



**HSTP**

Health Systems  
Transformation Platform

# Enabling Indian Health Systems Respond to People's Needs

Annual Report 2021-2022



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# Our Mission

To enable Indian researchers and policy makers to conduct health policy and systems research and translate evidence to practice for Universal Health Coverage.

The focus is on policy relevance, systems thinking and value-based partnerships with Indian and global institutions and experts.



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This Annual Progress Report is developed by Health Systems Transformation Platform (HSTP) to share our work and achievements during the year 2021-22.

Prof (Late) Maharaj Kishan Bhan, HSTP's pillar of strength, continues to inspire our work. We are grateful to the HSTP Board, Advisory Council, Donors, Collaborators and HSTP staff for their support and contribution.

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Report Design: Pathfinders

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# Message

Rajeev Sadanandan,  
Chief Executive Officer

This year saw work at Health Systems Transformation Platform progress to more mature levels, building on the foundation laid in previous years. The first cohort of the Indian Health Policy and Systems Research Fellowships completed their course and advanced to the research work. The second cohort have moved to the online pedagogic modules. Considering the interest in the HPSR community we have launched the Quarterly HPSR Webinars which will be delivered by an eminent expert on HPSR. HSTP has pioneered the efforts at defining and assessing competencies for primary care in India. The value of our work was recognised when I was invited as a keynote speaker at the launch of the Global Competencies and Outcomes Framework for Universal Health Coverage by the World Health Organisation, Geneva. We have finalised the competencies for pharmacists and medical laboratory technicians in consultation with national experts and will validate them in the field in the coming year. We will also see the finalisation of the competencies for nursing professionals, who function either as Community Health Officers or staff nurses in PHCs. We have also commenced work on enhancing the leadership competencies of district level managers in the health sector.

Regulation is an often-neglected area in health systems research. We completed a landscape document on central health acts and rules in India. The active participation and the interest shown in the dissemination workshop of the landscape document and the subsequent webinars we did on the topic, showed that the research community attaches high importance to our work in this area. Flowing from this work we identified home based care as an emerging area that required more work and are currently working on developing standard definitions for the field.

Our engagement with states has continued to deepen. Our assessment of the urban health system in Mysuru and determinants of urban health in Bhopal, promises to lead to a better understanding of the health situation in cities and will become the foundation for developing an appropriate PHC strategy for Urban areas and improving environmental and social determinants of urban health. In Odisha, in addition to our support to the state government on improving access to essential drugs and improving clinical competencies in PHCs, we are also engaged in developing a physician leadership programme, digitisation of healthcare and improving nursing education. We will convert the learning from these states into toolkits which will help other states replicate these initiatives.

Post the COVID 19 pandemic, India is set to see the scale up of a substantive number of reforms in the health sector. These include strengthening of infrastructure, creating electronic health records for the entire population and augmenting workforce and laboratory support to improve surveillance. This has led to an increase in interest in health systems. HSTP hopes to play a significant role in building capacity to generate evidence to support policies and programmes in the areas as well as work with policy makers on using the available evidence.

# Highlights

## 01

Launched the India Health Policy & Systems Research Fellowships Program Cohort 2022 to enhance capabilities of 20 Indian public health professionals every year on complexities of health systems & policy making, related research methods and tools to translate evidence to policy and implementation. [\[2\]](#)

## 02

Launched the Health Policy and Systems Research Webinar Series to bring together HPSR experts to engage with, policymakers, practitioners and upcoming researchers to increase the salience of HPSR in discourse on health systems. The first session was on Systems Thinking for Health Systems Strengthening. [\[2\]](#)

## 03

Expert consultations on developing competency frameworks for pharmacists and medical laboratory technologists in primary healthcare settings. [\[2\]](#)

## 04

Release of landscape report on regulations related to health care delivery in India. The document was shared widely and acts as a resource to strengthen regulations, in collaboration with state/central governments and other stakeholders. [\[2\]](#)

## 05

Conducted a study on home healthcare to understand how home healthcare is organised and delivered in India, with respect to the services, providers, users, and interaction between them.

