

Minutes of the NPOP Review Committee Meeting held on
Thursday 17th June 2010 at NISD, New Delhi

The fourth meeting of the NPOP Review Committee was held under the chairpersonship of Dr Mohini Giri, on Thursday 17th June 2010 at National Institute of Social Defence, New Delhi. The list of participants is at **Annexure A**.

Agenda items for discussion in the meeting were as follows:

- i. Follow up action on the decisions of the previous meeting
- ii. Steps taken for implementation of the various provisions of the existing policy and the progress made so far

The chairperson welcomed all the members and participants. She also asked the members to attend the meetings of the Committee or send representatives. Then she asked all the participants for introduction.

She outlined the focus of the work of the Review Committee and stated that concrete steps need to be taken for this large segment of the population. She stressed the need for an elderly friendly policy with availability of adequate resources, relevant to the common people and implantable by the government. She added that in order to formulate such a policy it is important to identify the lacunas in implementation of the current policy.

She informed the participants that four Sub-Groups have been formed to give expert view on the concerned subjects: oldest-old, health, safety & security and gender. She explained that the Committee would like to include widest possible range of stakeholders in the process of review.

Agenda Item 1:

Mrs. Purnima Singh, Member Secretary informed about the action taken on the Action Points listed in the Minutes of the last meeting.

- a) The tenure of the Committee has been extended till 31st December 2010.
- b) Holding of Regional Conferences and Sub-Committee Meetings was approved in-principle. The budget for these would be as per the norms of the NISD/ Ministry.
- c) The Members of the Committee had meeting with Secretary MoSJE to discuss urgent issues.

Agenda Item 2:

The exact lacunae in the current Policy were read out by Mr. M.M. Sabharwal for the representatives of various central ministries and state governments present in the meeting. They were asked to specify the steps taken by their respective ministries to implement these

lacunae. Some of the following unfulfilled provisions of the Policy were specially highlighted as mentioned below:

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A welfare fund for older persons will be set up. It will obtain funding support from Government etc. Contributions to the fund will be given tax relief.

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The necessity of National Institute of Research is recognised.

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A separate Bureau of Older Persons will be set up.

An Inter-Ministerial Committee will co-ordinate matters relating to implementation of the National Policy and monitor its progress.

Page 18 (93)

Five Year and Annual Action Plans will be prepared by each Ministry to implement aspects which concern them.

Targets will be set within the framework of a time schedule.

The Planning Commission and the Finance Ministry will facilitate budgetary provisions required for implementations.

The Annual Report of each Ministry will indicate progress achieved during the year.

Page 18 (94)

Every three years, a detailed review will be prepared by the nodal Ministry on the implementation of the National Policy.

There will be non-official participation in the preparation of the document. The review will be a public document.

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An autonomous National Commission for elderly with judicial powers be set up. of Older Persons (NAOP) will be established to mobilise senior citizens and to advise the Government on all matters relating to the older persons. The Commission will have National, State and District level offices and will choose its own office bearers.

The Government will also provide financial support to establish the National and State level Offices to cover both recurring as well as non-recurring administration costs for a period of 15 years.

Ministry of Rural Development: The Ministry monitors implementation of Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme given to older persons above the age of 65 from BPL households. The Central funds are provided to the State Governments which in turn

distribute it to the beneficiaries through bank or post office. This scheme covers 163 lakhs older person out of the estimated 169 lakhs eligible older persons. The budgetary allocation for the scheme was Rs. 1100 crores in the year 2006 which in the current year has increased to Rs. 5700 crores.

The central funds are transferred by the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Rural Development monitors the scheme by asking the states to provide utilization certificate for the amount.

11 states are not providing matching grant to the central contribution for the scheme.

Comments of the Members:

- a) The eligibility age should be lowered to 60 years and the amount should be increased.
- b) The method of disbursement and monitoring should be examined to make it more elder friendly (through money order or cash disbursement through Panchayat).
- c) Distribution mechanism should be strengthened and made uniform across the country.

Ministry of Health: Would be introducing shortly National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly (NPHCE). The proposed programme would be implemented in 80 districts of 16 states/ UTs. 8 medical colleges would be offering geriatric courses. There would also be courses on home care for elderly. Under this programme there would OPD clinics at PHC and CHC and dedicated wards at CHC. The total cost of the project would be Rs. 288 crores for 2 years duration.

The district level programme would be implemented before the proposed National Institute on Ageing would be taken up for action.

