

THE MIDS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



FEBRUARY 2026

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Institute of
Development
Studies

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

February 2026 saw MIDS organise a high-profile conference on the Report of Sixteenth Finance Commission featuring experts from all around the country with Dr C Rangarajan delivering the keynote. The MIDS events calendar also featured two workshops, two seminars, a conclave and a Development Dialogues episode in February.

The MIDS faculty and scholars continued to publish their research. Dr Prajwal Nagesh published a paper on the cultures of informal care comparing later-life care in Europe and India. Dr K Jafar co-authored a qualitative inquiry into help-seeking behaviour for postpartum depression care in Kerala. Prof M Suresh Babu and Dr A Kalaiyaran wrote extensively about the Union Budget 2026 across multiple news outlets. Prof M Vijayabaskar and Dr S Nelson Mandela co-authored a book chapter on Tamil Nadu's economic trajectory. An in-depth review of Prof A R Venkatachalapathy's co-edited book on Periyar was featured in *The Hindu*. Research Scholar, Gargi Sridharan co-wrote an article on Viksit Bharat and the reality of women's work in *The News Minute*.

Dr M Umanath presented a paper on diet diversification and nutrient intake among Indian households at the 66th Annual Conference of Indian Society of Labour Economics. Dr Jafar presented two papers: one on mapping outcomes beyond enrolment in a conclave at Calicut, another on WTO and mobility as part of a Panel Discussion at a Conference on Sustainable Futures. Dr Prajwal gave a lecture on micro-adjustments to later-age mobilities as part of the Seminar Series of the Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy. Dr K Hafsal took up a new ICSSR project as Co-Principal Investigator assessing the impact of GST rationalisation on renewable energy and eco-friendly markets.

FEATURED RESEARCH

CULTURES OF INFORMAL CARE: COMPARING LATER LIFE CARE IN THE UK, NETHERLANDS AND INDIA

Thomas A. Lowe, **Prajwal Nagesh**,
Jodi Sturge, and Louise Meijering



Increased life expectancy, chronic illnesses and limited formal care means informal care is becoming more critical for ageing populations. The majority of informal care studies focus on global north contexts and there are few cross-country comparisons, even among global north countries. Therefore, the link between context and the way informal care is experienced remains underexplored. Thus, this article aims to critically compare the lived experience of older adult informal carers in three sociocultural contexts: the UK, the Netherlands and India. This article uses qualitative in-depth interview data collected from the three countries. Data were analysed thematically, and this analysis revealed several key themes. First, there are several variations in informal carer dynamics, specifically in terms of spousal and parental carers. Second, there are key cultural negotiations in care dynamics. The study emphasises the need to expand comparison to more global south contexts. Focusing on certain age-related impairments may also offer unique insights and solutions to informal care concerns.

BETWEEN STIGMA AND SUPPORT: A QUALITATIVE INQUIRY INTO HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR FOR POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION CARE IN KERALA, INDIA

Sajna Panolan, Benson Thomas M,
& K. Jafar



Postpartum depression (PPD) adversely affects women, infants and their families. For various reasons, women are less likely to seek assistance for mental health issues during the perinatal phase, despite the availability of perinatal services. The study focuses on postpartum women's experience in a given context of the South Indian state Kerala, with an impressive record in public health and mass education. To explore the barriers and facilitators of help-seeking behaviour for depressive symptoms among postpartum women in Malappuram district, Kerala, India. This study utilised a qualitative descriptive design focusing on PPD among postpartum women (within 6 weeks) identified as screen-positive through community screening. Only those screened positive for PPD symptoms and given consent for detailed personal interviews (12 women) are included. The interview followed a phenomenological approach to reflect their experience with PPD and postpartum life in the given setting. The interviews were conducted in local language and transcripts were later translated into English. Thematic analysis and coding were done with the support of Quirkos software. The facilitators for help-seeking behaviour identified include awareness and social support. The barriers consist of a lack of awareness, inadequate social support, financial distress, reliance on spiritual treatment, absence of social connection, stigma, judgments, and fear of medication side effects. This study identifies barriers and enablers affecting help-seeking behaviour among women identified with PPD symptoms in Kerala, India. It advocates for a multi-sectoral collaborative approach that incorporates individual, family, community, and systemic factors to diminish stigma, elevate awareness, and reinforce support networks. Policymakers are urged to address these areas to improve diagnosis, treatment, and lessen maternal morbidity.

Presentations / Projects

Umanath, M. (2026). *Does occupation matter for diet diversification and nutrient intake? The case of Indian households* (Paper Presentation). 66th Annual Conference of Indian Society of Labour Economics.