## 06

Conducted a primary household & health facility survey as part of the diagnostic assessment of Odisha health system to understand performance in terms of health status, financial risk protection, access to services, quality, and efficiency of delivering care.

# Research for Health Systems Design

Through value-based partnerships with national, state & local governments, Indian and global research & knowledge partners, we conduct comprehensive health systems assessment and design strategies for improving outcomes with a focus on financial risk protection, population health & wellness.



## Odisha Health Systems Strengthening

The initiative aims to conduct a comprehensive health systems diagnostic assessment, design interventions for challenges/gaps identified, experiment socio-economically feasible solutions and evaluate them for refinement/scale up. HSTP, Tata Trusts and Government of Odisha agreed on a four-year memorandum of understanding (2019-2023). Harvard School of Public Health, and Indian Institute of Public Health Bhubaneswar are our technical collaborators.

This year, in consultation with the Government of Odisha and local partners, the research from the diagnostic study was used to design further research and interventions of strengthening health systems in Odisha. Expert committees headed by Government officers have been formed to guide and internalise context specific interventions with focus on:

- ◆ Improving competencies of public healthcare providers working in primary health settings
- ◆ Strengthening access to medicines at primary health centres

We are also engaged in providing technical assistance to the State Health Assurance Society for implementation of Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY), the universal health coverage program in Odisha State. Our healthcare financing experts support the BSKY scheme policy and implementation diligently working with the scheme Chief Executive Officer and the implementation team. This year we have produced knowledge products that identify issues and solutions for financing & scheme implementation.

- ◆ Policy Paper: District sector fund flow, resource allocations and utilisation: issues and challenges in Odisha, July 2021. [\[2\]](#)
- ◆ Policy Paper: Improving government financial transfers for health and their utilization: State experiences, April 2021. [\[2\]](#)
- ◆ Working Paper: Changes in utilization trends of services at public hospitals after the launch of Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana & other health initiatives in Odisha, April 2021. [\[2\]](#)
- ◆ Journal Article: State led innovations for achieving universal health coverage in a low resource setting Odisha, India: opportunities and challenges, International Journal of Community Medicine and Public Health, May 2021. [\[2\]](#)

## Support to the National Health Authority

We provide thought leadership and technical support to the National Health Authority (NHA) to develop strategies on

- ◆ Expanding health coverage to non-poor populations.
- ◆ Linkages between primary healthcare and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.

This involves conceptualization of effective interventions, exploratory research, and conducting experiments to understand what works and what does not in the Indian/ State Context.

# Strengthening Urban Health Systems

Increased investments on primary health care have seen India make improvements in health promotion, disease prevention and service outreach. Despite efforts, in urban areas, primary health care remains inadequate, fragmented, and associated with high out-of-pocket expenditures. Patient health seeking behavior and the organization of the urban health care system is complex with enormous disparities. We are trying to understand the underlying reasons for the poor performance of primary health systems in urban areas through following initiatives:

This year we implemented the formative research for comprehensive primary health care in Mysuru city in collaboration with Karnataka Health Promotion Trust & St. John's Research Institute. Research findings will be available in 2022 and allows us to identify potential interventions in consultation with local stakeholders to provide comprehensive primary healthcare in an urban setting. In collaboration with Swasti, we developed a white paper on healthy city framework. [📄](#)

## Health Systems Governance

One of our objectives is to provide technical assistance to governments, regulatory bodies and concerned stakeholders to strengthen health system governance with a focus on health regulations. We host a repository of health regulations to provide easy access to information on relevant acts, rules, schedules, and notifications issued by the government of India over the years. Progress made during the year:

