

Press Note

## **Unmukt Knowledge Series seminar “Solutions for Empowered Elder Living” Marks the First Step in Building Nation-wide Senior Care Ecosystem**

Tamil Nadu State is noted for having over 10% of its population above 60 years of age, as well as the highest number of retirement communities per capita in the country.

**Chennai, 21 August 2019** - Unmukt Festival, India’s original expo focussed on senior life and retirement planning announced its presence in Chennai today with an Unmukt Knowledge Series seminar titled **“Solutions for Empowered Elder Living”**.

As per projections from the 2011 census, the percentage of senior citizens in India will jump from 7.4% in 2001 to 12.4% in 2026 and touch 19.7% in 2050 or nearly 300 million people. A significant, largely urban, segment of this population is evolving as a consumer group that has distinct needs and wants which are very different from seniors in the past.

*“Unmukt Knowledge Series is a B2B platform to address the demand -supply gap in senior care and create a collaborative cross-industry ecosystem of support and empowerment to senior citizens,” said Monimita Sarkar, Founder – Unmukt Festival and MD – KW Conferences Pvt. Ltd.*

Dr. K R Gangadharan, Chairman Heritage Foundation, speaking on Ageing in India, emphasized that when it comes to senior care there needs to be a balance between emotions and rationality. “For example along with the best services and facilities senior living providers, also need to keep in mind how they are going to compensate the loss of the kind of the kind of contact that comes from having your children around you,” he added

The keynote address on “Silver Years – The Sunrise Industry” by Ankur Gupta, Chairman of the CII Taskforce on Senior Care and Jt. MD Ashiana Housing highlighted that awareness of senior living products and services is increasing, creating a rapidly changing market. “As seniors are becoming more comfortable with spending on their own needs, technology is going to have a big impact – a simple example is mobility – people no longer just use wheelchairs, but also walkers, stairlifts, scooters, providing much greater mobility, allowing older people to follow passions they did not give time to earlier. Other products that have immense potential to improve quality of life are monitoring devices, wearable devices, intergenerational experience sharing, mobility products, specialised gym equipment, tracking devices,” said Mr. Gupta.

A session on “Is India becoming the Dementia capital of the world?” saw a focus on the increasing incidences of mental health issues in the country and how a combination of family and institutional care is the best way forward. Neha Sinha, Founder & CEO of Epoch Eldercare pointed out – “In a few years, the total societal cost of dementia is going to grow 3 times from INR 24,700 crore now. Dementia care is exhausting for a family members and needs an ecosystem of support for themselves as well. “

At the same time, Dr. Pritika Chary Neurologist and Neurosurgeon said - “The market for formal dementia care is still very young as people are yet to accept the financial cost of this very specialised service”

Dr. B Vivekanand, Founder, Naimisha mentioned, “Mental well-being taking a hit because of work pressure and social demands to be successful. India is in denial on ageing and unless we get out of this, things will only get worse. Stigma on mental health problems needs to be removed.”

Adarsh Narahari Founder and MD, Primus Lifespaces speaking on myths about senior living emphasized that when people move to senior retirement communities it is not because they are very old and have been abandoned by their children. Rather it is because of the value that comes from living in a community that actually improves health outcomes and slows down the processes of both physical and mental ageing. “Also, the cost of living in one’s own home as one ages is often more than moving into a retirement community - especially if one takes in the value that comes from living in a community that actually improves health outcomes and slows down the processes of both physical and mental ageing,” he added.

From the perspective of a developer, KAV Ramesh Kumar, COO Sriram Properties, shared on how there is increasing emphasis on incorporating technology such as home automation into the building of homes for the retired, thereby reducing clutter for a more elder-friendly design.

Rajgopal G., CEO, KITES Senior Care speaking on the care continuum emphasized the importance of primary care physicians in the healthcare system, as a way of reducing invasive and radical medical solutions. In the case of seniors, this translates into a need for more qualified geriatric specialists – currently in short supply in the country.

Prithish Gupta, COO and Chief Business Officer, Dozee said, “The big shift that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will make in healthcare is to enable large scale screening and data interpretation of parameters. This allows medical staff to focus on actual care, rather than on data collection and interpretation. AI, by making non-intrusive monitoring a reality, will help to make healthcare more humane.”

Ramu Muthangi, Chief Technical Advisor, Smart Health Connect speaking on voice enabled technologies pointed out that voice is the most intuitive and natural form of communication. “Voice enabled technologies therefore make it possible for seniors to easily start using a smart speaker to activate many other apps or products – such as automated lighting, booking a table at a restaurant, sending an SOS alert to loved ones, or even simply find out the time!” he said

Bruce Schwack, Director of Communications, Netmeds spoke on how online pharmacies have made medicine more accessible even in remote areas such as wildlife sanctuaries in Assam, where earlier people had to drive 6 hours to the nearest pharmacy. “While earlier it was adult children buying their parents’ medicines for them, seniors buying their own medicines are now 45% of the users,” he says.

Unmukt Festival is India’s original B2C expo on senior life and retirement planning. The first event in Hyderabad in 2018 saw over 3000 visitors explore 500+ products and services designed to improve quality of life for seniors and their caregivers. **The next Unmukt Festival B2C expo will be held in Bengaluru in February 2020.**

Unmukt Knowledge Series, is the B2B knowledge exchange and networking forum of Unmukt Festival. These events bring together knowledge leaders and key stakeholders across NGOs, healthcare organizations, senior citizen forums, builders, technology experts, architects, academia and the media to educate, engage and reflect on key areas that impact seniors and their caregivers. **The next Unmukt Knowledge Series on the theme “Technology – the Biggest Driver of Growth in Senior Care” will be held in Hyderabad in November 2019.**

The Unmukt Knowledge Series by Unmukt Festival is curated & designed by KW Conferences Pvt. Ltd. and Shomex Production LLC, USA, to meet the needs of seniors, caregivers and those planning for their retirement years.

## The Producers

**KW Conferences** is a pioneer in India's Professional Conference Organising industry. Over the last twenty-five years, KWC has built an enviable reputation, managing end-to-end services at international and national conferences for hundreds of clients. Working on events covering a wide gamut of topics and business verticals gave the KWC team a unique perspective on issues facing the country. Events on healthcare and public health policy repeatedly highlighted the rapidly rising percentage of senior citizens in India and the vast under-representation of this demographic in healthcare, housing and a host of other services that have the potential to make a marked difference in their quality of life.

Founded in 1984, **Shomex Productions LLC** is a US based developer, manager and producer of exhibitions, generally co-branded with leading community and professional organisations, prestigious universities, industry tradeshow and media properties. With Unmukt Festival, Shomex brings to India all the benefits of its close association with Abilities Expo, the leading producer of events for people with different or diminishing abilities including seniors, veterans, and persons with disabilities. Shomex is responsible for all of the marketing and promotion to the senior audience and has built up the senior presence at shows from less than 5 percent in 2008 to more than 25 percent today.