

**INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL
SCIENCES AND HEALTH**

IASSH 2026
CONFERENCE
REPORT

Towards Viksit Bharat: Wellness for All
Integrating Social Science in Health Policy and Practice

11th – 13th February 2026



In collaboration with:

RA Podar Institute of Management
University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HEALTH

21st Annual Conference 2026

In collaboration with

RA Podar Institute of Management

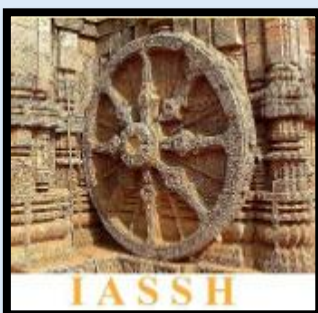
University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

Theme:

***Towards Viksit Bharat: Wellness for All
Integrating Social Science in Health Policy and Practice***

11th – 13th February 2026

Conference Supported By:



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 policymakers and initiating measures to evolve an equitable healthcare 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

India's vision of Viksit Bharat (Developed India) by 2047 emphasises inclusive growth and human well-being as the foundation of national progress. It recognizes health and wellness as the cornerstone of sustainable development. The pursuit of wellness goes beyond curative healthcare; it encompasses preventive, promotive, and holistic well-being for all sections of society. Achieving this ambitious goal requires a multidimensional approach that integrates medical sciences with the insights of social sciences.

Health outcomes and well-being are not only shaped by medical care but also deeply influenced by social, economic, cultural, and environmental contexts. Issues such as poverty, gender inequality, education, migration, environmental changes, and social determinants of health significantly impact access to care and health equity. Especially, inequalities in education, income and gender coupled with urbanization, climate change, and migration significantly affect health outcomes. While India has made significant progress in public health infrastructure, programmes and policies, there remains a pressing need to embed social science perspectives into health policy and practice to ensure inclusivity, accessibility, and sustainability. Therefore, to achieve the goal of Wellness for all, it is vital to integrate social science perspectives into health policy and practice.

Medical interventions alone cannot address the complex health challenges of today. Social science research provides a nuanced understanding of community behaviours, health-seeking practices, and the social determinants of health. Integrating these perspectives into health policies ensures that interventions are culturally relevant, context-specific, and socially just. A comprehensive approach that synergises the advances in medical sciences with social science insights can enhance health system responsiveness, foster community participation, and promote wellness for all and also ensures inclusivity, equity and sustainability.

This conference intends to generate a dialogue that connects evidence-based research with policy priorities, thereby contributing to India's broader development goals. It seeks to provide an interdisciplinary platform for scholars, policymakers, practitioners, and civil society to deliberate on how social sciences can strengthen health systems and ensure equity in the journey towards a Viksit Bharat.

Inaugural Session

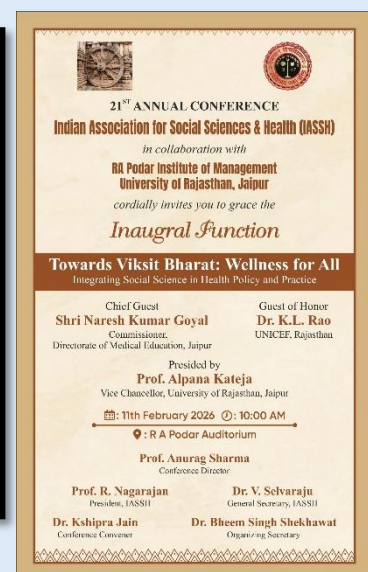
21st Annual Conference of the Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health (IASSH) was successfully conducted from **February 11-13, 2026**, at University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. Organised in collaboration with the Department of Economics, University of Rajasthan, the conference brought together leading scholars, researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to discuss the social determinants of health and well-being in India. The conference served as a dynamic platform for interdisciplinary discussions, showcasing research presentations, policy dialogues, and evidence-based insights on public health, gender equality, sustainability, and social justice.