### Landscape study on Regulation of Health Care Delivery in India

Released the report 'Regulation of Health Care Delivery in India - A Landscape Study', which reviews the landscape of health regulations in India, at the central government level with a focus on health care delivery. The areas covered are Practitioners, Health Facilities, Supportive Services, Professional Actions, Illnesses and Diseases, and Outbreaks, Epidemics and Pandemics. The study touches upon issues related to licensing and registration, quality,



quantity, pricing, and cost containment, protecting patients, information provision and grievance redressal. It focusses on legal provisions, institutional mechanisms including regulatory agencies, and gaps and challenges of the regulatory system. Proceedings of the release event may be accessed here. [📄](#)

### Exploratory qualitative research on organisation and delivery of home healthcare:

Undertook a study on Home Healthcare. The objectives were to understand how Home Healthcare is organised and delivered in India, with respect to the services, providers, users, and interaction between them. Home healthcare as a professional form of care in India is relatively new and emerging. Considering the rising need for home healthcare and the growth that this sector is experiencing, the study would contribute to the discourse on integrating home healthcare as a mode of service delivery within the Indian health system.



### Webinars

- ◆ A session 'Regulation of Clinical Establishments in India - 'The Train is Still Only Inching Forward' was organised to deliberate upon the present status of legislation to regulate clinical establishments in India and the regulatory challenges. October 2021. [📄](#)
- ◆ A session 'Silence of the Stories - Health Journalism in India' was organized where journalists and media persons shared their perspective on the state of health journalism in India and how media, research institutions, academia, civil society organizations, and the state could work together to increase the profile of health systems through strengthened reporting. [🎥](#) [📄](#)

# Enhancing Stakeholder Capabilities

Transformation is possible if policymakers, researchers & practitioners can conceptualize, design, and implement reforms. Our training programs, tailored to the Indian context, aim to build these capacities with a focus on knowledge and skill transfer through creating immersive experiences in real-world settings.



## India Health Policy & Systems Research Fellowship

An initiative of Health Systems Transformation Platform, the fellowship program was launched in January 2021. It aims to enhance capacity of mid-career public health professionals in health policy and systems research (HPSR) methods to strengthen evidence-based policymaking in health. The fellowship is organized in collaboration with eminent partners. It is envisaged, every year the fellowship programme will identify twenty fellows and train them in HPSR methods along with practical experience of conducting a HPSR study.

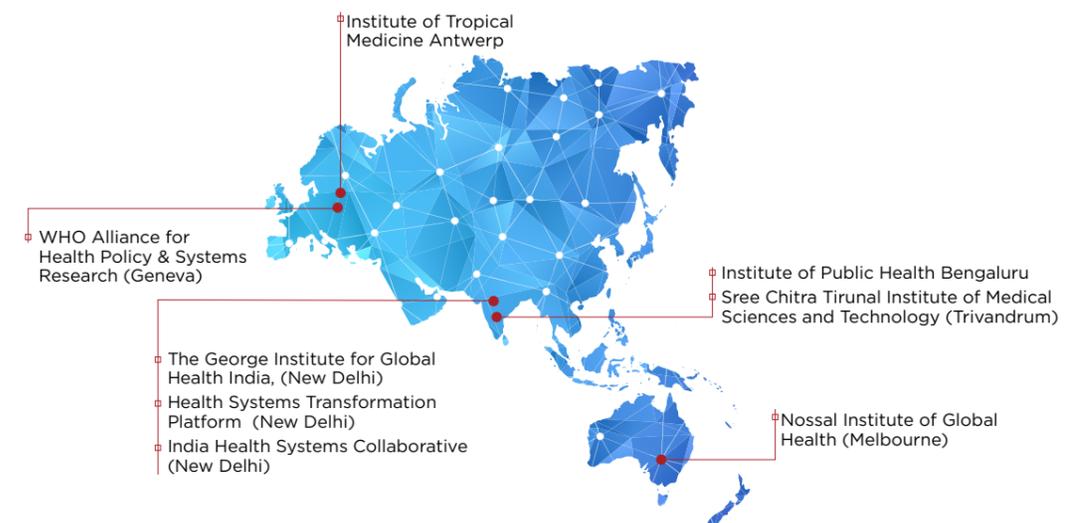
The fellowship is a blended training program, spread over a period of 18 months, comprising online, face-to-face modules, mentorship & implementation phase for conducting a HPSR study. The program trains the researcher about policies, contents and the processes. The researcher is empowered to identify policy processes like agenda setting, listing of all stakeholders and the power that they wield to generate evidence.

