



IASSH 2024 CONFERENCE REPORT



INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HEALTH (IASSH)

Annual Conference 2024

In collaboration with

Department of Sociology

Pondicherry University, Pondicherry

Theme:

**Gender, Health & Sustainable Development: Global
and National Perspectives**

31st Jan- 2nd Feb, 2024

&

Pre-conference Workshop

on

“Qualitative Analysis and Software Training”

29-30, Jan 2024



About IASSH:

The primary objectives of IASSH are to bring together scientists, research scholars, practitioners, and policymakers from various disciplines in one forum to explore and work in the areas of social and cultural dimensions of illness, health and health care in the country. It attempts to strengthen the networking with similar organizations in India and abroad, linking social and health scientists, health activists and policy makers and to initiate measures to evolve an equitable health care system in the country through appropriate and affordable health sector reforms. IASSH has more than 1300 life members who belong to different fields of social sciences and health studies.

Background of the Conference:

Given the issues concerning the health status, behaviour and health care system in India, there is a need to critically analyse various inter-connected issues pertaining to gender, health & sustainable development, with a view to develop useful perspectives and approaches. It is important for social scientists working in this field to debate and discuss the possibilities for evolving suitable mechanisms to interlink research, practice and policy. The conference provides a much needed platform for researchers to present their views and ideas, making significant contributions towards a better understanding of the inter-relationship between health, gender, well-being and socio-economic development. A healthy population is an essential foundation of sustainable development, contributing to inclusive growth in the country.

Despite some progress in the last few decades, the country's human development index highlights the need to take action for health promotion and disease prevention among different demographic segments of the population, especially among disadvantaged groups. The investments and interventions in health and health infrastructure are critical to accelerate progress towards the SDG goals and break the inter-generational cycle of poverty in India. The IASSH conference is a leading forum for exchanging insights and experiences on different emerging health and social sciences issues to address the challenges of achieving adequate and affordable health care in India. Professionals from diverse backgrounds are coming together to advance knowledge and understanding by debating health issues. The conference is supported by the **Indian Council for Social Sciences Research (ICSSR)**.

Inaugural Session



The inaugural session of the conference commenced with a formal ceremony held at the **Convention-cum-Cultural Centre** of Pondicherry University at **10:00 AM** on **January 31st, 2024**. The event commenced with the lighting of the lamp and a ceremonial invocation of the deity, symbolizing the auspicious beginning of the conference. This was followed by the singing of the National Anthem and Tamil Thai Vazhthu. **Dr. TAMILISAI Soundararajan**, the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Pondicherry & Governor of Telangana, graced the occasion as the chief guest of the inaugural session. **Shri P. M. L. Kalyanasundram** (MLA) and **Prof. K. Srinivasan** (Former Director, IIPS Mumbai) graced the occasion. The ceremony proceeded with the felicitation of the esteemed guests, during which presentations of mementos and bouquets were made as tokens of appreciation and respect.



Participants attending the Inaugural Session.

Chief Guest **Dr. (Smt.) TAMILISAI Soundararajan** expressed sincere gratitude for the opportunity to address the distinguished gathering. Dr. Soundararajan shed light on women's severe health issues, especially those residing in rural areas. She highlighted the lack of awareness about health issues among rural populations and informed about Indian government's involvement in various initiatives to empower women in these communities. Driven by her medical academic background and commitment to gender and health issues, Dr. Soundararajan articulated her primary focus on bridging the health disparities gap among low-income people. She urged the gathering to collectively strive towards an equitable and just society where everyone can access equal opportunities for growth and fulfilment.



Prof. C. Aruna, the conference convenor and Head of the Department of Sociology, Pondicherry University, extended a warm welcome to everyone present in the inaugural session. The distinguished gathering was graced by notable dignitaries from diverse backgrounds, encompassing academia, industry, and government sectors. Prof. Aruna articulated the conference's objective of fostering collaboration among researchers from academia and other sectors, aiming to cultivate a platform for sharing and enriching knowledge in the field. On behalf of the Department of Sociology and personally, Prof. Aruna extended warm welcome to all participants for the fruitful deliberations over the three days of the conference.



