



## WELFARE SCHEMES FOR WOMEN SENIOR CITIZENS IN TAMILNADU

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The Government of India took number of welfare services to the affected people for the enhancement of the society. Article 41, of the constitution of India provides right to safety, protection and care to the aged. <sup>1</sup>Present day, social systems of family, society and the State are not geared up enough to provide social security to all elderly citizens. . Increase in life expectancy on one hand and decrease in mortality and fertility has contributed to increase in population of 60 and above .This magnitude signifies the importance to provide social services to the elders but also physically challenged and transgender people. In India, the number of elderly care is higher in Tamilnadu and Kerala than in any other state.<sup>2</sup>

### Gender Discrimination

Gender discrimination begins before birth; females are the most commonly aborted sex in India.<sup>3</sup> If a female fetus is not aborted, the mother's pregnancy can be a stressful experience, due to her family's preference for a son. Once born, daughters are prone to being fed less than sons, especially when there are multiple girls already in the household.<sup>4</sup> Finally, a woman's health affects the household economic well-being, as a woman in poor health will be less productive in the labor force.<sup>5</sup>

### Welfare policies in India

The Adoption and Maintenance Act of 1956, entrusts the aged to ask for maintenance from their children in case they do not have any means for subsistence. The section 125 of Criminal Procedure Code 1973 makes it a natural and fundamental duty of the child to take care of older parents. An older mother who is unable to maintain herself should receive support from her children who have sufficient means. Such legislation will make it mandatory for the children to look after their aged parents or pay maintenance allowance. Such laws protect the interests of the aged parents by creating a responsibility among younger generations.<sup>6</sup>

The National Policy on Older Person was announced by the Indian Government in 1999 converting the fast changing population dynamics.<sup>7</sup> It envisages umbrella measures including support for financial security, health care education, shelter, welfare and protection against abuse and exploitation. They suffered a lot and longing for the care and concern. Due to the rapid urbanization, breakdown of family system, growth of nuclear families and increasing longevity, the elderly and disadvantaged people are finding it difficult to sustain themselves. It has therefore become necessary that a system of social security is put in place for the elderly. The primary purpose of pension schemes is to provide social security to aged persons, widows, deserted

wives and spinsters who do not have enough means of substance

### **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act of 2007**

In the year 2007, the Government of India passed the new act for the welfare of senior citizens named as Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act of 2007. This act provides more effective provision for maintenance and welfare of parents and senior citizens. This Act makes it a legal obligation for children and heirs to provide maintenance to senior citizens and parents, by monthly allowance. This Act also provides simple, speedy and inexpensive mechanism for the protection of life and property of the older persons. Indian Society lays high importance on providing care and protection for parents and elderly. Withering of joint family system has contributed to the challenges faced by elderly. But in the global scenario, they are forced to live alone and are exposed to various kinds of problems such as lack of physical, social, emotional and financial support. To overcome such difficulties and to face new challenges, the Government of India has enacted this law in the fifty- eighth year of republic so as to provide maintenance and protection to parents and senior citizens.

The state government formed the High Level Advisory Committee, in order to advise and supervise the effective and coordinated implementation of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act of 2007 in Tamilnadu. This committee consists of Chief Secretary as Chairperson, and 15 official members and 7 Non-official members. This committee monitor and supervise the works of the state and district social welfare department services related to the senior citizens.<sup>8</sup>

### **Old Age Homes Run By Non-Governmental Organisations with State Grant**

In order to safeguard the life of the elders who are homeless and abandoned by their families, the State Government is providing maintenance grant for the Old Age Homes run by the Voluntary Organisations. Destitute elder persons who are in the age group of 60 years and above are benefitted in these homes. Food, shelter, clothing, health care, recreational facilities etc., are provided in

these homes. State Government is providing grants to 28 Non-Governmental Organisations to run the Old Age Homes in 26 Districts. A sum of `2.00 lakh per year, per home is given as grant to maintain 40 inmates.<sup>9</sup>

### **Destitute Widows' Pension Scheme**

This scheme was started in first June of 1975. Destitute widows of any age, who have not remarried are benefitted under this scheme even if they have legal heirs aged 18 years and above. An amount of Rs.400 is paid as pension under this scheme. The entire expenditure under this scheme is borne by the State Government.<sup>10</sup>

The Government of India has launched a new pension scheme on 19 February 2009 named as Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme. The Government of Tamil Nadu also implemented the scheme and the District Collectors identified the beneficiaries under the scheme and sanctioned the pension as per scheme guidelines of Government of India.

All widows between 40-64 years of age belonging to below poverty line households will be benefitted under the scheme. However, the other destitute widows who are receiving pension under the State Scheme not eligible under the National Scheme would continue to get their pension under the State Scheme. A sum of Rs.288.11 sum of Rs.300 Crore has been provided in the Budget Estimate.<sup>11</sup>

### **Deserted Wives Pension Scheme**

This scheme was started on 25 April 1986. This scheme benefits the deserted Wives and destitute women who are not less than 30 years of age and who are deserted by their husbands for a period of not less than five years or who obtained legal separation certificate from a court of law.<sup>12</sup> Deserted wives having legal heirs who have completed 18 years of age are also eligible for pension under this scheme. An amount of Rs.400 is paid as pension under this scheme. The entire expenditure under this scheme is borne by the State Government. A sum of Rs.48.14 Crore has been provided in the budget estimate for the financial year 2009-2010 under this scheme.<sup>13</sup>