Research with a systems perspective, that explores health issues within their specific contexts, is key for designing solutions for improved health outcomes. HPSR methods allow us to focus on the system as a whole and generate evidence for policy making. Hence, the vision for strategically building capacity of researchers and practitioners in HPSR, culminated in the development of the India HPSR Fellowship programme.

### Course Structure

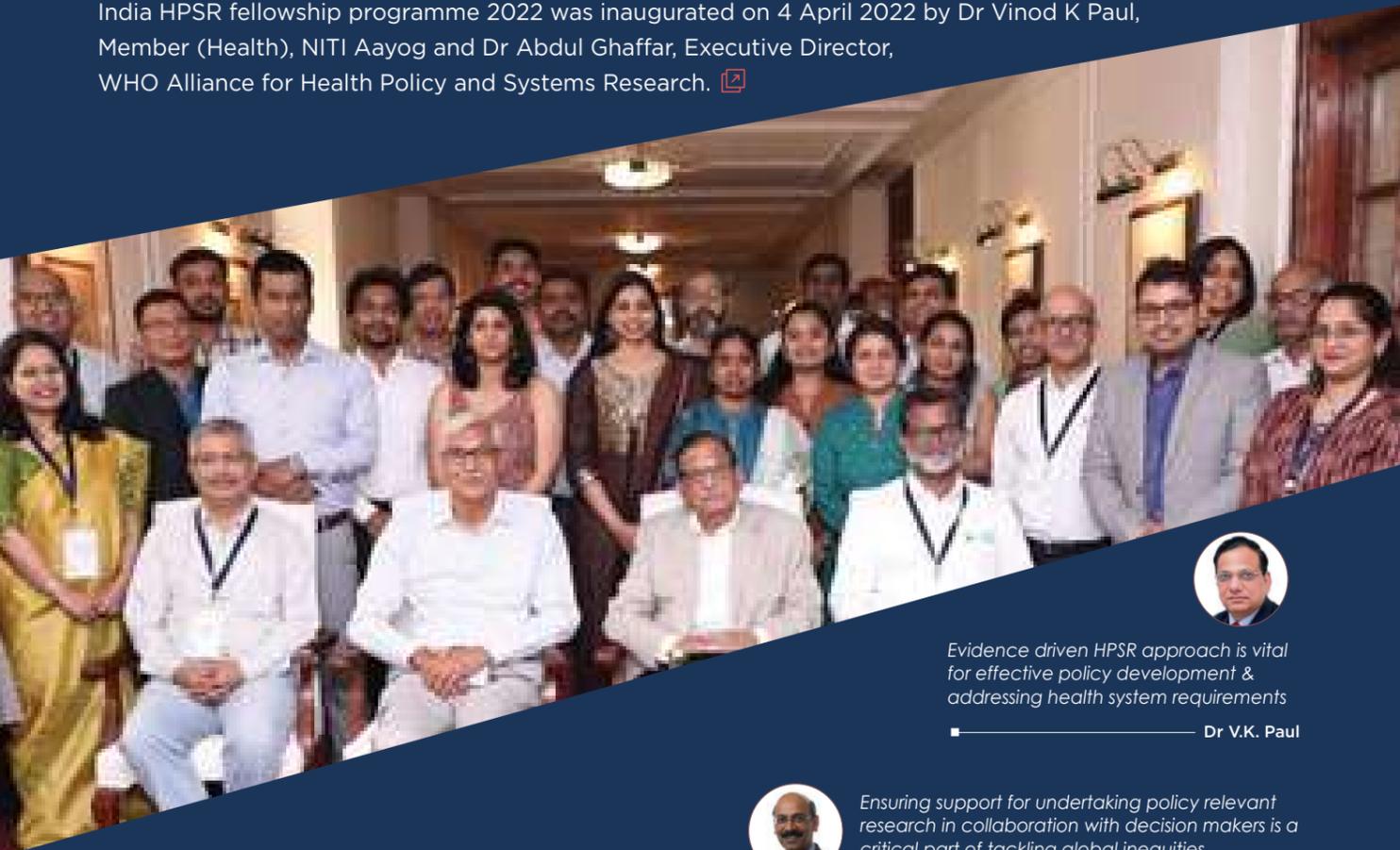