Jafar, K. (2026, 14 Feb). *Education, employment and empowerment: Mapping outcomes beyond enrolment* (Paper Presentation). Power, demography, resources: Representation Conclave, Calicut Tower.

Jafar, K. (2026, 12-13 January). *Reflections on WTO and Mobility* (Paper Presentation). Panel Discussion on *Geopolitics, Trade Policy, and Equitable Development* at the International Conference on Sustainable Futures: Navigating Growth, Equity, and Environmental Resilience in Global Transitions, jointly organised by BSAR Crescent Institute of Science and Technology, Chennai, and SAFI Institute of Advanced Study.

Prajwal, N. (2026). *Micro-adjustments to later-age mobilities in India* (Lecture). Seminar Series, The Scottish Collaboration for Public Health Research and Policy.

PROJECTS

Hafsal K, Co-Principal Investigator, *Impact of GST Rationalisation on Renewable Energy and Eco-Friendly Markets: A Retailer Perception Study in Kerala*, ICSSR.

(FACING PAGE) PHOTOGRAPHS
FROM FEBRUARY EVENTS

February 2026

EVENTS@MIDS



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ARTICLES IN JOURNALS

Lowe, T. A., **Nagesh, P.**, Sturge, J., & Meijering, L. (2026, January 23). Cultures of informal care: comparing later life care in the UK, Netherlands and India. *Journal of Global Ageing* (Early View / Online First). <https://doi.org/10.1332/29767202Y2025D000000043>

Panolan, S., Thomas M, B., & **Jafar, K.** (2026). Between stigma and support: A qualitative inquiry into help-seeking behaviour for postpartum depression care in Kerala, India. *BMC Pregnancy Childbirth*, 26, article number 249. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-026-08675-4>

ARTICLES IN NEWSPAPERS / WEBSITES

Suresh Babu, M. (2026, February 2). Union Budget 2026 bets big on industrial growth. *The Hindu*. <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/budget-2026-bets-big-on-industrial-growth/article70579955.ece>

Kalaiyarasan, A. (2026, February 2). Union Budget: No course correction from fiscal paternalism. *The New Indian Express*. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/budget/2026/Feb/02/union-budget-no-course-correction-from-fiscal-paternalism>

Kalaiyarasan, A., & Rhwithwik, M. S. (2026). *Budget 2026-27: How does South India fare* (Issue Brief No. 1). Deccan Centre for International Relations. <https://www.deccancentre.org/pages/MzA>

Vijayabaskar, M., & Nelson Mandela, S. (2026, February 25). An economic trajectory marked by resilience and challenges. *The Hindu*. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/tamil-nadu-economic-trajectory/article70656067.ece>

BOOK REVIEWS

Panneerselvan, A. S. (2026, February 27). Review of *The Cambridge Companion to Periyar*, edited by **A. R. Venkatachalapathy**, Karthick Ram Manoharan. *The Hindu*. <https://www.thehindu.com/books/review-of-the-cambridge-companion-to-periyar-edited-by-ar-venkatachalapathy-karthick-ram-manoharan/article70670014.ece>

PUBLICATIONS

INSTITUTE

Tamilnadu Economy in News—TEN (Vol. 2 Issue 12), December 2025. MIDS. https://www.mids.ac.in/assets/doc/TEN_Vol_2-12.pdf

STUDENTS

Gargi, S., & Basit, A. (2026, February 11). Viksit Bharat and the reality of women's work: What the Economic Survey misses. *The News Minute*. <https://www.thenewsminute.com/news/viksit-bharat-and-the-reality-of-womens-work-what-the-economic-survey-misses>

EVENTS @ MIDS

7 February 2026, One-Day Online **Workshop**, *Statistical and Multivariate Analysis Using Jamovi: An Open Source Software*, MIDS Development Analytics

11 February 2026, **Seminar**, *Trust—Arranged Marriage or Love Match; Planned or Unavailable?* by Thomas Müller, Julius Maximilian University of Würzburg

18 February 2026, One-Day **Workshop**, *Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects*, LKI Project, MIDS

21 February 2026, One-Day **Conclave**, *GST Simplified: From Compliance Burden to Business Advantage* (with MMA)

24 February 2026, One-Day **Conference**, *The Report of Sixteenth Finance Commission*, (with Madras School of Economics [MSE])

26 February 2026, **Development Dialogues**, A Fireside Chat on *Political Economy of Regional Development*, M Vijayabaskar in conversation with S Nelson Mandela

26 February 2026, One-Day **Seminar**, *Contributions of Malcolm S Adiseshiah in Shaping Economic Development* (with C. Kandaswami Naidu College)

Contact & Connect

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