

22nd Annual International Conference

CALL FOR PAPERS

Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health (IASSH)

IN COLLABORATION WITH

Department of Quantitative Economics and Data Science
Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, Ranchi

THEME

Digital India for Health Equity and Well-being
Reimagining the Social Determinants of Health



📅 7th – 9th January, 2027

at

📍 **Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, Ranchi**

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Digital India for Health Equity and Well-being

Reimagining the Social Determinants of Health

Background

Health and well-being are shaped not only by medical care and health systems but also by the wider social, economic, demographic, cultural, environmental and political conditions in which people are born, grow, work, live and age. Poverty, education, employment, housing, nutrition, sanitation, gender, social exclusion, caste, migration, working conditions and access to social protection profoundly influence exposure to health risks, access to healthcare and health outcomes. These **social determinants of health (SDH)** account for much of the avoidable burden of disease and persistent inequalities in health across population groups, regions and communities.

The social determinants of health therefore remain central to understanding health inequalities and to developing policies for universal health coverage, social protection and inclusive development. Gender norms and relations, for example, influence exposure to health risks, access to information and services, household decision-making and health outcomes across the life course. Similarly, socioeconomic disadvantage, social exclusion and geographical disparities can affect the health of children, adolescents, women, migrants, older persons, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable populations. Addressing these structural and social conditions is essential for achieving equitable health and well-being.

At the same time, India is undergoing a profound **digital transformation**, which is creating new opportunities as well as new challenges for health and well-being. Digital technologies are increasingly influencing how people access health information and services, communicate with health providers, manage their health, and interact with public institutions. Thus, the relationship between **digital health and the social determinants of health** has become an important emerging area of social science and health research.

Digital Transformation and Health

The Government of India's **Digital India** programme seeks to build a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy through digital infrastructure, governance and services on demand, and digital empowerment of citizens, while emphasizing digital inclusion and bridging the digital divide. Digital transformation has become increasingly important in the health sector through initiatives such as the **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)**, Ayushman Bharat Health Account (ABHA), eSanjeevani, CoWIN, Tele-MANAS and Ni-kshay. These initiatives demonstrate the potential of digital technologies to expand access, improve continuity of care, strengthen public-health management and facilitate more efficient delivery of health services.

Digital health, however, cannot be considered separately from the social context in which technologies are developed, accessed and used. The benefits of digital health may vary according to income, education, gender, age, caste, geographical location, disability, social status and digital literacy. Differences in access to smartphones, internet connectivity, affordability, digital skills and the ability to understand and use digital information can influence who benefits from digital health services and who remains excluded.

Consequently, digital transformation has a **dual relationship with the social determinants of health**. On the one hand, digital technologies can help overcome some existing barriers to healthcare, particularly for geographically isolated and underserved populations. On the other hand, digital exclusion can reinforce existing social and health inequalities. The digital divide may therefore become an emerging determinant of health in its own right. Questions relating to privacy, data protection, trust, algorithmic bias, misinformation, autonomy, accessibility and accountability further underline the need to examine digital health from a social science and health perspective. The 2027 Annual International Conference of the IASSH is therefore proposed under the theme "**Digital India for Health Equity and Well-being: Reimagining the Social Determinants of Health.**" The conference will provide a platform for examining both the established and emerging social determinants of health and the rapidly changing landscape of digital health in India. It will explore how social and economic conditions shape access to and use of digital health, and how digital transformation is, in turn, reshaping healthcare, health behaviour, social relationships, health inequalities and the wider determinants of health.

The Conference Will Pursue the Following Objectives

- 01 **To examine the changing landscape of digital health in India** and its implications for healthcare access, quality, affordability, continuity of care, health behaviour and population well-being.
- 02 **To critically examine the established and emerging social determinants of health**, including socioeconomic inequality, education, employment, gender, ageing, migration, nutrition, environment, housing and social exclusion, and their implications for health equity.
- 03 **To explore the two-way relationship between digital health and the social determinants of health**, including how social and demographic inequalities influence access to digital health and how digital transformation may reduce or reproduce health inequalities.
- 04 **To examine the role of social science research in shaping equitable, inclusive and people-centred health policies**, including issues of governance, ethics, trust, digital literacy, privacy, accountability and social justice.
- 05 **To develop evidence-based policy recommendations** for ensuring that India's digital transformation and broader health and development policies contribute to universal, equitable and inclusive health and well-being.

