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A Study of the Legal Framework for the Elderly Rights in India

Dr. Mohan Mishra

Assistant Professor

Ms Rakhi Jangir

Student of M.A. Public Policy, Law & Governance

Central University of Rajasthan, Ajmer

Email: mishra.mohan909@gmail.com, Mobile-9782831347

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Abstract

The elderly population in India is increasing rapidly, and it is bringing several issues related to their rights, care, welfare, and protection. This paper studies the legal framework which protects the rights of elderly persons in India. It first defines the meaning of "elderly" and statistics related to the ageing population. It also highlights the issues of abuse and negligence faced by senior citizens in society.

The paper discusses the constitutional provisions and key laws such as The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, The Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956, and relevant sections of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS). These laws aim to ensure the protection, care, and dignity of the elderly. Finally, the study suggests that proper implementation of laws, social awareness, and a sensitive approach are essential to safeguard the rights and welfare of senior citizens in India.

Key-words: Constitutional Provisions, Senior Citizens, Elderly Rights, Legal Framework.

Introduction

In Indian philosophical literature, there are four ashrama systems, like the Brahmacharya Ashrama, known for student life, education, and discipline. Similarly, from the Grihastha Ashram – marriage, family, earning and social responsibilities and the Vanaprastha Ashram to the Sanyas Ashram – the stage of old age, gradual detachment from worldly responsibilities. The stage of the ashrama (hermitage) involves the transition to old age, gradual detachment from worldly responsibilities, and spiritual practices, ultimately leading to complete renunciation and the pursuit of liberation¹.

The Vanaprastha Ashram is specifically for older individuals. This usually begins after the age 60 years+ or particularly following retirement from all the responsibilities, when children have grown up and

household responsibilities begin to settle. At this time, a person should gradually move away from luxuries and toward a simpler and more disciplined lifestyle.

The meaning of "old age" is challenging to define, regardless of how frequently the term is used. With reference to the old age, four main approaches may be identified: biological age, chronology age, the political economy approach, and an old age stage in the life cycle. Whatever definition of old age is used the term usually implies (implicitly or explicitly) some notion of decline and deterioration in health, vitality, social usefulness, and independence². Even according to the law senior citizens means "any person being a citizen of

¹ Classification of Ashram System in Vedic Society." *International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews (IJRAR)*, vol. 9, no. 3, Sept. 2022, pp. 431–433.
<https://ijrar.org/papers/IJAR22C2524.pdf>

² Karibeeran, Sathyamurthi. *Elderly in India: Problems and Prospects*. Today Publication, Feb. 2018. ISBN 978-81-936440-9-6. ResearchGate, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/351929298_Elderly_in_India_-_Problems_Prospects

India, who has attained the age of sixty years or above"³.

Statistics Related to the Elderly Population

A person who is 60 years of age or more is generally referred to as "elderly". Aging is an inevitable process that is typically assessed by chronological age. India has one of the fastest-growing populations of senior citizens worldwide. India is currently considered to have the second-largest population of elderly people worldwide⁴.

According to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *World Population Prospects 2022 (United Nations): Summary of Results*, about 1.1 billion individuals worldwide were 60 years of age or above in 2022, constituting 13.9% of the global population of 7.9 billion inhabitants. The number of elderly people worldwide is predicted to double over the next three decades, reaching 2.1 billion by 2050, which will be comprising 22% of the world's overall population. All regions of the world are predicated to experience an increase in both the proportion and absolute number of elderly people.

The percentage of older people will rise from 26% in 2022 to 34% in 2050 in more developed regions, while it will rise from 11.5% to 20% in less developed regions over the same period time. In less developed regions, the total number of elderly people is expected to more than double from 772 million in 2022 to approximately 1.7 billion in 2050.

Asia is home to 649 million people who are 60 years of age or older, comprising over 58% of the world's senior population. The proportion of older people in the population is 13.7% which will increase over the next three decades, and by 2050, there will be 1.3 billion older people in Asia, constituting 25% of the overall population.

