

## IX Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing:

### Autonomy and independence

#### Independence in Old Age

Ageing can often reduce an individual's independence. In changed socio-economic circumstances, older persons cannot possibly expect more from their family members as well as from society in India. For leading a comfortable and respectful life in today's changing environment older persons have to be prompted to become self-reliant in every field of their life – socially, medically, financially as well as emotionally. In Old Age when serious disability or illness occurs, those with good personal resources and social support system are more likely to be able to access the necessary support system.

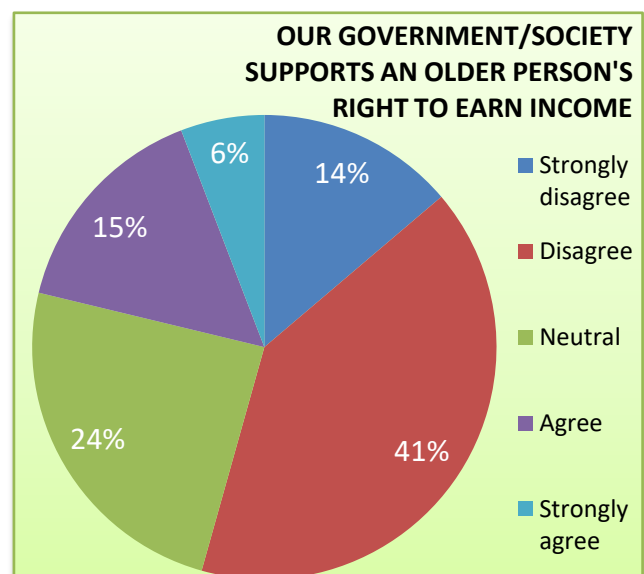
For this older persons should have adequate income, support with personal health needs (including speedy and affordable access to health services), appropriate housing and security, and concerns about transport.

#### Post Retirement Life in Old Age

Older persons are productive even after their retirement, but due to lack of post retirement job opportunities they remain unproductive throughout their remaining life. People consider older persons rich source of experience, knowledge and wisdom but always doubt their performance. Due to increased life span in old age, there is an urgent need for post-retirement income generational opportunities.

#### Perceptions on government and society's role

- More than half the respondents i.e. 54.4% reportedly said that our government or society does not support older person's right to earn income to a large extent. According to them, government policies and our social norms are not at par so far as financial security in old age is concerned.
- Out of total respondents 13.8% persons were found to strongly disagree with the fact that government/society support income generational jobs in old age.
- 24.4% respondents expressed their inability to respond when volunteers asked them about older person's right to earn money and remained neutral.



*Source: Survey conducted by Agewell Foundation, India*

- Only 21.2% respondents claimed that our government and society is doing enough to protect older person's right to earn income.

*As in most developing nations, the thrust of most government aid is towards women empowerment, children, youth and environment. The elderly remain a marginalized lot in terms of financial rights. Income generating activities for the elderly are few and far between. Civil society has stepped in to make a difference, however a lot more needs to be done in order to secure right to income for the elderly. This is primarily why a majority of the respondents disagree with the statement that government and society supports older persons' right to earn income.*

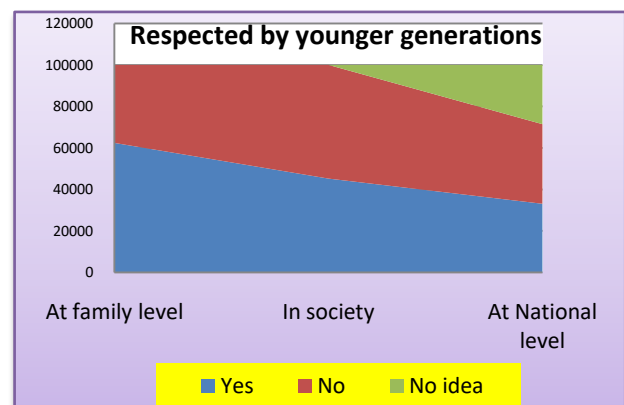
In changed scenario, profile of older persons also has changed. They seem to be more active, healthy, energetic and even wiser. That's why majority of them like independence at all level instead of compromising with situations.

There is an urgent need of creating gainful engagement opportunities for older persons at all levels, to that their active participation in the society, their dignity in old age and health well being could be ensured.

## Dignity in old age

- At family level, 62.4% older persons had opined that their family members respect them. At community level, far below from family level, 45.3% older persons accepted that they are respected.
- At national level, only 33.1% older persons think that government cares for their right to be respected as senior citizens.

*Though as a community, older persons are well-respected section of society in India. Due to poor awareness level among older persons, many have no idea about their status at national level.*



*Source: Survey conducted by Agewell Foundation, India*

## Participation in socio-economic activities

- 22.2% older persons said that there are adequate opportunities to participate in socio-economic activities in India for older persons.
- At family level 65.8% older persons said that their family members listen to them or take their opinion in family matters. At community level 54.2% agreed that they have a say in community matters whereas at national level, only 21.5% older persons think that senior citizens groups get an opportunity and participate in policy making process at national level.

*- Based on Surveys conducted by Agewell Foundation, India*