Key Research Questions

- 01 How is digital transformation changing healthcare delivery, health behaviour and health-seeking practices in India?
- 02 Who benefits from digital health and who remains excluded, and how do socioeconomic, demographic and geographic inequalities influence access and effective use?
- 03 Can digital health reduce existing health inequalities, or can it reproduce and deepen inequalities arising from poverty, gender, caste, age, disability, education and location?
- 04 How do established social determinants of health interact with emerging digital determinants such as connectivity, affordability, digital literacy and access to digital information?
- 05 How can digital technologies improve healthcare access and continuity of care for socially disadvantaged and geographically underserved populations?
- 06 How are broader social determinants—including poverty, education, employment, gender, ageing, migration, nutrition and environment—changing in an increasingly digital society?
- 07 What are the implications of digital health for privacy, autonomy, trust, accountability, social justice and the rights of individuals and communities?
- 08 How can social science research contribute to the design, implementation and evaluation of equitable digital health policies as well as policies addressing the wider social determinants of health?

Major Technical Sub-themes

01 Digital India and the Transformation of Health Systems

Digital public infrastructure, ABDM and ABHA, eSanjeevani and telemedicine, digital health records, health information systems, artificial intelligence, digital disease surveillance and the future of healthcare delivery.

02 Digital Health, Health Equity and the Digital Divide

Digital access and affordability, digital literacy, gender and socioeconomic inequalities, rural-urban disparities, caste and social exclusion, accessibility for persons with disabilities, and strategies for inclusive digital transformation.

03 Social Determinants of Health and Health Inequalities

Poverty and inequality, education, employment, housing, nutrition, sanitation, gender, caste, social exclusion, social protection and their influence on health across population groups and the life course.

04 Digital Health and Vulnerable and Marginalised Populations

Older persons, women, children and adolescents, migrants, tribal populations, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups; accessibility, usability, digital literacy and inclusion in health services.

05 Digital Technologies, Health Behaviour and Well-being

Health information and health literacy, social media, misinformation and disinformation, online health-seeking behaviour, digital technologies and mental health, and changing patterns of health behaviour.

06 Gender, Family, Life Course and Social Determinants of Health

Gender norms and health, maternal and reproductive health, unpaid care, family and social networks, childhood and adolescence, population ageing, healthy ageing and health across the life course.

07 Environment, Climate Change and One Health

Climate change and health, environmental degradation, air, water and soil pollution, zoonotic diseases, biodiversity loss, planetary health, climate-sensitive diseases and cross-sectoral One Health approaches.

08 Migration, Urbanisation, Employment and Health

Internal and international migration, urbanisation, informal employment, working conditions, occupational health, changing labour markets, platform economies and their implications for health and social well-being.

09 Data, Ethics, Governance and Social Justice in Digital Health

Health-data governance, privacy and security, informed consent, data ownership, ethical use of artificial intelligence, algorithmic bias, surveillance, accountability, trust and social justice.

10 Universal Health Coverage, Social Protection and Inclusive Development

Healthcare access, financial protection, out-of-pocket expenditure, health infrastructure, social protection, rural-urban disparities, non-communicable diseases, continuity of care and the contribution of digital and social interventions to universal health coverage and inclusive development.

Expected Contribution and Policy Relevance

The conference will bring together social scientists, demographers, public-health researchers, health professionals, policymakers, technology experts and practitioners to examine the complex and evolving relationship between technology, society and health. It will provide an interdisciplinary platform for understanding both the transformative potential of digital health and the continuing importance of the wider social determinants of health.

A major contribution of the conference will be to move beyond the view that digital health is primarily a technological intervention. Instead, digital health will be examined within its broader social context: who has access to technology, who can use it effectively, who benefits from digital services, and who may be excluded. At the same time, the conference will reaffirm that digital transformation does not replace the fundamental importance of poverty, education, employment, gender, nutrition, housing, environment, social protection and other social determinants in shaping health outcomes.

The deliberations are expected to generate evidence-based recommendations for strengthening India's digital health ecosystem while ensuring that it remains equitable, accessible, ethical, inclusive and people-centred. The conference will also identify strategies for addressing the wider social determinants of health and reducing persistent health inequalities. Particular attention will be given to vulnerable and marginalised populations so that digital transformation complements, rather than replaces, essential human-centred health services.

