



Message from Vice Chairperson

India's G20 Presidency marked a pivotal moment in its journey as a global thought leader, and at the heart of this achievement lies the

power of rigorous research. At NITI Aayog, we believe that strong policy is built on a foundation of robust evidence, deep analysis and inclusive dialogue. Our research is not only central to national policymaking but also instrumental in shaping India's contributions to the global policy discourse.

NITI played a key role in advancing G20 priority themes by bringing together leading thinkers to examine sustainable growth for the global economy. The outcome is a volume titled 'Navigating Challenges for Sustainable Growth: Insights from the Indian G20 Presidency,' which stands as a crucial open-access resource.

Shri Suman Bery
Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog



From the desk of CEO

NITI Aayog has been at the forefront of policy formulation, driving India's transformation through evidence-based research and strategic planning since its inception. Our work is rooted in fostering sustainable and inclusive growth, ensuring that the benefits of economic progress reach every section of society.

As India's premier policy think tank, NITI Aayog is committed to promoting research and policies that support eco-friendly farming methods, ensuring food security while protecting our environment. Since the union government reiterated its focus on the 'National Mission on Natural Farming' by giving it a major boost in the Union Budget 2025-26, this edition of the newsletter carries a column on the impact of natural farming on crop yield and farmers' livelihoods in India.

Each edition of NITISंधान features an excerpt from the quarterly Trade Watch Report by NITI Aayog, offering a comprehensive analysis of India's trade performance and emerging opportunities. It underscores our commitment to data-driven policymaking, providing valuable insights into global demand-supply dynamics and sectoral trends. By leveraging such analyses, we aim to enhance India's trade competitiveness and drive sustainable economic growth.

This newsletter embodies our dedication to transparency, knowledge sharing, and collaboration. We welcome your feedback to make NITISंधान a valuable resource for all.

Shri B.V.R. Subrahmanyam
CEO, NITI Aayog

About Research and Networking (R&N) Division

To further strengthen and streamline the research work being facilitated and undertaken by NITI Aayog, a separate Research and Networking (R&N) Division was formed in 2024. The R&N Division will oversee the development of a robust pipeline of research studies, evolve a multi-pronged dissemination strategy and foster a networking mechanism amongst relevant stakeholders from the policy research ecosystem.

Ms. Anna Roy (Programme Director, Research and Networking Division, NITI Aayog)
E-mail at pdresearch-niti@gov.in

Total Research Studies by NITI

322

*Since the inception of NITI Aayog

Workshops this quarter

27

NITI Aayog organizes a variety of workshops, seminars, and training programs to drive policy discussions, capacity building, and innovation in governance. These workshops focus on areas such as economic development, sustainable growth, social welfare, digital transformation, and public policy.

Research Publications this Quarter



Fiscal Health Index 2025



Expanding Quality Higher Education through States and State Public Universities: Policy Report



From Borrowers to Builders: Women's role in India's financial growth story



Trade Watch Report (Quarterly)



SCAN this QR to access NITI publications

Citations in Media

- "India-US bilateral trade pact likely by year-end: NITI Aayog's Arvind Virmani." ANI News, 28 Mar. 2025
- "US Reciprocal Tariffs an Opportunity for India: Niti Aayog." Financial Express, 28 Mar. 2025
- Saha, Dhruvaksh. "Woman Credit Seekers Up 3x in 5 Years, Says Niti Aayog & Cibil Report." Business Standard, 3 Mar. 2025
- "More Women from Non-Metros Self-Monitoring Credit Compared to Those in Metros: Niti Aayog." The Hindu BusinessLine, 3 Mar. 2025
- Qamar, Furqan. "Strengthening Higher Education: SPUs, Private Universities Both Crucial for India's Future." The Financial Express, 11 Mar. 2025
- "NITI Aayog Report Seeks More Public Funding for Higher Education." The Hindu, 20 Mar. 2025
- Gupta, Cherry. "India's Top 10 Best-Performing States in the Fiscal Health Index 2025
- Acharya, Debashis. "EXPLAINER | What NITI Aayog's Index Says About States' Fiscal Health." The Financial Express, 3 Mar. 2025