### Partners



# Fellowship Cohort 2022

India HPSR fellowship programme 2022 was inaugurated on 4 April 2022 by Dr Vinod K Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog and Dr Abdul Ghaffar, Executive Director, WHO Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research. 



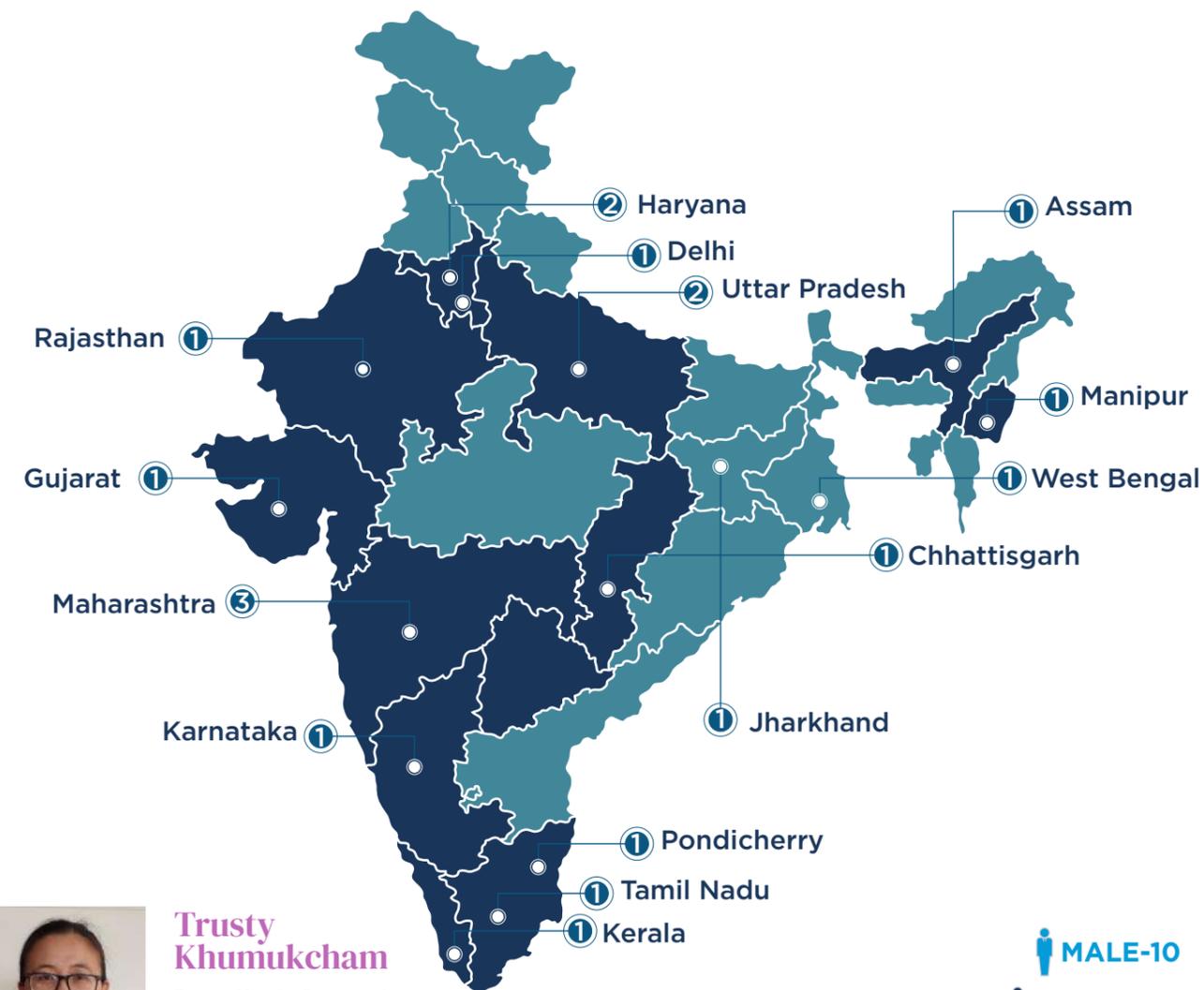
*Evidence driven HPSR approach is vital for effective policy development & addressing health system requirements*

