

## **Policies and Programmes for Elderly in India – An Overview**

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### **Abstract**

*The goals of the policies and programmes are the well-being of elder persons. The present article focus on the various policy, programmes and legislations for the elders in India to live the last phase of their life with purpose, dignity and peace. It aims to strengthen and support for financial security, health care, welfare and quality of life. This article helps to known about the central and state government policies and programmes for the welfare of the elderly population in India.*

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### **Introduction:**

The proportion of elderly population is growing at a faster rate in developed and developing countries of the world. Due to better health care facility and improvement in economic well-being, reduced fertility and mortality in the modern society have increased number of elderly persons. As a result, the number of people who have attained 60 years above in the globe was 673 million in 2005 and is expected to increase to 2 billion by 2050. In Indian context, the population of elderly is growing from 19.9 million in 1951 to 103.8 million in 2011, 116.10 million in 2016 and expected to increase to 143.20 million in 2021 and 173.2 million in 2026 (IPOP, 2015). India is the second populous country next to China giving attention to the issues relating to the elders population.

The increasing number of elder population has profound impact on social, economic, health and political implications for a country. On other hand, development of industrialisation, urbanisation, education and employment opportunities results in the nuclear families with fewer children to provide physical, psycho-social, economic, emotional and cultural care in families in last stage of life span. Thus, social security spending of government increases with the increase of old age population. Over the years, government has launched various policy and programmes to improve the financial security, health care, shelter, welfare and quality of life of elders. Some of these provisions have been discussed as follows:

- A. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- B. Constitutional Provision
- C. Policies and Programmes of Central government for elderly population
- D. Legislations
- E. Schemes and activities for welfare of elderly population in India
- F. State government policy and programme

#### **A. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment:**

The ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is a nodal ministry for the welfare of elders in India. It is responsible for the welfare, social justice and empowerment of disadvantaged and marginalised sections of society including scheduled castes (SC), Other Backward Classes (OBC), the disabled, the elderly, and the victims of drug abuse. Department of Social justice and empowerment support to elders by way of their maintenance, welfare, security, health care, productive and independent living.

#### **B. Constitutional Provision:**

- **Article 41** of the constitution provides that the state shall, within the limits

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of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the rights to work, to education and to public assistance in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of underserved want.

- **Article 47** provides that the state shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and, in particular, the state shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of consumption, except for medical purposes, of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health.

### **C. Policies and Programmes of Central government for elderly population: Integrated Programme for Older Persons, 2016**

A Central Sector Scheme to improve the quality of life of the Older Persons. The main objective of the Scheme is to improve the quality of life of the Senior Citizens by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities and by encouraging productive and active ageing through providing support for capacity building of Government/Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)/Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) / local bodies and the community at large. The main objectives of the policy are:

- Programmes catering to the basic needs of Senior Citizens particularly food, shelter and health care to the destitute elderly
- Programmes to build and strengthen intergenerational relationships particularly between children / youth and Senior Citizens
- Programmes for encouraging Active and Productive Ageing
- Programmes for providing Institutional as well as Non-Institutional Care/ Services to Senior Citizens
- Research, Advocacy and Awareness building programmes in the field of Ageing and
- Any other programmes in the best interest of Senior Citizens.

### **National Council for Senior Citizens, 2012**

The government of India constituted National Council for Senior Citizens by renaming National Council for older persons in 2012 to advise the Central and State government on issues related to the welfare of senior citizens and enhancement of their quality of life. The council envisages with following activities:

- Policies, programmes and legislative measures
- Promotion of physical and financial security, health and independent and productive living and

- Awareness generation and community mobilization

### **National programme for Health Care for Elderly (NPHCE), 2010**

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has launched the National Programme for Health Care of Elderly (NPHCE) during the 11th Plan Period to address various health related problems of elderly people. The basic aim of NPHCE is to provide dedicated healthcare facilities to the elderly people through State Public Health delivery system at primary, secondary and tertiary levels, including outreach services.

### **National Policy on Senior Citizens, 2011**

The foundation of the new policy, known as the “National Policy for Senior Citizens 2011” is based on several factors like demographic explosion among the elderly, the changing economy and social milieu, advancement in medical research, science and technology and high levels of destitution among the elderly rural poor. This policy addresses issues concerning senior citizens living in urban and rural areas, special needs of the “oldest old” and older women. The main focus of the policy is as follows:

- Mainstreaming of senior citizens, especially older women and bring their concerns into the national development
- Promote the concept of “Ageing in Place” or ageing in own home, housing, income security and homecare services, old age pension and access to healthcare insurance schemes and other programmes and services
- The policy will consider institutional care as the last resort
- Recognise that senior citizens are a valuable resource for the country and create an environment that provides them with equal opportunities, protects their rights and enables their full participation in society.
- Long term savings instruments and credit activities will be promoted to reach both rural and urban areas.
- Employment in income generating activities after superannuation will be encouraged.
- Support and assist organisations that provide counselling, career guidance and training services.
- States will be advised to implement the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 and set up tribunals, so that elderly parents unable to maintain themselves are not abandoned and neglected.
- States will set up homes with assisted living facilities for abandoned senior citizens in every district of the country and there will be adequate budgetary support.

