

ODISHA STATE POLICY FOR SENIOR CITIZENS 2016

VISION AND MISSION

Vision

Establishment of a coherent, comprehensive and sustainable social framework for the welfare of senior citizens in the State of Odisha.

Mission

To design, develop and promote participatory processes, critical service delivery and empathetic initiatives for senior citizens.

Goals

The Odisha State Policy for Senior Citizens 2016 recognizes that senior citizens need sustainable support systems to reduce their poverty and vulnerability, improve their health and well being and be active citizens contributing more effectively to their communities. It therefore aims to provide critical support and health services according to their needs; increase the capacity of service providers especially in rural areas to provide accessible, relevant and high-quality services to senior citizens; ensure their inclusion and full participation in society by providing enabling environments; mainstream gender perspective in its programmes to specifically cater to the needs and requirements of the increasing number of elderly women; and inculcate family values and respect for the elderly for providing psychological support and informal care. The approach will be multi-sectoral involving government departments, non-governmental organizations and corporate entities. The necessary institutional capacity will be developed for its effective execution.

Objectives

Odisha faces the unique challenge of modernization and population ageing with a significant proportion of its ageing population either economically dependent or in poverty. Social security measures are therefore mandatory to ensure independence and dignity in the lives of the elderly. The formulation of "Odisha State Policy for Senior Citizens 2016" is based on several emerging challenges, including the shift in demographic patterns in favour of elderly, changing socio economic structure, increase in life expectancy because of the advancement of medical technologies, lack of care and support for the elderly due to increasing nuclear families, higher level of elderly destitute in both rural and urban areas of the State. The data show that the elderly women are much more vulnerable than the elderly men as they do not have any viable source of income and mostly dependent on their spouse or children for their daily needs. The proposed policy seeks to address issues concerning senior citizens living in urban and rural areas, special needs of the "oldest old", disabled and women. The policy endeavours to strengthen integration between generations, provide care and support and ensure social security and welfare of the elderly. The policy seeks to reach out in particular to the segment of senior citizens living in rural and urban areas who do not have proper economic, social and family support to lean on in their advanced stage of life. The major objectives of the policy are –

1. To ensure dignity and protection of the rights of the senior citizens in the State through creating necessary support mechanism and system.
2. To recognize that senior citizens are a valuable resource for the country and create an environment that provides them with dignity, independence, equal opportunities, protects their rights and enables their full participation in society.
3. To ensure access to social security, health care, food, shelter, recreation and other welfare services to all senior citizens and especially to the economically poor and 20 socially marginalized section and ensure their participation in decision making processes to improve their quality of life.
4. To ensure and promote the concept of "Ageing in Place" by creating a conducive, safe and secure environment for the senior citizens in their homes and immediate community free from neglect, abuse and violence. Institutional care will be considered as the last resort in the care of the elderly.
5. To ensure that the senior citizens are cared for, respected and valued in the society through educating the future generations in family and social values that encourage inter- generational interdependence, solidarity and reciprocity.
6. To consider the gender implications of ageing as often elderly women and men have different needs, requiring different responses. Key sectors in which gender should be integrated include income security, employment, education, housing, health and protection.
7. To ensure that all senior citizens have barrier free access to public spaces.
8. To ensure that senior citizens have unrestricted access to financial and other resources as and when required through long term savings and credit facilities.
9. To support and assist organizations that provide geriatric care and counseling services; set up and manage homes and day-care centres for the elderly.
10. To encourage research and periodic surveys on issues of concern to the senior citizens to generate valuable evidence and information on older persons disaggregated by age, sex, and socio-economic characteristics necessary for policy formulation and intervention.
11. To promote partnerships across Government Departments, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), public and corporate sectors, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, national and international agencies for the cause of senior citizens
12. The State will reinvigorate the implementation of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 and monitor the working of Tribunals, Appellate Tribunals so that elderly parents unable to maintain themselves will not be abandoned and neglected by their children/relatives.

STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS

The State Policy for Senior Citizens, Odisha aims to provide strategic direction and guidance to the Government and its Departments on the welfare initiatives concerning senior citizens. 1. Income Security

1.1. The Government of Odisha is committed to ensure and provide financial and income security for the elderly population of the State. The State shall make necessary provision for providing old age pension to the needy senior citizens of the State. It will take necessary measures to identify all the senior citizens who need financial assistance and will provide a suitable quantum of pension. The

State will periodically review the pension and will take necessary steps to make it more inclusive and sustainable. Special consideration should be given to elderly persons, who depend only on the old age pension for their living. Special assistance should be given to elderly persons with disability, elderly widows, and single women, and particularly those living alone, or with little support and savings or income.

1.2. The State will make the necessary provisions to include all senior citizens living under poverty line or from socially and economically marginalized groups under the benefit of the Public Distribution System.

