

# INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HEALTH (IASSH)

## Eleventh Prof. K.E. Vaidyanathan Memorial Lecture

by

Dr. Pavitra Mohan

on

## “Health and Well-being of Labour-Migrants in India.”

The Eleventh **Prof. K.E. Vaidyanathan** Memorial Lecture was held at the RA Podar Auditorium on February 12, 2026, as part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health (IASSH). The session was chaired by Prof. C.P. Prakasam (Former President, IASSH) and co-chaired by Dr. V. Selvaraju (General Secretary, IASSH). The session commenced with a welcome address by Prof. R. Nagarajan, President, IASSH, who reflected on the remarkable contributions of Prof. K.E. Vaidyanathan to the field of health and population studies. He highlighted Prof. Vaidyanathan’s pioneering work in the socioeconomic determinants of health and demography, which continues to shape academic discourse and policy research.



The distinguished speaker for this year’s memorial lecture was **Dr. Pavitra Mohan** (Director & Co-Founder, Basic Health-Care Services (BHS)). His organization leads the initiatives in addressing the health and social protection needs of migrant and informal workers. Previously, Dr. Mohan worked as a Senior Health Specialist at UNICEF’s India Country Office, contributing to national policy dialogue and programme design in maternal, newborn, and child health.

The eleventh Prof. K.E. Vaidyanathan Memorial Lecture was delivered by Dr. Pavitra Mohan, on the topic “**Improving Health and Well-being of Labour Migrants in India: Context, Response and Insights**”. He highlighted the growing health vulnerabilities faced by India’s large population of labour migrants, who often experience poor nutrition, unsafe working conditions, and limited access to healthcare services. He illustrated how migration affects not only workers but also their families, particularly women and children, who face malnutrition, sanitation challenges, and limited welfare support. He highlighted the health challenges faced by labour migrants, including poor nutrition, hazardous work conditions, and inadequate housing. Using real-life experiences, field research, and case examples, he demonstrated how migration adversely affects workers as well as their families, particularly women and children. The lecture emphasized that existing health systems and welfare schemes often fail to adequately reach migrant populations.

Dr. Mohan emphasized that existing policies and health systems often fail to adequately address the needs of migrant populations. He also presented innovative responses such as migrant-

friendly healthcare services, AMRIT clinics in high-migration areas, Mohalla clinics in cities, improved food security through portable public distribution systems, and childcare initiatives for migrant families. The lecture concluded by calling for stronger policies, improved social protection, and inclusive health systems to ensure the health and well-being of migrants. The lecture provided valuable insights into the health vulnerabilities of migrant workers and highlighted the need for inclusive health systems and migrant-responsive policies. The lecture emphasized the need for equity-focused approaches to address health and nutrition inequalities. The session concluded with a formal vote of thanks by **Dr. Pragya Tiwari Gupta** (Joint Secretary, IASSH).

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. Prof. 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 Gandhinagar. He later 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. Prof. Vaidyanathan passed away in 2014 in Bangalore.



Guest Speaker and Participants at the Prof. K.E. Vaidyanathan Memorial Lectures.