interventions required to accelerate progress toward Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for women and children, particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing). Discussions covered financial and digital interventions, gender disparities, and nutrition-focused policies aimed at improving child health outcomes.

### Plenary Session II: Measuring Wellbeing – Challenges and Possibilities

Chair: Dr. Rajiv Kumar

Speakers: Sunil Rajpal, Achin Chakraborty, Udaya Shankar Mishra

This session examined different approaches to measuring wellbeing, addressing conceptual frameworks, methodological challenges, and policy implications for India. Experts debated the role of subjective assessments versus objective indicators and the importance of integrating economic, social, and psychological perspectives into wellbeing measurements.

### Plenary Session III: Localizing SDGs for Health Policy Implementation

Chair: Mr. Marine Mukherjee

Speakers: Shri Rajib Kumar Sen, Dr. Manabendra Nath Roy, Shri Meghendra Nath Bandyopadhyay

Panelists discussed the role of local governance in achieving SDG-related health targets, highlighting the importance of decentralized policy implementation. The session explored financial devolution, the role of Panchayati Raj institutions, and data-driven strategies to optimize healthcare interventions at the grassroots level.

## Plenary Session IV: Social Protection for Nutrition

Chair: Hyun Hee Ban

Speakers: Veena Bandyopadhyay, Sunil Rajpal, Mini Varghese, Akash Porwal, Suman Chakrabarti

This session explored the critical link between social protection systems and nutrition outcomes. Discussions focused on cash transfer programs, food security policies, and the effectiveness of government interventions in addressing malnutrition, particularly among vulnerable populations. The session also emphasized policy coherence and cross-sector collaboration.

## Plenary Session V: Programmatic Focus on Anaemia and Severe Wasting

Chair: Preetu Mishra

Speakers: Dr. Kapil Yadav, Dr. Sucharita Dutta, Dr. Sameer Manikrao Pawar, Dr. Ameet Babre

Panelists addressed India's persistent challenges in combating anemia and severe wasting. The discussion centered on fortification strategies, maternal and child health programs, and community-based interventions aimed at reducing malnutrition. Experts underscored the need for increased public investment in targeted nutritional programs.

## Plenary Session VI: Regulation and Taxation for Healthy Consumption

Chair: Purnamita Dasgupta

Speakers: Franco Sassi, William Joe, Dr. Manika Sharma, Ashim Sanyal

This session examined the role of policy regulations and fiscal measures in shaping healthier consumption patterns. Key topics included the taxation of high-fat, sugar, and salt (HFSS) foods, the impact of front-of-pack labeling (FOPL) on consumer behavior, and strategies for reducing tobacco consumption through taxation and advertising restrictions.





## Technical Session

The conference featured 14 technical sessions covering a diverse range of topics crucial to the understanding and advancement of public health and healthcare policy. These sessions served as platforms for researchers, scholars, and practitioners to present their findings, exchange ideas, and engage in meaningful discussions.

### Participation Overview

#### Number of Paper Presenters:

The conference received 260 abstracts, from which 79 were selected. Finally, 73 papers were presented during the conference.

#### Paper Presenters Background:

The presenters represented a diverse spectrum of academia and practice, including PhD scholars, early career researchers, assistant professors, and development practitioners.

#### Representation:

The event was attended by 69 delegates and 48 participants. Participants and delegates represented over 14 states, including Jammu and Kashmir and Assam.

#### Key Highlights

The technical sessions at the 12th Annual IHEPA Conference brought together leading experts, researchers, and policymakers to discuss key issues in health economics and policy. With a focus on contemporary challenges and innovative solutions, the sessions examined the intersections of health financing, nutrition, climate change, gender, and emerging technologies in healthcare.

## Key Themes

### Health and Nutrition Financing

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The sessions on health financing explored the financial burden on households, cost-effectiveness of various treatments, and the role of insurance models in reducing economic barriers to healthcare. Papers examined the equity implications of health insurance reimbursements, the economic burden of non-communicable diseases, and challenges in financing mental healthcare services. Cost-effectiveness studies on dialysis treatments and the impact of government health insurance schemes were also key focal points.

### Elderly Health and Well-being

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With the rising aging population, discussions revolved around the socioeconomic and health determinants affecting elderly care. Research presented included studies on time allocation among widowed seniors, the role of micronutrients in aging, district-level health disparities among the elderly, and financial literacy as a determinant of well-being. There was also a strong emphasis on policies that support active and healthy aging.

### Diets, Risky Behavior, and Health

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This session focused on the effects of dietary habits and risky behaviors on health. Papers addressed the impact of junk food consumption, the influence of alcohol bans on household decision-making, and the effectiveness of fortified foods in tackling malnutrition. Discussions also covered the relationship between maternal obesity and diet patterns, as well as the intergenerational transmission of smoking habits.