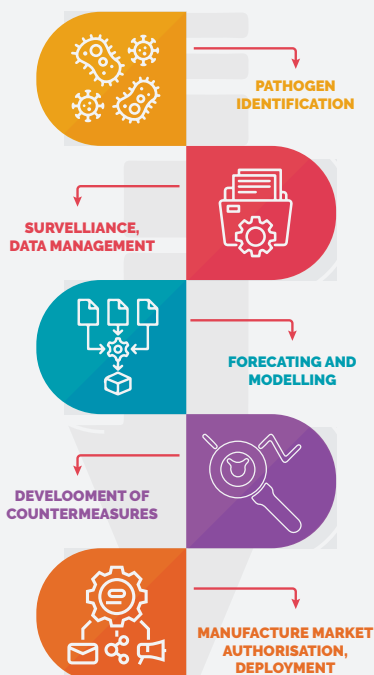
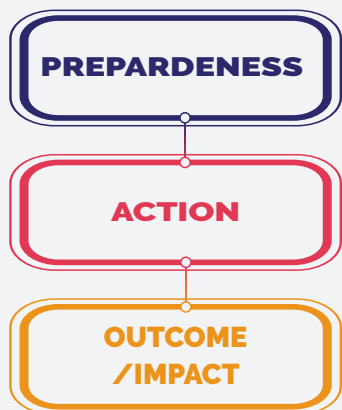
Voice of our Researchers

Future Pandemic Preparedness and Emergency Response: A Framework for Action



Dr. Sonali Rawal
Consultant Grade II,
Health Division

A 100 Days Mission



The COVID-19 contagion is undoubtedly not the last pandemic. Given the unpredictably changing planetary ecology, climate and human-animal-plant dynamics; new, potentially large-scale infectious threats to human health are inevitable. The WHO has warned the world that 75% of future public health threats are likely to be zoonotic threats (which could be due to emerging, re-emerging and new pathogens).

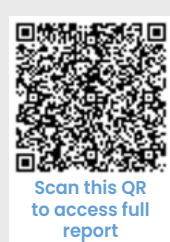
The COVID-19 pandemic unleashed a worldwide shock wave with severe health, economic and social consequences which continue to affect countries. According to estimates from McKinsey & Company and an independent G20 panel, it has caused a global economic burden of \$16-\$35 trillion by 2025. If better preparedness reduces this cost even modestly, the return on investment would be substantial.

In view of this, NITI Aayog constituted an Expert Group to prepare a Framework for Action for Future Pandemic Preparedness and Emergency Response. The experts examined lessons learned and challenges faced in managing COVID-19 at the national and global levels, and consulted with over 60 experts and stakeholders who were at the frontlines of the pandemic response at the national and global levels. The Expert Group Report recommends a comprehensive framework for India to deal with future public health emergencies. This report focuses on four main pillars for pandemic preparedness and response:

1. Governance, Legislation, Finance and Management
2. Data Management, Surveillance and Early Predictive Warning, Forecasting and Modelling,
3. Research and Innovation, Manufacturing, Infrastructure, Capacity building/Skilling
4. Partnership, and community engagement, including risk communication, Private sector partnerships, and international collaborations

The recommendations put forth by the expert group members within these four pillars offer an all-encompassing roadmap for us to prepare for public health emergencies. The need for specific, advanced legislation for public health emergencies, leadership at the highest level, a specific fund for emergencies and investment in data management, surveillance, and cutting-edge research are all welcome advice for managing infectious disease emergencies. In addition, translating research and innovation in products manufactured at scale, engaging with partners in the private sector and in the international community and engaging with affected communities are critical mitigation measures during a health emergency.

The report offers an implementable roadmap on how our country can deliver appropriate interventions within the first 100 days of a health emergency, which is the critical period for effective management. It suggests a structure that integrates and strengthens all existing components and builds the required components to deliver the outputs that meet the



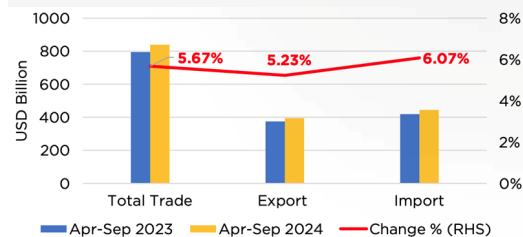
targets of a 100-day response mission. It outlines the detailed roadmap for preparedness and an implementation phase, indicating the steps on how the outbreak can be tracked, tested, treated and managed through a well-developed framework in a 100-day time frame.

