

Social protection and social security in Bangladesh

1. National Legal Framework

Bangladesh constitution has strong socio-economic protection mandates for all citizen so it includes older people or senior citizens. In the constitution part II section 15 entitled “Provision of Basic Necessities” described social security of the elderly people as the “provision of the basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care; the right to reasonable rest, recreation and leisure; and the right to social security, that is to say, to public assistance in cases of undeserved want arising from unemployment, illness or disablement, or suffered by widows or orphans or in old age, or in other such cases mentioned in the 15 (a) (c) and (d) clause respectively.” Apart from constitution Government introduced, Maintenance of parent act -2013” which is a part of older people’s social protection legal framework in Bangladesh. In this law the siblings have mandatory responsibilities to support older people livelihoods, medical treatments and meeting other basic necessities and if they are not carrying out these responsibilities, it will be punishable offence. This law has strong criticism on both social protection and human rights points of views. If older people without sons and daughters – how their protection will be ensured. If their sons and daughter are extreme poor realistically not capable of maintain their parents -punishment will not produce any results. Another two documents could be added to this framework of older people social projection. They are the following: National Social Security Strategy NSSF and National Policy on older persons 2013. The National Social Security Strategy (NSSF) proposed the introduction of a “Citizen’s Pension” for older people aged 60 years and above belonging to the poor and vulnerable population. However, given the challenges faced in targeting, Bangladesh may well want to consider a more universal approach. Cost estimates undertaken in 2013 found that a universal pension of 1,000 BDT (2013 prices) would cost a little over 1 per cent of GDP, which is consistent with the Constitutional spirit for protection of Bangladesh’s vulnerable older people and other vulnerable groups. The NSSF proposes the introduction of a National Social Insurance Scheme to provide contributory pension coverage to the private formal sector. This has the potential to provide higher levels of social protection for those who can afford to contribute but challenge is to cover large number of vulnerable older people in informal sector. National policy on older persons also based on the constitutional mandate of social protection of older persons. The policy has declared social facilities for older people which is other name of social projections. Because social facilities include reorganization, socio-economic protection and older person’s individual and collective security.

2. Availability, accessibilities and adaptability of older people for social protection supports and services

Bangladesh has social security supports services specially for the poor and older people, the government introduced a Monthly Allowance Programme for older people in April 1998. The

main features of this programme : i) Means-tested programme ;ii) Provides monthly allowance to poor elderly iii) Benefit has no condition attached to it iv) Financed from the country's national budget v) Has countrywide coverage vi) Accomplished substantial expansion since introduction; The government is providing 4 million elderly people with total Tk2100 crore under the Social Safety Net programme while 400,000 were brought under the programme in the current fiscal year 2018 -19 Every selected vulnerable senior citizen is getting Tk500 per month under the programme and the number of the beneficiaries is increasing every year. The government is implementing the programme to ensure.

Rural vulnerable older people accessibility is high than urban older people . Because of local government connectivity and social network work for inclusion in recipient list old age allowance . The amount of allowance is inadequate to meeting the vulnerable basic needs . Recipients old people said, " Whatever the amount we are receiving some money at end of the month , it gives us some financial power. But our treatments are costly and we need free and quality treatment."

Equality and non-discrimination

Older people in informal labor market are being discriminated regularly. Older people in Bangladesh are engaging worst form exploitative works like waste collection, earth works etc. So senior workers of informal sector in Bangladesh requires legal protection.

Accountability

Accountability framework of older people's social protection is not defined, specific and functional. Generally central government and its cabinets are accountable for safety and social security of every citizen . But specific law, policies ,guide lines , declarations in government gazette define issue based accountability framework and make them functional . Older people social protection issues came up in national policy on ageing . But it has not comprehensively defined who is responsible for what ?

