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Cross functional collaboration between science, policy, research and data

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NITI Aayog, Health Policy Experts call for better leveraging of research and data to firm up policy priorities



A panel discussion on **'Leveraging Big Data to Inform Research and Improve Public Health Policy'** was organised by NCAER, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Global Health Strategies in New Delhi recently. The discussion was held amid growing realization about the importance of using clinical, survey and administrative data for developing public health policies and shaping national health agendas.

The discussion, opened by **Dr. Suneeta Krishnan, Country Lead, Measurement, Learning and Evaluation, Gates Foundation,** began with key note addresses by **Dr. Maurício Barreto, Executive Director, CIDACS, The Center for Data Integration and Knowledge for Health, Brazil** and **Dr. Anurag Agrawal, Director, CSIR Institute of Genomics & Integrative Biology** who dwelt on the experiences of Brazil and India in the field of big data and its contributions to health policy reform.

Subsequently, leaders in the fields of public health research and policy discussed opportunities for multi sectoral collaborations and the need for building capacities for leveraging big data analysis. Panelists deliberated on the drivers of evidence use in public policy formulation in India. They underscored the importance of using research and administrative data analysis to identify policy priorities and suggest targeted use of available resources for improving health outcomes.

Alok Kumar, Adviser NITI Aayog, opined, "The need for cross-functional collaboration is now more than ever. As we grapple with new diseases and outbreaks globally, it is of utmost importance that science, policy, research and data are all viewed from the singular lens of informing public policy. Only then can we attain a comprehensive developmental and growth agenda".

In this context, Ayushman Bharat -PM JAY was highlighted as a rich source of data, including for longitudinal analyses and identification of disease determinants and population impacts of policies.

"Traditionally data has been viewed from the colored vision of security breaches and impeachment of privacy. Before anything else we need to sensitise and reassure people about the prudent, careful and anonymised used of data generated from governmental initiatives and develop standardised procedures that ensure no misuse of such large amounts of information", remarked **Dr. Indu Bhushan, CEO, Ayushman Bharat.**