

India's Telemedicine Milestone 2026: eSanjeevani and Digital Healthcare

India has achieved a major milestone in **digital healthcare**, with **eSanjeevani**, the **country's national telemedicine service**, crossing **50 crore (500 million) teleconsultations**.

The platform crossed the milestone on **15 September 2026**, recording more than **50.09 crore consultations** across all 36 States and Union Territories. This makes eSanjeevani one of the world's largest telemedicine implementations in primary healthcare.

The achievement highlights India's use of **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)** to expand healthcare access, particularly for people living in rural, remote and underserved areas.

What is eSanjeevani?

eSanjeevani is India's government-backed national telemedicine platform, developed by the **Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)** under the guidance of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Launched in **2019**, it enables patients to consult healthcare professionals remotely, reducing the need for travel to hospitals and helping connect primary healthcare facilities with doctors and specialists.

The platform currently supports:

- More than **1.42 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandir spokes**
- **19,473 medical hubs**
- **901 online OPDs**
- Over **2.41 lakh registered healthcare providers**
- Services in **15 languages**
- Around **2.5-3 lakh consultations per day**

Why is the 50-Crore Milestone Important?

1. Improving Rural Healthcare

Telemedicine can connect patients in remote areas with qualified medical professionals

without requiring long-distance travel.

This is particularly important in India, where specialists and advanced healthcare facilities are concentrated in urban centres.

2. Reducing Cost and Travel

Patients can save travel expenses, time and waiting periods, making healthcare more accessible and affordable.

3. Supporting Universal Health Coverage

eSanjeevani contributes to India's objective of **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** by extending healthcare services beyond conventional physical facilities.

4. Greater Inclusion

Women account for **57.14% of eSanjeevani utilisation**, while people aged 46 years and above account for more than 40% of consultations. This demonstrates the platform's growing relevance among populations that may face greater barriers to physical healthcare access.

AI and the Future of Telemedicine

eSanjeevani is evolving beyond simple video consultations.

The platform has integrated an **AI-powered Clinical Decision Support System (AI-CDSS)** that assists healthcare providers during consultations and supports more consistent clinical decision-making.

The AI-enabled system has received the **Gold Award under the National Awards for e-Governance 2026**.

The integration of AI with telemedicine illustrates how emerging technologies can help address India's shortage of healthcare specialists while improving the efficiency of public healthcare delivery.

From Primary Care to Specialist Care

Another important development is the expansion of eSanjeevani into **specialist OPD consultations**.

Teleconsultation services for selected specialties have been introduced through

institutions including:

- **AIIMS Jodhpur**
- **AIIMS Jammu**
- **AIIMS Patna**

The model is expected to progressively expand to other premier institutions, allowing patients to access specialist expertise without necessarily travelling to major cities.

Telemedicine and India's Digital Health Ecosystem

eSanjeevani forms part of India's broader **digital health ecosystem**, including the **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM)**.

ABDM seeks to create an interoperable digital health ecosystem through components such as:

- **ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account)**
- Healthcare Professionals Registry
- Health Facility Registry
- Digital health records
- **Unified Health Interface (UHI)**

In June 2026, the government launched UHI as an open and interoperable network intended to allow citizens and healthcare providers to connect across different digital platforms.

Challenges of Telemedicine

Despite its potential, telemedicine faces several challenges:

- Digital divide and poor internet connectivity
- Lack of digital literacy
- Privacy and cybersecurity concerns
- Difficulty in conducting physical examinations remotely

- Language and accessibility barriers
- Need for reliable digital health records
- Ensuring quality and accountability

Therefore, telemedicine should **complement rather than completely replace physical healthcare infrastructure.**

UPSC Relevance Prelims

Important facts:

- **eSanjeevani:** India's national telemedicine service
- Launched in **2019**
- Developed by **C-DAC**
- **50 crore+ consultations:** September 2026
- AI-powered Clinical Decision Support System integrated into the platform
- Linked with **Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission**

Mains - GS Paper II

The topic can be linked to:

- Universal Health Coverage
- Digital governance
- Public healthcare
- Health infrastructure
- Digital divide
- Technology for inclusive development

GS Paper III

Relevant themes include:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Digital Public Infrastructure
- Emerging technologies
- Cybersecurity
- Technology-enabled healthcare

Possible UPSC Mains Question

“Digital technologies such as telemedicine can help bridge India’s geographical and specialist healthcare gaps, but their effectiveness depends on digital inclusion and physical healthcare infrastructure. Discuss.”

Conclusion

India’s **50-crore eSanjeevani milestone** demonstrates the potential of technology to transform public healthcare delivery at population scale. The integration of **AI, specialist consultations and digital health infrastructure** can further strengthen India’s healthcare system.

For UPSC aspirants, eSanjeevani should be studied as a case study linking **Digital Public Infrastructure, Universal Health Coverage, AI, healthcare accessibility and inclusive governance**.

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