Prof. T. V. Sekher, President of IASSH, provided comprehensive insights into the Association's objectives and outlined the meticulous preparations for the conference, including arranging two memorial lectures. Prof. Sekher emphasized the significance of this conference as a platform for meetings, gathering experts and scholars from diverse disciplines to exchange ideas, disseminate knowledge, and discourse on emerging trends and challenges in gender, health, and development.



He highlighted the need for social scientists involved in this sphere to engage in robust debates and discussions aimed at devising effective mechanisms to bridge the gap between research, practice, and policy.

He particularly stressed IASSH's primary goal of fostering youth participation in knowledge dissemination within the realms of social sciences and health research, noting the significant presence of young researchers and Ph.D. scholars among the conference participants. Expressing gratitude towards Pondicherry University for hosting this year's conference and workshop, Prof. Sekher extended warm greetings to all attendees, wishing them fruitful and productive deliberations in the IASSH conference.



In his presidential address, **Prof. K. Tharanikkarasu**, Vice Chancellor of Pondicherry University, underscored the critical significance of integrating health within the broader framework of social sciences. Stressing the imperative for interdisciplinary methodologies, Prof. Tharanikkarasu highlighted how such approaches enhance health outcomes. Furthermore, he underscored the necessity for fostering collaboration between social scientists and health policymakers. Prof. Tharanikkarasu emphasized that these two realms can synergize their efforts toward advancing health policies and practices by forging strong partnerships.



Prof. B. B. Mohanty, Dean of the School of Social Science & International Studies at Pondicherry University, delivered a felicitation address. In his speech, Professor Mohanty emphasized universities' pivotal role in advancing research and fostering innovation within the realm of healthcare. He elaborated on the various initiatives undertaken by the institute to promote research endeavours and encourage collaborative efforts. Prof. Mohanty expressed gratitude towards the Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health (IASSH) for their fruitful partnership in organizing the workshop and the conference.



Professor K. Srinivasan, a distinguished demographer and former Director of IIPS, graced the event as the Guest of Honour. Prof. Srinivasan delved into an insightful discussion, touching upon both global and national perspectives concerning gender and health within social sciences. He meticulously outlined the challenges as well as the myriad opportunities that await exploration for enhancing healthcare services in India. Following

Prof. Srinivasan's address, Shri P. M. L. Kalyanasundram took the stage to share his profound insights on the current state of healthcare in India. Shri Kalyanasundram emphasized the need for reforms within the healthcare sector and special attention towards rural areas.

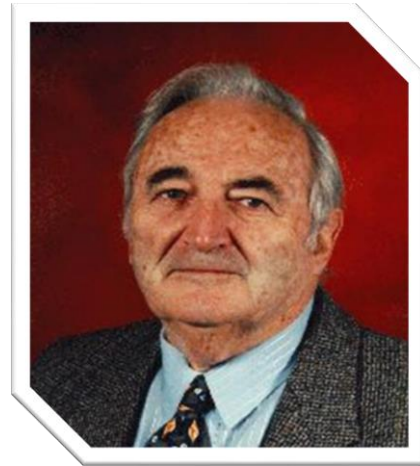
Prof. P. M. Sandhya Rani, General Secretary of IASSH, extended her heartfelt gratitude to all attendees and distinguished guests for their significant inputs and participation. She emphasized the importance of their contributions towards enriching the conference experience. The inaugural session saw an impressive turnout, with over 400 participants in attendance, reflecting the widespread interest and engagement in the conference's themes and discussions. As a symbolic conclusion to the inaugural proceedings, the session concluded with a rendition of the national anthem, uniting all present in a spirit of patriotism.



