

Edition 47 | September 26, 2025



The Lakshmi Mittal and Family
SOUTH ASIA INSTITUTE
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Harvard Global Research Support Centre India

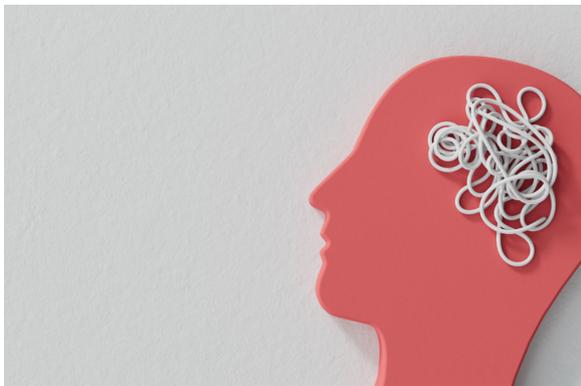


Dear Friends,

We are delighted to present to you the September edition of the monthly newsletter by the [Lancet Citizens' Commission on Reimagining India's Health System](#). This month's newsletter spotlights India's evolving health and policy priorities—from the risks of over-reliance on transformative technology and calls to reclaim leadership in safe drug development, to urgent reforms in mental health policy and medical education. The expansion of health insurance brings both promise and risk, while women's health emerges as a central concern with rising ovarian cancer among younger women, the launch of Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar Abhiyaan and Poshan Maah, and new evidence linking empowerment with better nutrition outcomes. UNICEF's warning of sharp increases in childhood obesity under five and NFHS-5 data on maternal, newborn, and child health coverage gaps highlight persistent challenges, even as India's intersectoral welfare programmes offer valuable lessons for building climate-health resilience.

Visit our Website

Views & Opinions



[Remember the way to the restaurant? How transformative technology may dumb us down as a species](#)

The science of brain plasticity is showing that we are losing a range of abilities, not just spatial orientation and navigation, but the ability to remember things and concentrate, interact with others, regulate our emotions and plan for the future. How our social world shapes our brains is the most important discovery in the science of human development, *writes Vikram Patel.*



[Reclaiming our leadership in safe drugs](#)

India has long been celebrated as the “pharmacy of the World.” We supply over 60% of global vaccine demand, 40% of generic medicines to the US, and 25% of all medicines to the UK. More than 200 countries import Indian pharmaceuticals. Our affordable, high-quality medicines have saved millions of lives across the globe, especially in low and middle-income countries where access to essential drugs would otherwise remain a distant dream, *writes Indu Bhushan.*



[Mental Health In India: Why Policy Reform Must Focus On Empathy](#)

India’s public health successes like polio, maternal mortality and COVID-19 have followed a similar arc—from a visible threat, to a coordinated response, and measurable reduction. Yet, mental health does not fit this trajectory. Unlike other health emergencies, it does not announce itself with a sudden outbreak, but with quiet signals such as dropping out of school, unexplained fatigue, declining productivity, and suicides relegated to the margins of newspapers, *write Nachiket Mor and Iti Bhargava.*



[Why India's medical education system needs a rethink](#)

India’s doctors have long been more than just clinicians—they are called upon to play numerous roles: Leading hospitals, health and research programmes, managing administration and finance, and working with policymakers. As these roles grow in complexity, they demand competencies that go beyond clinical skills, which are still the dominant focus of most medical curricula, *write Swati Piramal and Akshat Shukla.*

[The rise and risks of health insurance in India](#)

A minimal definition of universal health care (UHC) is that quality health care should be guaranteed to “all members of the community irrespective of their



ability to pay” — as the Bhore Committee report put it as early as 1946. Nearly eight decades later, India is nowhere near this basic goal of human development, even as many other countries, rich and poor, have achieved it in substantial measure, write Anfaz Abdul Vahab and Jean Drèze.