1.3 The State will ensure that the matters related to pension, provident fund, gratuities, etc. are resolved on a priority basis and that a senior citizen starts getting her/his pension as soon as he/she retires. Periodical review of the issues related to pensions will be taken up on a priority basis.

1.4 The State will encourage banks and other financial institution to extend loans at reasonable rates of interest to senior citizens within the purview of Reserve Bank of India Guidelines.

1.5 The State in partnership with private organizations will organize pre-retirement counseling programmes to help the senior citizens to work out a post retirement plan.

2. Health Security

Health care is one of the major issues affecting the welfare of the elderly population. With the progression of age people get more vulnerable to chronic and acute illness, injuries and disabilities. The need for long term care, home based nursing care, management of illness and palliative care increases with the advancement of age. Keeping this in mind –

2.1 The State will make adequate provision in the health system to address the issues of the elderly at all levels of health service system. The health facilities from Primary Health Centres to tertiary facilities such as Medical Colleges will be strengthened to address the health needs of the senior citizens. Preventive, curative, restorative and rehabilitative health services will be extended and strengthened to provide appropriate services to the senior citizens. The State will make provision for physiotherapy clinics at health facilities and at the community level for the senior citizens.

2.2 The State will make adequate provision to provide affordable health care to the senior citizens, free for the poor and subsidized to others, for treatment, diagnostics and medicine. Special geriatrics wards will be set up at district hospitals and the medical college hospitals in the State.

2.3 The State will make necessary provision to set up dedicated geriatric clinics in the secondary and tertiary care, public and private hospitals and make provision to organize special health camps, annual health checkup for senior citizens on a regular basis especially in rural and hard to reach areas. Importance will be given to the districts with poor economic indicators and with high concentration of socially marginalized population. The State will take necessary steps to extend the National Programme for the Health Care of the Elderly to all the districts in the State under NRHM.

2.4 The State will make adequate provision to provide mental health services to the senior citizens. Importance will be given to early identification and detection of diseases like Parkinson's, Dementia, Alzheimer, etc. both at the hospital level and the community level of health worker. Specialized clinics will be set up to treat this condition at appropriate health facilities. The State will strengthen the community mental health programme for prevention and better management of such cases.

2.5 The State will make adequate provision to provide mobility aid like wheel chairs, walkers, etc to the elderly living below poverty line free of cost to enhance mobility and social access.

2.6 The State will make necessary provision for including geriatrics and gerontology as a core subject in basic medicine (MBBS) and nursing courses. The State will work towards 23 including

geriatrics and gerontology as a specialized subjects in the post graduate medical studies in the medical and nursing collages of the State.

2.7 The State will set up a State resource centre on geriatrics and gerontology to provide research support and technical support to the Government. The State will work for inclusion of geriatrics and gerontology as a professional as well as part of the subject of Social Work to develop a cadre of trained professionals in the State.

2.8 The State infrastructure will be used to provide training facilities for community level workers in health and nutrition for the senior citizens. This could include training about the prevention and care of mental health issues for the elderly.

2.9 The State will make adequate provision for health education and awareness programme for senior citizens and on the health and nutritional issues faced by senior citizens. This will help in better health care management for the elderly. Special focus will be given to strengthen health awareness provision and services/facilities for health problems affecting elderly women related to menopause, reproductive health, cancers and nutrition.

2.10 Preventive alternate health care systems such as Ayurveda, Yoga, Pranayam, Meditation etc. will be promoted in the State among the elderly population.

3. Safety and Security

3.1 One of the major problems faced by the elderly and senior citizen is neglect and abuse. The State is committed to uphold the rights of the senior citizens and prevent any form of neglect and abuse faced by the senior citizens.

3.2 The State will make adequate arrangement for the senior citizens to create a system for easy reporting of any cases of neglect and abuse which violates his/her rights. The police will be sensitized on the issues of abuse and neglect faced by elderly and to handle such cases with sensitivity and dignity. A toll free help-line number will be set up for reporting such abuse and neglect. The call will be monitored and necessary action will be taken on a priority basis.

3.3 The State will make necessary provisions to maintain a database of the senior citizens with all local police stations, outposts and beat offices. The police will be vigilant about safety and security of the senior citizens who are staying alone. The State will set up mechanism for regular interaction between the police and the senior citizens at regular intervals for ensuring protection and speedy redress of complaints by senior citizens. Police will be vigilant about illegal occupation and trespassing of property both movable and immovable and take necessary action on a priority basis.

3.4 The State will make necessary provision for free legal aid to the senior citizens. The free legal aid cell for the senior citizens will be set up at district and high courts. These cells will provide specialized dedicated services to the elderly population and will be separate from existing free legal aid cells.

