



OLDER PERSONS AND MULTIPLE DISCRIMINATION

Presented by:

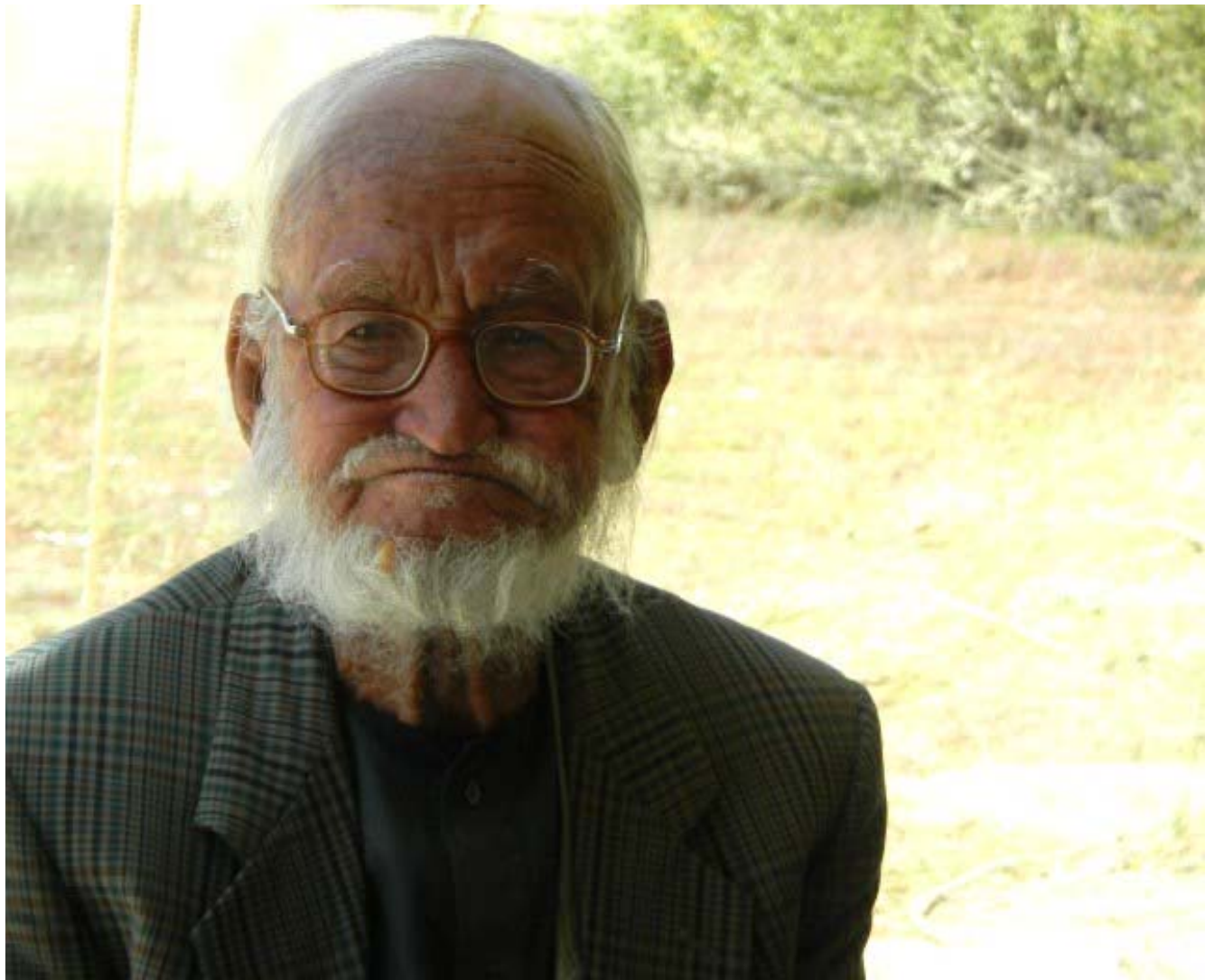
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the Rights of Older Persons**

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Mohammad Ali from Bamyan, Afghanistan,” *I am 75, my only two sons have gone to Iran for laboring. I and my wife have to take care of our four grandchildren, our cow and sheep”*



Lesson learnt/values

- Older persons are respected in many communities and are considered as:
 - Experienced in social/community affairs
 - Kind caretakers of children
 - Good negotiators for solving local disputes particularly in rural communities
 - Maintainers of social values and traditions
 - Live history of their nations
 - Think with wisdom not emotionally



Lesson learnt/values continued

- All religions have addressed every individual to respect and help older persons and also have been obliged to take care of their parents.
- In Islam, for instance, serving one's parents is a duty second to prayer, and parents, regardless of their age, expect it. Islam instruct children to do not say to their parents a word of disrespect. Or scold them, but say a generous word to them.