Dr V.K. Paul



*Ensuring support for undertaking policy relevant research in collaboration with decision makers is a critical part of tackling global inequities*

Dr Abdul Ghaffar



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Public Health Specialist  
Health Services,  
Manipur

 MALE-10  
 FEMALE-9

**Arohi Chauhan**  
Research Scientist  
Public Health  
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**Yuvaraj Krishnamoorthy**  
Assistant Professor  
ESIC Medical College  
& PGIMS, K.K. Nagar,  
Tamil Nadu



# Journey of Fellowship Cohort 2021



## Mentoring & Implementation Phase

By the end of the face to face training, the fellows refined & developed high value health policy & systems research proposals. These proposals were reviewed by a panel of HPSR experts comprising the core faculty and John Porter (Professor, LSHTM), Surekha Garimella (Senior Research Fellow, TGI India) & Rajesh Kumar (Technical Advisor, HSTP).



### Anika Juneja,

PhD fellow, Institute of Public Health Bengaluru

**Mentor:** Prof. Nakkeeran Nanjappan, Dr BR Ambedkar University

**Research:** How neighbourhood shapes access to healthcare for two Adivasi communities in central and southern India?

### Antony Stanley,

Research Associate, Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute of Medical Sciences & Technology

**Mentor:** Prof. Jeemon P, SCTIMST

**Research:** Which is the most cost-effective renal replacement therapy among HD, CAPD and renal transplantation?



What are the determinants and dynamics of treatment decision making regarding end-stage renal disease patients in Kerala?



### Sabu K U,

Institute of Public Health Bengaluru

**Mentor:** Prof. Kara Hanson, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

**Research:** How, why and under what condition has the POSHAN Abhiyaan program contributed to the changes in Anganwadi service delivery, service utilisation and child nutritional status of the Paniya community?

### Ankita Mukherjee,

Qualitative Researcher, The George Institute for Global Health India

**Mentor:** Dr Rajani Ved, BMGF, India

**Research:** What are the facilitators and barriers that can impact the capacity of rural Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) to operationalize mental health related guidelines in Faridabad district in the state of Haryana?



### Mintu Moni Sarma,

Programme in Charge, The Ant

**Mentor:** Dr Renu Khanna, Sahaj

**Research:** Why patients are visiting the non-specialized paid services provided by non-government entity for mentally ill, despite having specialized public health facilities, in a district of lower Assam, affected by repeated violent conflicts?



### Akanksha Sonal,

Asst Professor, King George Medical University

**Mentor:** Dr Sumegha Asthana, Independent Expert

**Research:** How are mental health needs of older adults addressed in policies and programs of central and different state governments of India?

### Tanu Anand,

Scientist D, Indian Council of Medical Research

**Mentor:** Prof. Shankar Prinja, School of Public Health, PGIMER

**Research:** What are morbidity profile, patterns of healthcare utilization and out of expenditure on healthcare among elderly and factors (socio-demographic, economic and clinical) associated with them in Longitudinal Ageing Study of India Wave 1?



### Anuj Ghanekar,

Social Anthropologist.

