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NOTIFICATION

No. B. 13012/17/2002-SWD, the 8th April, 2004. In pursuance of Govt. of India, Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment instruction vide D. O. No. 15-36(1)2002-AG dt. 14.11.2003, the Governor of Mizoram is pleased to formulate and notify the State Policy for older Persons in respect of Mizoram with immediate effect.

Lalramthanga Tochhawng,
Secretary to the Govt. of Mizoram,
Social Welfare Department.

STATE POLICY FOR OLDER PERSONS (SPOP)

With a wealth of ideas and suggestions contributed in the state level workshop held on 9 & 10th October, 2003 at I&PR Auditorium by the Social Welfare Department under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India, the State Policy for Older Persons (SPOP) has been prepared.

I. State Council For Older Persons (SCOP) : Instituting the State Council for Older persons with the Chief Minister as the Chairperson of the Council assumes the first important policy.

II. The State Policy for Older Persons (SPOP) have been formulated thus:—

III. PSYCHO-SOCIAL :

a) The Social Defence Branch of the Social Welfare Department is entrusted and specially assigned to deal with matters concerning the needs & welfare of older persons.

- b) Making uniform age of 60 for extending concessions.
- c) To enumerate the aged - of 60 years old and above from the electoral list and to acknowledge the EPIC cards as bonafide proof for senior citizens identification.
- d) Taking every possible step for the security of older persons by government and especially the Community Based Organisations.
- e) To teach the younger generation to acknowledge and celebrate the value of old age.
- f) To propagate and encourage the family as the primary caregivers for the aged.
- g) Suitable projects should be formulated for older persons where by they would be in a position to utilize their knowledge, wisdom and talent and to encourage them to work where they can.
- h) To set up old age home and recreational complexes in every district from available resources of the State & Central Government.
- i) A scheme for excursion for senior citizens to be formulated to enable them to see places of importance within the State and the country.
- j) To allow for concessional rates in Mizoram Houses and Government Accommodations for older persons.
- k) To encourage and assist the elders especially of the age group of 60-70 years to organize their pool of human resources-discipline wise, with a view to utilize their knowledge and experience for the advancement and benefit of the younger generation. EXAMPLE : Tutorial Institutions by the education discipline resource groups would go a long way in up-gradation of merit students with potential for meritorious performance (especially for poorer sections of society).
- l) To introduce a subject in the college and university curriculum regarding 'Aging' with a view to understand the perspective of aging academically and to built up a wealth of data and studies which would serve to be a valuable resource for the planning process of the State government.

IV. HEALTH SECTOR :

Transit Accommodation for the older persons who come to Aizawl and Lunglei for Medical treatment.

Setting up a hospice for terminally ill and cancer patients. This is to be taken up by the nodal department on a project mode.

Organize free Mobile Medical clinic for the elderly in every district of Mizoram.

Geriatric Ward to be opened in Civil Hospitals.

Seminar and awareness programmes should be organized to acquaint the elderly of the common ailments and diseases that befall them and are prone to.

Concessions to be extended to older persons in respect of medical consultation fees. This should however be determined by their income bracket.

V. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT:

1. The State Government to take initiative for full coverage of old age pension in the state and raising the amount of old age pension from the existing rate.
2. Introduction of income generating schemes for senior citizens sourced from both State and Central funding.
3. To impress upon the nationalized Banks to offer assistance in fostering savings with a special focus on the welfare of the senior citizens as well as for the citizen at large with a view to inculcate the need to save for their evening of their lives.
4. Steps to be taken with the active participation of the Financial Institutions & Banks not only to encourage savings but to educate the elders on the scope of availing loans.
5. To seek the active participation of the various Insurance Companies to educate the elders on the merits of availing suitable policies for the aged.
6. Special dispensation for the deprived aged in availing of Housing Loans and Residential House site allotment by the Government.
7. The nodal Department should facilitate the convergence of various State and Centrally funded schemes for the benefit of the elder citizens. Special reservation should be made with proportionate percentage reservation of the budget against various developmental schemes e.g. SGRY, Housing, Welfare, other development departments, etc., for the elderly.

VI. TRANSPORTATION (Mobility) :

Concessions to be made for older persons in MST Bus, city bus and town bus.

To utilize the voters ID card for concessions in MST buses, town bus and city buses.

VII. LEGAL PROVISIONS :

The foundation of 'Legal protection for older persons' is inherent in the Fundamental Rights of the Constitution. With special reference to the older persons there are a number of statutory provisions that affirm the protection

of their rights. For instance, there is the Code of Criminal Procedures, 1973 Section 125 which inter alia, guarantees the safeguard for the older persons whereby if the children are not willing to take care of their aged parents through this law they can be taken to court.

The state government should set up special cells to cater to the legal needs and advise of the elderly especially in upholding their rights - e.g. property matters, inheritance issues and other financial related issues and disputes, legal education on writing of Will and other documentation.

VIII. OTHER SELF-ACTUALISATION MEASURES :

Media exposures and special programmes : Special forums e.g. discussions in TV programmes, and topical talks on various categories of events and issues which may be cultural, social, political, historical etc. These may be facilitated in AIR, DD and other local Channels and media.

IX. MULTI SECTORAL INTERVENTION :

All Departments must be impressed to be prompt in settling the terminal claims of their retiring functionaries.

All Departments to be advised to set aside a special welfare fund from out of their Budget for the aged. The rationale behind this being that the welfare of the aged is a multi-sectoral responsibility and that each department should contribute in the welfare activity of the elder persons in society.

Non-developmental Departments also have equally important part to play in the welfare of the elderly. For instance, the Accounts & Treasury Department may organize Pension (Adalats) Court as is practiced in some larger states of the Country. These adalats are highly laudable intervention, which are basically meant to be a fast track re-dressal camp/ programme for pensioners.

ACTION ARISING OUT OF THE SPOP:

The state government through the nodal Department i.e. Social Welfare Department shall draw up a comprehensive State Action Plan. The Action Plan which will emerge from the above stated policy for older Persons, will set out clear goals both long and short term. The affirmative action and project mode activities would clearly define the role responsible centers, which will unequivocally spell out the various roles assigned to the various wings and department of the State Government and also to the Banks, Insurance agencies, other Financial Institutions, NGOs and Community Based Organizations etc., as well.

Lahramthanga Tochhawng,
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Social Welfare Department,
Govt. of Mizoram.