

Unlocking Opportunities: Transforming India's Medical Ecosystem

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A FROST & SULLIVAN INSIGHT

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Introduction

The Indian Healthcare Sector

Indian healthcare is one of the largest and fastest-growing sectors within the Indian economy. It comprises a complex network of private and public sectors that includes hospitals, pharmaceuticals, biologics, medical devices, and wellness programs. Delivering healthcare for a population of 1.4 billion is a challenging task and the public and private sectors have been collaborating closely to improve the Indian healthcare system.

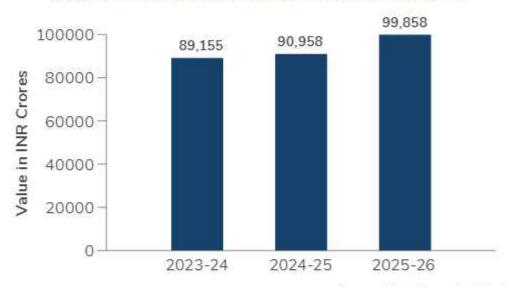


Figure 1: Union Budget of India: Allocation to Healthcare

Source: https://www.indiabudget.gov.in

The 2025-26 Indian healthcare budget allotted ₹99,858.56 crores to the Health Ministry, which is a 2% increase from the healthcare expenditure incurred in the previous year, reflecting a rising public focus on the Indian healthcare landscape. Other 2025 Indian healthcare budget announcements such as the exemption of Basic Customs Duty (BCD) on 36 critical drugs, extension of the Jal Jeevan Mission, setting up of additional day-care cancer centers in rural India, and promotion of medical tourism, will have a great positive impact on the Indian healthcare sector. However, India's healthcare spending since 2020 has remained below 2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) compared to an average healthcare expenditure of over 10% of GDP in most developed countries such as the US, UK, Germany, France, and Japan. There is a need to increase the Indian healthcare spending, owing to the rising aging population and growing sedentary lifestyle-related health concerns. The Department of Health and Family Welfare (DoHFW) has requested Indian States to prioritize budget allocation to the health sector by at least 8% of the total State budget which is expected to enhance healthcare delivery across the value chain.

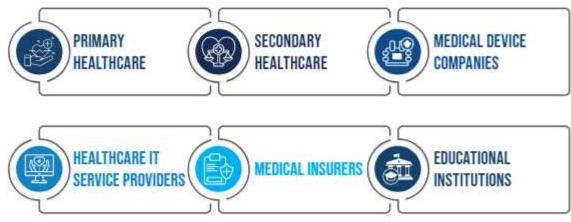


Overview of the Indian Healthcare Value Chain

The Indian healthcare value chain comprises mainly of primary and secondary healthcare providers, medical device companies, healthcare IT service providers, medical insurers, and educational institutions.

Key Components of the Indian Healthcare Value Chain

Figure 2: Components of the Healthcare Value Chain



Source: Frost & Sullivan

Primary healthcare in India covers preventive practices such as immunization and disease control, and access to basic diagnostic services and treatments. It also includes awareness programs for health, hygiene, nutrition and family planning, as well as improved access to basic medicines. Primary healthcare in India is mainly delivered through Primary Health Centers (PHCs) under the National Health Mission (NHM) that cover a population of 30,000 in rural areas and about 20,000 people in hilly and tribal areas. Sub-Centers (SCs) and Community Health Centers (CHCs) also play a role in improving access to primary care. The Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs) launched in 2018 aim to transform 1.5 lakh sub-centers and PHCs by including screening for non-communicable diseases, better access to mental healthcare, and free medicines. The Mohalla Clinics in Delhi provide free diagnostics, medical consultations and medicines to the urban poor and helps improve access to primary care in the country's capital. Tamil Nadu's primary healthcare model is also well known for providing free medicines, maternal care and mobile healthcare to remote rural regions.

There is an increased focus to improve secondary healthcare services in India by providing district and sub-district level access to specialist consultations, trauma care, critical care, advanced imaging-based diagnostic services and basic surgical procedures such as C-section and appendectomy. The 2025-26 Union Budget prioritized cancer care and plans to establish day-care cancer centers in all district hospitals in the next three years, starting with 200 centers between 2025 to 2026.