### Regulatory Concerns in Health and Nutrition

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Experts in this session examined the regulatory landscape of public health policies, including drug pricing, alcohol prohibition laws, and food safety measures. Research assessed the influence of pharmaceutical profit motives on drug affordability, district-level liquor bans, and access to healthcare for disadvantaged communities. The session also covered the governance of out-of-state healthcare choices and immunization progress among marginalized populations.

### Evaluation of Health Policies and Programs

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The evaluation of major public health programs was a critical discussion point. Presenters analyzed immunization coverage, maternal healthcare service efficiency, and the effectiveness of public health insurance initiatives. Studies also examined the readiness of primary healthcare facilities for digital health interventions and the impact of health and wellness centers on service delivery.





## Adolescent Health

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The adolescent health session covered topics such as malnutrition among adolescent girls, visual impairment in rural youth, and adolescent fertility trends. Research also explored factors affecting family planning use among adolescent wives and the economic impact of caregiving on families supporting children with disabilities.

## Measurements and Ranking in Health and Nutrition

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Discussions centered on different approaches to measuring healthcare performance and nutrition outcomes. Papers assessed the reliability of multidimensional poverty indices, gender-based nutritional deprivation, and health vulnerability assessments at the district level. Ethical considerations in health data collection were also a key theme.

## Climate Change and Health

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Experts discussed the impact of climate shocks, pollution, and extreme weather events on public health. Research focused on the long-term health effects of natural disasters, climate governance, and food security in the face of environmental changes. Case studies highlighted the effects of climate change on child health and the role of social protection measures in mitigating risks.

## Social Protection for Nutrition

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This session highlighted the role of social policies in addressing malnutrition. Studies explored the impact of antenatal iron supplementation, nutritional disparities between tribal and non-tribal populations, and community-based maternal and child health interventions. The session also covered malnutrition clustering in Indian households and reproductive health progress in achieving SDG targets.

## Gender, Health, and Well-being

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Gender disparities in healthcare access were examined through studies on menstrual health, maternal care, and cervical cancer screenings. Research also analyzed the impact of financial incentives on women's participation in health programs and the factors contributing to rising cesarean section rates in India.

## Occupational Health Concerns

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Workplace health risks were a key focus, with papers examining air pollution's impact on labor productivity, heat stress among outdoor workers, and urbanization's role in shaping life expectancy. Discussions also addressed systemic barriers in accessing health insurance for informal sector workers, particularly migrant women.

## Applications of Data Science Approaches

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Advancements in digital health and data science were explored through studies on machine learning applications in healthcare, geospatial analysis of immunization coverage, and predictive models for diabetes prevalence. Other research focused on optimizing health insurance plan selection and the implications of AI-driven emotional dependency on digital health platforms.



## Award Ceremony

### Prof. T. N. Krishnan Award For Best Paper by Early Career Researchers

The authors of the abstracts selected for the 12th Annual Conference of IHEPA were invited to submit the full papers for considerations of Prof. T. N. Krishnan Award for Best Paper by an Early Career Researcher. The award constituted of a certificate and an honorarium of ₹ 20,000/- for the winner who will be selected based on the decision of the Award Committee of the 12th Conference of IHEPA. Initially, a screening committee meticulously evaluated all applications, adhering to distinct eligibility criteria. These criteria included:

- The principal author must be the first author of the paper.
- The principal author must be under 40 years of age.
- The paper submitted for the conference must not have been published as of December 31st, 2024.

Subsequently, the Award Committee meticulously reviewed the papers that had been shortlisted, ultimately recommending the paper titled

**“Reliability and Validity of Multidimensional Poverty Index in measuring economic poverty for service delivery in Aligarh.”** by Absar Ahmad for the prestigious Award.



## Prof. Gavin Mooney Award For Best Paper by PhD Students (Two Awards)

The authors of the abstracts selected for the 12th Annual Conference of IHEPA were invited to submit the full papers for considerations of Prof. Gavin Mooney Award for Best Paper by PhD student. Two awards are instituted which will constitute of a certificate and an honorarium of ₹10,000/- for the two winners who will be selected based on the decision of the Award Committee of the 12th Conference of IHEPA. Initially, a screening committee meticulously evaluated all applications, adhering to distinct eligibility criteria. These criteria included:

- a. The author should be the first author of the paper.
- b. The author should be registered as a PhD student in a recognized institution.
- c. The author should be below 40 years of age.
- d. The submitted paper for the conference should be unpublished as of 31st December, 2024.

Subsequently, the Award Committee meticulously reviewed the papers that had been shortlisted, ultimately recommending the following papers for the prestigious awards:

1. "Equitable Health Insurance for Migrant Women Workers in Urban Informal Sectors: Addressing Systemic Barriers" by Aishwarya



2. "Life after loss, ageing, widowhood, and time allocation in India" by Sila Mishra



## Opening Remarks by Prof. Uday Shankar Mishra



Dr. Uday Mishra opened the valedictory session by expressing gratitude to all participants and highlighting the significance of the discussions held over the two-day conference. He acknowledged the role of IHEPA in fostering meaningful academic and policy discourse and outlined the session's agenda, which included a conference report, award announcements, and a valedictory address.