Inaugural Session of the IASSH Conference 2024 at Pondicherry University

Seventh Prof. John Caldwell Memorial Lecture

The Doyen of Demography, **Prof. John Charles (Jack) Caldwell**, died on 12th March 2016 at the age of 87 in Canberra. He was associated with the Department of Demography of the Australian National University (ANU) for many decades. Caldwell's seminal work included documentation of the role of mother's education in fertility limitation and child mortality decline and the role of circumcision in inhibiting the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. He is known for his "wealth flows" theory, which relates demographic transition theory to changes in intergenerational transfers within the family. He has encouraged and mentored many young scholars from India, and a good number of them received their Ph. Ds from ANU under his able guidance. His anthropological demographic work on South India, particularly on marriage, fertility and contraception, received much research attention. At Prof. K.N.M. Raju's initiative, his students, colleagues, and friends approached the Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health (IASSH) to institute a memorial lecture in his honour. Considering this request, the IASSH instituted the lecture series in memory of the most famous demographer of our times.



The Seventh Prof. John Caldwell Memorial Lecture was held at the **Convention-cum-Cultural Centre** of Pondicherry University at **12:00 PM** on **January 31st, 2024**. **Prof. K. Srinivasan** (former Director of IIPS, and IUSSP Laureate) chaired the session. The session began with an introduction by Prof. T. V. Sekher about the life and works of Prof. John Caldwell, a renowned demographer who contributed significantly to the field of demography. The guest speaker was **Dr. Soumya Swaminathan** (Chairperson of Dr. M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, served as WHO's Chief Scientist and Deputy Director-General for Programmes), who delivered the seventh Prof. John Caldwell Memorial Lecture on the theme - ***"Lessons from the Pandemic for Science and Public Health."***



In her speech, Dr. Swaminathan highlighted key insights from the COVID-19 pandemic and their implications for scientific research and public health practices. She emphasized the importance of global collaboration, data transparency, and rapid response mechanisms in addressing future health crises. She elaborated on how the pandemic highlighted the existing inequalities worldwide. Dr. Swaminathan discussed the role of scientific innovation in vaccine development and the need for equitable distribution to ensure widespread protection against infectious diseases. She emphasized the significance of evidence-based decision-making and effective communication strategies in fostering public trust and adherence to public health measures. Furthermore, Dr. Swaminathan addressed challenges such as misinformation, vaccine hesitancy, and health inequalities, calling for concerted efforts to address systemic issues to promote health equity worldwide.

At the end of the lecture, **Dr. V. Selvaraju** (Vice President, IASSH) proposed a vote of thanks, expressing gratitude to the guest speaker, the chairperson, and the audience for their active participation and contribution to the event. Overall, the lecture provided valuable insights into the lessons learned from the pandemic and emphasized the critical role of science and public health in safeguarding global well-being.



Participants attending the Prof. John Caldwell Memorial Lecture. Prof. K. Srinivasan, Prof. T. V. Sekher and Dr. V. Selvaraju on the dais.

9th Prof. K. E. Vaidyanathan Memorial Lecture

IASSH has instituted a memorial lecture in honour of **Prof. K.E. Vaidyanathan** since 2014. He was the President of the Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health (IASSH) from 2007 to 2011 and was mainly responsible for the expansion of the Association to its present form. Dr. Vaidyanathan was a distinguished demographer who served in various capacities in the United Nations and other organizations. He started his career as a faculty at the International Institute for Population Sciences in Mumbai.



He later became the Head of the Department of Population Studies at the Institute of Rural Health and Family Planning in Gandhigram. He then joined the UN system and worked in various countries such as Egypt, Syria, Uganda, and Sudan, where he helped establish centers for population studies and research, advised planning commissions and conducted successful population surveys and censuses. In his later years, he also helped plan and implement the Living Standards Measurement Survey in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Dr. Vaidyanathan passed away in 2014 in Bangalore.