Lesson learnt in the areas of legislation, policies and measures

- Article 53 of the Afghanistan's Constitution obliged the Government to assist older aged person, widows, orphaned persons and person with disability.
- In Afghanistan, any government employee who is caretaker of his/her old parents, some portion of their annual remuneration tax is exempted.
- In Afghanistan, any man who has no adult brother, and he is the only caretaker of his old father of over 65, is not obliged to pass the compulsory military service.
- Older criminal persons of over 65 is not imprisoned in Afghanistan, but he is sentenced to a non-detention type of punishment.
- The Government of Afghanistan encourages the establishment of Elder Councils to exercise their consultative role and manage issues at village and district level.



Challenges facing by older persons

- Increasing of establishing nuclear families that in consequent older parents receive less care from their children.
- Existence of stereotype of perceptions that older persons are dependant, fragile, to much talkative, troubling and useless persons.
- Facing risk from urbanization, industrialization, migration of young children to other cities, who could take care of their older parents at their home town.
- Suffering from demolishing the traditional community structure wherein older persons were highly respected and given them community leadership role and peace builders.
- High illiteracy rate among older persons in developing countries; It restricts their access to many social services and facilities.



Challenges ...

- Unavailability of social security provision for older persons, particularly in poor countries.
- Non-governmental older employees has rarely pension benefits in poor Asian countries, only some companies/enterprises provide their retired employees with a lump sum money, as one time paying at the time of terminating their contract.
- Older women suffer when they lose their breadwinner husbands because most women in developing countries are housewife and have to care of her children after husband death.
- Older persons suffer from different Psycho-trauma problems



Challenges continued

- Sometimes legislation or regulations deprive older person to enjoy of their human rights, e.g, in Afghanistan, since two years ago, older pilgrimages of over 65, despite that he/she has physical abilities, are prevented in engaging Haj ceremony in Mecca.
- Retirement age in many countries now is 60 even 55 in some countries, while due to good health care, age longevity has increased.
- Under conflict situation, older persons, as children and persons with disabilities, are at risk and face with increasing vulnerability.
- Older person with chronic illness, unfortunately, are considered as burden to their families



Older persons and multiple discrimination

In the area of health

- Since older persons become susceptible to many infectious diseases and suffer from other ageing illnesses, therefore, they always allocate the great portion of their income for health care and treatment purposes .
- Shortage or lack of geriatric medicines in most health care centers, particularly in developing countries
- In countries where health sector has highly privatized, **poor** older persons have no access to good health services as others , while the government hospitals can meet only little needs of older persons
- Since very older persons grow disabilities with them, therefore, they need rehabilitation health services which are inadequately available in governmental health care centers of developing countries, and on the other hand, private health clinics offer it at unaffordable cost.



Health ...

- Since the state parties to ICESCR has the obligation to guarantee that health system are established to provide adequate access to health services for all, therefore, taking into account the physical and mental problems of older persons, states have to provide necessary facilities for older person in the areas of preventive and curative health services,
- States should provide the older person with social security , enabling them to maintain with good health.
- CSOs/NGOs whenever providing health services, should take into consideration the problems of vulnerable people, including older persons.
- The health service centres should be accommodative for very older persons and persons with disabilities.



Health ...

- The state party to ICESCR should adopt their health policies in accordance with the Vienna Intern. Plan of Action on Ageing so as to preserve the health of elderly persons to provide them with better living environment and facilitate mobility and communication.



Discrimination on the ground of age

- The retirement age in a number of countries is 60, regardless that the persons still have physical and mental capabilities, to maintain working, even in some countries the retirement age for government employees is 55-57. Considering the longevity of today's generation, states should not adopt the retirement age less than 65.
- One of the reasons of age discrimination is stereotype about the older people, believing that older persons are more burden to families and communities and non-productive; unfortunately they are socially marginalized.
- Off course no one denies the human rights of older persons as equal to others, but older persons, due to their age problems (physical and mental impairment), have little or no adequate access to means of enjoying their human rights as others.