#### **D.Legislations:**

##### **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007**

The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 was enacted in December 2007, to ensure need based maintenance for parents and senior citizens and their welfare. Section 19 of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 envisages provision of at least one old age home for indigent senior citizens with a capacity of 150 persons in every district of the country. The objectives of the Act are:

- Revocation of transfer of property by senior citizens in case of negligence by relatives
- Maintenance of Parents/senior citizens by children/ relatives made obligatory and justiciable through Tribunals
- Pension provision for abandonment of senior citizens
- Adequate medical facilities and security for senior citizens
- Establishment of Old Age Homes for indigent Senior Citizens

The Act was enacted on 31st December 2007. It accords prime responsibility for the maintenance of parents on their children, grandchildren or even relatives who may possibly inherit the property of a senior citizen. It also calls upon the state government to provide facilities for poor and destitute older persons such as:

- The scheme for management of old age homes, including the standards and various types of services to be provided by them which are necessary for medical care and means of entertainment to the inhabitants of such homes.
- A comprehensive action plan for providing protection of life and property of senior citizens
- Every rule made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of State Legislature, where it consists of two Houses or where such legislature consists of one House, before that House.

#### **E.Schemes and activities for welfare of elderly population in India:**

##### **Vayoshreshtha Sammans – A scheme of National Award for Senior Citizens**

The Scheme of National Award for Senior Citizens (Vayoshreshtha Sammans) was launched in 2005 and is dedicated to senior citizens. This scheme is applicable for eminent senior citizens and institutes involved in rendering distinguished services for the cause of elderly persons.

##### **Indira Gandhi National Old age Pension Scheme**

Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), earlier called

as “National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)” is a social sector scheme and forms part of the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) which came into effect from 15th August, 1995. This scheme provides social assistance for the old age persons by providing a pension of Rs. 200/- for persons between 60 years and 79 years. Persons who are 80 years and above are eligible for the pension of Rs.500/- per month.

#### **International Day of Older Persons:**

The 1st October is observed every year as the International Day of Older Persons internationally. Being the nodal Ministry for the welfare of senior citizens, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has been celebrating the occasion every year by organizing a series of programmes. The main idea behind these celebrations is to reiterate the government’s commitment towards welfare of the elderly and to ensure that the services rendered by the elderly get its due recognition in the society.

#### **F.State government facilities.**

- **Department for the Empowerment of Welfare of Differently abled and Senior Citizens, Karnataka**

Department for the Empowerment of welfare of differently abled and senior citizens was created in year 1988 strives for the welfare of persons with differently abled and senior citizens and enable to get the benefits of the different policies and schemes in order to bring to the mainstream of the society.

- **Karnataka State Policy for Senior Citizen, 2003**

The Karnataka State Policy for Senior Citizens has come into force on September 2003. The policy envisages the following development in following sectors.

1. Health and welfare of Senior Citizens
2. Financial Security, Housing and Shelter
3. Protection of life and property

#### **Objectives of the Policy:**

1. The goal of the State Policy is to maintain the wellbeing of the older persons.
2. The state shall extend support for financial security, health care, shelter, welfare and other needs of older persons, provide protection against abuse and exploitation.
3. Programme should be drawn for the older persons living in rural areas to ensure that they should be provided with equal opportunities as prevailing in urban areas
4. The Senior citizens shall be provided with the opportunities to run active, creative, productive and satisfying life.

5. The policy aims at having an age-integrated society.
6. The State recognizes that elderly persons are also resourceful and render useful services to the family and the society.
7. The policy recognizes the importance of proper budgetary allocation for the welfare of poor elderly persons.

· **Karnataka State Schemes for welfare of Senior Citizen:**

**1. Helpline for Senior Citizens**

Help lines are established at 14 places in the State i.e., Bangalore, Mysore, Hubli-Dharwad, Gulbarga, Mangalore & Belgaum Davangere, Raichur, Bellary and Shimoga with the help of Police Dept. and NGO's to redress the grievances of senior citizens who are in distress.

**2. Day Care Centres for Senior Citizens**

Day care centres are established at Bangalore, Hubli- Dharward, Gulbarga and Belgaum corporation areas. The main objectives of Day Care centre is to maintain wellbeing of older persons, to provide social and emotional services, recreation, Health care etc.,

**3. SandhyaSurkasha Scheme, 2007**

This scheme is implemented by the revenue department. The purpose of the scheme to provide financial assistance in the form of social security pension and the Senior citizens shall be eligible for pension of Rs.400/- per month under this scheme.

**Conclusion:**

Thus, central and state government implemented various policy and programmes for the welfare of the elderly population. The goal of these provision is to provide a safe and secured environment for the disadvantaged and marginalised sections of society i.e., elderly population in the country. As there population is increasing at a faster rate and also various factors such as increase level of industrialisation, urbanisation and diminishing value system are likely to make welfare of the elderlyas the most critical area for intervention in modern period.

The government of India took a stand on behalf of the elderly and make effective provision for them in areas of financial security, health care, welfare and quality of life to a greater extent. As population of elders in growing at a faster rate, there need to protect andstrengthen the institution of the family and provide support services as would enable the family to cope with its responsibilities of taking care with physical, psycho-social and emotional support. The present policy and programmes related to elderly focus on physical, social and financial support and

lacks in psychological, social, emotional, cultural and subjective wellbeing. Proper and effective welfare services, facilities for geriatric counselling services, effective implementation of policy at different level from time to time, help from professional experts, co-ordination between various departments and monitoring are essential for overall development of the elders during the last stage of life span.

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