The 9th Dr. K. E. Vaidyanathan Memorial Lecture was held at the J N Auditorium on the 2nd of February 2024. The session was chaired by **Prof. B. B. Mohanty**, Dean of the School of Social Science & International Studies at Pondicherry University and co-chaired by Prof. S. Siva Raju (Former President of IASSH). Prof. T. V. Sekher spoke about the life and contributions of Prof. Vaidyanathan. The speaker for the event was **Dr. Manju Rahi**, a clinician by training, Scientist-'G' and Director at ICMR - Vector Control Research Centre, Pondicherry.

Who delivered the 9th Prof. K. E. Vaidyanathan Memorial Lecture on the topic, ***“Gendering of Health Outcomes: The Case of Vector-Borne Diseases.”***

Dr. Manju Rahi began by highlighting the significance of understanding gender dynamics in the context of health outcomes, particularly concerning vector-borne diseases. She emphasized that while vector-borne diseases affect everyone, they often manifest differently based on gender, socio-economic factors, and cultural norms. Dr. Rahi presented compelling data and case studies demonstrating the differential impact of vector-borne diseases on men and women. She discussed how societal roles, access to healthcare, and exposure to vectors influence the vulnerability of individuals, with women often bearing a disproportionate burden due to their roles in caregiving and domestic work. In conclusion, she emphasized the need for gender-sensitive approaches in research, policy-making, and public health interventions to address these inequalities effectively.

Overall, the 9th Prof. K. E. Vaidyanathan Memorial Lecture provided valuable insights into the gender dimensions of health outcomes related to vector-borne diseases, emphasizing upon further research and action in this critical area. The lecture was followed by a vote of thanks by **Dr. Pragya Tiwari Gupta**, who expressed her gratitude to all the speakers and participants for their valuable contributions.



Prof. T. V. Sekher, Prof. B. B. Mohanty, Dr Manju Rahi, Prof. S. Siva Raju, & Dr. Pragya Tiwari Gupta at 9th Prof. K. E. Vaidyanathan Memorial Lecture.

IASSH-Best Publication Awards for Young Researchers

To encourage academic scholarship and quality scientific publications in social sciences and health studies, IASSH invited applications from young researchers to submit their recent journal publications for consideration for the Best Publication Awards. Based on our announcement in Aug. 2023 for the best publication awards, we received 31 applications. A screening committee first scrutinized the applications for the eligibility criteria like age (below 35 years), year of publication (2022), single/first author of the paper, etc., and shortlisted 22 papers for the assessment of the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee, consisting of four experts, reviewed the shortlisted papers and recommended three young researchers for the award. Though, it was a difficult choice to select three from many high-quality publications in reputed journals. The winners received a Certificate and a cash prize of Rs. 25,000 each, which was presented to them by Prof. K. Srinivasan during the conference.

The winners are:



Dr. Sayani Das
Indian Statistical Institute
(ISI), Kolkata



Mr. Ali Abbas Rizvi
International Institute
for Population Sciences
(IIPS), Mumbai



Dr. Rajeshwari A. Biradar
KLE University, Belgaum,
Karnataka

Technical and Poster Sessions

We are happy to report that IASSH received an overwhelming response to our call for abstracts in all three categories – **Oral, Poster, and Youth Best Paper Award competition**. A committee selected the abstracts for the conference. Seventeen technical sessions were held, in which researchers presented 94 papers. Forty poster presentations were made in two sessions on the 31st of January and the 1st of February. The Best Youth Paper award competition was conducted on the 1st of February, in which 22 young researchers participated.



Technical and Poster Sessions are in Progress.