In India, 10.4 crore (104 million) individuals were above the age of 60, accounting 8.6% of the country's total population, according to the 2011 census. According to the *Population Projections for India and its states from 2001 to 2026*, demonstrate that this proportion would increase to 12.4% by 2026. Further, it is estimated that every fifth Indian will be a sexagenarian (an individual who is aged between 60 to 69 years) by 2050, as compared with one in twelve at present period of time⁵.

According to the 2011 Population Census, there are approximately 104 million senior persons (60 years of age or more) in India, constituting 51 million men and 53 million women⁶.

Even though the population in India is largely young, it is however on track to become the country with the second-highest number of elderly people worldwide⁷. Hence, further studies indicates that India is undergoing a rapid demographic transition, with the elderly population (60 years and above age) estimated to more than double from "100 million to 230 million by 2011 to 2036"⁸.

Isolation and Loneliness among Elderly Persons

On the one hand, the number of elderly people is increasing, while on the other hand, they are becoming socially isolated. India, which was historically known for its joint family system, is now witnessing a change in this situation.

There is a major transformation observed in India like from joint to nuclear families, single-parent, and childless households. The typical Indian family structure has drastically evolved because of individualization, industrialization, urbanization, westernization, and globalization. Therefore, taking care of the elderly has emerged as a challenging issue. The decline in the number of joint families, the increase of dual-career households, a potential change in the values of filial piety, rapid urbanization of rural areas-where children relocate to cities, and other factors affecting the composition and structure of families. Hence, with the increasing influence of Western values emphasizing individualization and self-realization, these changes has made younger generations less willing to devote time to care for ageing parents⁹.

This situation is commonly observed when the main earning member of a family fails to find suitable employment opportunities. Under such circumstances, that person is often forced to migrate elsewhere in search of livelihood or employment. Therefore, parents or elderly persons of the household are left with limited alternatives, they either must live alone or move to an old age home. Unemployment, thus, can be considered one of the major reasons behind this condition.

Abuse and Negligence Faced by the Elderly

However, one of the most painful experience can be considered when the elderly persons, who devoted their entire lives working hard to raise their children,

³ Section 2 H Of The The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

⁴ HelpAge India, & Ipsos Research Pvt. Ltd. (2022). Bridge the gap: Understanding elder needs (A HelpAge India 2022 report). HelpAge India.
<https://www.helpageindia.org/documents/research/research-reports>

⁵ <https://www.helpageindia.org/documents/research/research-reports>

⁶ Central Statistics Office. (2016). Elderly in India 2016. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, Government of India.
https://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/ElderlyinIndia_2016.pdf

⁷ Delsly, T. (2017). *Healthcare of the elderly in India (National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly - NPHCE)*. *Global Journal for Research Analysis*, 6(9), 28–29.
https://www.worldwidejournals.com/global-journal-for-research-analysis-GJRA/special_issues_pdf/September_2017_1507110510_11.pdf

⁸ "Elderly in India : Population, Challenges, and Government Initiatives." 28 Oct. 2025, Release ID 2183196. PIB, Delhi.
<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2183196>

⁹ Kumar, Pradeep. "Is Family Dynamics, Belief System and Structure Changing or Challenging?" *Journal of Psychosocial Research*, vol. 18, no. 1, May 2023, pp. 65–74. DOI: 10.32381/JPR.2023.18.01.6.

are later mistreated by those very children once they grow up. In the present era, abuse against elderly people is also increasing day by day. Some common types of abuse are discussed here to better understand the nature of discomfort experienced by elderly people.

Elderly people face different types of abuse such as emotional/ physical/ sexual/ and financial, along with neglect abandonment, confinement, and voluntary deprivation¹⁰. The abuse of older people, also known as elder abuse, is stated as an intentional act or a failure to act by a caregiver or another individual in a relationship associated with an expectation of trust that causes harm to a person who is 60 years and older¹¹. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) as defined in its report "global response to elder abuse and neglect"¹².

