

**Draft**

# STATE POLICY ON OLDER PERSONS

## HIMACHAL PRADESH



## ***I. The Background***

The demographic ageing of population has implications at the macro and also at household level. The growing number of persons 60+ in the coming decade will belong to the middle and upper income groups. A significant number of older persons between the age of 60 years to 70 years are young old active and healthy and looking for opportunities for a more active, creative and satisfying life.

Industrialization, urbanization, education and exposure to life styles in developed countries are bringing changes in values and life styles. The younger generation is moving out from homes in search of better employment avenues. The joint families are changing into nuclear families due to shortage of space in dwellings in urban areas, high rents, the young generation prefers to leave their parents in the native place and changing roles and expectation of women, their concept of privacy, materialistic attitudes thus large number of older persons has become vulnerable, isolated and neglected. The State of uncertainty is prevailing amongst the growing older population whether their children will be able to look after them when they need care in old age. The position of single person particularly widows having no independent source of income is more vulnerable.

Demographic ageing is a global phenomenon and it has hit Indian society as well. The traditional norms and values of the Indian Society laid stress on showing respect and providing care for the elderly. Consequently, the elder members of the family were normally taken care of in the family itself. In recent times, the rapid socio-economic transformation has affected various aspects of traditional Indian Society. Industrialization and Urbanization alongwith the migration of population have affected institutions like the age old joint family. Thus the Indian Society is witnessing a gradual but definite withering of the joint family system as a result of which a section of the family,

primarily the elders, are exposed to emotional neglect and lack of physical support.

## Demographic Profile

**1.1.** The total population of Himachal Pradesh stood at 6,077,248 as per the Census report of 2001. The elderly population of the state is 5,48,000 which is 9.02% of the total population. The life expectancy at birth in Himachal Pradesh is 66.5 years (male) and 67.3 years (female) which is higher than the national average of 62.6 years (male) and 64.27 years (female) for the period 2002–2006.

**1.2.** People are living longer. Life expectancy for males has shown a steady rise from 42 years in 1951-60 to 58 years in 1986-90. It is projected to be 67 years in 2011-16. In the case of females, life expectancy has been higher by about 11 years during the same period.

### Age Group Wise Population of H.P. in Rural Area (Census 2001)

Age Group ( Years)	Males	Females	Total Population
50-54	108551	105547	214098
55-59	84952	86658	171610
60-64	80078	81266	161344
65-69	56746	62928	119674
70-74	49780	49941	99721
75-79	27014	25991	53005
80+	37801	38776	76577

### Age Group Wise Population of H.P. in urban Area (Census 2001)

Age Group ( Years)	Males	Females	Total Population
50-54	14524	9623	24147
55-59	9769	7158	16927
60-64	6892	5914	12786
65-69	4710	4522	9232
70-74	3706	3280	6986
75-79	2007	1853	3860
80+	2132	2247	4379
	<b>43740</b>	<b>34597</b>	<b>78317</b>

Census Years	TOTAL			RURAL			URBAN		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
1961	99257	57154	42103	95975	55172	40803	3282	1982	1300
1971	247921	142927	104994	237620	136690	100930	10301	6237	4064
1981	321142	180228	140914	304646	170848	133798	16496	9380	7116
1991	420003	222242	197761	395597	209161	186436	24406	13081	11325
2001	547564	270846	276718	510321	251419	258902	37243	19427	17816

### **Population of 60+ in H.P. (District wise)**

Districts	TOTAL			RURAL			URBAN		
	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female	Persons	Male	Female
Chamba	32635	16462	16173	30177	15212	14965	2458	1250	1208
Kangra	135965	66529	69436	130105	63508	66597	5860	3021	2839
L&S	2855	1387	1468	2855	1387	1468	0	0	0
Kullu	27620	14033	13587	25789	13049	12740	1831	984	847
Mandi	81344	39470	41874	76532	37125	39407	4812	2345	2467
Hamirpur	49832	22949	26883	47679	21866	25813	2153	1083	1070
Una	48897	23457	25440	45545	21842	23703	3352	1615	1737
Bilaspur	35720	17317	18403	34150	16531	17619	1570	786	784
Solan	35988	18527	17461	31948	16354	15594	4040	2173	1867
Sirmour	33531	18119	15412	30292	16380	13912	3239	1739	1500
Shimla	56061	29335	26726	48133	24904	23229	6928	4431	2497
Kinnaur	7116	3261	3855	7116	3261	3855	0	0	0

Census of India, 2001

## **Legal Framework.**

**1.6.** Well being of older persons has been mandated in the constitution of India. Article 41, Directive Principle of State Policy has directed that the state shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provisions for securing the right of public assistance in case of old age. There are other provisions too, which bind state to improve the quality of life of its citizens. These provisions apply equally to older persons. Social Security has been made the concurrent responsibility of the Central & State Governments. From several years there has been a demand for a policy statement by the State towards its own citizens so that they do not face identity crisis and know where they stand in overall national perspective. This policy at State Government level will define the relative roles of Government & Non-Governmental institutions to facilitate in carving out of respective areas of operation and action in the direction of a humane age integrated society.

