Protection against abuse and exploitation social work essay

Introduction: - Since the time when development planning was taken in independent India, the state has recognized older persons as vulnerable and weaker section of society which always need extra care and attention. It has been a responsibility of state and central government to provide better services to the older persons. The Directive Principles of State policies in Indian Constitution enjoin the state to provide welfare and assistance to the older persons for their upliftment. India is the second largest number country in terms of older population. The special features of the elderly population in India are: (a) a majority (80 per cent) of the elderly live in the rural areas, thereby making service delivery a challenge; (b) feminization of the elderly population (51 per cent of the elderly population would be women by the year 2016); (c) increase in the number of the oldest-old (persons above 80 years) and (d) a large proportion (30 per cent) of the elderly live below the poverty line. (Office of Census of India; 2012). A combination of these features makes the elderly very vulnerable. However, due to the rapid changes in social structure and scenario nuclear family system is emerging, which is raising the challenges and social problems of older persons such as emotional, physical and financial insecurity. This was the result to seek an attention of the policy makers and administrators at central and state governments, voluntary organizations and civil society. Activities on the international front also built momentum for a national policy on aging.

Although the concept of individual aging had been recognized for many millennia in India, the impact of population aging was not well-understood until well into the last quarter of the 20th century and was not accepted as a subject for planning policy formulation. Keeping in mind that old age care need attention so Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India adopted ' National Policy on Older Persons' in January 1999. The National policy, seeks to assure older persons that their concerns are national concerns and they will not live unprotected, ignored or marginalized. The Constitution of India mandates that the well-being of older persons should be ensured without any discrimination. Many suggestions have been made for designing policies and programmes to ensure equality among the elderly. The National Policy Statement includes the following: I. Ensuring the well-being of the elderly so that they do not become marginalized, unprotected or ignored on any count. ii. Protection on various fronts like financial security, health care, shelter and welfare, including protection against abuse and exploitation. iii. Ensuring for the elderly, an equitable share in the benefits of development as well as addressing the neglect of elderly women on three counts viz. age, widowhood and gender. iv. Promoting an age-integrated society by adopting mechanisms for improving inter-generational ties so as to make the elderly a part and parcel of families/households. v. Considering the elderly as a resource by advocating their inclusion within the family, community and society and carving out specific productive roles and opportunities for themvi. Viewing the elderly as an agency which needs to be empowered, with regard to their voice and representation in the electoral sphere. Vii. In connection with the larger budgetary requirements, to ensure the welfare of the elderly thereby

advocating the involvement of civil society, individuals and families in this endeavor. viii. Recognising the need for expansion of social and community services with universal accessibility. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MOSJE) coordinate the implementation of NPOP while many elements of the Policy are under the mandates of several other ministries. After about a decade of implementation of NPOP, the MOSJE set up a committee of experts to review implementation experience and suggest ways and means for improving the policy content and its implementation. The expert committee has now prepared a revised National Policy for Senior Citizens (NPSC) that recognizes that (a) elderly women need special attention, (b) rural poor need special attention and (c) factoringthe advancements in medical technology and assistive into the revised policy. The goal of the National Policy is the well - being of older persons. It aims to strengthen their legitimate place in society and help older persons to live their last phase of their life with purpose, dignity and peace. The salient features of the National Policy as under: 1. To support financial security, health care and nutrition, shelter, information needs, appropriate concessions and discounts etc. to senior citizens. 2. Special attention to protect and strengthen their legal rights such as to safeguard their life and property. 3. Recognizes persons aged 60+ as senior citizens. Evaluation of NPOP: - For setting this policy and effective implementation of it various service users involved to make statements in this policy. Role of these service users was though effective. As one stakeholder cannot provide services to older persons. Also these service users play an important role as pressure groups for making this policy by Government of India. Non �" Government organizations and voluntary organizations were the most

prominent user in that. As state alone cannot provide all services which is in great need of older persons. Also, Private sector agencies cannot cover the whole older population. In society various NGOs working for the welfare and empowerment of older people. So NGOs sector become very prominent institutional mechanism to provide user- friendly services to complement the endeavours of the state in this direction.

Pressure Groups:

International OrganizationsVienna Plan of Action on AgeingInternational Federation on AgeingOther UN agencies

Governing Bodies:

National Council on Older PersonsAn Inter- Ministerial CommitteeSetting up of Separate Bureau in Min. SJ& ENHRC

Key User Involvement at different levels

Individual Service Users:

Civil Society (CBOs and PRIs)MediaSocial ActivistsExperts in field of law, social welfare and Medicine

Professional Bodies:

