



FOUNDATION *for* RESTORATION of NATIONAL VALUES

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः। सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः।।
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु। मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग्भवेत्।।

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NEWSLETTER

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Message from the CEO

More often than not, we are so busy growing up, that we forget that our parents are growing old. Add to it, the pressures and perils of modern life, urbanization and globalization, that wrenches us away from basking in the wisdom, common-sense, patience and prudence of the older generation, of our parents and grand parents. Many of us neglect, ignore and make fun of the aged, instead of learning what they have to offer. Many senior citizens suffer violence, others are languishing in old age homes, in total isolation and neglect.

Government policies and laws are made to help the aged, but they help only to an extent. Unless the younger generation revere the old, love, care and support them, senior citizens will continue to suffer.

Let the younger generation never forget that Growing old is compulsory, growing up is optional.

In this edition of our newsletter, we bring to you the Government policy on Senior citizens and what has the erosion of our value system done to the old people.

Anupama Jha
CEO

AGONY OF AGED

A Personification of Our Depleting Value System

-Asim Khan, Programme Associate, FRNV

According to a study conducted by Agewell Foundation last year, over 65% elderly face neglect and abuse in India. Many suffer violence and isolation. According to census 2011, almost 15 million elderly Indians live all alone and close to three-fourths of them are women.

While many who live alone have taken a conscious decision to do so, many others do this because of lack of option. They have been isolated, neglected, hounded out and housed in old age homes, because they are the victims of fast eroding social values. The younger generation who consider the senior citizens limiting their 'independence' subject them to neglect - almost every day, we hear stories of elderly people from well-to-do families, living on the streets after being ill-treated by their children.

Traditional Indian society cared and respected the old age and the wisdom, abilities, common-sense and confidence, that came with it. The older family members also reciprocated, guiding them, supporting and nurturing them with love and affection. But with urbanization, industrialisation and globalisation, Indian society underwent a rapid transformation. Children who migrated, left their old parents in the village, causing problems of loneliness and lack of care givers for old parents. Traditional values and family system weakened and degenerated. Intergenerational ties that were once the hallmark of the traditional family system broke down. The care of elderly, therefore, has emerged as an important issue in India. The situation has worsened with the rapidly increasing number of aged due to improved health facilities.

Another significant factor is, earlier, when a value based joint family system was dominant, providing care for the aged was not a problem. However, the vulnerability of elderly is rapidly increasing with a growing trend towards nuclear family set-up. Also, due to lack of wisdom and the challenges of modern life, the coping capacities of the younger and elder family members are now being challenged, resulting in neglect and abuse of the elderly in many ways. Parents have to take care of themselves in these circumstances. If they are able bodied, it works, if not, then they become vulnerable.

Another development impacting negatively on the status of older people is the increasing occurrence of dual career families. This development has implications for elderly care. On one hand, working couples find the presence of old parents emotionally bonding and of great help in the caring for their own children. On the other hand, high costs of housing and health care are making it harder for children to have parents live with them and since both wife and husband go out to work, they have work life pressure and hence they do not spend much time with parents who are growing old and now require more care and attention. This is true both in rural and urban areas.

Sociologically, ageing marks a form of transition from one set of social roles to another, and such roles are difficult. The shift into the new role of the 'old' is one of the most complex and complicated among all role transformation in the course of ageing. In a historically agriculture based traditional society, where children followed their parent's occupation, it was natural that the expertise and knowledge of each generation were passed on to the next. However, this is no longer true in modern society, in which improved education, rapid change in technology and new forms of organization have often rendered obsolete the knowledge, experience and wisdom of older persons. Elderly people find that once they retire, their children are not seeking advice from them anymore, and society is sidelining them on many fronts. This realization often results in feeling of loss of status, worthlessness and loneliness. The growth of nuclear families has also meant a need for changes in role relations. Neither having authority in the family, nor being needed, they feel frustrated and depressed. If the older person is economically dependent on the children, the problem is likely to become even worse.



It is time, younger generation learns to live in gratitude, and respect the aged for what they have done for us. Gratitude bestows reverence, changing forever how we experience life and the world.

The most pressing concern lies with the process of 'isolation' that these elderly are subjected to. The most crucial step lies in addressing this. This can be done by treating the elderly with the love and respect, which they deserve. For this, it is important to instil values of love, compassion and respect for every human being from childhood.

Organisations such as FRNV is already working in this direction. Through Values Based Education (VBE) program, values are instilled not only in children but also parents and teachers. Also, Parents and teachers can be the role models for the children. So, they have to act and behave consciously to show that they care for the elderly.

