

**Scheme for setting up of Senior Citizens Voluntary Service
Association/Network.**

Today with the improved life expectancy the demography of the State is also changing because there is an increase in number of persons above the age of 60 years. The population projections for India for the period 1996-2016 made by the Technical Group on Population Projections indicated that 100 million persons will be above the age of 60 years in 2018. Similarly, United Nations had also indicated that there will be 198 million people in 2030 above this age. Today roughly 7-8% of the population in the State is above 60 years of age. Amongst this population group, the majority of the people are in the age group of 60-69 years which can be considered 'as not old.'

The above facts indicate that there is a large human resource available above the age of 60 who are active, creative and can still contribute to the society. These persons have the advantage of rich experience of their lives which can be shared with the society. Normally a kind of vacuum is created on retirement from service or active work leading to frustration and loneliness, which has damaging effect not only on the health but also on the psychology of the Senior Citizens as well as the family. Most of the Senior Citizens after retirement feel redundant due to lack of activity. Therefore, it is very necessary to make them feel that they are still important and are required by the society. This can be done by providing them opportunities for maintaining their separate identity and to restore their self-esteem. It is felt that with a positive frame of mind backed by long experience they can continue to be creative contributors to the society. However, most of the people either do not know how to approach NGOs or they do not want to be a part of them. Besides there is no database or any mechanism available to access administration or NGOs.

On the other hand, there is a felt need for experienced and committed people in the various sectors of society, where the rich human resource of senior citizens can be utilized effectively. Various Govt Departments and Local Bodies often require voluntary helping hands to fulfill their objectives aiming to serve the general public especially the poor, helpless & illiterate specially in the field of education, health and civic development.

Keeping in view this background, a scheme for "Promotion of Senior Citizens Voluntary Service Network/Association has been formulated. The main objective of the scheme is to encourage the Senior Citizens to come together to form a network/association/group for offering voluntary service in each district. This network will provide a platform to the Senior Citizens to offer their services in an organized manner and

on regular basis to the District Administration and the Local Authorities for the socio-economic development of the district. This network/association aims to provide its services to the District Administration/Municipal Committees or any other govt./semi govt. organizations in the following manner:-

1. Assistance for implementing various programmes of the Govt.
2. To lend a helping hand in times of crisis management
3. Providing a channel for communicating and reaching out to people on social issues like female feticide, literacy etc.
4. Give information and counselling to the needy groups like teenagers, disabled etc.

Organization and Management

The organization to be known as “Senior Citizens Voluntary Service Network” will be registered as a Society. The organization will have a Governing Body. The organization will be headed by Deputy Commissioner and will have Addl. Deputy Commissioner, SDM and DSWO as the official members and five representatives of Senior Citizens. The day to-day management will be done by a Management Group consisting of three volunteers from Senior Citizens. Amongst them, one person would be designated as the General Secretary and other two will look after the operations and administrative functions of the network. One of them would be given the charge of handling the funds. The Management Group will be assisted by one office associate whose salary would be provided by the Govt. under the scheme. The office associate will be appointed on contract basis having a minimum qualification of a graduate with minimum six months certificate course in computer. The services of the Management Group will be on voluntary basis. However, the Deputy Commissioner will have the discretionary power of giving honorarium to the members of the Management Groups as a token of reward for their contribution to work.

Financial Assistance

The network/association will be given a financial assistance of Rs.15,000/-p.m. To meet its contingent expenses and the salary of the office Associate and part time worker if any. The network/association will be given a computer with printer and other accessories to keep a database and also shall be provided with furniture and fixtures. For this purpose,

it will be given a grant of `1 lakh on the formation of the network/association with minimum of 50 members. Every year `10,000/- will be given as a grant for maintenance to the association and `10,000/- for jackets/banners publicity.. Therefore, each network/association will be given financial assistance as follows:-

Annual (in rupees) Administrative Expenses Contingency Including telephone	=	`20000 x12= 240,000/-
Maintenance	=	`10,000/-per annum
Jackets/Publicity	=	`10,000/-per annum
		Total =`2,60,000per annum
One time grant for Computer/furniture fixtures	=	`1,00,000/-

Operation and Activity

The Network / Association will invite applications from the senior citizens in the district to register their names with them indicating their preferred area of voluntary service. The network/association will also list the areas of activities which need to be carried out in the district through voluntary work. This exercise will be done in consultation with various departments in the district. The objective will be to fill the gaps in the administrative structures as well as address the needs that the citizens have from various authorities. The network/association will act a linkage between the Govt. and people. After having developed a portfolio of job required to be done by volunteers. The volunteers will be deputed for doing various tasks. The volunteers will be briefed properly about their role and assignments.

The volunteers will report to the D.C. and the Management Group from time to time. In order to ensure that the voluntary service is carried out with bonhomie and atmosphere of good will, it is suggested that DC may take the Department into confidence before deputing the volunteers. As far as possible, the group should attempt to depute the volunteers in the areas of their choice and expertise.

The Network/Association can also undertake other projects of community service with help of volunteers. For instance, a helpline can also be created for the senior citizens/women/families which can be run by the volunteer's senior citizens. The DC may send cases for additional requirement of funds for projects like helpline.

Suggested activities for the Network/Association

Health:

The volunteers can help and guide the patients in hospitals, organizing free camps, sorting of medicine, distribution of OPD Cards etc. I.E.C . activities for spreading a message of female foeticide, encouraging institutional deliveries and all other health campaigns.

Education:

The volunteers can be associated with children, organization of various programmes in the schools where community is involved, help in coaching or extra classes for the weak students.

Local Government:

1. Feedback and maintenance of parks, cleanliness, streetlight, helping the citizens to fill forms, cleanliness and other civic services.
2. Drafting application
3. Filling up forms.
4. Nursing Services to patients.
5. Providing guidance information about the procedures, working in different offices.
6. Disseminate information/knowledge about welfare services of Govt.

Recognition and Rewards:

Each volunteer will be known as 'sahyogi' and will be given a sleeveless cotton jacket as a mark of identification to be worn over his clothes whenever she/he is performing her/his voluntary work.

Every year the best volunteer and association will be given reward on 1st October, International Day of the Old.