

A PLEA FOR GRANT OF SOME RELIEFS TO THE SENIOR CITIZENS IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES

I have been making suggestions for amelioration in the living conditions of old and aged -people of advanced years. ' The dear old fossils' with diminished physical and mental health, prone to or already suffering not only from old-age induced physical and mental infirmities, and deficiencies, but also terminal/debilitating diseases, physical and mental disorders, besides either already enduring or facing the ugly prospects of 'empty-nest syndrome. Among these oldies, the condition of Octogenarians and Nonagenarians - Super- senior citizens of eighty years or more- is rather more pitiable. They are left with fewer years to live and walk on this earth. Due to several factors beyond control, the traditional uniquely Indian-joint family system- is rapidly crumbling. Cases are not wanting where it has already collapsed beyond redemption. In such a scenario, it may not, perhaps, be out of order if a few concessions and reliefs are accorded to them, bring a little sunshine in their lives, and make they are living a little bit easier and comfortable.

In most of the cases I came across, I found these Octogenarians and Nonagenarians - Super-senior citizens an extremely proud lot, not complaining while grappling with odd situations with commendable courage and fortitude. Seeking help even from next-door neighbours is not in their nature. It's infra-dig for them to make demands, and seek redress of their Grievances from Government agencies. But that should NOT be any reason for not providing them with what they richly deserve - some relief and succour from the Government who should take initiative, and act on its own. They richly deserve to be provided with some succour from the State agencies, as well. To begin with, a few listed below could be in the rock bottom category of such reliefs for which provisions should be made urgently without losing much time.

All 80 and above Citizens should be officially recognized and designated as SUPER-SENIOR CITIZENS, accordingly granted reliefs, as under:

1. Total exemption from payment of Income Tax and filing of return.
2. Priority in cases of hospitalization in the Govt. owned or Pvt. Hospitals of their choice with Govt. bearing the total cost of medical treatment in all cases of hospitalization and follow up treatment.
3. Priority in Reservation of berth in buses, trains, aeroplanes, metros etc with at least Fifty per cent concession in the fare, as well as other charges in all classes in all the trains, buses including the charges at Railway Retiring Rooms, Tourist resorts, guest-houses both public and private, Dharamshala etc. Similar concessions may be granted and PRIORITY accorded for Air travel.
4. WHOLE/REST OF THE LIFE TRAVEL AS YOU PLEASE WHEREVER YOU PLEASE Railway, Metro and Bus pass at a flat concessional nominal charge for EACH class conveniently convertible to any other class on payment of the difference in fare for that distance, should be issued to them at their request.
5. Other facilities and concessions, the benevolent Modi-Govt.may consider fit and proper.
6. In the current context of the spread of the Corona pandemic, the super-senior citizens 80 and above should immediately be given the booster dose of vaccines in all cases where they have been administered the second dose two months or more back.

Not at all a costly proposition needing a Mullah. I will be surprised if even 10% of these oldies could venture to avail fullest advantage of these concessions. At the same time, it will afford society a reason to feel like redeeming a little bit of the debt it owes to these oldies, who have devoted all their life to its service.

Time is the essence of the matter. The Sooner the above suggestions are implemented the better it would be for all concerned.