While we strengthen our surveillance networks and monitor for emerging threats, it is also crucial to invest in preparedness and response capabilities to fortify our ability to address global health crises in the future.

Preparing for Future Pandemic -A 100 Days Mission Framework



Figure 1:
Trade Performance in the H1 of FY25



Source: Department of Commerce, MoC&I, GOI

Trade Watch: Quarterly Insights into India's Evolving Trade Landscape

Global trade exhibited a steady recovery in the first half of FY25, with both merchandise and services trade showing positive momentum. Merchandise trade volumes expanded by 1.5% from April to July compared to the same period in 2023. This upward trend continued in the services trade, where from July to September 2024 overall service trade values increased by 8.0% year-on-year, reinforcing the resilience of global trade dynamics.

India's total trade performance showed a y-o-y improvement in the first half of FY25. During this period, total trade amounted to \$839 billion, reflecting a y-o-y increase of 5.67%. Exports rose by 5.23% y-o-y to reach \$395 billion, while imports grew by 6.07%, reaching \$445 billion. (Figure 1).



Scan this QR to access full report



National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP)



5150+ Datasets

Covering 53 Ministries

SDAP for Karnataka & Meghalaya

NDAP is NITI Aayog's flagship initiative to make public government data more accessible, user-friendly, and actionable for citizens, policymakers, researchers, and other stakeholders. It is a centralized data platform that brings together a wide range of datasets from different government ministries and departments across India.

It seeks to democratise data delivery by making government datasets readily accessible, implementing rigorous data-sharing standards, enabling interoperability across the Indian data landscape, and providing a seamless user interface and user-friendly tools.



Scan this QR to access full report



From Borrowers to Builders: Women's role in India's financial growth story

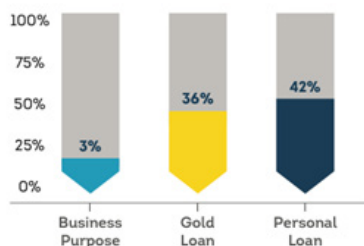
The report, jointly published by TransUnion CIBIL, the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) of NITI Aayog, and MicroSave Consulting (MSC), delves into the evolving participation of women in India's financial sector, highlighting their transition from mere borrowers to pivotal contributors in economic development.



The number of women borrowers availing retail credit in India has increased at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 22% between 2019 and 2024

Gold loans have gained popularity amongst women borrowers, ~4 crore loans of value INR 4.7 lakh crore accounted for 38% of all loans availed by women borrowers in 2024, a growth of 5.1X by volume since 2019.

Share by Credit Product Type
Loan Originations by Women in 2024



Key Findings

Steady Rise in Women Borrowers

Women seeking credit grew ~3X between 2019 and 2024, reflecting increased demand among female borrowers.

Women Borrower Demographics

About 60% of women borrowers availing credit are from semi-urban or rural areas. Women under 30 years of age, account for only 27% of retail credit uptake by women, compared to 40% for men.

Credit Supply Trends

Women's participation in credit origination has seen notable growth in recent years. Since 2019, their share in Business Loans and Gold Loans has increased by 14% and 6% respectively. While the credit supply to women in business sectors has improved, the majority of loans availed by women continue to be against gold – 36% of all loans availed by women in 2024 were gold loans vs. 19% of loans availed in 2019.

Rise in Credit Monitoring and Awareness

As of December 2024, 27 million women borrowers in India have monitored their credit information reports and scores with CIBIL. While this is an encouraging trend, this must continue for women to progress from participants to leaders in India's economic story.