The inaugural session of the 21st Annual Conference of the Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health (IASSH) commenced with a formal ceremony at the RA Podar, Auditorium, **University of Rajasthan, on February 11, 2026, at 10:00 AM**. The session began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp, symbolising an auspicious start, followed by the University Anthem.



Inaugural Session of the IASSH Conference 2026 at
University of Rajasthan, Jaipur



The inaugural session commenced with a warm welcome address by **Dr. Kshipra Jain**, Local Conference Convener at the University of Rajasthan, who graciously acknowledged the presence of distinguished guests, scholars, and participants from diverse academic and research institutions. **Prof. Anurag Sharma**, Director of the Conference, outlined the key objectives and emphasized the importance of fostering interdisciplinary dialogue between social sciences and public health research.

Dr. V. Selvaraju, General Secretary of the IASSH, described the conference as an important platform for scholars and practitioners to exchange ideas on population, health, and social development. He noted that the annual conferences of IASSH have consistently promoted interdisciplinary engagement and encouraged collaborative research to address emerging public health and social challenges. He also highlighted the key components of the conference, including memorial lectures, plenary sessions, thematic sessions, poster presentations, and young scholars' paper presentations.

This was followed by an address from **Prof. R. Nagarajan**, President of IASSH, who underscored the critical role of interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing public health challenges and advancing social science research. He emphasized that health outcomes and well-being are shaped not only by medical care but also by broader social, economic, cultural, and environmental factors. Issues such as poverty, gender inequality, education, migration, environmental change, and other social determinants significantly influence access to healthcare and health equity. He further reiterated the founding vision of IASSH—to bring together scholars and practitioners from diverse social science disciplines to deepen understanding of the social, cultural, economic, and political determinants of health and illness in India.

The Chief Guest, **Shri Naresh Kumar Goyal**, Commissioner, Medical Education Department, Directorate of Medical Education, Jaipur, delivered an insightful address on the role of academic institutions in shaping evidence-based policies and fostering research-driven solutions to socio-economic and health-related challenges. He highlighted the growing intersection of scientific innovation, technology, and public health research, and emphasized the need for strategic collaborations between academia and industry to promote sustainable health initiatives.



Prof. Anurag Sharma
University of Rajasthan



Prof. R. Nagarajan
President, IASSH



Shri. Naresh Kumar Goyal
Commissioner, Medical
Education Department,
Jaipur



Prof. F. Ram
Former Director, IIPS, Mumbai



Dr. V. Selvaraju
General Secretary, IASSH



Dr. Anil Agarwal
UNICEF, Rajasthan



Dr. Kshipra Jain
Conference Convener
University of Rajasthan



Dr. Bhem Singh Shekhawat
Conference Convener
University of Rajasthan

Further enriching the session, **Dr. Anil Agarwal**, UNICEF, Rajasthan, and **Prof. F. Ram**, Former Director, IIPS, Mumbai addressed the audience as Guests of Honour. They emphasised the importance of bridging research with practice to create impactful health policies. They commended the efforts of IASSH and Rajasthan University in fostering meaningful discussions on the socio-economic dimensions of health and well-being.



Release of the **Souvenir & Abstracts** of the conference by Dr. Bheem Singh Shekhawat, Dr. V. Selvaraju, Prof. R. Nagarajan, Shri Naresh Kumar Goyal, Prof. Anurag Sharma, Dr. Anil Agarwal, Prof. F. Ram, and Dr. Kshipra Jain.

The session also witnessed the announcement of **Best Publication Awards** by the **Prof. T.V. Sekher**, (Former President IASSH), recognising the outstanding contributions of young researchers in the field of health and social sciences. The publication awards were presented to the winners by the chief guest. The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks delivered by **Dr. Bheem Singh Shekhawat**, Organizing Secretary, expressing gratitude to the esteemed guests, participants, and organisers for their collective efforts in making the conference a success.



Prof. T.V. Sekher, Former President, IASSH, announced the winners of the best publication awards.