**Mentor:** Prof. Greg Armstrong, Nossal Institute for Global Health

**Research:** What processes and mechanisms determine the responsiveness of urban primary health centers in Surat towards primary healthcare of adolescents in order to implement RKSK?



### Harsha Joshi,

Program Officer, India Primary Healthcare Support Initiative Project

**Mentor:** Prof. Helen Schneider, School of Public Health, UWC

**Research:** How is health equity conceptualized in the national 'Health and Wellness Centre' policy documents in India?



### Ponnambily Chandy,

Asst Professor, Sathyabhama College of Nursing

**Mentor:** Prof. Bart Criel, ITM Antwerp

**Research:** What are the systemic determinants and policy responses of nurse turnover in rural primary health centers in Tamil Nadu?

### Rekha Ravindran,

Senior Research Officer, State Health Systems Resource Centre

**Mentor:** Dr Jagnoor Jagnoor, The George Institute of Global Health

**Research:** How well is the State Trauma Action Plan being implemented in Kerala, India?



### Gitismita Naik,

Independent Researcher

**Mentor:** Dr Sridhar Kadam, Indian Institute of Public Health Bhubaneswar

**Research:** Why are there barriers to Antenatal care for Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy at primary level health system in Nadia district of West Bengal? What works in providing standard antenatal care at primary level health system for Hypertensive Disorders of Pregnancy?



### Jithesh V,

Asst Director, Kerala Health Services

**Mentor:** Dr Kerry Scott, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

**Research:** What individual, community and health system factors underpin the Paniya community's low utilization of government health care services in Wayanad, Kerala?

### Deepshikha Chhetri,



Senior Analyst, The Ballot House (UK)

**Mentor:** Prof. Asha George, School of Public Health, UWC

**Research:** Health System Facilitators and Barriers in influencing Early Initiation of Breastfeeding (EIBF) among rural women in an aspirational district of Haryana: A qualitative study



### Deepak Behera,

Asst Professor, Birla Global University

**Mentor:** Prof Sumit Kane, Nossal Institute for Global Health

**Research:** What are the services provided in a palliative care center in Odisha for Terminal cases of cancer patients?

# Op-Eds and Publications

Pallavi Gupta, Sonali Randhawa, and Sunil Nandraj authored an article on 'Regulation of health care delivery in India: What ails the law' on The Law Blog [🔗](#)

Dilip T.R, Devadasan N and Sunil Nandraj authored an article on 'Utilisation of Public Healthcare Facilities- Have they Improved?' in the Economic & Political Weekly [🔗](#)

Sonali Randhawa & Pallavi Gupta authored a working paper on 'Legislative Response to Epidemics and Pandemics in India: Need for a Contemporary Comprehensive Law' [🔗](#)

Rajeev Sadanandan co-authored an article 'Study Protocol for Diabetic Retinopathy Care Pathway' in BMJ open [🔗](#)

Comments on draft Rajasthan Right to Health Care Bill, 2022 to Government of Rajasthan [🔗](#)

Rahul S Reddy authored an article on 'India's changing health financing narrative: Insights from Health Accounts' on PLoS [🔗](#)

Rahul S Reddy authored an article on 'Paying for health services during COVID-19: What can India learn from Southeast-Asia neighbours?' on PLoS [🔗](#)

Sanjeev Kumar authored an article on 'Promoting Open Science in COVID times: An Opportunity to build Trust among Researchers and the Public in Global Health' on PLoS [🔗](#)