NGOs could form groups who would volunteer to go and visit the elder persons who live alone in their houses, enquire about their welfare, and do some odd jobs like shopping for medicines, etc, so that the elder persons feel that they are being cared for by society. Many elders would welcome the opportunity to have someone to talk to, because they long for company. NGOs could also organize gatherings or outings for elderly persons where they could meet other seniors and bond with them. In the case of elders living in Old Age Homes, NGOs could make their lives a happy experience by organizing suitable activities for them.

NEWS AND EVENTS

□ A one day workshop on 'Corporate Integrity and Responsibility: Strategies for making Business Engines of Beneficial Change' was organized by FRNV on 21st October at India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi. Participants from government institutions, NGOs and private sector attended the workshop and recognized that conducting business ethically is possible if the senior management at the top is committed to the cause. The workshop witnessed powerful sessions by eminent speakers like Dr. E. Shreedharan, Mr. Madhavan, Mr. Varun Arya, Mr. Rodion Amin, Mr. D.P. Bagchi, Acharya Prashant, Mr. Anil Aggarwal, Mr. Apoorva Lochan, Mr. Akhileshwar Sahay and Mr. Uday Dutt. Each of the speakers dealt with how malpractices are the reality of all sectors. They demonstrated through personal experiences how have they overcome these to ensure that their businesses run ethically and principally. In his Valedictory Address, Dr Gopal Ganesh highlighted the need for participants to follow the example of speakers who demonstrated their success in upholding qualities of integrity in running their enterprises and also take initiative to organize such workshops/training sessions on Corporate Integrity within their own enterprises. He also affirmed that FRNV would be willing to participate in such workshops so that the aim of spreading the message for upholding such values is fulfilled.

□ Dr. Seema Pawar, Project Director VBE and Ms. Khushboo Srivastava, Programme Associate, undertook a field activity at the Delhi University

Social Sciences School located in Maurice Nagar, Delhi University Enclave. The occasion was to celebrate International Girl Child Day in the school and promote the value of gender sensitivity and respect for the other gender. In keeping this, activities like poetry and painting were organized for children from classes' nursery to class 10th. There was a brief talk by our Project Director, Mrs. Seema Pawar and the Principal Mrs. Garima Bharti. Mrs. Seema spoke about how values and education system are intertwined and that for the furtherance of any society, respect for its women is quintessential. With the help of stories, Mrs. Seema Pawar exhorted the students that they need to treat the women around them with respect and accord to them the dignity they deserve. Emphasizing on this being a basic fundamental value, she tried reminding the students of their duties towards the nation, primary amongst them being to treat everybody equally and with respect without any discrimination. This was a rewarding activity for it facilitated our close involvement with the school and interaction with students, parents and teachers.

National Policy on Senior Citizens 2011

-Rohini Khullar, Member, FRNV

The large increase in human life expectancy over the years has resulted not only in a very substantial increase in the number of older persons but in a major shift in the age groups of 80 and above. The demographic profile depicts that in the years 2000-2050, the overall population in India will grow by 55% whereas population of people in their 60 years and above will increase by 326% and those in the age group of 80+ by 700%.

As a result of the current ageing scenario, there is a need for all aspects of care for the Oldest Old (80+ years) namely, socio economic, financial, health and shelter. Problems in any of these areas have an impact on the quality of life in old age and healthcare when it is needed. Increase in life span also results in chronic functional disabilities creating a need for assistance required by the Oldest Old to manage simple chores.

In terms of illness and disability caused due to old age, women experience proportionately higher rates of chronic illness and disability in later life than men. Women suffer greater non-communicable diseases and experience lower social and mental health status, especially if they are single and/or widowed. Over 50% of women over age 80 are widows. Elderly people living in rural areas need special attention too.

The National Policy on Senior Citizens, 2011 endeavour to strengthen integration between generations, facilitate interaction between the old and the young as well as

strengthen bonds between different age groups. It believes in the development of a formal and informal social support system, so that the capacity of the family to take care of senior citizens is strengthened and they continue to live in the family. The policy seeks to reach out in particular to the bulk of senior citizens living in rural areas who are dependent on family bonds and intergenerational understanding and support.