In 2024, DNA Wellness announced Rs. 200 crores as investment to establish more than 100 cervical cancer screening labs in India within the next three years, which will provide timely cancer treatment in the future. Several other state initiatives are also focused on improving secondary health care services. For instance, ESIC (Employees' State Insurance Corporation) Hospitals provide cashless secondary care to workers and their families. Andhra Pradesh's Aarogyasri Scheme provides secondary care to families below the poverty line, in public and private hospitals. Rajasthan's Mukhyamantri Nishulk Dava Yojana is another instance where diagnostic services and free medicines are provided to secondary care hospitals.

The Indian medical device sector is referred to as the sunrise sector by the Government of India as it has a high growth potential. The global market share, which is currently stands at about $1.5\%^2$ for this sector, will increase as India emerges as a significant manufacturing hub under the 'Make in India' initiative that will strengthen the Indian manufacturing ecosystem. The Technology and Development Board (TDB) is also fueling the development of advanced medical devices.

Digital technologies are also contributing to the growth of the healthcare IT sector in India. The "Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission" intends to establish a country-wide digital health ecosystem that will provide seamless access to medical records and teleconsultation facilities. COVID-19 accelerated the pivot towards digital healthcare in India with the launch of CoWIN and Aarogya Setu apps. Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, partnered with Blockchain for Impact (BFI) in 2024 to develop affordable healthcare technologies.

The Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB PM-JAY) is the flagship public insurance scheme in India that provides free health coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per family annually for families that have an income which is less than Rs. 1.8 lakhs. This scheme provides secondary and tertiary care which includes medicines, diagnostics, food and hospital stay. In 2024, the scheme was expanded to include senior citizens above 70 years, irrespective of their economic status. The increasing emphasis on nation-wide healthcare coverage is also reflected by the insurance sector reforms proposed under the 2024 amendment bill that has a lofty goal of "Insurance for All by 2047".

Increasing public-private collaboration for improving health education will also have a positive impact on the growth of the Indian medical ecosystem. For instance, Apollo Hospitals and the National Skill Development Corporation have collaborated to develop medical skills through country-wide training institutes. The Indian healthcare value chain is transforming significantly with help of public and private initiatives as well as rising investment and innovations that will ensure sustained growth of this sector over the next 3 to 5 years.



Snapshot of the Indian Healthcare Regulatory Landscape

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) sets and governs the nationallevel health policies. State-level health departments and medical councils regulate the implementation of central policies and medical practice within each state. National Medical Commission (NMC) regulates the quality and delivery of medical services.

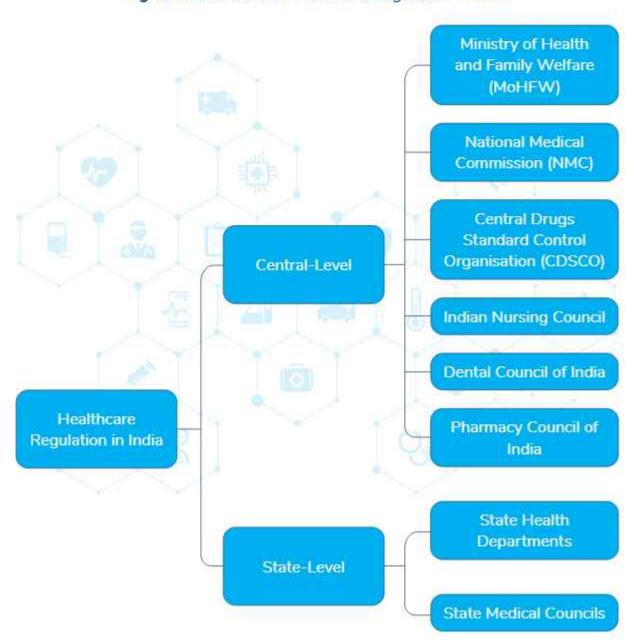


Figure 3: Overview of Healthcare Regulation in India



Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) oversees regulatory approvals of drugs and medical devices in the country. Further, there are central governing bodies for regulating nursing and dental practices in India. In 2025, CDSCO released the draft guidance on updated risk classification of medical devices, reflecting a rising focus to implement healthcare regulatory reforms. The National Nursing and Midwifery Commission (NNMC) Act, 2023, will help establish a modern regulatory framework for Indian nursing practices and education. Regulatory reforms, rising investments, combined with growing cross talk between public and private healthcare sectors will help the holistic transformation of the Indian healthcare landscape.

