



## **NORMATIVE INPUT**

### **for the thirteenth session of the GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP**

for the purpose of strengthening the protection of the human rights of older persons

#### **Focus area-1:**

#### **Contribution of Older Persons to Sustainable Development**

India has the second-largest population of older people (60+) in the world, with currently an estimated elderly population of 140 million+. They are expected to reach about 20% of the total population by the year 2051. Till a few years back, in India, issues concerning older persons were considered peripheral issues only. But now keeping because of this fastest-growing section of society, the government at various levels has focused on issues concerning older people in its core agenda.

As per Article 41 of the Constitution of India, the State shall, within the limits of economic capacity and development, make effective provisions for securing the right to work, education, and public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want. Further, Article 46 says that the State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people including older persons and shall protect them from social injustice



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and all forms of exploitation.

Older people's participation in the economy and their contribution at the family, community, or national level are not well-recognized. Taking care of young children by grandparents is an age-old tradition in India. Older women are involved with caregiving, cooking, cleaning, and other household activities. Most older men involve in income generation and other supervisory activities. Older people, despite the contribution they make to the economy, are mostly low-paid, as most of them work in the informal sector. With the aging of the population, the financial contribution of older people to families is growing. In old age, people also contribute their income to the welfare of their respective families and communities as well.

Due to changes in financial status and the ever-increasing independence of older persons, particularly those belonging to the middle, upper-middle, and upper classes, their role in financial activities has also undergone significant change over the years. Today, they can be observed to be active consumers of various products and services and embark on other financial activities. Still, there is a significant number of older persons, who face social, financial, and psychological problems due to the unusual poor-rich gap as well as the urban/rural divide.



In India majority of older persons are not able to contribute actively to sustainable development. However, if older persons in the age groups of 60-75 are provided with ample opportunities like skill training, digital literacy, gainful engagement, etc. they can contribute to sustainable development.

Over the past decades' work culture across the sectors has changed remarkably primarily due to the advancement of technology. The majority of older persons are unskilled, and digitally challenged or have lower academic qualifications as compared to younger people. Moreover, ever-increasing unemployment and lack of post-retirement gainful engagement

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opportunities discourage older persons to realize their right to work in old age. A very low percentage of the elderly workforce are engaged in poorly paid jobs in the informal sector, either as casual workers or as self-employed in low-skilled or unskilled occupations.

Gainful re-employment is an area of great concern, for many older persons. They want it because they find themselves completely active but retired and financially compromised. Since they are mentally and physically fit to work for some more years in old age, they may participate in several productive activities and contribute to sustainable development.

Management of a large section of retired older people, who will have time, experience, and even resources, but no opportunities, may be a huge challenge for the government of India. To address this, governments at all levels, need to modify their retirement rules and make them older persons friendly.



Policy-making for ensuring economic security in India is crucial. Therefore, interventions for aging populations are required to be widened to focus not only on health and social security but also on the economic challenges of workforce composition and sustainable economic outcomes.

Older people, with their experience, knowledge, skills and wisdom can contribute to sustainable development to a great extent if a suitable older person's friendly environment is created for them in the country. Older persons' contribution to the society and economy needs to be acknowledged as we move towards fulfilling the agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

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