- A. **Physical abuse** denotes to any act that causes bodily harm, injury, physical coercion or restricting the free movement of an individual without justification. This category also encompasses sexual abuse of older persons, which includes any non-consensual sexual contact or act¹³.
- B. **Psychological or emotional abuse** involves actions that result in mental or emotional distress on an individual. These include behaviours such as verbal assaults, threats, humiliation, intimidation, isolation, and other actions intended to cause stress, anxiety, or damage to an individual's sense of dignity and self-worth¹⁴.
- C. **Economic or financial abuse** states to the improper or illegal use of an older person's financial resources, assets, or property. It includes acts like fraud, extortion, theft, blackmail, and misuse of money or possessions, often exploiting the vulnerability or dependency of elderly person¹⁵.
- D. **Neglect or abandonment** refers to the failure to provide essential care, assistance, or protection to a person who is dependent on such support, especially when there exists a legal or moral obligation. Neglect may be **intentional**, which arises from wilful irresponsibility of the caregiver, or **unintentional**, resulting from the caregiver's ignorance, incapacity, or lack of awareness regarding the needs of the older person¹⁶.

According to the Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI), Wave 1 i.e., 2017-2018, states that 5.2% of elderly individuals above the age of 60 years reported that they were experiencing abuse in the year prior to

the survey, whereas 3% reported experiencing abuse within their own household, this finding indicates that why some older people consider an old age home as more secure and safer alternative than their family-based care. The most common type of elder abuse was verbal abuse or disrespect. The prevalence of elder abuse varied significantly between states and Union Territories, with Bihar (11.6%) and Karnataka (10.1%) having the highest rates¹⁷. From the evidence of HelpAge India, which indicates that "about 16% of elderly women in India have faced abuse, mostly in the form of physical violence, disrespect and psychological abuse"¹⁸.

Provisions of the Constitution of India

The supreme document of the country is the Constitution of India. It came into force on 26 January, 1950. Hence, when discussing the important parts of the Constitution, Fundamental rights (Part III) and Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV) plays extremely important role.

The Honourable Supreme Court of India has observed that DPSPs and Fundamental Rights are both core features of the Constitution, hence maintaining balance between them is essential¹⁹. Therefore, to ensure that no form of inequality exists against elderly people who are living in society, the right to live a dignified life in old age can be recognised as an essential part of the right to life (Article 21) of the Constitution. If any children or legal heirs neglect their parents or elderly persons, the court provides full assistance. Moreover, if any children or heirs disobey the orders of the court, there are provisions for punishment and fines in such matters.

Further, the study provides an analysis of some crucial Articles of the Constitution of India that address the interests of senior citizens. One of the most important provisions in this arena is Article 21, which signifies that "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law"²⁰. The court has persistently interpreted the "right to life" to include the right to live with dignity. There are various landmark cases held by Supreme Court such as Maneka Gandhi²¹, Fransis Corolie²², Sunil Batra²³, that the right to life under Article 21 includes the right to live with dignity.

Article 21 of the Indian Constitution plays an essential role in safeguarding the rights and well-being of senior citizens of the country. This article guarantees rights to every senior citizen or a person aged more than 60 years

¹⁰ D'Cunha, S., Suresh, S., & Yathindra, C. (2019). *Rights of the elderly: Awareness study among elderly*. *International Journal of Health Sciences and Research*, 9(6), 271-279.

https://www.ijhsr.org/IJHSR_Vol.9_Issue.6_June2019/38.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.who.int/health-topics/abuse-of-older-people>.

¹² <https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/WHO-A-Global-Response-to-Elder-Abuse-and-Neglect-Building-Primary-Health-Care-Capacity-to-Deal-with-the-Problem-Worldwide.pdf>

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ athya, Thennavan, Yesuvadian Selvamani, and Rangasamy Nagarajan. "Elder Abuse/Mistreatment and Associated Covariates in India: Results from the Longitudinal Aging Study in India Wave 1, 2017-2018." *Epidemiology and Health*, vol. 44, 2022, e2022017. *PubMed Central (PMC)*, doi:10.4178/epih.e2022017.