3.5 The State will sensitize various community level workers to identify and report any cases of neglect and abuse against senior citizens to the appropriate authority.

3.6 The State will make necessary legal provisions for stringent punishment for harassment, neglect, abuse or fraud against a senior citizen.

3.7 The State will organize awareness programmes and camps on the rights of the senior citizen and the legal provision under the constitution to prevent and address such abuse and neglect from panchayat level to State level. The State will organize awareness camps for the general population on geriatric issues and care and support for the senior citizens.

3.8 The State will promote community level mechanisms to identify and address the cases of abuse, crime and neglect and encourage community action on the issues of senior citizen.

4. Welfare of Senior Citizens

4.1 The State recognizes the immense contributions of the senior citizens towards nation building and is therefore committed to ensure the highest possible standard of social security and welfare measures for the senior citizens of the State.

4.2 The State will make adequate provision of old age homes in each district with all the necessary amenities and support services. The demand for such homes will be reviewed periodically and establishment or expansion or up-gradation of the old age home will be done according to the review. The State will set up short stay homes and homeless shelters for the destitute senior citizens according to the requirement. The State will make adequate provision for day care, community care and recreational facilities for the senior citizens at all levels.

4.3 Senior citizens association will be promoted. The State will encourage volunteerism amongst senior citizens through counseling and training.

4.4 The State will promote community-based and recreation-oriented programmes such as leisure, sports, and cultural activities for the ageing population in order to help them develop a sense of self-reliance and community responsibility.

4.5 The State will make necessary arrangement at panchayat level to ensure that all schemes targeted at the senior citizens are implemented on a timely basis and with full accountability and transparency. The State will ensure participation of senior citizens in the review of schemes and programmes at all levels. The panchayats will be empowered to initiate senior citizens welfare centric innovative programmes and activities.

4.6 The State will make necessary provision for reservation of seats in the public modes of transportation. The public transport fares will be subsidized for the senior citizen and the transport system will be made more accessible.

4.7 The public places including train and bus stations, government offices, public and private buildings, banks, hospitals, places of worship, community centres, recreation facilities, cinema halls, markets, parks etc. will be made senior citizens friendly with provision of ramps, hand railing, toilet facilities, seating arrangements and other aid to make access barrier free.

4.8 The State will make necessary provision for dedicated separate counters and queues for senior citizen in public transport stations, hospitals, government offices, utility services and recreation centers to ensure ease of access for the senior citizens.

4.9 In case of any natural disaster and national emergency, senior citizens will get equal and preferably preferential treatment in accessing food, shelter, medical care and other services during and after such an event. The senior citizens will have access to financial and other resources for rebuilding and reconstructing of their property and communities.

4.10 The State will encourage any care and support initiative of non-governmental/voluntary organizations for the senior citizens. It will support their initiatives in counseling, income generation, IEC, Behavioural Change Communication, awareness, community action, research, housing and other support services on the problems of senior citizens.

5. Productive Ageing

5.1 Since the senior citizens have years of experience and skills the State will promote dissemination of their learning and give them the opportunity to re-employ their experience and expertise for the betterment of the society.

5.2 The State will therefore make necessary provision to create avenues for post retirement employment opportunities. Directorate of employment will make arrangement for senior citizens to find reemployment in the private and public sector according to the need and available opportunities.

6. Intergenerational Bonding

6.1 The State will make necessary effort to strengthen the family system so that it can be a centre of primary care and support to the senior citizens. The State will initiate various special programmes to promote the family system and highlight the contribution of senior citizens towards the family, society and the nation. Values such as respect, tolerance, love, and compassion to the elders should be inculcated in the children and youth through the school curriculum, clubs, schools, and colleges, religious/cultural and other institutions.

6.2 State will make adequate provision to educate the general public with regard to the ageing process. Such education can start at an early age through formal and non-formal education system in order that ageing be fully understood as a natural process.

7. Participation of Media

7.1 Media plays a vital role in bringing up issues of concern to the senior citizens in the conscience of the public and policy makers. The State intends to work closely with the media to bring in a change in the social perception of ageing and age related issues. For this the State will employ the print, electronic, web media, social media, street play, TV, audio video channels, hoarding, banner, posters, booklets, and other means of mass mobilization to sensitize various stakeholders and the general population. The State will work with media for sensitizing them on the issues of senior citizens.

8. Disability and Gender

8.1 Senior citizens with any form of disability and women will get priority in all the strategic areas mentioned above.

9. Awards and Recognition

9.1 The State will observe October 1st as assigned by UN as International Day for Older Person. To commemorate this day the State will organize various activities like seminars, workshops, community level activities like sports and cultural shows for the senior citizens. The State will felicitate the outstanding contribution made by senior citizens in various fields and initiatives taken by conscientious citizens/ organizations who have contributed substantially to the cause of the senior citizens.