



**ADVANCED STUDY INSTITUTE OF ASIA, NEW DELHI**

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**For Immediate Release**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**25 June, 2024**

***The Progress and Policy Colloquia on Addressing Lead Poisoning in South Asian Countries***

**Press Brief Highlights**

- The “Progress and Policy” colloquia organized by Advanced Study Institute of Asia at SGT University focuses on understanding the extent and impact of lead poisoning in South Asia, as well as potential policy interventions to address to prevent the issue.
- The discussions highlighted the need for comprehensive strategies, including strengthening regulations, improving public awareness, and enhancing epidemiological research, to effectively tackle this public health challenge.
- The colloquia also unveiled an initial working document titled "No Safe Blood Lead Levels: Understanding Thresholds, Compliance, and Legal Consequences" by ASIA which is being further developed with expert feedback.

**Delhi: ASIA, 25 June 2024:** The Advanced Study Institute of Asia in collaboration with the Young Scholars Initiative (YSI) of the Institute of New Economic Thinking (INET), hosted a two-part colloquia on June 25, 2024. The event was divided into two panel sessions:

**Panel Session 1: Evidence-Based Assessment and Policy Interventions**

- Satish Sinha, Associate Director of Toxics Link in Delhi, India, stated that despite regulations limiting lead content in paints to 90 ppm in India, ongoing violations persist among smaller brands and the unorganized SME sector, with some non-branded paints containing over 2,000 ppm of lead.
- Bjorn Larsen, a development economist from the USA, Norway, and Laos, highlighted that there is a lack of nationally representative blood lead level data in South Asia, with most studies done on small samples. New research reveals that IQ losses in children due to lead exposure are about 80% higher than previous estimates, with severe implications for economic development and productivity.
- Jeiel Guarino, the Global Lead Paint Elimination Campaigner (IPEN) emphasized the importance of the Rotterdam Convention in accelerating global lead paint elimination through legally binding controls on lead chromate pigments such as vivid yellow, orange, and red colours.

**Panel Session 2: Addressing Lead Poisoning in South Asia: Impact, Challenges and Policy Solutions**

- Dr Professor Howard Hu, a leading expert on lead toxicity, emphasized that even low-level lead exposure can significantly and irreversibly impact cognitive development and health outcomes, underscoring the critical need to reduce lead exposure from all sources, especially during pregnancy.
- Perry Gottesfeld, the Executive Director of Occupational Knowledge International, emphasized the urgent need for a holistic approach to mitigate all sources of lead exposure, including soil, dust, industrial emissions, lead-based paint, and lead in gasoline, to address the significant long-term health impacts in South Asia.
- Sudha Rajagopalan, an epidemiologist and program manager for the lead poisoning prevention program at the Florida Department of Health, emphasized the crucial role of public health agencies in tackling lead poisoning through comprehensive blood lead testing, data reporting, case management, and primary and secondary prevention strategies to eliminate lead hazards

*The colloquia were Chaired by Dr. Indu Bhushan, the Chair of the India Working Group (IWG) and former CEO of Ayushman Bharat. Dr. Indu Bhushan also delivered the Keynote speech “emphasized the importance of establishing a national lead monitoring system, developing affordable testing technologies, and enacting strong policies to eliminate lead exposure, particularly in the private sector”. Prof. Amogh Dev Rai, Research Director at Advanced Study Institute of Asia also Chaired and delivered the opening and closing plenaries.*

Note: The event aims to serve as a platform for knowledge-sharing, policy dialogue, and collective action to address lead poisoning in India and South Asia, identifying gaps and limitations in existing policies and research, and proposing recommendations for strengthening the policy framework and research agenda. ASIA aims to use the insights gained from this Colloquia discussion as part of a broader initiative will include a series of events, such as workshops, a roundtable, and a larger conference.

For more information, please contact [Communication@advancedstudy.asia](mailto:Communication@advancedstudy.asia) or visit the Advanced Study Institute of Asia's website <https://www.advancedstudy.asia/>

Co-partnered by Young Scholars Initiative (YSI)



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