Primary and Secondary Healthcare

India is currently facing a rising prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes, hypertension, cancer and cardiovascular diseases. NCDs have accounted for about 60% of all mortality in India³. India is currently known for being the diabetes capital of the world. However, several NCDs, including diabetes, can be prevented by marked changed in diet and lifestyle habits. The COVID-19 pandemic and the more recent Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) outbreak that began in Pune in 2025 has directed a renewed focus on hygiene practices for preventive healthcare. Therefore, there is a growing need for public and private health sectors to promote preventive healthcare practices and incentivize healthcare economy to promote holistic health and wellness.

For instance, the Universal Health Care Bill was introduced in 2021 to promote preventive healthcare practices and integrate primary healthcare into the government schemes, regardless of the socio-economic status of Indian citizens. This will drive transparency and accountability in the Indian healthcare ecosystem. The Ayushman Bharat - Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs, now called Ayushman Arogya Mandir) intends to transform 1.5 lakh sub-centers and primary health centers into HWCs through preventive and promotive healthcare services. The National Health Mission (NHM) focus on strengthening infrastructure, human resources, and service delivery for primary care across rural India. The PM-Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) will help improve response to current and future pandemics by developing improved healthcare infrastructure. Multinational healthcare company Abbott had also committed to 75 PHCs to Ayushman Arogya Mandir, reflecting a growing interest across the private healthcare sector to drive infrastructure reforms in India.



The major challenges in rural Indian healthcare are largely due to the lack of healthcare providers and healthcare infrastructure. The lack of access to transportation and low health education awareness further complicates primary healthcare delivery in rural regions. The development of public initiatives such as PM-ABHIM and National Health Mission (NHM) will enhance the quality and delivery of primary care across rural India in the future.

The healthcare infrastructure has transformed significantly since the last year. In 2024, 1,75,418 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAMs) were established by transforming existing Sub-Health Centres (SCs) and Primary Health Centres (PHCc) in rural and urban areas to provide more comprehensive healthcare services⁴.

There is also a need to incentivize and promote medical education and awareness to ensure that the country meets the rising healthcare needs. India is also facing a shortage of human resources for health (HRH). The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends a density of 44.5 doctors, nurses, and midwives per 10,000 inhabitants but India has 20.6 healthcare providers per 10,000 citizens. Although India has witnessed a drastic increase in healthcare providers, it is not sufficient to optimize healthcare delivery in the world's most populated country. There is an urgent need to promote and incentivize medical education in the country to address the HRH gaps.



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Medical Devices

India still relies on imports for approximately 70%-80% of its medical devices from countries such as the US, China and Germany. Although, the reliance on exports has reduced since the past 3 years, it is still significantly higher than the export value of medical devices?

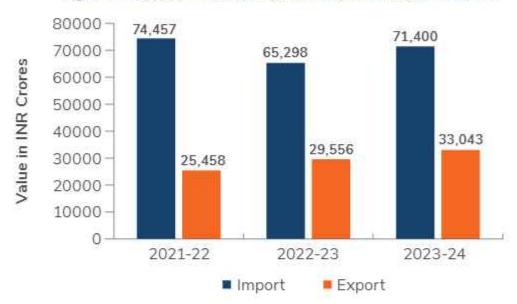


Figure 5: Medical Devices Import & Export, India, 2021-2024

Source: Government Of India Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers Department of Pharmaceuticals

To address this, the Indian government has introduced several initiatives to boost domestic manufacturing, investment, and innovation in the medical device sector. In April 2023, the Indian Government approved the National Medical Devices Policy, 2023, which is expected to facilitate the orderly growth of the medical devices sector to meet the public health objectives of access, affordability, quality, and innovation. The initiative through policy interventions such as regulatory streamlining, the development of large medical device parks and infrastructure, facilitation of research & development (R&D) and innovation, and human resources development, is expected to help India's medical devices sector to grow from \$11 billion in 2023 to \$50 billion by 2030°. Since the launch of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for medical devices in 2020, a total of 26 projects have been approved, with a committed investment of Rs. 1,206 crore⁹ (US\$ 147 million) to enable growth and innovation in the MedTech industry, aiming to position India as the global hub for manufacturing and innovation in the coming years. To provide strong support for the industry, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), under the guidance of NITI Aayog launched the MedTech Mitra initiative in 2023 to empower MedTech innovators and advance healthcare solutions by providing crucial support for clinical evaluation, regulatory facilitation, and the adoption of new