Comments:

- a) Health Insurance schemes like Arogyashree should be expanded to cover the people above poverty line and introduced in all state.
- b) Treatment and rehabilitation efforts should be coordinated to provide complete care in old age. Various institutions and programmes dealing with these aspects should be integrated.
- c) There should be a special provision for the oldest-old.
- d) Efforts should be made for convergence of various Ministries involved in treatment, care and rehabilitation of older persons. The Ministry of Science and Technology which has dedicated programme for older persons should be part of it.

- e) All the Departments of various Ministries dealing with related issues should be housed in one institute.

Ministry of Finance, Department of Banking: No specific role for the Department of Banking as insurance issues under the purview of IRDA. The Government is aware of the issues involved and would be taking it up with IRDA. The ministry has issued instructions to banks to provide banking facility to persons with meager amount (No frill accounts) in their accounts. By March 2012 all the districts will be provided banking facility.

Comments and Suggestions:

- a) Nomination should be made compulsory for all bank account holders.
- b) The banks should provide home service to disabled and frail elderly.
- c) The Committee should recommend to RBI that the money should be directly transferred to the banks accounts of beneficiaries of Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme.
- d) The Ministry should issue guidelines to all the banks to provide services to the beneficiaries of the scheme.

Ministry of Home Affairs: Since safety and security are state subjects, the Central Government advises to various State Governments from time to time to deal with such issues. Many State and UT Government have set up senior citizen security cell. Some States and specially Metro Cities are maintaining register of vulnerable senior citizens, some have provisions for beat constables meeting the older persons regularly, scheme for verifying domestic servants, a list of 'dos and don'ts' is advertised for the benefit for senior citizens and run helplines. National Crime Record Bureau maintains statistic on the crimes/ atrocities against elderly.

Comments and Suggestions:

- a) Confidence building measures should be initiated by police to instill confidence in older persons. More publicity should be given to the cases solved by the police.
- b) Bureau of Police Research and Development while developing modules for training of lower staff should include components of gero-sensitization.
- c) Community policing should be tried in rural areas to deal with cases of elder abuse.
- d) Common elders' helpline number should be adopted for the entire country.
- e) The recommendations of the research reports of two studies conducted by International Longevity Centre, Pune on Crime against Elderly in Metros should be given to Ministry of Home Affairs.

Ministry of Women and Child Development: Does not have any specific scheme for older women; but the Swadhar scheme covers destitute and widowed women. Under this scheme food, clothing and shelter is provided to the beneficiary.

There is a provision for a short stay homes for women under Central Social Welfare Board. Originally under the scheme the person could avail benefits for only upto 3 years but now the scheme has merged with Swadhar.

There is a general Grant-in-Aid scheme but that does not cover old age home for women.

Comments and Suggestions:

- a) The programmes specifically targeting older women are neither accepted by MoSJE nor by WCD. Efforts should be made to deal with system related problems.

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment:

It was informed that the initiatives taken by this Ministry included-

- i) Enactment of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007. Thereafter, for the implementation of the Act it was followed up with States and UTs. As a result 22 States and 7 UTs have brought the Act into force and these States are in different stages of implementation of the Act. The Ministry had also prepared and circulated Model Rules on the Act to all the States for its effective implementation.
- ii) Revision of the scheme of financial assistance to NGOs for running various services for the benefit of elderly. 13 new innovative projects were added for financial assistance including projects like Day Care Centres for Alzheimer's disease/ Dementia Patients; Multi facility Care Centres for destitute older widow women and Regional Resource and Training Centres.
- iii) A new scheme for providing assistance for establishment of Old Age Homes is also under active consideration.
- iv) Preparing of trained persons in the field of elderly care under National Initiative on Care for Elderly (NICE) run by NISD.

The Ministry has been actively coordinating with various Central Ministries, State Governments and other Government agencies and for various Policies and Programmes for the benefit of Senior Citizens and elderly. The Committee was informed about the Income tax concessions, concessions in Railway Fares, elderly friendly rail coaches, separate OPDs for elderly in hospitals etc.

The Chairperson asked MoSJE to compile information about the benefits being provided to senior citizens by various Ministries/ Deptt and forward it to the Members of the Committee.

Government of West Bengal: The steps taken by State Government for benefit of older persons. Details in **Annexure B:**

- Notified Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007. It has formulated rules for implementation. Set up 68 tribunals with sub-divisional officers as incharge with facility of video conferencing.
- Set up Old Age Homes and Day Care Centres.
- Providing pension to older persons, older women, backward classes and tribals.