Scan this QR to access full report

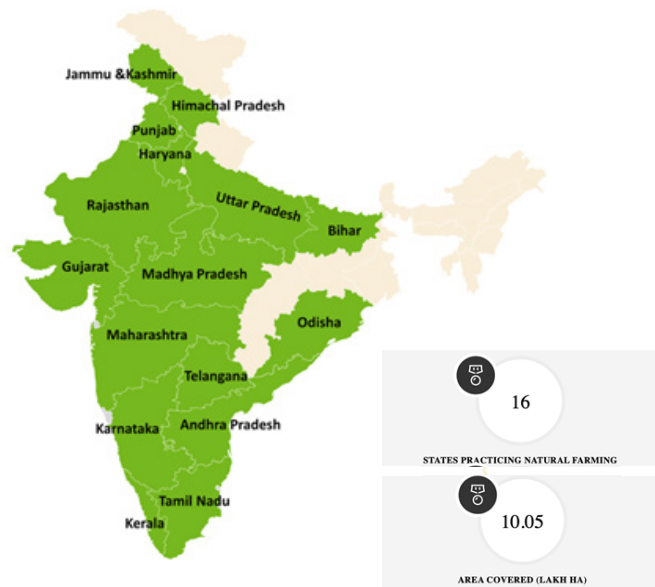


Natural Farming: A NITI Initiative

India's green revolution has transformed the country's food security from scarcity to surplus with a significant increase in the area and production of food grains. India's agricultural sector has long been the backbone of its economy, sustaining a vast population, driving rural development and providing livelihood support to over 45 per cent of the population. However, input-intensive agriculture and the excessive use of chemical fertilizers/pesticides have resulted in soil degradation, depletion of the groundwater table, and impact on human and livestock health. In order to transit Indian agriculture towards sustainable farming systems, there is a need to promote natural farming (NF) which provides safe and nutritious food while reducing health risks associated with chemical-intensive agriculture.

Adoption of Natural Farming and its Effect on Crop Yield and Farmers' Livelihood in India Report

The report presents a comprehensive analysis of NF practices across Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. Conducted between January 2019 and May 2020 by ICAR, the study evaluates both socio-economic impacts and agronomic outcomes of NF adoption.



[Prominent states practising NF are Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.]

Key Findings

Crop Yield

The study indicates that while NF yields are generally comparable to those of conventional farming, the integration of Farm Yard Manure (FYM) or Ghanajivamrit can lead to significant yield improvements.

Cost of Cultivation

A notable reduction in input costs was observed among NF practitioners, primarily due to the decreased reliance on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. This cost efficiency contributes to enhanced profitability for farmers.

Farmers' Income

Despite yields being on par with conventional methods, the reduced expenditure on inputs and the potential for premium pricing of chemical-free produce have collectively improved the Benefit-Cost (B:C) ratio for NF farmers.

Soil Health

Preliminary analyses suggest that NF practices may positively influence soil biology and structure, promoting sustainable agriculture.

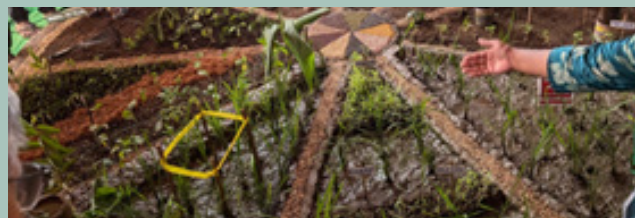
RECOMMENDATIONS

Scientific Validation

The report emphasizes the need for rigorous scientific studies to further substantiate the long-term benefits and viability of NF across diverse agro-climatic zones.

Policy Support

To facilitate the broader adoption of NF, the report suggests policy interventions, including financial incentives, training programs, and the establishment of market linkages for NF produce.



Scan this QR to access full report

Fiscal Health Index 2025

The report provides a comprehensive assessment of the fiscal health of 18 states of India, based on five key sub-indices: Quality of Expenditure, Revenue Mobilisation, Fiscal Prudence, Debt Index, and Debt Sustainability. It provides data-driven insights that will be leveraged for state-level policy interventions aimed at improving fiscal governance. Highlighting the fiscal performance of various states, the index encourages improved fiscal discipline and the adoption of better management strategies, contributing to India's long-term economic resilience and equitable development.