Participants at the Inaugural Session at RA Podar Auditorium

Following the inaugural session, attendees engaged in networking over high tea, marking the beginning of three days of intellectually enriching discussions and research exchanges.



Ninth Prof. John Caldwell Memorial Lecture

The Ninth **Prof. John Caldwell** Memorial Lecture was held at the RA Podar Auditorium of University of Rajasthan, at 12:00 PM on February 11, 2026, as part of the 21st annual conference of IASSH. The session was chaired by **Prof. KNM Raju** (Former Director, PRC, ISEC Bangalore) and co-chaired by **Prof. T.V. Sekher** (former President, IASSH). 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 ninth Caldwell Memorial Lecture was delivered by **Dr. Ravi Verma**, Regional Director of the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW-Asia), New Delhi, a distinguished social scientist with over three decades of experience in gender, population health, and public health research. His lecture, titled “**Fertility Transition to Gender Justice: Revisiting Caldwell’s Theory of Social Change,**” revisited Caldwell’s theoretical framework to examine the evolving links between demographic transition and gender equality. Drawing on his extensive experience in gender, population health, and social research, he highlighted the importance of gender-transformative approaches and evidence-based policies to address social and health inequalities in India and South Asia.

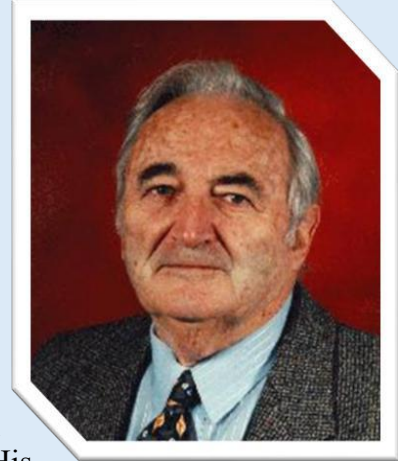
In his address, Dr. Verma emphasized that fertility decline and broader social changes must be understood alongside persistent gender inequalities. Drawing on his extensive research on masculinities, violence against women, and sexual and reproductive health, he highlighted the need for gender-transformative approaches that actively engage men and boys and promote gender-just social norms. The lecture provided valuable insights into how demographic and social transformations can contribute to more equitable health and development outcomes in India and the wider South Asian region.

Dr. Verma warned that persistent level of fertility could lead to long-term population decline, and stressed the need for balanced policies to support ageing populations, workforce sustainability, and family well-being. His lecture concluded with a call for rethinking India’s demographic policies in light of future socio-economic challenges.

At the conclusion of the lecture, **Dr. Manas Pradhan** (Treasurer, IASSH), proposed the vote of thanks, expressing sincere appreciation to the guest speaker, chairpersons, and audience for their engagement and valuable contributions to the session. He acknowledged the insightful discourse on India’s fertility transition and its policy implications, emphasizing how the lecture shed light on emerging demographic challenges and the need for strategic interventions. The session provided a comprehensive understanding of fertility trends, socio-economic influences, and future population concerns, making it a significant addition to the conference’s academic discussions.

Prof. John Charles (Jack) Caldwell

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. Prof. Caldwell was the President of IUSSP (1994-98). At Prof. K.N.M. Raju's initiative, Prof. Caldwell's former 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.



Eleventh Prof. K.E. Vaidyanathan Memorial Lecture

The Eleventh **Prof. K.E. Vaidyanathan** Memorial Lecture was held at the RA Podar Auditorium on February 12, 2026, as part of the 21st 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 Gandhi gram. 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.