## Conference Report by Dr. William Joe

Dr. Joe provided a brief overview of the conference proceedings, emphasizing the success of the two pre-conference workshops—one on the application of R software for health data analysis and the other on research using national sample survey data. He expressed appreciation for the conference sponsors and institutional supporters, acknowledging their role in making the event possible. He also noted the conclusion of Dr. Uday Shankar Mishra's tenure as President of IHEPA, recognizing his leadership in strengthening the association.





**Announcement of the IHEPA Journal – Dr. Uday Mishra & Dr. Sanjay Kumar**

Dr. Uday Mishra announced the launch of IHEPA's official journal, **Health Empirics**, and invited Dr. Sanjay Kumar to elaborate on its objectives. Dr. Kumar emphasized the need for a dedicated platform to publish empirical research on health economics and policy. He discussed challenges related to maintaining publication quality and periodicity, while also highlighting emerging research areas, including the economic implications of teenage pregnancy and intergenerational wealth transfers.

Launch of IHEPA's official journal, Health Empirics



## Reflections on the Journal – Prof. T.V. Shekhar



Prof. Shekhar commended the launch of Health Empirics and underscored the importance of sustaining the journal's academic rigor and leadership. He noted that while establishing a journal is relatively easy, maintaining its quality and relevance over time requires strong editorial direction and institutional commitment.

## Honoring the Legacy of Prof. T.N. Krishnan – Prof. Neeta

Prof. Neeta reflected on the contributions of Prof. T.N. Krishnan to the field of health economics. She noted how his work integrated economic tools with social, political, and historical contexts to derive meaningful insights. She emphasized the importance of continuing research in the areas Prof. Krishnan had explored and encouraged scholars to build upon his legacy.





Prof. Mala Ramanathan

## Valedictory Address

Prof. Mala Ramanathan emphasized the importance of gender analysis in health economics research and policy development. She urged scholars to incorporate frameworks that account for sex and gender disparities, highlighting issues such as gender bias in medical research and the challenges faced by transgender individuals in accessing healthcare. She also discussed the need for inclusive health policies that address structural inequalities, emphasizing that gender-based differences in health outcomes must be considered in policy design.

She also spoke about ethical considerations in healthcare research, pointing out that historically, clinical trials were conducted predominantly on male subjects, leading to biases in treatment outcomes. She highlighted overlooked biological differences in disease progression between men and women, particularly in conditions such as COPD. Additionally, she stressed the importance of reducing stigma in healthcare access for marginalized groups, including LGBTQ+ communities, and called for continued interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing healthcare inequities.

## Vote of Thanks

Dr. Joe concluded the session by thanking all speakers, panelists, and attendees for their contributions. He acknowledged the importance of sustaining high-quality research and fostering interdisciplinary dialogue, reaffirming IHEPA's commitment to collaboration among researchers, policymakers, and practitioners. He extended special thanks to Professor Mala Ramanathan for her insightful valedictory address and reiterated IHEPA's mission to advance impactful research and policy discourse in health economics.



Dr. William Joe



## Conference Overview

The 12th Annual IHEPA Conference served as a vital platform for interdisciplinary discussions on emerging challenges and opportunities in health economics and policy. The deliberations across plenary, technical, and valedictory sessions underscored the urgent need for evidence-based policy interventions, equitable healthcare financing, and the integration of innovative technologies in public health. The conference also shed light on the importance of gender equity, social protection for nutrition, and climate change mitigation as essential components of a resilient healthcare system.

The conference brought together experts from diverse domains, reinforcing the need for collaboration between academia, policymakers, and practitioners to address pressing health challenges. Discussions emphasized the significance of health system strengthening, addressing disparities in access to care, and leveraging digital tools for improving healthcare delivery. The technical sessions provided deep insights into data-driven decision-making, public health program evaluation, and regulatory frameworks essential for ensuring sustainable healthcare systems.

A key milestone of the conference was the launch of Health Empirics, a dedicated journal for health economics research, reflecting IHEPA's commitment to fostering high-quality academic contributions in the field. The valedictory session reinforced the importance of addressing systemic inequalities in healthcare and the need for an inclusive research approach that considers the diverse socio-economic and demographic contexts of India.

Moving forward, the insights from this conference will play a crucial role in shaping health policies that prioritize accessibility, affordability, and efficiency. IHEPA remains committed to driving impactful research, strengthening policy dialogues, and promoting innovative solutions that advance public health and economic well-being. The association looks forward to continuing these critical conversations in future conferences.

