

Abstract

Health Insurance for the Poor in India: A Conceptual Analysis

Health insurance is increasingly being recognized as an important financing tool for meeting health care challenges facing the poor. However, health insurance for the poor is still not widely observed in many developing countries where the vast majority of the poor live. In India over 50% of the population living at low-levels of income is without any health insurance cover.

Globalization and increasing commercialization of healthcare services as well as shrinking government support to public health services is raising concern about the healthcare needs of the poor. There are different ways of pooling health risks facing the low-income people. Community based health insurance is one possible way of pooling the risk. Government mediated arrangement with the providers and insurers, is another way of providing health insurance to the poor. Each arrangement has its own strengths and weaknesses.

This proposed study attempts to conceptually advance the understanding of how best to provide health insurance to low-income people. Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each of the possible insurance arrangements, the study would analyze conditions under which a particular arrangement scores over other arrangements.