Plenary Session: Healthy Diet: Conceptualizing Healthy Diet in the Indian Socio-Cultural Context

The plenary session on “**Healthy Diet**”, sponsored by UNICEF, was chaired by **Dr. Reshma Boolchandani**, Professor, Department of Home Science, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur. The session brought together experts from academia, government, and international organizations to discuss various dimensions of nutrition and healthy dietary practices in India. **Dr. Pradeep Chaudhary**, Project Director (Child Health), Government of Rajasthan, discussed “Conceptualising a Healthy Diet in the Indian Socio-cultural Context,” emphasizing the integration of traditional food practices with modern nutrition knowledge. **Dr. Mukta Agarwal**, Retired Professor, Home Science, University of Rajasthan, highlighted the importance of a life-course approach to nutrition—from infancy to old age—for ensuring overall health and well-being. **Dr. R.L. Suman** discussed community-based and state-level innovations aimed at promoting healthy diets and improving nutritional outcomes among children and vulnerable populations. **Dr. Akash Porwal**, Associate Director, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning, IPE Global, Jaipur, addressed the double burden of malnutrition and dietary transitions in India, while **Dr. Preetu**, Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF India Country Office, New Delhi, emphasized the role of food systems, agriculture, and markets in shaping dietary patterns and food security. **Prof. Jalandhar Pradhan**, Professor and Head, Humanities and Social Sciences, National Institute of Rourkela, discussed the significance of nutrition policies, programmes, and inter-sectoral convergence for improving public health outcomes. Further, **Smt. Mukta Arora**, SBC Specialist/State Coordinator, UN Women, highlighted the role of equity, gender, and social determinants in influencing dietary practices. **Mr. Nanak Kumar Santdasani**, WASH Officer, UNICEF Rajasthan Office, concluded the session by discussing the impact of climate change on nutrition and healthy diets.



Speakers at the Plenary Session on “Healthy Diet”

21st ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Indian Association for Social Sciences & Health (IASSH)
in collaboration with
RA Podar Institute of Management
University of Rajasthan, Jaipur
cordially invites you to grace the
Plenary Session on *Healthy Diet*

Chairperson
Dr. Reshma Boolchandani
Professor, Department of Home Science
University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

Panelists :

Dr. Pradeep Chaudhary, Project Director Child Health, Govt. Of Rajasthan
Dr. Mukta Agarwal, Subject Expert, RCOI, Udaipur
Dr. Akash Porwal, Associate Vice President, Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning
IPE Global, Delhi
Dr. Preetu, Nutrition Specialist, UNICEF India Country Office, New Delhi
Prof. Jalandhar Pradhan, Prof. & Head, Humanities & Social Sciences,
NIT Rourkela, Odisha
Dr. R.L. Suman, Prof. & Head, Dept. Of Paediatrics, MB Hospital, Udaipur
Dr. Mukta Arora, State Coordinator, UN Women
Mr. Nanak Kumar Santdasani, WASH Officer, UNICEF, Rajasthan Office

📅: 12th February 2026 🕒: 11:15 AM
📍: R A Podar Auditorium

Sponsored by :

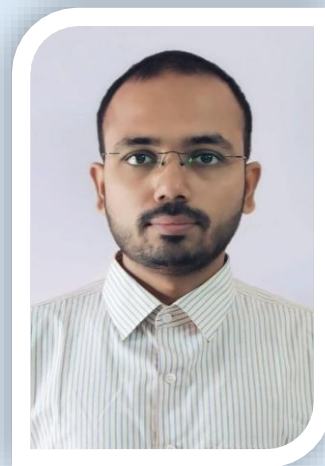
IASSH Best Publication Award for Young Researchers 2025

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 the consideration of Best Publication Award. Based on our announcement in September 2025 for the best publication award, we received 42 applications. A screening committee first scrutinized the applications for the eligibility criteria like age (below 35 years), year of publication (2024), single/first author of the paper, etc. and shortlisted 23 applications/papers for the assessment of the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee consisting of five experts reviewed the shortlisted papers and recommended two young researchers for the award, though it was a difficult choice to select two from many high-quality publications in reputed journals. The winners received a certificate and cash prize of Rs. 25,000.