## *II. State Policy Statement*

### **2.1. Aims & Objectives of State Policy**

- The Goal of the State Policy is to maintain the well being of the older persons.
- Its objective is to strengthen their legitimate place in the society and help them to live the last phase of their life with dignity and peace.
- The state aims to extend support for financial security, health care, shelter, welfare and other needs of older persons and provide protection against abuse and exploitation.
- Programme will be formulated for the older persons, living in rural areas to ensure that they get equitable opportunities of development as prevailing in urban areas.
- The older persons shall be provided with the opportunities to lead an active, creative, productive and satisfying life, ensuring their productive involvement and not just care.
- The policy aims at having an age-integrated society to strengthen intergenerational relationship particularly between children/youth and older persons.

The policy recognizes that older persons are also resourceful and render useful service to society.

## *III. Strategies*

### **3.1. Shelter**

- Preference will be given to older persons living in indigent conditions for sanction of assistance for the constructions of houses under various housing schemes being implemented by the Department of Rural Development and SCs, OBCs and Minority Affairs, Himachal Pradesh subject to the condition of fulfilling the eligibility criteria and availability of funds under the scheme.
- Training and orientation of town planners, architects and housing administrator will include modules on barrier free needs of older persons for safe and comfortable living.
- Preferences will be given to older persons in the allotment of flats on ground floor.
- Civic authorities providing public utilities will provide top priority to attending complaints of older persons. Payment of civic dues will be facilitated.
- Older persons will be given special consideration in prompt dealing with matters relating to transfer of property, mutations, property tax and other matters. Harassment and abuses will be checked.
- The rights of parents without any means to be supported by their children has been recognized and simplified the procedure for speedy grant of maintenance allowance in the Himachal Pradesh Maintenance of Parents and Dependant Act, 2001.
- Awareness programmes will be launched through dissemination of information through various means of communication including mass media, so that old parents unable to maintain himself or herself do not face abandonment and acute neglect.

## 3.2. Financial Security

- Financial insecurity is a great anxiety in old age . some level of income security in old age is a goal which will given high priority.
- Old age pension will be provided to all the elderly persons living below the poverty line. Delays in the matter of selection of beneficiaries and disbursement of pensions will be checked. Rates of pension will be revised at intervals so that inflation does not deflate its real purchasing power.
- Long term saving instruments will be promoted to reach both urban and rural areas. Earners will be motivated to save in their working years for financial security in old age for which suitable schemes will be formulated.
- Employment in income generation activities after superannuation should be the choice of individual. Non Governmental Organizations will be encouraged to provide career guidance, training, orientation and support services.
- Reverse Mortgage lease schemes will be propagated to provide additional income to senior citizens.
- Pre-retirement counseling programmes will be promoted and assisted.
- It will be ensured that pension, provident fund, gratuity and other retirement benefits cases of Government employees are processed promptly and settled within the prescribed limits and superannuated person are not put to hardship due to administrative lapses. Accountability for delays will be fixed. Widows will be given special consideration in the matter of settlement of benefits accruing to them on the demise of husband.
- Medical reimbursement claims of retirees will be settled on priority basis and adequate budget provisions will be made.

### **3.3. Health Care and Nutrition**

Health care needs of older persons will be given high priority. The goal of State Government will be good affordable health schemes through following interventions:-

- Elderly persons belonging to BPL families will be covered under Rashtriya Swasthya Beema Yojna (RSBY) of Health Department for medicare facilities and through non profit organization including trusts, charities and private medical care.
- The primary health care system is the basic structure of public health care. It will be considerably expanded and strengthened and geriatric care facilities provided at secondary and tertiary levels.
- Medical and paramedical personnel in primary, secondary and tertiary health care will be given training orientation in health care of the elderly. Facilities for specialization in geriatric medicine will be provided in medical colleges. Geriatric care will be included in training in nursing care. The private practitioner will be extended opportunities for orientation in geriatric care.
- Public hospitals will be directed to ensure that elderly patients are not subjected to long waits and visits to different counters for medical tests and treatments. Geriatric wards will be set up and special OPDs will be arranged on specific days.
- Private hospitals/trusts/chemists will be requested to offer a discount to older persons.
- Older persons and their families will be given access to educational material on nutritional needs in old age.



- Concept of health ageing will be promoted. Older persons will be educated on preventive health care and early diagnosis through mass media, folk media and other communication channels. Messages will be given on how to stay healthy for entire life span. Importance of yoga, meditation and methods of relaxation will be developed and transmitted through different channels of communication.
- Mental health services will be expanded and strengthened. Families will be provided counseling facilities and information on care and treatment of older persons having mental health problems.