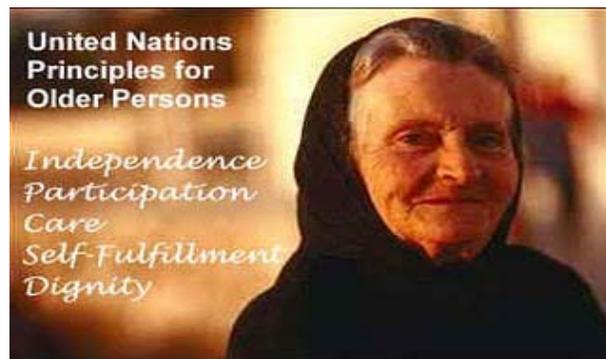
Charter of Rights and Responsibilities of Older Persons Initiated by the Guild of Service, Delhi

In December 1991, the United Nations adopted a set of United Nations Principles for Older Persons, recommending that all member governments incorporate them into their programs for older people.

The United Nations General Assembly summarized the Declaration as follows:

'Add life to the years that have been added to life by assuring all older persons: independence, participation, care, self fulfillment and dignity'

These principles form the foundation of the **rights based approach to ensure the human rights of the elderly.**



1. Independence

Older persons have the right:

- ❑ To access to adequate food, water, shelter, clothing, and health care through the provision of income, family and community support and help.
- ❑ To work and pursue other income generating opportunities with no barriers based on age.
- ❑ To retire and participate in determining when and at what pace withdrawal from the labour force takes place.
- ❑ To access education and training programs to enhance literacy, facilitate employment, and permit informed planning and decision making.
- ❑ To live in environments that are safe and

adaptable to personal preferences and changing capacities.

To reside at home as long as possible.

2. Dignity

Older persons have a right:

To be treated fairly regardless of age, gender, racial or ethnic background, disability or other status, and to be valued independently of their economic contributions.

To live in dignity and security and to be free of exploitation and physical or mental abuse.

To exercise personal autonomy in health care decision making, including the right to die with dignity by assenting to or rejecting treatment designed solely to prolong life.

3. Participation:

Older persons have the Right:

To remain integrated and participate actively in society, including the process of development and the formulation and implementation of policies that directly affect their well-being.

To share their knowledge, skills, values and life experiences with younger generations.

To seek and develop opportunities for service to the community and to serve as volunteer in positions.

To form movements or associations of the elderly.

4. Care:

Older persons have the Right:

To benefit from family support and care consistent with the well being of the family.

To access health care to help them to maintain or regain the optimum level of physical, mental and emotional well-being and to prevent or delay the onset of illness.

To access social and legal services to enhance capacity for autonomy and provide protection and care.

To utilize appropriate levels of institutional care which provides protection, rehabilitation and social and mental stimulation in a human and secure environment.

To exercise human rights and fundamental freedoms when residing in any shelter, care and treatment facility, including full respect for their dignity, beliefs, needs and privacy and for the right to make decisions about their care and the quality of life.

5. Self-Fulfillment:

Older persons have the Right:

To pursue opportunities for the full development of their potential.

To access the educational, cultural, spiritual and recreational resources of society.

The Ministries concerned at central and state level would implement the policy and take necessary steps for senior citizens by providing them with income security in old age, for those living below the poverty line. A dedicated fund of appropriate amount would be created to enable the old age beneficiaries to get pension in time.

The Rs. 70,000 restriction on PPF is a major disadvantage to senior citizens. One way out could be to raise the ceiling for annual investment in PPF from Rs.70, 000 to Rs. 3 lakh.

The public distribution system would reach out to cover all senior citizens living below the poverty line.

The age bracket, for declaring the person as Senior Citizen and providing concessions, is different. The age bracket for receiving concessions should be made uniform and it should be 60+. The Finance Ministry has a different age criteria for many years which needs to change.

Children who look after parents should be taxed at lower rates as they are fulfilling their duties. A 2 % concession in overall rate of taxation should be offered as an incentive.

TDS should not be in the rule book at all for seniors, especially for those deriving income from pension & savings alone.

Healthcare needs of senior citizens will be given high priority. The goal would be good, affordable health service, heavily subsidized for the poor and a graded system of user charges for others. It would have a judicious mix of public health services, health insurance, health services provided by not-for-profit organizations including trusts and charities, and private medical care.

For more details on The National Policy on Senior Citizens, 2011, please go to our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/frnvindia/> or log on to our website www.valuefoundation.in.

Dear readers,

FRNV invites stories from its readers on deep-rooted values that have helped us in our everyday lives. Some of these stories will be featured in the next issue of our newsletter. So put your thinking caps on, recall the values integral to your life which you cherish and write to us at shilpi@valuefoundation.in.