Keynote Lecture

Ageless Aging or Meaningful Decline? A Critical Analysis of “Successful Aging” through the Lens of Everyday Lives in India

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Goethe-Institut New Delhi
Siddhartha Hall
Max Mueller Bhavan
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This keynote lecture brings the perspectives of older subjects from India into dialogue with the mushrooming public, academic and biomedical discourse on successful aging originating in Europe and North America and circulating around the globe.

The dominant biomedical, policy and popular successful aging model promotes ideals of agelessness, independence, and individual responsibility for aging well, and has received little scrutiny as to its cultural assumptions. Prevalent models of ageing well in India, in contrast, emphasize appropriate (inter)dependence within families, and accepting and growing from the fundamental condition of human transience.

The talk argues that the significance of ageing is not limited to the customary question of how to care for increasing numbers of dependent elderly as the world faces dramatic population maturation; rather, beliefs and practices surrounding ageing illuminate far-reaching social-cultural phenomena, including the cultural agendas behind national policies, intricate models of personhood, and profound social-moral visions of how best to live.

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