¹⁸ <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/16-of-elderly-women-in-india-have-faced-abuse-says-helpage-india-survey-4121358>

¹⁹ Keshavanand Bharati vs State of Kerala 1973

²⁰ Article 21 of The Constitution of India 1950

²¹ Maneka Gandhi Vs UOI 1978

²² Francis Coralie Vs Administration Union Territory Delhi 1981

²³ Sunil Batra Vs Delhi Administration 1979

to live with dignity, it includes protection from neglect, humiliation, and ill-treatment. The provision also ensures that elderly persons receive proper care, covering physical, emotional, and social support is important for a meaningful life. Further, the right to health forms a crucial part of this guarantee, making it the responsibility on both the State and families to provide access to adequate medical facilities and healthcare services. In addition to this, Article 21 extends to the safety and security of senior citizens, ensuring that they are protected within their homes, institutions, and public spaces. Further, the provision also guarantees freedom from all forms of abuse whether physical, emotional, or financial—thus upholding their overall well-being. Collectively, Article 21 establishes a strong constitutional foundation for protecting and promoting the rights of elderly people in India.

The judiciary has further highlighted the states to protect the related rights such as the Right to Shelter as well as Right to Health under provisions of the MWP Act, 2007²⁴, to establish old age homes, reservation of hospital beds for elderly age persons (senior citizens), and publicise the elderly rights at broader level²⁵. The Court held in one such a case that “neglect, cruelty, or abandonment of elderly parents is a violation of Article 21 of the Constitution of India”²⁶, the judges observed that caring for aged parents is not a moral duty of children but it is also a statutory obligation under the law²⁷.

In addition to this, Directive Principles of State Policy enforce an obligation or duty on the State to provide welfare assistance in cases of “old age, sickness, and disablement”²⁸. These principles have been considered specifically as instrumental in the shaping of various social security schemes for senior citizens, such as the National Old Age Pension Scheme and the Integrated Programme for Older Persons etc. There is also a duty of the State to ensure the “promotion of educational and economic interests of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other weaker sections”²⁹. However, the inclusion of senior citizens within the definition of the term ‘weaker section’ is not specifically interpreted under this article³⁰, further it specifies the “State to secure a social order for the promotion of the welfare of the people”³¹. This Article directs the State to promote social, economic and political justice not only for individuals but for all, and therefore it also includes elderly people.

Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

Indian society has traditionally emphasized familial responsibility for the care of elderly persons. However, rapid urbanization, migration, and the disintegration of the joint family system have left many senior citizens vulnerable to neglect and abuse. To address this challenge, Parliament enacted the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, which provides a statutory framework to secure the rights of elderly persons. This legislation recognizes the fundamental human right of the aged to live with dignity and supplements constitutional provisions such as Article 21 (right to life with dignity) and Article 41 (public assistance in cases of old age, sickness, and disablement).

Right to Maintenance as Senior citizens³² (aged 60 years and above) and parents (irrespective of age) have a legal right to claim maintenance from their children or heirs if they are not able to maintain themselves from their own earning or property³³. This can be understood as an obligation of law on children and heirs who are authorized to inherit the property³⁴ of such people to provide them a normal and dignified life. The term “maintenance”³⁵ includes provision for food, clothing, residence, medical care, and other treatment essential for a dignified existence.

If the concerned individual is unable to carry out the entire process on their own, any other person or organization may file an application on their behalf. In fact, the Tribunal itself may take *Suo motu* cognizance of the matter. Furthermore, if any child or relative, as directed by the Tribunal for maintenance, fails to comply with the order, the consequences may be severe, and such a person may even be sentenced to imprisonment³⁶.

The Maintenance Tribunal is empowered to order a monthly allowance³⁷ (up to ₹10,000 or as notified by the State) through a summary procedure³⁸, thus ensuring speedy justice. One of the most important provision is Section 17, which states: “Notwithstanding anything contained in any law, no party to a proceeding before a Tribunal or Appellate Tribunal shall be represented by a legal practitioner.” Hence, this means that if a person is fighting a case before the Tribunal, they must present their case on their own and cannot hire a lawyer to represent them in that proceeding. This rule exists to keep the Tribunal process simple and fast, allowing the individuals to present their cases on their own without legal complications.