The winners are



Dr. Shubham Ranjan, PhD
Indian Institute of Technology,
Mandi

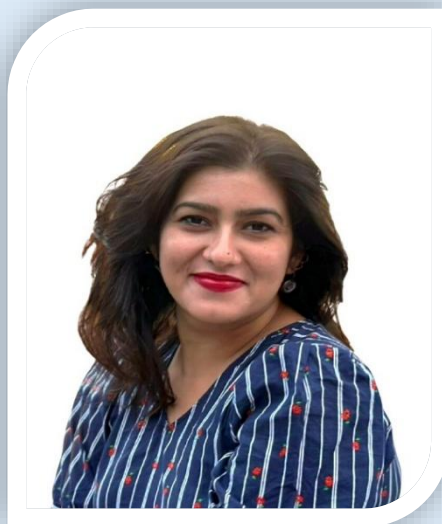


Dr. Sumit Kumar Das, PhD
All India Institute of Medical
Sciences (AIIMS)

Prof. K. Mahadevan Award for Best Publication 2025

To encourage field-based research, academic scholarship, and scientific publications in social sciences and health studies, IASSH invited young researchers to submit their published journal articles for the consideration of award. Following the June 2025 announcement for the Prof. K. Mahadevan Award for Best Publication, we received 23 applications. A screening committee first scrutinized the applications for eligibility criteria such as age (below 35 years), year of publication (2024), focus on field-based research, and single/first author of the paper. Fourteen papers were shortlisted for final evaluation by a Selection Committee. The Selection Committee, comprising five experts, reviewed the shortlisted papers and recommended a paper for the award this year. The winner received a certificate and cash prize of Rs. 25,000.

The winner is



Dr. Sandeep Kaur

IIPH-D, Public Health Foundation of India
Honorary Researcher Associate
Department of Surgery & Cancer
Imperial College London

Technical and Poster Sessions

The 21st Annual Conference of IASSH received an overwhelming response to its call for abstracts across all three categories: Oral Presentations, Poster Presentations, and the Youth Best Paper Award Competition. A scientific committee carefully reviewed and selected the abstracts for presentation at the conference. Fourteen technical sessions were conducted, where researchers presented 58 papers covering diverse themes related to health, gender, social inequalities, and policy interventions. The poster presentation sessions displayed 37 research posters, held on February 11th and 12th, 2026, providing an interactive platform for researchers to engage with peers and experts. The Best Youth Paper Award Competition was conducted on February 13th, 2026, with 14 young researchers competing for the recognition. The competition highlighted innovative research and emerging scholars, fostering academic excellence in social sciences and health studies. The enthusiastic participation and high-quality research presented at the conference reaffirmed IASSH's commitment to fostering young researchers and advancing interdisciplinary scholarship.



Technical and Poster Sessions in progress.

Valedictory Session

The Valedictory Session of the 21st Annual Conference of the Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health (IASSH) was held at the RA Podar Auditorium, University of Rajasthan, on February 13th 2026. The session began with a welcome address by **Dr. Bheem Singh Shekhawat**, Conference Convener, University of Rajasthan, who extended his gratitude to all participants and speakers for their contributions in making the conference a success.



Dr. V. Selvaraju, General Secretary, IASSH, provided a brief review of the conference, summarising the key discussions, technical sessions, and presentations that took place over the three days. He highlighted the diverse range of topics covered, the engaging scholarly debates, and the valuable networking opportunities facilitated by the conference. In his remarks, **Prof. R. Nagarajan**, President, IASSH, expressed his appreciation for the enthusiastic participation of researchers and young scholars. He commended the efforts of University of Rajasthan and the local organising team for their dedication to hosting the event successfully.