Valedictory Session

The valedictory session was held at the **J N Auditorium**. It began with the rendition of the University Anthem, followed by a welcome to the audience and the guests by **Prof. P. M. Sandhya Rani**, General Secretary of IASSH. **Dr. Rakesh Aggarwal** (Director, JIPMER) graced the occasion as the chief guest and delivered the valedictory address. Dr. Aggarwal spoke about the advantages and benefits of an academic conference like this, such as better networking and collaboration for researchers and young scholars. **Shri P. Angalane** (MLA), **Prof. B. B. Mohanty** (Dean, School of Social Science & International Studies at Pondicherry University) and **Selvi. P. Muthumeena** (Director, Dept. of Women and Child Development, Govt. of Pondicherry) graced the occasion as a guests of Honour. The ceremony proceeded with the felicitation of the esteemed guests, during which presentations of mementos and bouquets were made as tokens of appreciation and respect.



Dr. Rakesh Aggarwal (Director, JIPMER), delivering the valedictory address.

In Presidential address, **Prof. Clement Sagayaradja Lourdes** (Director, Culture and Cultural Relations, Pondicherry University) highlighted the need for collaborative research and sharing of knowledge. **Prof. T. V. Sekher** (President of IASSH) expressed his happiness with the successful completion of the conference and thanked Prof. C. Aruna and the local organizers for their active involvement and commitment in organizing the conference and workshop successfully. He also thanked the participants of the conference and members of the Association for their cooperation and support in enhancing the profile and activities of IASSH. The session ended with a formal vote of thanks by **Prof. C. Aruna**, the Conference

Convenor, who thanked all the participants, guests, sponsors, and organizers for contributing to the event. She particularly mentioned the support received from the Administration of the University, faculty colleagues and student volunteers.



Participants attending the valedictory Session at the J N Auditorium

Announcement of the Awards

The Valedictory session's highlight was the announcement of the Best Youth Paper and Poster Awards. The awards were given to young researchers for their exceptional work in the field of research. The winners were selected based on their research findings, methodology, and presentation skills. The President of IASSH, Prof. T.V. Sekher, announced the awards for best youth papers and best posters, which were selected by expert committees. The winners of the prestigious **Youth Best Paper Awards - 2024** were four young researchers **Aditi** (IIPS, Mumbai), **Mugdha Deshpande** (Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune), **Akif Mustafa** (IIPS, Mumbai), **Zuvairiya Nassar** (Bharathiar University, Coimbatore) and they were each honoured with a certificate and cash prize.

Youth Best Paper Award Winners - 2024



Ms. Aditi



Mr. Akif Mustafa



Ms. Mugdha Deshpande



Ms. Zuvairiya Nassar

The Best Poster Awards - 2024 were given to five young scholars: **Aditi B Prasad** (IIPS, Mumbai), **Archana Behera** (Pondicherry University), **Shubham Kumar** (IIPS, Mumbai), **Puja Goswami** (IIPS, Mumbai), **Arosmita Sahoo** (University of Hyderabad) and they received the certificates and cash prizes. The audience applauded their achievements. The conference secretariat team included **Dr. P. Murugesan**, **Mr. Anjani Kumar Mishra**, **Mr. Jitender Prasad**, and **Mr. Pankaj Kumar Patel** of IASSH. **Prof. C. Aruna** proposed the formal vote of thanks.

The Best Poster Award Winners- 2024



Ms. Aditi B Prasad



Ms. Archana Behera



Ms. Arosmita Sahoo



Ms. Puja Goswami



Mr. Shubham Kumar

Cultural Evening

On the evening of January 31st, a cultural program was held at the Cultural-cum-Convention Centre to showcase the rich traditional cultural heritage of India. The program featured various dance forms, including classical, folk, drama and contemporary dances. The dancers, dressed in colourful and traditional attire, presented a beautiful display of artistry and grace. The performances enthralled the audience, which transported them to a different world altogether. In addition to the dances, there were also several musical performances. The singers, accompanied by talented musicians, mesmerized the audience with their melodious voices and soulful renditions. The event was a testament to the fact that cultural programs like these are a great way to promote and preserve our cultural heritage. The event was well-attended and appreciated by all participants. The cultural program was sponsored by the **Flavour India (P) Ltd**, Pondicherry.