### **3.4. Education**

- Educational curriculum at all stages of formal and non formal education will be incorporated to strengthen intergenerational bonds mutually supporting relationship.
- Schools will be encouraged and assisted to develop out reach programmes for interacting with older persons on regular basis and develop activities for them.
- Educational training and information requirements of older persons will be met. Information and educational material especially relevant to the lives of older persons will be developed and widely disseminated using mass media and non formal communication channels.

### **3.5. Welfare**

- The vulnerable among the older persons such as poor, disabled, the infirm, the chronically sick and those without family support will be identified and institutional care will be provided as the

last resort when personal circumstances are such that their stay in old age homes becomes absolutely necessary.

- The model concept for housing support- need for old homes will be adopted and it will be ensured that old age homes are designed scientifically so as to provide a comfortable environment to allow the process of ageing.
- Assistance will be provided to only those voluntary organizations by way of grant-in-aids for the construction and maintenance of old age homes who fulfill the norms and other conditions as prescribed by the Government from time to time.
- No person shall establish or maintain an institution for older persons without obtaining a certificate of registration from the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- Voluntary organizations will be encouraged to organize services such as day care, multi service centers, help lines etc. Friendly home visit by social workers for escorting older persons to hospitals, shopping complexes and other places will be promoted. Older persons will be encouraged to form informal groups of their own in neighborhood which satisfy the needs for social interaction, recreation and other activities.
- A welfare fund for older persons will be set up. It will obtain funding support from Government, corporate Sector, trusts, charities, individual donors and others. Contribution to the fund will be given tax relief.

### **3.6. Protection of life & property**

- Old persons have become soft targets for criminal elements and also become victim of fraudulent dealings, physical and emotional abuse within the household by family members to force them to part with their ownership rights. Widow's rights of inheritance, occupancy and disposal are at times violated by their own children

and relatives. It is important that protection is available to such older persons.

- Voluntary organizations and associations of older persons will be assisted to provide protective services and help to senior citizens through helpline services, legal aid and other measures.
- Police will keep a friendly vigil on old persons or old single persons living alone and promote mechanisms of interaction with neighbourhood associations. Information and advice will be made available to older persons on the importance of keeping contact on phone with relatives, friends and neighbours and on precautions to be taken on matters such as prevention of unauthorized entry, hiring of domestic help, visits of repair and maintenance persons, vendors and others and the handling of cash & valuables.

### **3.7. Other Areas of Action:-**

- Identity cards will be issued to senior citizens for availing the benefits being extended to them by the Government from time to time.
- Preference will be given to senior citizens in reservation of seats and earmarking of seats in local public transport; modifications of designs of public transport vehicles for easy entry and exit; strict enforcement of traffic discipline at zebra crossings to facilitate older persons to cross streets.
- Priority will be given to senior citizens while sanctioning gas and telephone connections and in fault repairs.
- Concessions in entrance fees in leisure and entertainment facilities: art and cultural centers and places of tourist interest.
- Speedy disposal of complaints of older persons relating to fraudulent dealings, cheating and other matters.
- Older Persons Day will be celebrated on 1<sup>st</sup> October of every year. Activities will be planned and executed with the participation of different organizations of older persons.

- Facilities, concessions and relief given to older persons by Central and State Governments will be compiled, updated at regular intervals and made available to associations of older persons for wide dissemination.
- To ensure better services and networking, capacity building of voluntary organizations, trainings will be organized.
- Older persons will be encouraged to organize themselves to provide services to fellow senior citizens thereby making use of their professional Knowledge, expertise and contacts.
- Society will be sensitized to accept the role of married daughters in sharing responsibility of supporting older parents in light of the changing context, where parents have only one or two children, in some situations only daughter. This would require some adjustment and changes in perception of in laws in regard to sharing of caring responsibilities by sons and daughters as a corollary to equal rights of inheritance and greater emotional attachment that daughters have with their parents.
- State Government will allow medical reimbursement and preference in house allotment to those children who co-reside with their parents and in laws.
- Research activity on ageing will be strengthened. Universities, Medical Colleges and Research Institutions will be assisted to take up research activities. Medical Colleges will offer specialization in geriatrics and orientation courses will be introduced for nurses and paramedical Staff.
- Sensitization programmes on ageing will be organized for legislative, judicial and executive wings at different levels.

## *IV. Implementation*

- 4.1.** The State Policy on older persons will be widely disseminated for which an action plan will be prepared so that its features remain in constant public focus.
- 4.2.** A State Level Advisory Committee comprising of representatives of all the Departments / public agencies having interface with senior citizens and National/ International N.G.O. working in area of old age welfare will be setup.
- 4.3** The Department of Social Justice & Empowerment will be the nodal Department to coordinate all matters relating to the implementation of the State Policy for older persons. A separate cell at three levels i.e. Secretariat, Directorate and District Levels with adequate staff will be created in the department who will be responsible for preparing a plan of action for implementation and monitoring of the policy.
- 4.4** Panchayati Raj institutions will be encouraged to participate in the implementation of State Policy and address local level issues. The Social Justice committees of village panchayats will advocate different measures for giving effect to the policy.

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