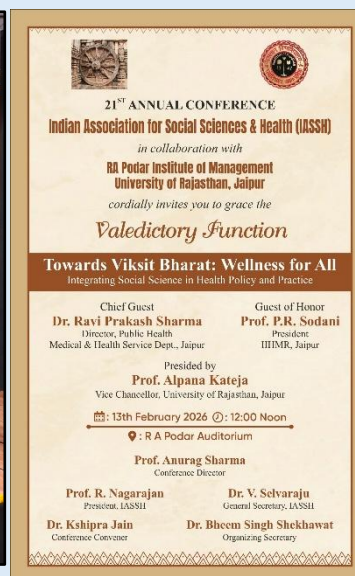


The Chief Guest, **Dr. Ravi Prakash Sharma**, Director, Public Health, Medical & Health Service Department, Jaipur, an eminent anthropologist, delivered an insightful speech on the emerging trends in social sciences and health research, stressing the need for context-driven policy solutions to address contemporary challenges in public health, gender equality, and economic sustainability. He encouraged young researchers to continue pursuing high-quality research that contributes to societal development. He also highlighted the contributions of anthropologists in understanding society and culture, which is crucial in studying well-being, based on his vast expertise in ethnographic research.



Prof. Sanjay Lodha (Director, IDS), who was the Guest of Honour, emphasised the need for a multidisciplinary approach in better understanding the determinants of health-seeking behaviours. He also highlighted the importance of combining quantitative and qualitative research methodologies to capture a more holistic picture of health disparities and socioeconomic influences on healthcare utilisation. The session also included a special address by **Prof. P.R. Sodani**, President, IIHMR University, Jaipur, who emphasized the importance of strengthening health systems through evidence-based policy, capacity building, and academic leadership in public health.





Valedictory Session

Following the valedictory session speeches, the Best Youth Paper Award and Best Poster Award were presented to the winners jointly by Dr. Ravi Prakash Sharma and Prof. Sanjay Lodha, recognising the contributions by young researchers in social science and health research. The session concluded with a formal vote of thanks by **Dr. Kshipra Jain**, who expressed sincere gratitude to the guests, speakers, organising team, student volunteers, and all participants for their efforts in making the conference a fruitful and memorable experience.

The successful completion of the conference reaffirmed IASSH's commitment in promoting interdisciplinary research, academic excellence, and policy-driven discussions in social sciences and health studies. The conference secretariat team included **Dr. P. Murugesan, Mr. Anjani Kumar Mishra, Ms. Sarika Rai, and Mr. Vikas Kamble** IASSH. Participants and convenors of the conference appreciated their efforts in successfully conducting the conference.



Audience at the Valedictory Session at the RA Podar Auditorium

Announcement of the Awards

Best Youth Paper Award 2026

The Valedictory session's highlight was the announcement of the Best Youth Paper and Best Poster Awards. The winners were selected based on their originality of research, methodology, analysis, research findings and presentation skills. The President of IASSH, **Prof. R. Nagarajan**, announced the awards for best youth papers and best posters, which were selected by expert committees. The winners of the prestigious Best Youth Paper Awards 2026 were two young researchers, **Ms. Shabnam** (IIT, Delhi) and **Mr. Manish Lekhwani** (IIPS, Mumbai). They were each honoured with a certificate and cash prize.

Best Youth Paper Award 2026 Winners



Ms. Shabnam
IIT, Delhi



Mr. Manish Lekhwani
IIPS, Mumbai

The Best Poster Award 2026 Winners

The Best Poster Awards 2026 were given to four young scholars: **Ms. Devikrishna N.B.** (IIPS, Mumbai), **Ms. Bharathi K** (Bharathiar University, Coimbatore), and **Mr. Kalyan Dash** (NIT, Rourkela). **Mr. Utkarsh Jain** (BHU, Varanasi). They received the certificates and cash prizes. The audience applauded their achievements.



