

INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HEALTH (IASSH)

21st Annual Conference in collaboration with RA Podar Institute of Management, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

Ninth Professor John Caldwell Memorial Lecture

on

Fertility Transition to Gender Justice: Revisiting Caldwell's Theory of Social Change
by
Dr. Ravi Verma

11th February 2026 at 12.00 noon

R.A. Podar Auditorium, Rajasthan University, Jaipur



Dr. Ravi Verma is a senior social scientist and public health expert, currently serving as Regional Director of the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) Asia, New Delhi. He has over three decades of experience in interdisciplinary research spanning gender studies, population health, masculinities, violence against women, sexual and reproductive health, and adolescent development. At ICRW Asia, Dr. Verma has provided intellectual and strategic leadership to large-scale empirical studies and policy-oriented research across South Asia, with a strong emphasis on gender-transformative approaches and evidence-based advocacy. His work has made significant contributions to understanding the social and structural determinants of gender inequality and health outcomes, particularly through innovative interventions engaging men and boys. Dr. Verma has an extensive publication record in peer-reviewed journals and policy reports and has advised national governments, multilateral agencies, and international development organizations. His scholarship has played an important role in shaping gender-responsive policies and programs in India and the region.

Prior to joining ICRW in 2007, Dr. Verma was a program associate with Population Council/Horizons, where he collaborated with partners to design, implement and evaluate innovative operations research projects on gender and HIV. For more than 20 years, he was a professor in the department of population policies and programs at the International Institute for Population Sciences in Mumbai, India. The Indian Association for the Social Sciences and Health (IASSH) is honoured to host Dr. Ravi Verma as the **Caldwell Memorial Lecturer** at its **21st Annual Conference**.

Professor John Caldwell's seminal work includes documentation of the role of mother's education in fertility limitation and child mortality decline, and the role of circumcision in inhibiting the spread of HIV/AIDS in Africa. He is known for his "wealth flows" theory, which relates demographic transition theory to changes in intergenerational transfers within the family. A 2009 survey of nearly 1000 demographers worldwide named John Caldwell the most influential researcher of all time in the field of demography. In 1985, the Population Association of America (PAA) presented him with its highest prize, the Irene B. Taeuber Award for excellence in demographic research. In 1994, he began an elected four-year term as President of the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP), and, in 2004, he was presented with the prestigious United Nations Population Award. These are the three highest international honours in the field of demography and no other person has won all three of these awards. Dr. Caldwell's anthropological demographic work on south India, particularly on marriage and fertility, received lot of research attention. He encouraged and mentored many scholars from India, and good number of them received their Ph.D from Department of Demography at Australian National University (ANU) under his able guidance. He passed away on 12th March 2016 in Canberra at the age of 87. Upon request from his students, colleagues and friends, Indian Association for Social Sciences and Health (IASSH) instituted an annual memorial lecture in honour of Dr. Caldwell in 2016.

