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Irudaya Rajan S

Centre for Development Studies, India

Palliative care for the elderly in India

India's elderly population stands at 123 million in 2018. According to the 2014 round of the National sample survey, two million elderly persons in India are bed ridden and another seven million are confined within their households. Who will take care of them during their sunset years? The issue of caring for the elderly and ensuring their dignity at death should thus receive immediate public attention. In this context, this paper is an attempt to understand the steps taken by government and other agencies in India to cater to the care needs of the elderly. It further looks at the flaws in these mechanisms and offers some suggestions to improve the present situation. We shall use government reports, organizations working in the field of palliative care and Kerala Aging Survey data. Palliative care for elderly in India is still in the early stage of development. Many elders are not aware of the existing policies on palliative care. Awareness programs, care training centers, etc. are need of the hour. Though we have multiple mechanisms in palliative care for the elderly, there are many loopholes here which must be addressed.

Biography

Irudaya Rajan S has completed his PhD from International Institute for Population Sciences, Bombay. He is the Professor at Centre for Development Studies, Kerala, India. He has published extensively in national and international journals on social, economic, health and demographic facets of aging since the last three decades. He conducted the first longitudinal Aging Survey in Kerala in 2004, which is repeated every three years and entered its fifth wave in 2016. He has been involved in several projects on aging funded by the United Nations, South Asian Network of Economic Institutes, Indo-Dutch Program on Alternatives in Development, Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute, International Development Research Centre, World Bank and Help Age International.

rajan cds@gmail.com