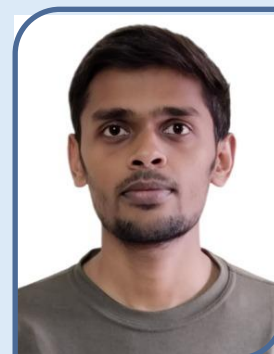
Ms. Devikrishna N B



Ms. Bharathi K



Mr. Kalyan Dash



Mr. Utkarsh Jain

Cultural Evening

On the evening of 11th February 2026, a cultural programme was held at R.A. Podar Auditorium, University of Rajasthan, to showcase the rich traditional and cultural heritage of Rajasthan. The programme featured various dance forms, including classical, Rajasthani folk dance, and contemporary dances. The dancers, dressed in colourful and traditional attire, presented a beautiful display of artistry and grace. The performances enthralled the audience. In addition to the dances, there were also several musical performances. The singers, accompanied by talented musicians, mesmerised the audience with their melodious voices and soulful renditions. Additionally, a yoga and flexibility performance highlighted the discipline and physical strength of the performer. The cultural programme provided a refreshing and enjoyable conclusion to the day's academic sessions, celebrating India's artistic traditions alongside scholarly wisdom. The event was well-attended and appreciated by all participants.



Executive Committee and General Body Meetings of IASSH

The Executive Committee (EC) of IASSH met on 10th February 2026 at the Meeting Room of the R.A. Podar Institute of Management, Rajasthan University, Jaipur and deliberated on various activities of the Association, such as membership and fund mobilisation. The General Body (GB) meeting took place on 12th February 2026 at the Seminar Hall of the R.A. Podar Institute of Management. 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 and workshop. The Audited Statement of Accounts of the Association for the year 2024-25 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. The 21st annual conference of the IASSH received financial support from the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR), UNICEF, RCOE, University of Rajasthan, RA Podar Institute of Management. We are thankful to all these organizations for their contributions in successfully organizing the conference, which was attended by around 200 delegates from various parts of the country.



Condolence Meeting

During the conference, participants paid tribute to **Prof. P.K.B. Nayar**, Founder President of the IASSH, who passed away on 12th February 2026 at the age of 96 in Thiruvananthapuram. In honour of his immense contributions to the field of social sciences and health, a condolence meeting was held on 13th February 2026 at 11:45 a.m. during the conference. Prof. R. Nagarajan, along with Prof. T.V. Sekher, Prof. C.P. Prakasam, and Prof. N. Audinarayana, paid heartfelt tributes and remembered his pioneering role in establishing IASSH and promoting interdisciplinary research in health. The meeting concluded with a one-minute silence in solemn remembrance of the departed soul.



Obituary



The Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health (IASSH) deeply mourns the passing of its Founder President, **Prof. P.K.B. Nayar**, who left for his heavenly abode on 12th February 2026 at the age of 96 in Thiruvananthapuram. With his demise, Indian social sciences have lost a distinguished scholar, institution-builder, and visionary leader whose intellectual commitment and moral integrity shaped generations of researchers and practitioners.

Prof. P.K.B. Nayar was not only the founding President of the IASSH, but also one of the principal architects behind the emergence of health as a legitimate and vibrant domain within Indian social sciences. At a time when biomedical paradigms dominated discussions on health, he consistently argued for the centrality of social, economic, cultural, and structural determinants in shaping health outcomes.

As Founder President of the IASSH, Prof. Nayar laid the intellectual and organizational foundations of the Association. He envisioned the IASSH as an interdisciplinary platform that would bring together sociologists, demographers, economists, anthropologists, public health professionals, and policy practitioners to critically engage with the social dimensions of health and healthcare. Under his stewardship, the IASSH developed a strong culture of academic dialogue, inclusivity, and rigorous scholarship-values that continue to define the Association's annual conferences and academic engagements. The IASSH he founded has expanded considerably over the years, with 1400 life members now.


Prof. Nayar also made seminal contributions to the Indian Sociological Society (ISS), where he served with distinction, including as its President. He played a pivotal role in strengthening sociology's engagement with development, health, and social policy. His efforts helped widen the scope of sociological inquiry in India, bridging theoretical scholarship with pressing societal concerns. Through his writings, lectures, and mentorship, he inspired scholars to pursue socially relevant and ethically grounded research.

In recognition of his lifelong dedication, the 21st Annual Conference of IASSH, held at the University of Rajasthan, Jaipur, during 11–13 February 2026, paused to honour his memory. Even as the conference was underway, news of his passing reached the Association, casting a profound sense of loss among participants. To mark respect for the departed soul and to acknowledge his foundational contributions, a condolence meeting was organized in the Conference Hall on 13th February 2026 at 11:45 a.m.