India's health landscape is being shaped simultaneously by **persistent social inequalities and rapid digital transformation**. The challenge is therefore twofold: to harness the potential of digital health to improve access, quality, efficiency and equity in healthcare, and to address the underlying social, economic, demographic and environmental conditions that continue to shape health outcomes.

The 2027 Annual International Conference will provide an important international forum for examining these two dimensions together. By bringing **Digital India and digital health into dialogue with the broader framework of the Social Determinants of Health**, the conference will strengthen the contribution of social science to India's health and development agenda. It will seek to advance a vision in which digital transformation and action on social determinants work together to achieve **health equity, social inclusion and well-being for all**.

Conference Outcome

The conference is expected to contribute to academic scholarship, policy dialogue and programme development by identifying emerging research priorities at the intersection of digital health and social determinants of health. *Selected high-quality papers adhering to the prescribed research article format and quality requirements will be considered for publication as chapters in an edited volume. A proposal for a Scopus-indexed edited book is currently in progress, subject to the publisher's review and approval.*



BIT Mesra, Ranchi. Photo source: College360

Call for Papers

The Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health (IASSH) invites original and unpublished research contributions for presentation at the International Conference. Authors are requested to carefully follow the guidelines below while preparing and submitting their work. Submissions should include an Extended Abstract or Full Paper on topics relevant to the conference themes. Each submission must also include a separate Abstract not exceeding 300 words. The Extended Abstract/Full Paper should clearly present the background, rationale, objectives, data and methods used, analysis, key findings, and discussion of results. Please include the name(s) of the author(s), their designation, institutional affiliation, and email address. An author may submit a maximum of two papers, either individually or jointly with co-authors. All submissions will undergo peer review by the Expert Committee. The decision on acceptance will be communicated to the authors through the IASSH website and email. The Abstract and Extended Abstract/Full Paper must be submitted online at www.iassh.org/onlineabstract.aspx on or before **15th October 2026**.

Youth Best Paper and Poster Awards

There will be a competition for **best paper awards** and **best poster awards** for younger scholars in the conference. Based on the paper and its presentation, an Expert Committee will select best research papers and best posters from young scholars (less than 30 years of age). The best youth paper should be single authored research paper. Interested young scholars are encouraged to submit their **Full-Paper** online for the competition by mentioning "**For Young Scholars Research Paper Award**".

Memorial Lectures

IASSH has instituted a memorial lecture in honour of Prof. John Caldwell, doyen of Demography, who passed away in 2016. The Tenth Lecture in memory of **Prof. John Caldwell** will be held during the conference. In honour of late Prof. K.E. Vaidyanathan, a distinguished demographer and former President of the Association, the Twelfth Lecture in Memory of **Prof. K.E. Vaidyanathan** will also be held during the annual conference.

Important Dates

Last Date for Receiving Abstract / Full-Paper Online	15 Oct 2026
Intimation about Acceptance and Travel Grant	25 Oct 2026
Last Date to Pay Conference Registration Fee	5 Nov 2026
Submission of Full Paper	30 Nov 2026
22nd Annual International Conference	7 – 9 Jan 2027

Registration Fees *(Non-Refundable)*

TYPE OF PARTICIPANT	EARLY REGISTRATION BY 5 NOV 2026	LATE REGISTRATION BY 20 NOV 2026	SPOT REGISTRATION AFTER 20 NOV 2026
Member of IASSH	Rs. 2000	Rs. 2500	Rs. 3000
Non-Member	Rs. 3500	Rs. 4000	Rs. 4500
Non-Member (Students)	Rs. 3000	Rs. 3500	Rs. 4000
Overseas Participants	\$ 100	\$ 120	\$ 130

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Travel Grants

Travel Grant may be awarded to paper presenters of some selected papers which include to and from rail fare (excluding Vande Bharat Rajdhani, Shatabdi, Duranto trains). All participants are requested to explore the possibility of obtaining TA/DA from their organizations, which will facilitate participation of more young scholars. Decisions regarding the award of travel grants rest with the review committee and depends upon the availability of funds. Preference will be given to the life members of the Association. Local hospitality (accommodation and food) will be provided to all registered paper presenters of selected abstracts/papers.