²⁴ **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007**

²⁵ Ashwani kumar vs UOI & Ors 2018

²⁶ Ram Dular Gupta vs State of U.P. 2025

²⁷ **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007**

²⁸ Article 41 of the constitution of India 1950

²⁹ Article 46 of the constitution of India 1950

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ Article 38 of the constitution of India 1950

³² Section 2(H) of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

³³ Section 4 of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

³⁴ (if there is any property)

³⁵ Section 2(b) of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

³⁶ Section 5 of Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

³⁷ Section 9 of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

³⁸ Section 8 of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

Right to Residence and Protection of Property³⁹: This agreement is based on certain conditions, and the value exchanged is meant to benefit both sides equally. Transfers of property by elderly persons made on the condition that the transferee will provide care may be declared void if such situations are not fulfilled. Senior citizens have the right to reside peacefully in their own property and may seek the eviction of abusive children or relatives through Tribunal orders.

In one case, the relevant section of the act allows eviction if a senior citizen is ill-treated after transferring property or granting residence⁴⁰ and in another case, an elderly couple sought the eviction of their son and daughter-in-law who were harassing them in their self-acquired house, this case was held by the Bombay High Court that restored the eviction order passed by the Tribunal, holding that senior citizens cannot be compelled to shelter abusive children and encouraging the right of the elderly persons to enjoy their property peacefully and live with dignity⁴¹.

Right against Abandonment⁴²: Abandoning a senior citizen by a person responsible for their care is a criminal offence, punishable with imprisonment for a term up to 3 months or a fine up to ₹5,000, or with both. Hence, "every offence under this Act shall be cognizable and bailable"⁴³.

The Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, 1956

This law is bound to give "maintenance"⁴⁴ in all cases, involving provision for food, clothing, residence, education, and medical attendance or treatment. Generally, the application of this law includes mostly Hindus, but it does not apply on any person who is a Muslim, Christian, Parsi, or Jew by religion. Section 2(1) of the act specifies the exact application of the law. The law defines "dependents"⁴⁵ to include various family members who are entitled to maintenance. Among them, the father and mother are given clear priority under this definition.

Responsibility of Children: The law places equal responsibility on both sons and daughters to maintain their parents and other dependents. This reflects a commitment to gender equality in family obligations. Despite recognizing both male and female children, the law remains silent on individuals belonging to the third gender, as there is no explicit mention of their rights or responsibilities. This creates a gap in legal protection and clarity for transgender individuals. While the Supreme Court has provided legal recognition to the

third gender⁴⁶ and there are laws which specifically define the third gender and protect the dignity of such individuals, this Act does not clearly address their positions⁴⁷.

This law binds a person, during his/her lifetime, to maintain his or her aged and infirm parents⁴⁸. In determining the amount of maintenance to be provided to aged or infirm parents under this Act, several factors are taken into account, such as the position and status of the parties, the reasonable needs of the claimant, and, if the claimant is living separately, whether such separation is justified. The value of the claimant's property and any income derived from that property, as well as the claimant's own earnings or income from any other source, are also considered⁴⁹.

Provisions in Procedural Code

If any person having sufficient means but neglects or refuses to maintain his father or mother who are unable to maintain themselves, a Magistrate of the first class may, upon proof of such neglect or refusal, order such person to make a monthly allowance for the maintenance in an amount the magistrate deems fit. It is a time-bound proceedings, and if the children fail to obey the order, then the magistrate may issue a warrant to recover the dues and may also sentence the defaulter to imprisonment for term expanding up to one month⁵⁰.

Further, almost similar provisions are given under the B.N.S.⁵¹. These Provisions provide a quick, inexpensive and effective remedy for neglected wives, children, and parents. Even though the subject matter is civil in nature (maintenance), it was put into the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC, 1973), to seek faster relief compared to civil courts. This approach inhibits poor and needy persons (like elderly parents), from suffering long litigation.

The central aim of these provisions is to prevent starvation, vagrancy, and crime by ensuring that vulnerable dependents are not left destitute. Maintenance under these sections is limited relief but it ensures survival and dignity. Significantly, these provisions apply evenly across all religions - not regulated by personal laws like Hindu, Muslim, or Christian law.

Suggestions

In the light of the study, this paper brings out the following suggestions for the well-being of the older generation. For the Government to ensure the protection and maintenance of the dignity of senior citizens, a holistic and compassionate approach is required at every level of society in the nation. Young people should be guided, right from the school level, to respect and empathise with the elderly or senior citizens. Value-based learning through Education and

³⁹ Section 23 of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

⁴⁰ Sunny Paul & Anr. v. State of NCT of Delhi & Ors. W.P.(C) 10463/2015 & CM Appl. 43227/2016.

