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2nd Edition

Guidelines for Ageing with Health, Grace and Dignity



Forewords
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JAYPEE

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Song of Life

Start with one and
End with one
In this journey, of emotions
Sometimes sorrow & sometimes fun
Like sometimes cloudy & sometimes sun.

For this journey
Each one of us is a part of someone
Thus let us try to help those someones.

Don't you tell this to anyone
As they're going to make it's fun
This is the story of everyone
Try not to hurt anyone
Start with one and end with one.

Composed and written by
Gagan Joshi and SM Tuli

CHAPTER 3

Home for seniors: sanctuary in silver years

A. The most fortunate and healthy arrangement is if the seniors can stay with their children (and grandchildren). This arrangement is most comfortable for the seniors and it also serves as an educational module for the next generations. In nuclear families such arrangements are becoming difficult to manage because of the travel and location of work and schooling, and the young generations are scattered around the globe. In affluent countries or affluent families, the next option is to have two flats or floors in the same building or neighbourhood; one unit for the residence of seniors and the other for the younger generations. Most generations prefer living independently. This provides independence or free-dome to each family unit and at the same times offers a confidence of help in case of emergency situation.

B. If arrangements like (A) is not possible the next choice should be for the senior couples to have

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a residence near their relatives or friends. This works very well so long as your spouse is with you and is healthy; they can manage to look after the needs of each other.

C. When the senior citizens are left alone after the demise of one, the life does become lonely and difficult. One can however still manage with the assistance of domestic helps, the problems of trust issues may crop in.

D. For the situation like (B) and (C) if one is not able to manage, it is wise to move on to either "Service Apartments" suitable for people/ persons who can afford; or to senior citizens apartments with "assisted living services". The second options is less costly and middle class families can afford if they earmarked funds for 'senior ageing life span' during their earning period of life.

E. If the seniors cannot manage any of the above options, the only place left is senior home shelters run by the government, or state, and by number of NGOs. In general, the atmosphere is depressing, loneliness is oppressive and you are practically surrounded by persons (many with age-related mental disorders) with whom you cannot communicate. The only thing you can be sure is about three meals to satisfy your appetite.

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The above description (A) to (E) shows a wide spectrum of the options and possibilities for which the younger earning members of the society should be aware of, and be prepared to face and invest accordingly for their own sunset years (senior-years).

While enjoying the privilege of staying together as multigenerational family, the senior most members should become resilient and apaptive to the management behavior of the middle generation (aged 40–60 years). This generation is caught in the middle, catering to the needs of the growing children and the requirement of parents.

On an average, there are two senior members in a family of five, which makes up a modern nuclear family in India. There are estate/property dealers who are building "affordable houses" with special facilities for seniors, such as ramps for wheelchair bound, grab-bars for senior citizens along the ramps, stair cases and the washrooms, and area for social gatherings. Younger earning members of the family must plan for investment for their own suitable housing for their post-retirement sunset years. Model Building Bye Laws (2016) have guidelines for user-friendly environment for differently abled and elderly people. At

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present, Pradhan Mantri Jan Awas Yojana (PMAY) is suggesting availability of affordable housing starting with rupees 31 lac onwards. Many cooperative societies in different cities are engaged in developing affordable housing. The Prime Minister has announced that by the year 2022, three crore houses would be added in India under PMAY.

F. Unfortunately, there would always be a sizable number of seniors ("parents of their children") forced to lead their last years of life in category/ option (F) because they have no other choice. There are always some segments of society where young people produce children and then abandon them (due to any constraints) on foot paths or orphanages. These are children who could be nursed/nurtured to be constructive citizens for the family and society; similarly there would always be segments of society, who would abandon "their parents" to lonely life in shelter homes: and all this despite the cultural heritage of our reverence for the aged people in Indian-subcontinent and the theory of Karma! The family, friends, societies, and government must ensure "safe housing and companionship" either by siblings or relatives, or friends or domestic help.

Moving to an old age home is a disrupting experience, but once there most of the elderly

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do not take much time to settle. They gradually develop a sense of peer group. For those who were unhappy at home, it is also a sense of relief. Old age homes do provide three meals per day and a place for ADL, however, the life there is not always able to take care of emotional vulnerabilities of old age; feeling no purpose of life, feeling uselessness, and the feeling of being a burden on others. There is however some opportunity for some seniors to build up new bonds with like-minded people. Many senior homes allow children to come over and spend a few days with their parents.

Laws are in place but struggle goes on

Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act (SCA) (2007) was passed by the government for the maintenance and protection of senior citizens by children and relatives. HelpAge India study in 2017-18 however revealed that despite the SCA may senior citizens were subjected to physical abuse, mental torture and disputes related to property. Many petitions filed by senior citizens remain under consideration by tribunals for years, mostly because of financial and infrastructural inadequacies. Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act

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2007, 2010 has mandated for establishment of at least one "old-age-home" in each district. The proposals for implementation are pending in many cases. By the year 2016, there were only two government old age homes in Delhi for about 18 lac senior citizens residing in Delhi.

Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has planned to build old-age-homes, in the form of studio apartments for retired government employees in Dwarka Sector 16. Their aim is to build 1550 apartments to be rented to retired employees. The employee has the right to hold the property till he or his spouse are alive. The area will have Metro-connectivity, shopping complex and health-care centers. The DDA has in focus the quality and community life for senior citizens and ensure their privacy and security. There are 48 old-age-home in Delhi NCR run by NGOs and trusts where cost incurred by a senior citizen is about rupees 4000 per month. Those which are available for free are in pitiable conditions.

Ravi Kalra the founder of an NGO—The Earth Saviours Foundation has around 100 beds available irrespective of religion or any other considerations (Svearth000@gmail.com). There are enthusiastic people who would like to help and run old-age-homes, one of the examples is the Guwahati-based centurion Aruna Mukherjee who is keen to run such a facility in Guwahati. GP

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Bhagat founder of Saint Hardyal Educational and Orphans Welfare Society (SHEOWS)—an NGO provides shelter to destitute senior citizens.

Assisted living

In addition to senior homes, "assisted living" is another option being developed in many cities. The whole process at present is in infancy and difficult to afford by average middle-class persons. The concept is creating spaces and residential flats where the basic needs of the elderly can be taken care. These projects are like creating special areas of flats as real estate participation. The residents living would be assisted by housekeeping services, about three meals a day and a small flat to live in. One can either buy or get on rent a space within a community space/ area. The residents are provided meals, help in cleaning, bathing, shopping, housekeeping and driving to doctors consultations. Expenditure for health care is on extra payment.

In assisted living, "Meals on Wheels" is another facility available in many European Countries. In the Indian-subcontinent, also the meals can be delivered at your home by many facilities like Bombay-Dabba-Service.

Despite all facilities of assisted living- "Home" is the best place to age with dignity. Preparing

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our homes for senior citizens, we should design furniture and doors, without sharp edges, staircases with short steps, "grab-bars" an each side of the stair cases or ramps. The wash-rooms or bath-rooms must have non-slip floor (when wet) and must have a number of "grab-bars" near the toilet seat and near the bathing area. Grab-bars help the elders to prevent falls while negotiating the stairs or slopes, in the washrooms the grab-bars help you during sitting on and standing from the washroom seats. Minimum width of all doors of the home should be 26 inches, so that a wheelchair can easily enter into washroom, living rooms and bedrooms.

With changing demographics some members of a family may need the help of a wheelchair.



Fig. 3: All doors of living areas and wash rooms should permit wheelchair mobility

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All the doors of wash-rooms and living rooms should ensure the facility for easy mobility of the wheelchairs.

There are a few organisations analysing and possibly helping to improve the care of the needs of the aged populations like HelpAge India Longitudinal Ageing Study India (LASI). A few senior care centres are coming up in many metropolitan cities.

Mumbai:
Varista: 022-26606033
Dignity Dementia: 022-65133848

Kolkata:
Ananda Ashram: 93310-03123
98302-84526
Sebayan: 99030-36803
82729-26860
Department of Social Welfare: Asha Kiran Complex, Avantika, Rohini, Sector-1, Delhi-110085
Phones: 011-27510307
011-27522760

Delhi:
Sandhya: 011-24671273
011-24103542
Aradhana: 011-23382795
Vishram Vridh Ashram, Mohan Cooperative Industrial Estate, New Delhi

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Delhi Government Old Age Home—
Bindapur, Narela
Gharaunda Old-Age Center, New Delhi
By Paras Jain Foundation
Rajpuri Sanstha, Pankha Road, New Delhi
The Earth Saviours Foundation
Svearth000@gmail.com
Asha Deep, Home for mentally-challenged
(Male), Narela, New Delhi-110040.
Phone: 011-27285712
Dr Rajeshwari Mishra's, SAI SAHARA Old Age Home.
Age Ventures India (AVD)—www.ageventures-india.org
Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board
(Government NCT of Delhi), R. No. 10
Punerwas Bhawan, IP Estate,
New Delhi-110002,
Phone 011-23814305

Varanasi:

Kasiniwas Bhavan (since 2007)
Mukti Bhavan (since 1958)

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Guidelines
for Ageing with
Health, Grace and Dignity

Indian-subcontinent is a home for 100 million elderly people above the age of 60 years at present. A dramatic change in demographic profile is expected in the next three decades. It is easier to recognise the expected social problems than to find practical solutions. An attempt is suggested through this book so that we can take care of the senior population with grace and dignity. This write up has been compiled by collating the observations made by the three authors belonging to three different generations. SM Tuli is an octogenarian having worked in government hospitals dealing with the medical issues of the senior citizens and their families. Neena Bhasin is mature in age, a medical doctor working in a charity health providing organisation. Punya Bhasin belongs to the growing generation and is a teacher of psychology for senior classes in a school. All the contributors have lived their life in generational families (four or three generations) living together under the same roof. SM Tuli has collated the observations regarding the problems and possible solutions while taking care of the seniors in the families.

Since 2019, the unprecedented COVID-19 global pandemic leads to approximately 6 million human deaths in the world. Hopefully, the young surviving generations may be induced to appreciate the value of immunity, positive health, and empathy for the family, friends and the society in general.

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