Recommendations of State Government Representatives:

- 50% discount on all pathological tests in government and joint sector hospitals.
- Healthcare monitoring at district level hospitals for elderly women.
- 50% concession on bed charges in government and joint sector hospitals.
- Priority in allotment of land/ houses. Group housing for senior citizens.
- Aggressive promotion of Reverse Mortgage Scheme.
- Reasonable increase in the amount of social pension.
- Under the social pension scheme more money should be given to older persons suffering from terminal diseases.
- Free legal advice.

Comments and Suggestions:

- a) Different categories of older people have different requirements which should be recognized by the Policy. This includes people in rural area, women, tribal, scheduled caste and other such categories.

Government of Delhi: Rs. 1000 is given to each beneficiary of Indira Gandhi National Old Age Scheme. Currently there are 2.19 lakhs beneficiaries. Eligibility criteria includes less than Rs. 60,000 per annum household income and resident of Delhi for last 5 years. To prove domicile any document out of the listed 22 is acceptable. The application forms are available in the offices of 10 district social welfare officers. It could also be down loaded from the website. It needs authentication from either a Gazetted officer or a local MLA and submitted to the district social welfare officers. From the year 2000, ECS system has been adopted for transferring money. The details of the disbursement i.e. name of the beneficiary and amount disbursed are uploaded on the website.

There is a State Policy on Older Persons.

There are 54 recreation centres. This facility would be extended to all Assembly Constituencies in the next 3 years.

The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007 has been notified and 9 tribunals established. The appellate tribunal will be established shortly. Maintenance officer has been designated.

Two old age homes in Lampur and Tilak Vihar are providing support to the older persons. Three more old age homes would be set up.

23 hospitals provide geriatric Sunday Clinic facility.

Senior citizens have been given special identity card.

A booklet outlining the various benefit and privileges available to senior citizens in Delhi would be published shortly.

Government of Assam: Indira Gandhi Old Age Pension Scheme is operational in this state. Under a scheme of the Department of Social Welfare older people can claim medical expenditure of an amount upto Rs. 750. There is a scheme for widowed and single women from BPL households whereby beneficiaries get Rs. 250 per month. The age eligibility for the scheme is 45 years and above. This scheme has provision for one time grant of Rs. 10,000 for the beneficiary to start income generating activity.

The CM's Jiwan Bima Scheme provides insurance cover for all those registered electorate of Rs. 50,000. This also covers expenditure for terminal and chronic diseases.

Other Issues:

(1) Dr. Shiela Sreenivasan informed that an FIR had been filed against her organization, Dignity Foundation. The Chairperson asked her that in case she was personally involved she must inform the Committee as soon as possible.

(2) The members unanimously agreed that there should be an advertisement in the paper about the process of review of the National Policy on Older Persons and the Secretary MoSJE should be requested to convene NCOP meeting before 16th of August 2010, the day when some senior citizens associations are planning to observe a protest day. The Committee should be ready with a matrix with information on action taken on the various provisions of the current policy to share with all concerned, the facts and figures. For this purpose, a small committee should be formed to prepare detailed para-wise note on the lacunas and circulate it to the members.

(3) The Member of the Committee decided to hold four **Regional Conferences**: It was decided that NISD would organize the regional conferences in coordination with the State Governments.

NISD will send the list of participants including the members and others on the basis of suggestions received from Members. The numbers of invitees in the list provided by NISD to the respective State Governments would be limited to 25 participants only. However the State Government would be free to invite additional local participants.

It was decided to hold the Regional Conferences at following places and on the following dates listed in the table below-

S.No.	Day & Date	City	Organising Partners
01.	Tuesday, 6 th July	Chandigarh	Help-Age India & NISD in co-ordination with State Govts of Punjab, Haryana & UT of Chandigarh
02.	Tuesday, 13 th July	Chennai	NISD in coordination with State Government.
03.	Friday, 23 rd July	Mumbai	-do-
04.	Tuesday, 3 rd August	Guwahati	-do-

(4) The Committee has decided that Dr. S.D. Gokhale would be Permanent Invitee for all the meetings of NPOP Review Committee.

Action Points:

- a) Each phase of the work of the Committee should be so targeted that the draft recommendations are ready by end of September 2010. These should be widely circulated for getting opinion of all stakeholders.
- b) Ministry of Health to provide details of NPHCE to the Committee.
- c) Ministry of Finance, Department of Banking to provide copy of the instruction to all the banks to open and operate accounts of beneficiaries of Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme.
- d) Recommendations of the Study Report on the Crime against Elderly in Metro Cities conducted by International Longevity Centre, Pune would be sent to Ministry of Home Affairs.
- e) Invitation to representatives of Ministry of Finance – Department of Revenue and Department of Insurance; Planning Commission, Ministry of Labour to attend the next meeting of the Review Committee.
- f) To provide the updated information compiled by M/o Social Justice and Empowerment about various schemes, policies implemented by various Government Departments for the benefit of older persons to the members of the Committee.
- g) It was suggested by Mrs. Giri to hold a meeting of the National Council of Older Persons before 16th August 2010.

