

Problems faced by number of Senior Citizens

Requirements – Steps to be taken

Sources of funds – Time cycle

Appeal on behalf of Needy Indian Senior Citizens who are having no support, neglected, isolated and are looking for a graceful life, wanting to stay in a separate place like well maintained Old Age Home Complexes.

India has about 15 crore Senior Citizens at present and will be about 33 crores by the year 2050. As per various surveys by Niti Aayog, Tata Trusts, UN, Help Age, etc., number of Senior Citizens are neglected by their own family/ Society in India (comparatively higher in urban areas). **Also, many Senior Citizens having no income, single person, etc., require help. They cannot live separately on their own due to financial or health problems. Overall, about 10% or more Senior Citizens require suitable alternate arrangement for living.**

Alternatives are so much limited that that these Senior Citizens continue to live in same places under those undesirable conditions. Many of them do not complain due to social pressures and even if they complain, there is no suitable solution available to most of them. Senior Citizens having nobody to look after is a problem.

Government supported facilities are there but highly limited. Although as per "Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007", every State in India must have at least 1 Old Age Home in each District to accommodate a minimum of 150 Senior Citizens who are indigent (to begin with and more as required), the fact is that some Districts do not have such facilities even now after 17 years of passing the Act in 2007, and available facilities cater to very small number of people.

Senior Citizens requiring special attention, need to be handled carefully. As per year 2021 Data of Ministry of Social Justice, Government supported 551 NGOs run Old Age Homes all over India had only 16290 destitute elderlies, means just about 3 per Old Age Home. Actual requirement may be much higher.

Private NGOs are also there for Senior Citizens help but those are very few. Some facilities are being provided on commercial basis by some Organisations which are very costly. Only financially well-placed Senior Citizens can afford such services. **All in all, hardly 10 lac Senior Citizens are provided with some alternate arrangements all over India which is not even for 1 percent of**

Senior Citizen population.

Migration of younger generation within and outside India, nuclear families, costly real estate, social environment, etc., are major factors which are coming in the way of care of Senior Citizens. Children's own responsibilities and condition of Senior Citizens also come in the way. **Government support in terms of some small amount and health insurance can take care of emergencies to some extent. But main problem is absence of day-to-day care and respectful life. Separate places with all essential facilities to live in groups are necessary for needy Senior Citizens.**

What needs to be done for needy Senior Citizens?

To start with plan to build Senior Citizen facilities for about 2 crore citizens in a reasonably well populated area within the next 6 to 7 years (by that time the total Senior Citizen population may be about 20 crore). Further addition can be made as per the need and operating experiences. Government and other Organisations are holding considerable immovable properties within and outside developed areas. Through NLMC, Government has sold considerable properties in the last 2.5 years (worth about 4 lakh crore) and Government has plans to sell more, part of which actually can be spared to build Senior Citizen units.

In addition to lot of area already under development, Government has planned to develop 12 new Cities with initial investment of about 28000 crore which shall also have allocated area for Senior Citizen Homes. Town Planners should also take into consideration this requirement in new areas planned for development and in the TP schemes. Also, due to shifting of Government premises, Courts, Old Markets, etc., to new places, lot of premises/areas fall vacant in various cities. The same can be spared for Old Age Homes. Existing Old Age Home facilities may also have possibility of further expansion.

Sources of Funds

- 1** 6,000 crores - As 40 percent of CSR funds (out of about 15,000 crores of all the profit-making Companies)
- 2** 3,800 crores - As 30 percent of MP, MLA Local Area Development Fund (out of about 12,800 crore per year for all the MPs and State MLAs)
- 3** 24,000 crores - 0.5 percent of Central Budget which is about 48 lac crores.
- 4** 31,000 crores- 0.5 percent of all the State Budgets (out of about 62 lakh crore yearly Budget of all States of India)
- 5** 4,400 crores yearly - 10 percent of PM Awas Yojana (which is 2.2 lac crore for 5 years, and the same is likely to increase)
- 6** 5,000 crores yearly - From well-placed rich Indian Citizens. Some of them may want to give good amount one time and some yearly. These shall be covered under income tax rebate schemes.
- 7** 1,000 crores yearly - From Indians Abroad (who are as such sending about 120 billion Dollars as remittance to India every year).
- 8** 1,000 crores yearly - from Budgets of Metropolitan and other Large Cities
- 9** Contribution by Charity Organisations, Religious Trusts.

Money should not be a problem for this noble cause. What is required is reliability of the use of contribution made by public for a good cause. Indians spend about 50,000 crores alone on leisure trips Abroad every year. Rich Indians are spending enough amount in marriages, gold, luxury goods, luxury properties in India and residential properties Abroad, etc., which may total up to more than 10 lakh crore every year. In addition, there are investment activities in Share Markets where yearly SIP itself is about 2.4 lakh crore.

Thus, a yearly plan of about 80,000 crores can be made for Senior Citizen Homes and Care Centres till the time requirement is fulfilled. Initial requirement is high as what has been done so far is very little.

Type of Old Age Homes

There may be various ideas and opinions, however as far as possible it will be better to plan **300 sq ft, self-contained independent units on ground floor with some open area around each unit for each Senior Citizen Couple in a group in well populated area** and with all the common facilities like Common Kitchen, Hall, etc., as required. Each unit shall be provided with essential facilities, furniture, and fittings. This type of facility will provide required privacy to those who prefer it and will allow the occupant to pursue their own hobbies as well as to remain in a peaceful atmosphere in a group.

Other options are there which can be implemented as per situation and requirement. Those who want larger area, can do it on their own.

As per the above plan, about 1 crore Units will take care of 2 crore Senior Citizens if each Unit is occupied by a Couple or two individual Senior Citizens. If Government and other Agencies provide land, then 1 crore Units in different areas in a Cluster with all required facilities and support services can be constructed as per the yearly plan of suggested fund allocation.

Some rich people may want to donate substantial amount by naming the Cluster of Units on their chosen name. Some individual family may also prefer to donate in the same way. This shall be welcomed.

Conclusion

Senior Citizens are suffering today silently as they are not united, no lobbies and they do not agitate like Organised Unions. Number of them have highly limited resources but they are still subjected to enough tax load directly or indirectly through GST, etc.

Senior Citizens are there for some time and then they will call it a day silently with or without graceful life. They have contributed in building up the nation in their own way and as per their capacity. They have also sacrificed to bring up their children. **These Senior Citizens deserve graceful ageing with the help of People in Power, their own Children, and Wealthy Citizens.** Lip sympathy and token support cannot help the cause of Senior Citizens. Media and Celebrities should also come forward to bring awareness in the public.

It will be better to name the Senior Citizens Homes as "Aanand Niwas" and make these places worth living.