



A Policy Prelude to Advancing Collaborative Oral Health Systems

Authors



Dr. Lakshmi Balraj
Indian Dental Association



Dr. O. P. Kharbanda
Ramaiah University of
Applied Sciences in Bengaluru



Dr. Ashok Dhoble
Indian Dental Association

Abstract

Oral health is increasingly recognized as an integral component of public health and universal health coverage (UHC). In response to the global momentum catalyzed by the WHO Bangkok Declaration (2024), the **Indian Dental Association (IDA) will be convening the D20 International Workshop on Advancing Oral Healthcare on 19-20 July 2025 in Mumbai, India.** This short communication presents the workshop's thematic areas, strategic dialogues, and expected outcomes, emphasizing collaborative implementation of prevention, standardization, and policy-driven oral healthcare. The deliberations aimed to contextualize international frameworks within national agendas, strengthen regional collaborations, and promote the integration of oral health into mainstream health systems.

Prelude

Oral diseases affect over 3.5 billion people worldwide and represent a substantial burden on health systems, economies, and quality of life.^[1,2] Despite this, oral health has historically remained marginalized in global health priorities. The WHO's *Global Oral Health Action Plan 2023-2030* and the *Bangkok Declaration on Oral Health in Achieving UHC 2030* have emphasized the need for systemic reforms to integrate oral health within primary healthcare and UHC frameworks.^[3,4]

India, as a signatory to the Bangkok Declaration, has initiated strategic dialogues through national and international platforms to localize these global commitments. In this context, the IDA organized the D20 International Workshop on Advancing Oral Healthcare, focused on prevention, standardization, and implementation.

Workshop Objectives and Scope

The workshop convened national and international stakeholders including WHO representatives, FDI World Dental Federation, Asia-Pacific dental associations, academic leaders, and government officials. The primary objectives were:

- 1. Assessing National Progress on Global Oral Health Frameworks:** Discussions focused on aligning national policies with the WHO Action Plan, FDI Vision 2030, and the Bangkok Declaration. Participants shared experiences and evaluated policy progress, implementation readiness, and contextual barriers.

- 2. Promoting Preventive and Early Detection Strategies:** Given the global economic burden of oral diseases—estimated at \$710 billion annually^[8]—participants advocated for integration of innovative preventive models within health systems.
- 3. Advancing Standardization Across Dentistry:** Building upon IDA's 2024 initiative, *Vision 2030 – Challenges and Opportunities*, the workshop examined existing efforts toward developing standardized clinical forms, procedural codes, and guidelines. Discussions emphasized harmonizing clinical, educational, and research practices across India.

Expected Outcomes

- 1. Policy Recommendations for Bangkok Declaration Implementation:** A formal roadmap will be developed for the phased implementation of the Declaration in India, with clear guidance on funding, infrastructure, and service delivery integration.
- 2. Regional Collaboration and Partnerships:** Bilateral and multilateral partnerships will be pursued to co-develop context-specific strategies for prevention and early detection of oral diseases.
- 3. Framework for Standardized Dental Practices:** Recommendations will be consolidated to guide future national efforts in harmonizing dental education, practice, and policymaking.

Way Forward

The D20 Workshop represents a pivotal step toward mainstreaming oral health in public health agendas and UHC. Through strategic dialogue, cross-sector collaboration, and commitment to global frameworks, the initiative aspires to deliver equitable, quality oral healthcare for all by 2030. The forthcoming recommendations will provide actionable steps for policymakers and health planners across India and beyond.

References

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