

BRIEF ON SENIOR CITIZENS

Ageing is a natural process and the older persons have contributed a lot as active young citizens throughout their life and now it becomes the responsibility of their families as well as the States to pay back to them for their valuable contributions and to fulfill their needs. All religions including Islam have granted dignity to mankind and older persons have special and honourable status in Islam.

2. The countries all over the world at Vienna in 1983 discussed concerns of older persons wherein it was decided to design international, regional and national levels policies to uplift the lives of the older persons, providing comfortable environment to enjoy their old age fully and freely. The other major declarations and plan of actions including IFA Declaration of rights and responsibilities of older person, 1990, United Nations Principles of Older Persons, 1991, Bali declaration on population and sustainable development, 1992, Macau declaration and plan of action on ageing for Asia and the Pacific, 1998 and Berlin Ministerial declaration- a society for all ages in the UNECE Region, 2002 also emphasizes that fundamental human rights do not diminish with age.

3. Increasing demands for nuclear family system, transfers, postings, relocation, loneliness, death of friends and family members, retirement, loss of social status, reduced income and decline in physical energy are stressful circumstances for senior citizens however, most vital concern is financial and health security. Despite change in the socio-economic conditions and preferences of youngster, it is widely believed that the senior citizens deserve special care and attention.

Thank you very ~~much~~ ^{Mr.} chair person:

4. Pakistan has high value, respect and dignity for older persons and follows a defined agenda for their dignity and respect. The guiding principles for their protection include equality, principles of non-discrimination and taking special measures to ensure their protection are embedded in the Constitution of Pakistan. ➡

while looking at constitution of Pakistan

5. The government is effectively addressing the issue of economic empowerment and a relief package for older persons was announced in 2004 which provides basic needs of life like special treatment at ^{hospitals,} railway stations, airports, ~~hospitals~~ and banks besides concessional legal facilities like free entry to public parks, museum, zoos and public libraries throughout the country.

6. To address the educational needs, Allama Iqbal Open University offers distant learning courses to people of all ages. Similarly, Employees Old Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) provides monetary benefits through various programmes such as Old Age Pension, Invalidity Pension, Survivors pension and Old Age Grants. National Savings provides Behbood Saving Certificates and pensioners' Benefit Account to fulfill the financial needs of senior citizens.

7. Islamabad Capital Territory Senior Citizens Act, 2021 ^{has been promulgated which} protects the rights of senior citizens at ~~Islamabad~~ ^{level} Capital Territory (ICT) and award certain privileges included concession in prescribed rates of medicine and tax exemption to the senior citizens of Islamabad. Similarly, Provincial Governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan have introduced reform package and interventions to ensure the welfare of the older persons in the provinces. ^{also}

8. Pakistan Bait ul Mal has also established Great Homes for senior citizens at each provincial/regional headquarter. Moreover, Aafiyat administered by Social Welfare Department, Punjab, Edhi Foundation's Old Homes, Happy Homes (Lahore), The Senior Citizens Foundation (Lahore), Senior Citizens Welfare Program Pakistan, etc have also been providing welfare and rehabilitative services to the older people in Pakistan.

^{gave +} 9. Despite all measures, serious efforts are required and it is the basic responsibility of the family to provide dignified life free from exploitation, mental and physical abuse to its senior citizens. They feel comfortable in their home environment with their children and grand children; therefore, the family support system needs to be strengthened by providing economic incentives, such as tax exemptions and special privileges, to families who are taking care of their elderly members.

10. The practical measures taken by Pakistan demonstrate its strong commitment to protect, promote and empower senior citizens to become equal and dignified citizens. The Government of Pakistan is fully cognizant of the commitments under the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing and playing its role in realizing the dream of making Pakistan where human rights of older persons are fully promoted and protected.