List of Members of the Committee to Review NPOP

Sl.No.	Name	Designation and Address
1.	Dr. V. Mohini Giri	Chairperson, Guild of Service
2.	M.M. Sabharwal	HelpAge India, New Delhi
3.	K.R. Gangadharan	Chairman, Heritage Foundation
4.	Dr. Sheilu Sreenivasan	Dignity Foundation
5.	Purnima Singh (SD)	Member Secretary
6.	H.K. Sharma	Commissioner & Secretary Social Welfare Department, Govt. of Assam, Dispur
7.	Shalini Prasad	Joint Secretary, M/o H&FW
8.	Prem Singh	Director, M/o Home Affairs
9.	Mutiny Banerjee	Jt. Director & Spl. Officer, Dte. of Special Welfare Juvenile Court Building Salt Lake, Sector-1, Kolkata-69
10.	Anju Bhalla	Dy. Secretary, M/o WCD, R.No. 641, A Wing, Shastri Bhavan
11.	P.C. Sharma	Dy. Director, NCT Delhi
12.	Raman Gaur	Ministry of Finance, D/o Financial Services
13.	S.P. Arya	M/o Rural Development Under Secretary, 376 A Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi
14.	Dr. S.D. Gokhale	President, Longevity Centre Pune (Special Invitee)
15.	Shri Satish Gavai Secretary	Social Welfare Department, Govt. of Maharashtra
16.	Smt. Chaya Ratan, Principal Secretary	Department of Women & Child Development, Government of Andhra Pradesh

Status Report

Government of West Bengal has already given effect to the Maintenance & Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 and published the State Rules.

In our State we have already started 68 tribunals for Maintenance & Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens. The problems are addressed by the Sub-Divisional Officers. Regular monitoring is done with Sub-Divisional Officers through video conferencing. Government of West Bengal has released fund for awareness programme, taken integrated programme for the benefit of older person. We have **old age home, day care units, mobile medical units** etc.

We have 27 Nos. Old Age Homes run by N.G.O. and **one** Government Home, out of which three Nos. are exclusively for female and **eleven** Nos. are for male and **thirteen** Nos. are for both male & female. The capacity of inmates in these homes is **860** Nos.

Beside Women and Child Development & Social Department others Departments like Panchayet and Rural Development, Backward Class Welfare, etc. have separate Pension schemes for older persons.

Women and Child Development & Social Welfare Department has sanctioned **75,465** Nos. of old age pension cases and beneficiaries are getting pension @ Rs. **750/-** per month.

Panchayet and Rural Development has sanctioned **10,39,041** Nos. of old age pension last year and total expenditure was Rs. **404.52** Crore.

Backward Class Welfare Department has sanctioned **1,22,000** Nos. of old age cases for Tribal people and beneficiaries are getting pension @ Rs. **750/-** per month.

As per National Policy Govt. of West Bengal has taken steps for opening Bank account of individual pension holder for rural and urban area.

Recommendations

1. Health Care:

- i) Since health care need increases and income decrease with old age, senior citizens may be offered a 50% discount on all pathological/ radiological tests in Govt. as well as Jt. Sector Hospitals (if not in private nursing homes/ labs).
- ii) Special health care monitoring cells may be available at all district hospitals for elderly women.
- iii) 50% concessional bed charge at all Govt. and Jt. Sector Hospitals for senior citizens irrespective of categories like Below Poverty Line and Above Poverty Line.

2. Shelter:

- i) Aged persons irrespective of gender may be allotted priority in allotment of land/ houses for BPL/ Landless/ MIG categories.
- ii) Group Housing Schemes may be encouraged for Senior Citizens both in private and public sector since many aged couples may suffer from the empty nest syndrome and would like to find companionship, security and solace in Peer Company.
- iii) Reverse mortgage scheme which is yet to find acceptance among institutional finance bodies, would need aggressive promotion.

3. Social Security:

- i) The National Pension Scheme should be augmented to a level that allows an indigent older person not only mere sustenance but also needs medicines, diagnostic test etc.
- ii) This pension should have a sub-category offering a higher rate for older persons suffering from terminal diseases.
- iii) Free legal advice may be offered to elderly through State Legal Aid Services, irrespective of economic criteria.