⁴¹ Chandiram Anandram Hemnani & Anr. v. Senior Citizens Appellate Tribunal & Ors. 2015 Bombay HC

⁴² Section 24 of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

⁴³ Section 25 of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

⁴⁴ Section 3 (B) of the Hindu adoption and maintenance act 1956.

⁴⁵ Section 21 of the Hindu adoption and maintenance act 1956

⁴⁶ National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India [(2014) 5 SCC 438

⁴⁷ The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019

⁴⁸ Section 20 of the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act 1956.

⁴⁹ Section 23 of the Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act 1956

⁵⁰ Section 125 of Criminal Procedure code 1973

⁵¹ Section 144 of B.N.S.S. 2024

counselling can nurture a culture of care within families and society.

Families themselves should be supported through awareness programmes and counselling sessions conducted with the help of non-governmental organisations and community-based organizations, so that moral responsibility towards aged parents is viewed as a duty of love rather than a burden. Professionals like social workers should be engaged to visit elderly people on a regular basis to listen to their concerns and provide emotional as well as intellectual support through geriatric counselling.

Care homes and observation homes for the elderly should not merely act as shelters but as vibrant spaces where residents feel valued and respected. Meaningful daily activities should be integrated into their routines, supported by systematic monitoring to ensure dignity and quality care. Each elderly person deserves opportunities for joy and engagement; therefore, parks, activity centres, and multi-skilling hubs both in rural and particularly in urban areas must be developed to encourage social interaction and mental well-being.

Elderly Self-Help Groups and community-based collectives should be encouraged, and it may be supported from professionals, while dedicated self-employment schemes can provide retirees with opportunities to use their skills, remain financially secure, and stay socially active.

Furthermore, a foundation for the regeneration of traditions and oral knowledge could help to bridge the generational gap by enabling elders to share their wisdom, stories, and cultural heritage with the youth. There is a need for the recognition of the right to health, under which universal medical insurance coverage is essential so that no senior citizen has to compromise on treatment due to financial constraints. As well as, old-age homes should receive sufficient funds, trained professionals, and compassionate staff to ensure that residents live with dignity and comfort.

Pension and benefit schemes should be easily accessible and disbursed promptly, without bureaucratic hurdles. Programmes like the Atal Pension Yojana, the National Pension Scheme (NPS), and Swavalamban Yojana etc. should be restructured to enhance their accessibility and effectiveness, thus reducing the financial burden on older persons.

There is also a need for the establishment of a commission for the protection of senior citizens, like the National Commission for Senior Citizens. Elderly persons should be considered as weaker and vulnerable sections of society, therefore similar protection is increased under the National Commission for Women, which is vital for safeguarding the rights and dignity of senior citizens across India.

In addition, a national medical research centre may be established specifically to address health issues related to ageing. Courts and Maintenance Tribunals must be strengthened with adequate resources and trained personnel to ensure timely resolution of cases. There should be strict enforcement of maintenance orders, with zero flexibility in cases of non-compliance, and strong penalties should be imposed for contempt of the

court. Further, there must be easiness to access free legal aid services to help senior citizens navigate legal procedures and secure their rightful entitlements.

Conclusion

India stands at a vital phase in addressing the care and welfare of its elderly population. With their numbers rising speedily, the challenge is not only to provide healthcare and financial support but also to recognize senior citizens as active contributors to society. Strengthening primary health centres, expanding specialized healthcare services, and safeguarding access to welfare schemes especially in rural areas are essential steps. Equally important is empowering elderly people with digital and economic opportunities so they can remain independent, confident, and purposeful.

Legal protections already exist; hence, they must be enforced more strictly to safeguard the rights, dignity, and safety of senior citizens. At the same time, society must cultivate greater awareness and sensitivity toward the elderly by ensuring that they are treating them with respect and compassion. When government initiatives, community support, and legal frameworks work hand in hand, India can build a system where every senior citizen lives with dignity, security, and respect which should be valued not as burdens, but as pillars of wisdom and experience for the nation's future.