



SUBSTANTIVE INPUT

for the twelfth 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:

CONTRIBUTION OF OLDER PERSONS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

India has the second-largest population of elderly citizens in the world, with currently an estimated 140 million+. They constitute the fastest-growing segment of the population in the country and are expected to reach about 19% of the population in 2050. Till a few years back, in India, issues concerning older persons were considered as peripheral issues only. But now government at various levels has started including issues concerning older persons in its central agenda.

So far as national legal and policy framework is concerned, as per Article 41 of the Constitution, the State shall, within the limits of economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to 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 and all forms of exploitation.



Submission by

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The National Policy for the Older Persons and subsequent laws, implemented for the welfare and empowerment of older persons keep a realistically achievable component. Educating the people about this new policy framework and legal provisions and creating awareness can ensure older persons' participation in sustainable development to a great extent.

Preparing financially for longer lives and finding ways to reduce aging-related disability have become our priorities. Experience shows that it is critical to address challenges concerning old age sooner rather than later. Waiting significantly increases the costs and difficulties of addressing these challenges. To provide older persons with decent, active and healthy lives, policymakers need to take necessary steps to improve the well-being of older people. This issue is of high importance because people do not stop moving when they reach the age of sixty and, thereby, they need equal opportunities to participate in sustainable development.



In view of ongoing Covid situations across the country for the past more than two years, the human rights of older persons are at stake. Most of them have to compromise on interpersonal relations within the four walls of their houses... to a large extent with their human rights.

In old age, people have to face a lot of hurdles in comparison to their younger age. They not only suffer due to declining health conditions with their growing years but also due to dependence on others for their healthcare, financial and social needs. In India majority of older persons are not able to contribute actively in 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 in sustainable development.

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.

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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 in sustainable development.

By the year 2050, India would have 20% of its population in the age group of 60+. Management of such a large section of retired older people, who will have time, experience, and even resources, but no opportunities, maybe a huge challenge before the government of India. To address this, governments at all levels, need to modify their retirement rules and make them older persons friendly.

So far as the right to work is concerned, older persons must be given equal rights and opportunities in a non-discriminatory manner, so that their participation in the mainstream and contribution to sustainable development can be ensured. The Government of India has initiated several schemes for exploring gainful engagement opportunities for retired and older persons, but these are only on the pilot project level. Currently, there is an urgent need to take these steps;

- Develop, formulate and implement requisite policy programs for the elderly population
- Study various aspects of older persons and initiate social, economic and health policy debate about aging
- Promote self-help groups of older persons
- Explore gainful engagement creating opportunities for retired older people
- Tap untapped/unutilized resources of older persons (time, experience, knowledge, financial resources, and wisdom as well)
- Create older persons friendly environment in the country in order to facilitate their participation in sustainable development and appreciate their contribution



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