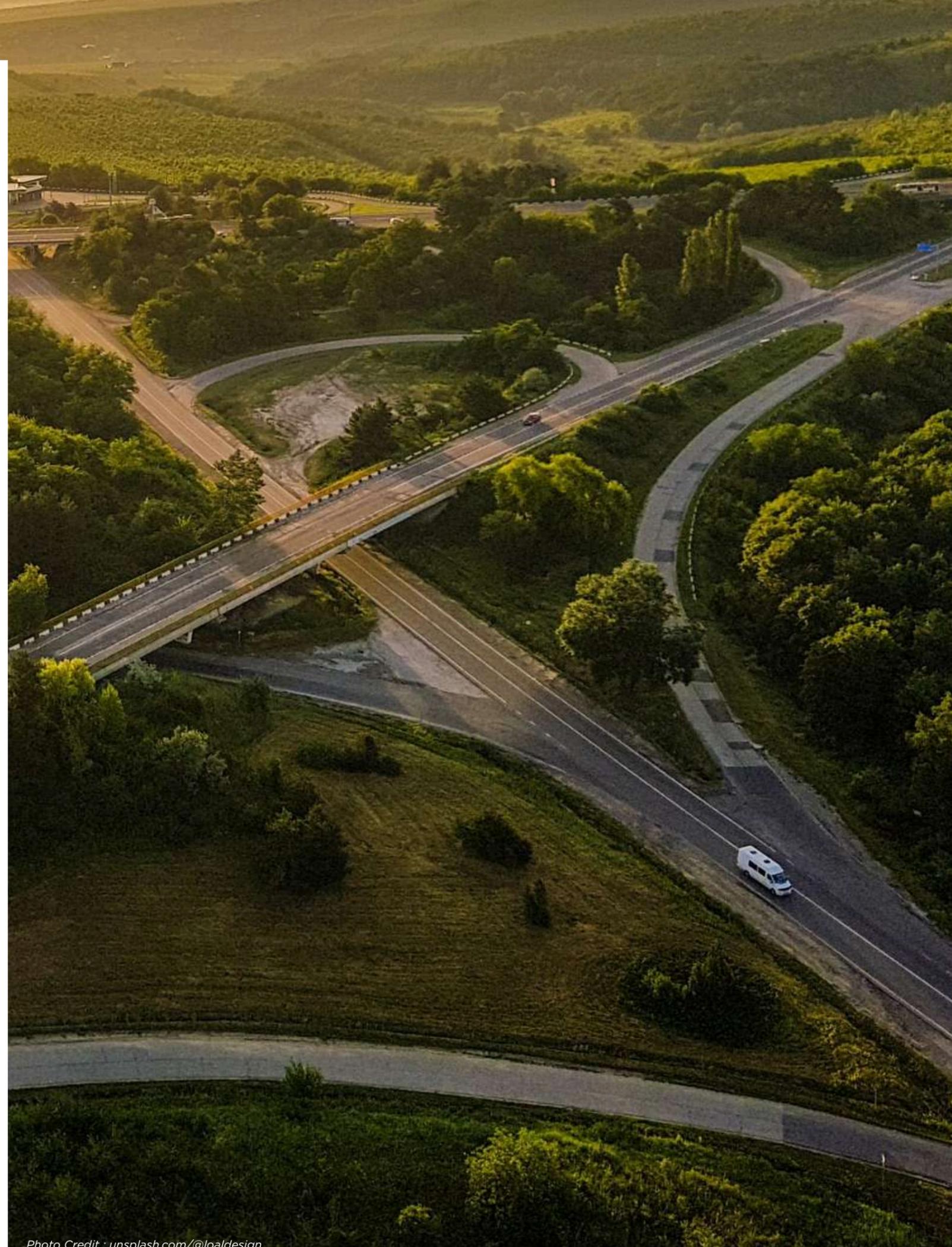
Sanjeev Kumar authored an article on 'Covid 19 Vaccine Introduction in India' on PLoS [🔗](#)

Sanjeev Kumar authored an article on 'Strengthening Primary Care Provider Competence: A Step towards Increasing Resilience for Future Infectious Disease Outbreaks' on PLoS [🔗](#)

Sanjeev Kumar authored an article on 'Cervical Cancer Screening and Its Challenges in India' on PLoS [🔗](#)

Sanjeev Kumar authored an article on 'Improving Vaccine Hesitancy in India' on PLoS [🔗](#)

Sanjeev Kumar authored an article on 'Understanding the role of Primary Care in Covid 19 response In India' on PLoS [🔗](#)





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