### **Destitute Physically Handicapped Pension Scheme**

Physically handicapped destitute persons aged 45 years and above whose permanent disability is 50 percent or more are eligible for this pension.<sup>14</sup> District Level Committees, constituted by the Government in all the districts functioning under the Chairmanship of the District Collectors and the District Medical Officers and District Social Welfare Officers as members, examine applications received from physically handicapped persons and sanction pension to them considering the individual hardship without reference to age limits prescribed by the scheme. Other conditions applicable to Old Age Pension (Normal) scheme are applicable to this scheme also. Patients suffering Leprosy are also covered by this scheme. Entire expenditure under this scheme is borne by the State Government. In the year 2007, 70,626 destitute physically handicapped persons are benefitted under this scheme.<sup>15</sup>

### **Destitute Agricultural Labourers Pension Scheme**

This scheme was introduced in 1981 which covers the Destitute Agricultural Labourers aged 60 years and above. Beneficiaries under this scheme is applicable to Old Age Pension scheme are applicable to this scheme also.<sup>16</sup> Entire expenditure under this scheme is borne by the State Government. There are 88,481 Destitute Agricultural Labourers are benefitted by this scheme in a single year.

### **Rehabilitation of the Disabled**

The Government of Tamil Nadu is geared to provide an enabling environment for disabled people to achieve livelihood security, equality, full participation in community life, and more independence and self determination. The State Government has a vision to create a society where disabled and non disabled persons work together and are accepted as equal partners. This Government focuses on the prevention of disabilities and providing timely assistance to Persons with Disabilities to lead as normal a life as possible within the family and the community. This Government aims at early detection of disabilities and provision of comprehensive services in medical, vocational, economic and social spheres in order to make the disabled self-supporting citizens and integral part of the society<sup>17</sup>. It is the joint responsibility for the

Government, NGOs, Entrepreneurs, Philanthropists, and the Community as a whole to work towards the welfare of the disabled.

The Department discharges certain functions for the welfare of the Disabled. The main work is to assess the nature and extent of the problem of the disabled, including the early detection and immunization against polio, measles, rubella, mumps, etc., besides free bus-pass, supply of simple aids and appliances suited to the needs of the individual in order to improve mobility and physical capacity. It further ensure that every disabled child is given free and compulsory primary education, either special education or integrated education, based on the level of disability of the individual and also to promote the integration of the handicapped students with normal students at every stage depending upon the capacity and level need of each handicapped child. This department also tries to develop the required skilled manpower by establishing Teacher Training Centres and develop a corps of competent Teachers in Educational Institutions and training Centres who have developed a deep understanding of the problems of the handicapped and to promote special supportive facilities like scholarship, free transport, supply of teaching aids, special aids and assistive devices, appointment of Resource Teachers, Hostel facility, etc., help the disabled to pursue appropriate higher education

### **Conclusion**

Old age should be the golden age. But the lives of older women are a tale of hardship. Factors creating this are the feminine nature of ageing, society's discriminatory treatment towards female and ill treatment because of the traditional roles attached to Women in society .Such customs and conventions made life of women vulnerable. Owing to the changing lifestyle and urbanization in India have led to the total neglect of large number of elderly people.

### **End Notes**

<sup>1</sup> M.Laxmikanth, "*Indian Polity*", Tata McGraw Hill Education Private Ltd, New Delhi, 2010, p.39.

<sup>1</sup> *Social Welfare Magazine*, 2005, p.32.

<sup>1</sup> Raj, Anita. "*Sex selected abortion in India*." Narin Publications, New Delhi, 2011, p. 378.

<sup>1</sup> Jose, Sunny, and K Navaneetham. "*A Factsheet on Women's Malnutrition in India*." Economic and Political Weekly. 43.33 (2008)

<sup>1</sup> Chatterjee, *Women Health*, Ankit Publication Agra 1990, p.34

<sup>1</sup> *Policy note on Social Welfare and Nutritious Meals Programme, Demand No.29*, Government of TamilNadu, 2004-2005, p. 130

<sup>1</sup> *India 2007*, "A Reference Annual, Ministry of information and Broadcasting, Government of India. 2007, p.917.

<sup>1</sup> *Policy note on Social Welfare and Nutritious Meals Programme, Demand No.29*, Government of TamilNadu, 2007-2008, p.132

<sup>1</sup> *Social Welfare Manual*

<sup>1</sup> *G.O Ms No.995*, Finance (Pension) Department, dated 18.7.1979

<sup>1</sup> *Idem*

<sup>1</sup> *G.O Ms No.459*, Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Department dated 25.10.1991

<sup>1</sup> *Social welfare Magazine*

<sup>1</sup> *G.O.Ms. No.324*, dated 1.11.1974. *Ministry of Social Welfare and Nutritious Meals Programme*

<sup>1</sup> *Policy note on Social Welfare and Nutritious Meals Programme, Demand No.29*, Government of TamilNadu, 2007-2008, p. 134.

<sup>1</sup> *G.O.Ms. No.351*, dated 15.03.1981. *Ministry of Social Welfare and Nutritious Meals Programme*

<sup>1</sup> *Policy note on Social Welfare and Nutritious Meals Programme, Demand No.29*, Government of TamilNadu, 2004-2005, p. 130

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