

Report by Tahrira Khan  
Triologue of visit to the conference



**Partners in Population and Development (PPD)**  
**An Inter-Governmental Organization**  
**Promoting South-South Cooperation**



**International Conference on**  
**Services to the Elderly – Current Challenges & Emerging Trends**  
**Date: 23–24 February 2017**  
**Venue: ITC Kakatiya, Hyderabad, India**

Heritage Foundation and the Global Ageing Network organized a two days international conference on “**Services to the Elderly – Current Challenges & Emerging Trends**” in Hyderabad, India from 23 to 24 February 2017. Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) worked as knowledge partner of the conference. This conference brought together 11 keynote speakers, 130 participants, and 63 oral presentations, with 6 posters displayed – and additionally, a special interactive session with Caregivers of Persons with Dementia. Government officials, academicians, researchers, senior citizens, caregivers, media and volunteers comprised the participants. The objective of the conference was to educate delegates regarding caregiving experiences and services being rendered in various parts of the world and disseminates path breaking innovations & practices in the area of ageing services.

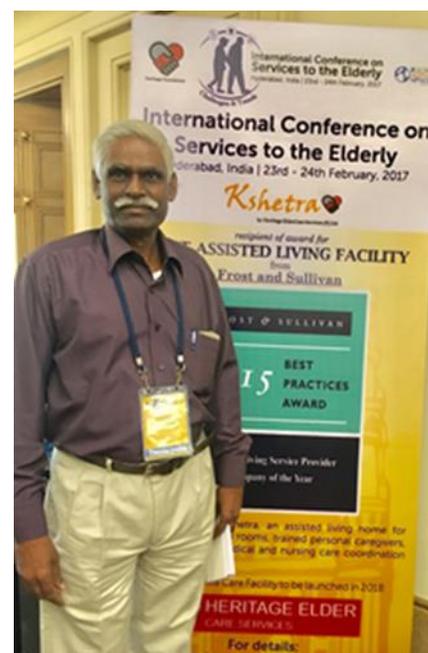
Mr. Mathew Cherian, Chief Executive HelpAge India; Prof. S Siva Raju, Deputy Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad; Dr. S. Irudaya Rajan, Professor, Centre for Development Studies, Kerala, India; Dr Nori Graham, Psychiatrist, Royal Free Hospital, London; Dr. Shanthi Johnson, Professor, Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies, University of Regina; Mr. Marcus Riley, Chairman of the International Association of Homes & Services for the Ageing (IAHSA – the Global Ageing Network), USA; Mr. Jack York, co-Founder and President – It’s Never 2 Late; Dr. Grace Clark, Chair of Sociology, Forman Christian College, Lahore, Pakistan; Mr. Tim Mahlberg, Catalyst-in-Residence, BallyCara; Dr. Isaacson, Asst. Prof. at Haifa University’s Gerontology Department; Dr Anil Patil, Founder and Executive Director of Carers Worldwide; were keynotes speakers. Others speakers and participants were from USA, UK, Canada, Australia, India, Brazil, Bangladesh, and Pakistan.



**Mr. Mathew Cherian, Chief Executive of HelpAge India**



**Mr. Jack York, co-Founder and President – It’s Never 2 Late**



**Prof. S Siva Raju, Deputy Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Hyderabad**

Ms. Tahrifa Khan, Program officer of Partners in Population and Development (PPD) represented PPD's "Global Commission on Ageing in Developing Countries". She presented 2 papers on: "An inter-governmental alliance of 26 south-south countries for ensuring active and healthy ageing in developing countries" and "Elderly Healthcare situation in Bangladesh".

The conference being based on elderly healthcare challenges and optimum solution had the following 4 main themes: 1) Geriatric health care; 2) Care-giving; 3) Age friendly environment; 4) Dementia care. Beside these themes, the keynote speakers also deliberated on pertinent concerns relating to ageing in the global context.

The two themes: 'Geriatric healthcare and Caregiving' had discussions pertaining to the emerging concerns such as the most vulnerable-gender; oldest-old persons living alone and economically disadvantaged; long-term care; and technology, with emphasis on quality health care and health promotion both from the health and socioeconomic point of view. Ageing is not only a biological fact but is a social construct, where people are going through various transformations in their socio-economic environment while getting old. Though family is the traditional support system in many societies, what would be the solution for an older person who doesn't have family support for himself/herself? So, the discussions were about ensuring health and well-being for older persons' within the perspective of society, family or individual. Fundamentally and ethically, an older person should rightly have the highest attainable standards of physical and mental healthcare, but in reality everyday several kinds of elder abuse are occurring – some physical, emotional, sexual exploitation or some might be neglect by self/family/others. Majority of the cases of elder abuse is by family members, friends or the service provider like nursing home or home care staff. So, the speakers discussed to what extent the service provider, health infrastructure, government, care givers, family member, etc., are able to fulfill older person's needs.

The theme on an Age Friendly Environment (AFE) was one of the major concerns during the conference with the discussion focusing on the role, relevance and issues of AFE. Also, various models of AFE from different countries were discussed. Different organizational structure also came up like inter-governmental alliances, building silver nests: Adhata's model, BallyCare's SONA approach, community based care, etc. Telemedicine was rated high amidst the audience, since it has a potential advantage of being able to offer a service eliminating travel costs for the



**Ms. Tahrifa Khan, Program Officer of PPD**

doctor and the patient at marginally increased cost, depending on volume. Strengthening intergenerational relationships, advocacy and policy measures, and awareness at the community level against elderly abuse were discussed along with the involvement of technology in elderly healthcare.



Dr. Nori Graham, Psychiatrist, Royal Free Hospital, London; interacting session with caregivers during the Conference

The theme on Dementia focused on how care for dementia affected persons requires a holistic approach. This kind of brain disease is incurable. The reasons for deterioration of thinking capability, memory power and everyday activities received importance during the session. It was pointed out that the needs of the affected person changes and care needs to be personalized accordingly during the course of the disease, Dr. Nori Graham, Psychiatrist, Royal Free Hospital, London had an interactive session with the caregivers of dementia and provided practical suggestions based on the questions of caregivers. Discussions centered on diverse therapeutic supportive interventions ranging from music therapy to Cognitive Stimulation Therapy (CST) and long-term care/Community care and building dementia friendly communities/societies where persons with dementia and their family members can lead a life of dignity without any discrimination.



Closing ceremony (From left to right): Dr. KR Gangadharan, Founder – Heritage Foundation; Prof. Siva Raju, Deputy Director, TISS, Hyderabad; Mr. Jagadheeshwar, Secretary, WCD, Telangana Government; Mr. Anand Katoch, Director, National Institute of Social Defense, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Gol, and Marcus Riley from Australia, Chair, Global Ageing Network, USA at the closing ceremony

The two days conference were filled with systematic discussions and dissemination of existing models, networking of various stakeholders, lobbying for the rights of elderly, promoting healthy ageing, creation of an age friendly environment leading to social connectedness, social capital, infrastructure and constructive use of technology also. The vision was to create a platform for policymakers, researchers, business and ageing services providers to collectively share their knowledge and best practices to enhance quality of care for the elderly which was effectively achieved for organizers and participants combined effort. After successfully concluded with each attendee carrying home the knowledge and best practices shared during the two-day deliberation and vibrant passion for ensuring health and well-being for the elderly.