products. These tailwinds have provided a conducive environment for proliferation of MedTech startups that have focused on integrating digital technologies, leveraging AI, IoT, and cloud computing to develop portable medical devices, remote monitoring systems, and screening tools. These start-ups are enabling breakthroughs in areas such as early disease detection, minimally invasive techniques, and home-based care. For instance, Mumbai-headquartered Qure.ai uses deep learning techniques to diagnose disease and create automated diagnostic reports from CT scans, X-Rays and MRIs. Gurugram-based SS Innovations develops surgical robotic system to perform precision minimally invasive surgery to reduce patient trauma, enable shorter recovery times and facilitate better patient outcomes. Bengaluru-based Niramai has developed a machine learning-powered early breast cancer detection technology that is a radiation-free and non-invasive. Dehradun-located Sunfox technologies has developed a portable electrocardiogram (ECG) solution for cardiac diagnostics including for early detection of heart attack, and monitoring arrhythmias.

The above factors, such as the growing demand for quality healthcare, favorable government policies, and advancements in technology, are driving astounding growth in India's medical devices sector.



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Healthcare IT

Telemedicine in India has witnessed a phenomenal growth especially post-COVID-19 pandemic primarily driven by digital healthcare adoption. Through rising smartphone penetration in the country, better internet connectivity, and favorable government support, telemedicine is expected revolutionize healthcare access across both rural and urban India. The COVID-19 pandemic and ensuing lockdowns resulted in significant task-shifting in healthcare provision, with in-person visits in India decreasing by 32% and online consultations increasing by 300% between March to November 2020. This trend revealed the potential of telehealth in bridging service provision gaps, particularly in the context of growing internet connectivity with over 0-75 billion active internet users (as of January 2024) and some of the lowest data costs worldwide. India's free-to-use National Telemedicine Service, eSanjeevani launched in 2019 supported by over 154,000 Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centres, has provided over 276 million¹¹ consultations as of 2024 and shown promise to reduce systemic inequalities in access to care. Furthermore, the integration of IoT-enabled remote healthcare in the medical wearables such as smart glucometers, electrocardiogram (ECG) patches, and blood pressure monitors is allowing them to track patients' vitals and share real-time updates with doctors. Startups like BeatO, Dozee, and Wellthy Therapeutics are leading innovation facilitating faster video consultations and real-time remote patient monitoring for better chronic disease management in the patients' home. Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) launched in 2021 is digitizing healthcare and creating a seamless, paperless, and integrated digital health infrastructure. It is a part of the larger Ayushman Bharat initiative and is designed to improve accessibility, affordability, and efficiency in healthcare services across India. The key objectives of ADBM include digitization of patient health records for easy access and portability, interoperability between different healthcare systems and empowering patients with control over their medical history. However, issues related to storage of medical records and patient data security remains a concern. To mitigate this issue, strong cybersecurity measures and compliance with data protection laws is the need of the hour that can help in driving the telemedicine adoption in the country.





Healthcare Insurance

Key Indian public health insurance schemes include Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), Employees' State Insurance Scheme (ESI), Aam Aadmi Bima Yojana (AABY) and State-Specific Schemes. On the other hand, private health insurance offers customized coverage, higher sum insured, faster claim processing and wide network of private hospitals with better hospital access for middle- and high-income groups. Key private health insurance providers include HDFC ERGO, ICICI Lombard, Max Bupa (Niva Bupa) and Care Health. Some of the key differences in the public and private insurance policies have been highlighted below.

Key Differences Between Public and Private Health Insurance

Figure 7: Comparative Study of Public and Private Insurance in India, 2024

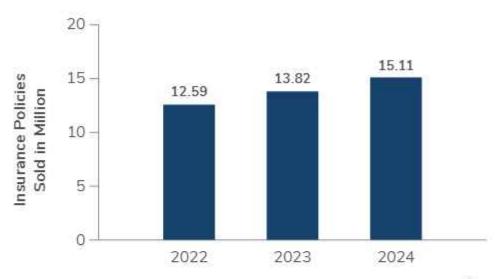
Factor	Public Health Insurance	Private Health Insurance
Target Audience	BPL families, unorganized workers, govt employees	Middle & high-income individuals
Premiums	Free or subsidized	Paid by policyholder
Hospital Network	Government hospitals & some private hospitals	Large network of private hospitals
Sum Insured	Usually ₹30,000 - ₹5 lakh	₹5 lakh - ₹1 crore or more
Claim Settlement	Slower, bureaucratic	Faster, customer-friendly
Coverage	Basic hospitalization	Comprehensive (OPD, maternity, crictical illness, etc.,)
Quality of Care	Crowded hospitals, long wait times	Better medical facilities

Source: Frost & Sullivan



Healthcare insurance in India has risen in the past three years as shown below.