Discrimination on the ground of age ...

- Combating discrimination on the ground of age and promoting the dignity of older person is an important goal of the Madrid Int. Plan of Action on Ageing, 2002. States should pay attention to implement the Action Plan.
- States should pay attention to eradicate all gender based discrimination; there should be no difference, in terms of benefits, between the retirement age for man and women, and women's right to ageing benefits should not be denied.
- To eliminate age discrimination, public awareness raising on the role of elders in social affairs, valuing their practical experiences and community leadership skills is very important. State should provide awareness raising facilities.



Older persons and education

- Science and technology particularly, digital engineering, are dramatically developing, which their usage requires updated knowledge and special training, but older people cannot use it because they have no adequate access to training to update their technical know-how, and on the other hand, they cannot afford to pay for training. States, NHRI and CSO/NGOs can play important role in helping older persons to updating their knowledge.
- States should not deny the rights of older persons from education; the age ceiling for admitting to higher education institutions should be raised. In Afghanistan, for example, less attention is paid to literate people of over 40.
- There is stereotype thoughts with people, saying persons lose their learning capability along with ageing. In this regards awareness raising among public is very important for eradication of such stereotype and understand the public that older persons lose very less of their learning capabilities. States, NHIRs, CSOs/NGOs and media organizations can play vital role in this respect .



Education ...

- In very conservative societies, women have very less chance to benefit from outside home education facilities, therefore, older women has less knowledge than man.
- Sates, NHRIs, CSOs/NGOs have vital role in educating older women through program designing and facilitating the implementation of appropriate education methodologies.
- Older women in rural areas, comparing to men, suffer much from shortage or lack of education facilities because men can easily go to urban areas and access to learning opportunities, while older women are mostly occupied with house keeping and child care.



Social security

- Provision of social security for older persons, particularly for non-governmental employees, is not exist or is very poor in developing countries.
- In Afghanistan there is no social security provision such as, pension benefit for older person of non-governmental organizations, self-employed persons in the informal economy, part-time workers, home workers and casual workers.
- Due to poor economy, countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and some other Asian countries provide social security benefits only to person with disabilities and very poor destitute persons and disaster effected people.
- States should consider the Article 9 of the ICESCR “*The right of everyone to social security*”, and the ILO’s Conventions No.102 (1952) concerning Social Security (Minimum Standards), and The Invalidity, Old-Age and Survivors' Benefits Convention, 1967 (No. 128)



Older persons and employment

- Older persons in rural areas have to perform hard jobs because their adult children may have moved to cities for cash-bearing laboring or have established nuclear families, while their older parents may not have enough physical capability to perform hard jobs, but they have to do it for survival.



Employment ...

- Because of deteriorated economic situation and high unemployment rate, particularly in poor developing countries, such as Afghanistan, where there is no social security provision for all older persons, older persons have to maintain hard working so as to shoulder even their adult children and survival.
- Due to changing the job environment, technical know-how of older persons doesn't fit to today's high-tech working methods, and on the other hand, there is no refreshing training facilities available for them. They are inevitably imposed to perform hard manual jobs at low wage.



On the ground of gender

- Women in most Asian countries are caregivers in the extended families, but they receive less support. Due to this bounding they have very less accessibility to outside home education, employment, health care, social engagement facilities and other community based initiatives.
- Women in Asian countries, particularly in Muslim families, are mostly dependant to their husbands; therefore, after their husbands' death, they face a lot of problems particularly if their children are under age or having children with disabilities.

Gender...

- In developing countries, older women mostly have unremunerated job, e.g, house keeping, caring children, cooking, and family farming, while older men still can earn from remunerated jobs.
- Due to care giving role, older women suffer from lower pension comparing to older men and also for being kept at home, they have very less access to labour market.
- According to Article 3 of the ICESCR, State parties are bound to ensure equal rights of men and women to the full enjoyment of all economic, social and cultural rights. Therefore, state parties should adopt legislation, policies and measures to provide older women with additional opportunities to enjoy of their equal rights as men.

Many thanks for your attention