During the condolence meeting, the current President of IASSH, Prof. R. Nagarajan, along with Past Presidents Prof. T.V. Sekher and Prof. C.P. Prakasam, and former Office Bearer Prof. N. Audinarayana, paid rich tributes to Prof. Nayar. They recalled his intellectual clarity, gentle leadership, unwavering commitment to interdisciplinary dialogue, and his role in nurturing the IASSH from a nascent idea into a nationally respected professional body. All conference participants joined in the condolence meeting, which concluded with a one-minute silence in solemn remembrance.

Prof. P.K.B. Nayar's legacy lives on in the institutions he built, the scholarship he advanced, and the countless students and colleagues he mentored. His life stands as a testament to the power of ideas guided by social commitment. IASSH remains forever indebted to its Founder President, whose vision continues to illuminate the path for future generations of scholars in social sciences and health.

Executive Committee
IASSH

 21ST ANNUAL CONFERENCE 

Indian Association of Social Sciences & Health (IASSH)
in collaboration with
RA Podar Institute of Management
University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

Towards Viksit Bharat: Wellness for All
Integrating Social Science in Health Policy and Practice

📅: 11th - 13th February 2026
📍: R A Podar Auditorium


Prof. Alpana Kateja
Vice Chancellor
University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

Prof. Anurag Sharma
Conference Director

Prof. R. Nagarajan | **Dr. V. Selvaraju**
President, IASSH | General Secretary, IASSH

Dr. Kshipra Jain | **Dr. Bheem Singh Shekhawat**
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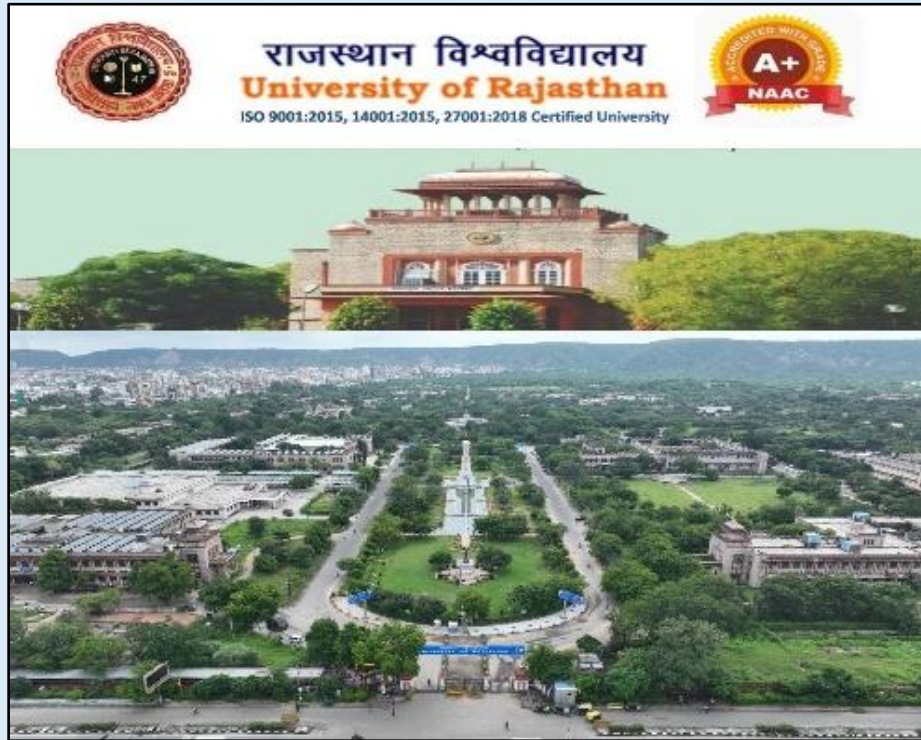
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