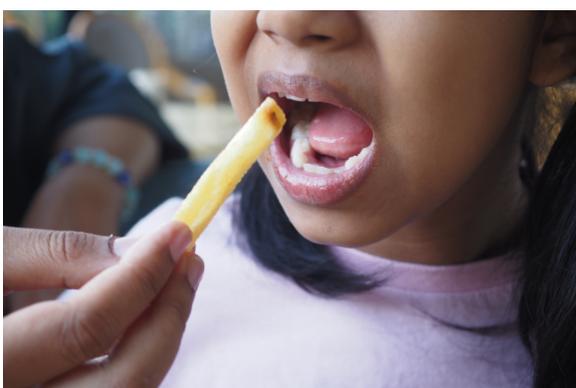
[Why is ovarian cancer rising among younger women in India?](#)

Ovarian cancer is increasingly affecting younger Indian women in their 40s and 50s, a shift oncologists are observing with concern. Factors like lifestyle changes, obesity, hormonal imbalances, delayed childbearing, PCOS, genetic predispositions, and environmental factors contribute to this rise. Early diagnosis and appropriate treatment, including chemotherapy, surgery, and targeted therapy, are crucial for saving lives, even in advanced stages.



[PM to launch 'Swasth Nari, Sashakt Parivar Abhiyaan', and eighth 'Poshan Maah'](#)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the initiative jointly led by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD), and it is India's largest-ever mobilisation in aid of women and child health. More than one lakh health camps will be set up across the country, and daily health camps will be held in all government health facilities, *writes Bindu Shajan Perappadan*.



[Sharp rise of obesity among children aged under 5 in India, warns UNICEF](#)

Obesity has now overtaken underweight as the more dominant form of malnutrition among school-age children and adolescents across the globe, a study has found. UNICEF's Child Nutrition Report 2025 has also found that low and middle-income countries are experiencing the steepest rise in overweight in school-age children and adolescents. In India, there is a rapid surge in overweight and obesity among under-five children, with prevalence rising by 127% between 2005-06 to NFHS 5 2019-21.

[A climate-health vision with lessons from India](#)

For countries in the Global South seeking synergistic policies that advance multiple



developmental goals, India's intersectoral welfare programmes offer valuable insights. Consider the Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN), India's flagship nutrition scheme covering over 11 crore children across nearly 11 lakh schools. Its accomplishment lies in also connecting the dots between health, education, agriculture and food procurement systems. By promoting millets and traditional grains, it addresses malnutrition and also builds climate-resilient food systems, *write Neethi V. Rao and Priyanka Tomar.*

Resources

[Coverage of continuum of Maternal, Newborn and Child Health \(MNCH\) care in a nationally representative sample of 40,687 mother-child dyads of India: a report from NFHS-5](#)

A package of Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) services are administered sequentially to mother-child dyads as Continuum of Care (CoC), but often each intervention is reviewed in silo in low-middle-income countries like India. Therefore, we aimed to examine the coverage of the entire package by computing composite CoC score of Indian mother-child dyads, *write Ghosal, J., Nanda, A., Behera, P. et al.*

[Women's empowerment and nutritional outcomes in India](#)

Women's nutritional health is significantly influenced by their social standing, especially in low- and middle-income countries where patriarchal structures restrict women's decision-making. In India, women have limited autonomy over personal and domestic matters, which restricts their decision-making power and access to resources. In this context, this study investigates the relationship between women's empowerment and their nutritional health in India, *write Dutta, S., Dutta, A. and Maiti, S.*



Featured Partner



Centre for Health Equity, Law & Policy is an initiative aimed of advancing and improving health delivery, access and outcomes through the development, sharing and use of knowledge on health-related law and policy as informed by India's constitutional framework, and her international commitments including the Sustainable Development Goals.



Help us develop a roadmap to achieve universal health coverage in India by visiting our website: <https://www.citizenshealth.in/>

[#ReimaginingIndiasHealth](#) [#HealthcareForAll](#) [#CitizensHealthIndia](#)

We love hearing back from you! Please send your comments, suggestions, and contributions for these newsletters, including research highlights and published features to citizenhealthin@gmail.com

Subscribe to our newsletter



Copyright © 2021 The Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute, Harvard University, All rights reserved. | B- Block, 43, First Floor, Middle Circle, Connaught Place | Delhi, DL 110001 IN

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!