Musical performance by students of Pondicherry University

Facilitation of artist by conference organizers



EC and General Body Meetings of IASSH

The Executive Committee (EC) of IASSH met on 30th January 2024 and deliberated on various activities of the Association such as research, workshops and fund mobilization. The EC also approved the proposal from Prof. S. Siva Raju (TISS) for establishing an award in honor of Prof. K. Mahadevan. This award will be given to a young researcher every year for the published research paper purely based on field work. The General Body (GB) meeting took place on 1st February 2024. The discussions in the GB meeting were on the membership drive, new collaborations and newsletters, fund mobilization for the conference, and planning for the next conference. The Audited Statement of Accounts of the Association for the year 2022-23 was presented and approved by the EC and General Body. The audited statement of accounts is placed on the IASSH website for the members' reference. 19th annual conference received financial support from the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR). IASSH is thankful to ICSSR for their support in successfully organizing the conference 2024.

12th Pre-Conference Workshop on 'Qualitative Analysis and Software Training'

The pre-conference workshop was held from 29th and 30th January 2024 at Pondicherry University. In order to train young research scholars, IASSH has initiated the Pre-Conference Workshop from 2010 onwards. Topics Covered in the Pre-Conference Workshop are to provide hands-on training in the applications of ATLAS.ti and NVivo software in qualitative research. This covers transcription of qualitative data; Analysis of Qualitative Data coding, memos, and relationships; Data Management using ATLAS.ti and NVivo software; Reporting and presenting qualitative findings. Forty-five young researchers participated in the workshop. They gave the feedback that the workshop helped fine-tune their research skills. The participants were given certificates after completion of 2 days of intensive training. **Resource Persons:** 1) **Dr. B. Madhusoodhana**, Senior Program Officer, Population Council, New Delhi. 2) **Dr. Manas R. Pradhan**, Assistant Professor, IIPS, Mumbai.

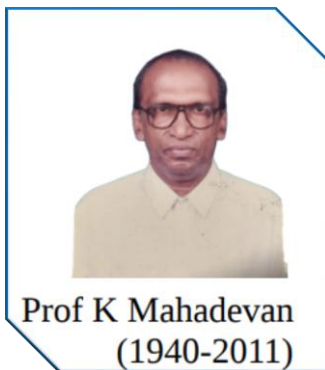
Prof. T. V. Sekher, Prof. B. B. Mohanty, Prof. S. Siva Raju, Dr. V. Selvaraju, Prof. Sandhya Rani and Prof. C. Aruna presented the certificates to the participants. **Prof. T.V. Sekher and Prof. C. Aruna** were the Coordinators of the two-day workshop, supported by **Mr. Jitender Prasad and Mr. Pankaj Kumar Patel** of IASSH Secretariat.





Workshop Participants with the Resource Persons and Workshop Coordinators.

Announcement of Prof. Kuttan Mahadevan Award



To foster and encourage fieldwork-based research, IASSH has decided to institute an award for young researchers. Named after **Prof. K Mahadevan**, the award will be conferred annually to a young scholar, based on a competition of published research papers purely focused on fieldwork. Prof. Mahadevan, a renowned anthropologist and demographer, led the Department of Population Studies at S.

V. University, Tirupati for many years. His family, colleagues, and students under the initiative by **Prof. S. Siva Raju** (TISS) mobilised the fund for this award. The announcement of instituting this award was made by **Prof. T. V. Sekher** (President of IASSH) during the 19th annual conference held at Pondicherry University. **Prof. K. Srinivasan** and **Prof. S. Siva Raju** highlighted the enormous contributions of Prof. Mahadevan for teaching and research. The first award will be selected in the year 2024 by an expert committee of IASSH. The winner will get a certificate and cash prize of Rs. 25,000.