Places to Visit in and around Ranchi

Ranchi, popularly known as the "**City of Waterfalls and Lakes**," offers a delightful blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage and scenic landscapes. Conference participants may explore **Hundru Falls**, where the Subarnarekha River cascades dramatically over the Chota Nagpur Plateau; **Dassam Falls** and **Jonha Falls (Gautamdihara)**, renowned for their picturesque settings; and the **Rock Garden and Kanke Dam**, ideal for a relaxing outing. **Tagore Hill**, associated with the family of Rabindranath Tagore, offers panoramic views of the city. The historic **Jagannath Temple**, known for its distinctive architecture and Rath Yatra, reflects Ranchi's cultural heritage, while **Pahari Mandir**, situated atop a hill, offers both spiritual significance and sweeping views of the city.



BIT Mesra, Ranchi. Photo source: Reddit

Conference Organizers

IASSH

Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health (IASSH) is a vibrant professional association with more than 1300 life members. It has played an important role in bringing together social scientists working in the field of health and development. Through annual conferences, workshops and publications, IASSH reaches out to large number of scholars, researchers, NGOs and health practitioners in India and abroad. One of the goals of IASSH is to encourage youth participation in knowledge transfer in social sciences and health research.

IASSH is an independent professional association to meet the felt need of having an exclusive forum for social scientists from various disciplines who are working on health and related issues to meet periodically and share the research findings. By highlighting the implications of the research findings among different stakeholders, it is hoped to bring about concerted action to address the emerging issues in health and development sectors. Association tries to enable scholars in health social sciences to enlarge their career opportunities and fulfil their professional commitment.

Web: www.iassh.org



Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, Ranchi

Established in 1955 by the visionary industrialist and philanthropist Late Shri B. M. Birla, **Birla Institute of Technology (BIT), Mesra, Ranchi**, is a premier institution of higher education and research with a rich legacy of academic excellence, innovation and nation-building. The Institute was granted the status of a **Deemed to be University under Section 3 of the UGC Act in 1986**, in recognition of its sustained contributions to higher education, research and technological development.

Located in a sprawling, green and fully residential campus near Ranchi, the capital of Jharkhand, BIT Mesra provides an intellectually vibrant environment conducive to teaching, research, innovation and interdisciplinary engagement. The Institute offers undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes across diverse areas, including engineering and technology, sciences, architecture, pharmaceutical sciences, management and humanities and social sciences. Its academic ecosystem is supported by research facilities, innovation initiatives, industry-academia linkages and a strong commitment to emerging areas of knowledge.

Over the decades, BIT Mesra has established a distinctive identity through its pioneering contributions to engineering and technology education and its emphasis on research-driven learning. The Institute has also expanded its academic and research outreach through extension centres and collaborations. With its multidisciplinary academic environment and commitment to research, innovation and societal development, **BIT Mesra provides an appropriate setting for the 22nd Annual International Conference of the Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health (IASSH)**. The Institute is pleased to host scholars, researchers, practitioners and policymakers for academic deliberations on contemporary issues concerning digital health, social determinants of health, health equity and human well-being.

Web: www.bitmesra.ac.in



Department of Quantitative Economics and Data Science, BIT Mesra, Ranchi

The Department of Quantitative Economics and Data Science was established in 2021 with the aim of providing fundamental knowledge and developing problem-solving skills in the fields of Quantitative Economics and Data Science. The Department aspires to become a globally recognised centre of excellence in teaching and research by nurturing academicians, professionals, and innovators who can contribute to a better world through a deeper understanding and effective application of Quantitative Economics and Data Science in business and society. The Department proudly hosts six research laboratories, namely, the Interdisciplinary Statistical Research Lab, Digital Innovation Lab, Advanced Data Science Lab, Applied Data Science Lab, Advanced Statistical Learning Lab, and Policy Analysis Lab, which undertake high-quality research and industry-oriented projects across diverse domains.

Conference Organizing Committee

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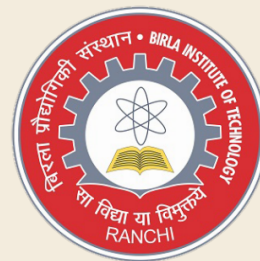
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HOST INSTITUTION

Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, Ranchi



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- ✦ To join, simply fill out the membership form and make the one-time payment of **Rs. 5000/-** online.
- ✦ Once done, send the completed filled-in form and payment details to **iassh2004@gmail.com**
- ✦ You can find the IASSH membership form and payment details at **www.iassh.org/member.html**

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