Figure 8: Number of insurance policies sold by stand-alone health insurers across India from financial year 2022 to 2024



Source: Statista

Despite the rising demand for insurance policies, insurance penetration remains low, making awareness and accessibility key challenges. While private insurance provides better facilities, it is largely inaccessible to rural and BPL families. Thus, there is need for collaboration between public and private sectors to improve equitable access to healthcare and achieve the Universal Health Coverage goal.





Medical Education

India, despite having one of the largest healthcare systems in the world, faces a severe shortage of medical professionals, particularly in rural and remote areas. Though the doctor-population ratio in the country is around 1:836 which is better than the WHO standard of 1:1000 based on Ministry of Health and Family Welfare 2024¹² estimates, there is significant deficit of healthcare workers as the number of active professionals is considerably low. Furthermore, there is a shortfall in lab technicians, radiologists, anesthetists and nurses that compounds the problem. The lack of infrastructure and the inability of the institutions to provide medical training as per recent industry trends worsen the crisis. The shortage of medical professionals leads to overburdened healthcare system, long waiting times for patients, increase in medical errors and rural healthcare crisis.

To address this issue, the government is focusing on increasing in medical colleges such as the establishment of new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) institutions and government colleges for expanding medical seats. Incentives such as salary hikes, special allowances, and promotions have also been rolled out to doctors for facilitating rural posting aimed at addressing rural healthcare crisis. Telehealth has also been leveraged to allow rural patients to consult urban doctors and subsequently enable faster and effective disease diagnosis amongst them. Furthermore, the deployment of advanced technologies such as Al-based medical imaging analysis solutions as a public health screening tool are being encouraged including those developed by companies such as DeepTek for swiftly detecting conditions like chest abnormalities. The Al models can enable accurate and timely interpretations of patients' medical images and addresses the dearth of expertise in India which has only 20,000 radiologists for a population of 1.4 billion (a grossly inadequate ratio of 1 radiologist per 100,000 individuals).¹³



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Globally immersive technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and mixed reality (MR), are transforming medical and surgical training by enhancing learning, improving precision, and enabling hands-on practice without risks to patients. Hospitals and medical colleges in India are recognizing the importance of this and collaborating with immersive technology companies to integrate these technologies to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills ensuring better outcomes for medical professionals and patients. The use of the immersive technologies to develop comprehensive, curated module library endorsed by the Medical Council of India can help in imparting essential patient care skills to the medical professionals such as assessing vital signs, proper wound care techniques, and insertion of catheters to boost productivity, address skill gaps, and align training and research with industry needs. For instance, In July 2024, MediSim VR, a healthcare simulation training technology provider partnered with Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (SRIHER) to establish Chennai's first Center of Excellence (CoE) VR lab at the institute. The CoE VR lab is expected to offer realistic medical scenario simulations in a safe and controlled environment to prepare upcoming medical professionals with procedural competency, skills, and the confidence needed to care for their patients.



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Strategic Insights & Recommendations

Improving Primary & Secondary Healthcare in India

The World Economic Forum reported that countries worldwide spent an average of about 10% of their GDP on healthcare in 2024. However, despite a rising healthcare budget and expenditures, India spent less than 2% of its GDP on healthcare in the same year. Considering that India is the world's most populous country, India's healthcare expenditure should ideally exceed the global average. This should largely be achieved by increasing investments in preventive healthcare practices as well as in advanced healthcare infrastructure, especially in rural regions. Public initiatives such as PM-JAY and AAM establishments are great tools for improving healthcare infrastructure, but there should be greater collaboration between public and private healthcare centers to ensure better accessibility, especially in rural areas.

Decentralization of public healthcare will improve the efficiency of healthcare delivery. For instance, Tamil Nadu has a unique model that comprises a robust, decentralized network of public health professionals, which enabled the State to achieve over 95% immunization coverage¹⁴ in 2023-24-higher than the national average of 93.5%¹⁵. Such models should be replicated across other states and districts to achieve higher immunization rates.

Fueling Medical Device Innovations and Healthcare IT-enabled Practices

The 'Make in India' initiative and the establishment of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) have boosted medical device manufacturing in India. The global COVID-19 pandemic enabled India to emerge as the second largest manufacturer of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits¹⁶. Leading medical device companies such as Siemens Healthineers, have set up R&D facilities in Bangalore to develop medical device products for global export. Additionally, an artificial organ development facility was recently inaugurated at Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone. Leading medical device companies should consider investing in India as it presents a lucrative opportunity for new product development that meets international quality standards.



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Robotics are also poised to transform the India's MedTech sector. SSI Mantra is India's first indigenous surgical robot, that is CDSCO-certified for telerobotic surgery. With a cost of approximately INR 5 crores, it is three times more affordable than the internationally recognized Da Vinci robot, which costs about INR 15 crores.

Connected medical diagnostics and wearables are also emerging as high growth opportunities for India's MedTech sector, given the country is the leading provider of IT services globally. Investments across medical robotics, digital diagnostics and wellness wearables will yield lucrative return in the Indian MedTech landscape over the next five years.

Figure 9: Medical Devices: Growth Opportunities in India



Source: Frost & Sullivan





Enabling Healthcare Reforms to Improve Medical Insurance and Education

While AB PM-JAY is a step towards achieving Universal Health Coverage, there is a need to streamline central and state health insurance schemes to create equitable healthcare access. A centralized claims processing system would further enhance efficiency in healthcare delivery. Additionally, standardizing healthcare policy documents ensuring the inclusion of medical consumables such as diagnostics or drugs would make health care more affordable, especially in rural India. The digitization and real time updating of medical insurance records will enable faster claims processing, while cashless hospitalization policies should be encouraged to streamline claims management and improve patient care.

India's medical curriculum needs to be updated to align with the latest medical practices. Additionally, the education system needs to re-orient towards a more practical approach and de-emphasize rote learning. Medical educators also need upskilling to keep pace with India's rapidly evolving MedTech landscape. While Indian medical tuition fees in public universities are lower than US or Europe, the employability of Indian medical professional remains largely restricted to India thereby limiting the country's growth as a global leader for medical practices. To address this, there is a need to upgrade Indian education centers to be at par with international healthcare education systems. Hence, there is a need to reform the Indian medical education sector. Industry and academic collaborations should be incentivized in the medical sector to improve healthcare education and employability of healthcare professionals.



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Outlook

Automation, personalization and collaboration present three key focus areas for driving transformation of the Indian medical ecosystem. India is currently witnessing a digital health transformation and can emerge as a leader in digital health ecosystem. The digitization of the Indian healthcare landscape will enable the following key outcomes:

Figure 10: Key Outcomes Driven by Healthcare Digitization in India



INTEROPERABILITY

Interoperability, standardization and cybersecurity practices will faciliate seamless exchange of healthcare data



ACCESSIBILITY

Rising use of healthcare technology will enable better accessibility and democratize high quality healthcare delivery



PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION

Partnership between private and public healthcare centers will foster a favorable environment for the growth of health innovations



GLOBAL DIGITAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION

India's digital healthcare transformation would help establish best practices to enable similar transformations across the world

Source: Frost & Sullivan



Public initiatives such as the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) and the Digital Health Incentive Scheme (DHIS) can help set global benchmarks for digital transformations. The post-COVID surge in telemedicine demand has enabled the development of the e-Sanjeevani platform for delivering remote consultations. The National Tele Mental Health Programme has helped establish mental health helplines that have serviced over 17.6 lakh calls since its inception. There is also rising focus on AI-powered diagnostics to improve detection accuracy, enhanced cybersecurity networks to protect sensitive healthcare data and rising use of blockchain for maintaining accurate health records.

The Indian innovation landscape is also witnessing an increasing adoption of digital technologies in medical practices. Theranautilus, established in 2020, is developing nanorobots for effective root canal treatments. Haystack Robotics, established in 2021, is developing clinical-grade disinfection robots that use advanced AI to automate disinfection practices in hospital settings.

The personalization of healthcare delivery presents a significant growth opportunity in India. In 2025, India announced the release of 10,000 of its whole genome samples archived at the Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC) portals for research aimed at developing personalized healthcare solutions tailored to the Indian population. Indian companies such as MedGenome, which leverage AI-driven genomic diagnostics, can use this database to drive innovations in precision diagnostics.

The World Economic Forum, Apollo Hospitals, and leading global healthcare organizations launched the Digital Healthcare Transformation (DHT) Initiative in 2024. The initiative will leverage India's public-private partnerships to close healthcare gaps and create repeatable digital healthcare models that can be scaled globally. Thus, India is well-positioned to emerge as a global pathfinder in the digital health and connected care landscape.



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End Notes

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