NGO's citizen's groupApex level organizations of older personsCharitable Societies and Other Voluntary organizations working for old age careFig: 1. 1 Key User Involvement at different levelFrom above figure 1. 1, we can understand that for the setting up and implementation of this policy many key users participated and involved to bring such into an action so that older people in India can get complete care and protection at the age of 60 or 60+

years. For making this policy much effective, proper networking and coordination was get done through meetings, seminars and workshops so that from the grass root level these users can highlight the issues and challenges of older people and through this policy older persons can get security, safety and protection to make better their quality of life. Non-Government and other voluntary organizations of of elders, which had formerly soughthelp and small favors from government, began to talk about their rights and develop an advocacy role. Population aging in a democratic state leads to increased proportions of older voters who have the right to determine public policies. It has often been said child welfare policy is neglected because children are not voters. By contrast, elders are often vocal and determined to express their will through the ballot box. By the late 1990s, most political parties had included aging as part of their election manifesto. In the 1999 elections, the Indian Federation on Ageing (IFA) wrote all political parties and their leaders, requesting clarifications of their positions on aging issues. Thus, the political situation was ripe for a national policy on aging. The growing understanding by national policymakers was influenced by the 1982 World Assembly on Aging, by the U. N. Principles for Older Persons adopted by the General Assembly in 1991, and by the Proclamation on Ageing and Global Targets on Ageing for the Year 2001, adopted by the General Assembly in 1992. The leader of the Indian delegation was Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee, who was the Prime Minister of India at that time, who outlined the progress towards India's national policy on aging. Furthermore, the international discussions on economic security of older persons in developing countries generated by the World Bank study (1994) became the subject of national debate in India. It was clear that the

various programs of economic security for the elderly needed to be reviewed and that a search for a new system for provision might be necessary. An urgent need to supplement traditional family support systems also gained greater recognition, with emphasis on developing supportive services at the local level, rather than at the national or state levels. Wide dissemination is seen as the basis for an action plan. Collaboration by government, other institutions, and individuals was the primary mechanism. Organizations of older persons have special responsibilities such as watchdogs, mobilizers of public opinion, and generators of pressures for NPOP implementation. Furthermore, each national ministry is required to prepare Five-Year Plans and annual action plans about their implementation of aspects of the NPOP that fall into their jurisdiction. Targets, time frames, and implementation responsibilities was specified to ensure that both age-related and age-based programs benefit elders; each ministry's annual report had indicated progress achieved during the year. In addition, the MJSE prepared a detailed review of NPOP implementation every three years. The preparation of the report is to draw on non-official sources and to be discussed at a national convention. To ensure effective implementation at different levels, on occasion experts in public administration was called on to consult on details of administrative structure, coordination, and monitoring of the NPOP. At the subnational level, state governments and Union Territory administrations were urged to undertake similar actions. Similarly, Panchayati Raj institutions (village councils) were encouraged to participate in NPOP implementation by addressing local level issues and needs of the elderly and developing programs for them, and by providing forums, which ensure adequate representation of older women, to discuss elders' concerns and actions to be

taken. They were expected to mobilize and utilize the talents and skills of older persons through specific plans, with the help of panchayat Social Justice Committees. For the formulation and implementation of National Policy on older persons, media have played a very important role to in highlighting the changing situations of older persons and in identifying emerging issues and areas of action. It also focuses on relevant and latest data to highlight the problems of older persons. Media always plays an effective role to aware the people about society. So, through media's intervention in ageing sector people aware about all issues related to old age care. Therefore we can say that media was an effective pressure group and user in promoting, setting up and implementation of NPOP. Apex level organizations of older persons for example: local Senior citizen associations in the area had special responsibilities in this regard because they always function as a watchdog, energize continuing action, mobilize public opinion and generated pressure on government for implementation of such policy for old age care and protection. More importantly, implementation and review of Vienna Action plan of action on ageing, International federation on ageing and other United Nations agencies which highlight the global scenario on ageing and highlights the need of policy statements for older people in India. At Individual service user involvement CBOs and PRIs (Community based organizations and Panchayati raj institutions) were the key actors in highlighting the issues of ageing at grass root level which creates a pressure on Government to provide such policy as an welfare mechanism for those elderly who are completely dependent on society. Panchayat Raj institutions were encouraged to participate in the implementation of the national policy, address local levels issues and needs of the ageing and implement programs

for them. They provide forums for discussing concerns of older persons and activities that need to be taken. Such forums were encouraged at Panchayat, block and district level. They were having adequate representation of older women. Panchayat has to mobilize the talents and skills of older persons and draw up plans for utilizing these at the local level. Amongst others, the help of the social justice committees of the village panchayats were taken to advocate different measures for giving effect to the policy. Last but not the least, NHRC (National Human Rights Commission) was also one of the key actor as pressure group for setting up of policy. NHRC highlights the cases of violation of human rights of older persons which creates an urgent need for government of India to set up it for protection of rights of older persons. For effective implementation of this policy, the ministry of social justice and empowerment worked as the nodal ministry to coordinate all matters relating to the implementation and setting up of the policy. A separate bureau of older persons was set up for this, which is known as old age division. An Inter-ministerial committee was set up to coordinate matters relating to implementation of the national policy and monitor its progress. States governments were also encouraged to set up separate directorate of older persons and set up machinery for coordination and monitoring. Also this committee ensures that other ministries in central Government will run the specific projects and welfare programmes for providing various services to the older people. Another strategy for implementation and user involvement was the constitution of an autonomous National council for older persons, (Representatives from Central Ministries, States, Non Official members representing NGOs, academic Bodies, Media and Experts and members) which is headed by the minister for social justice and

empowerment Govt. of India. The council's role was indeed effective as it include the representatives of relevant central ministries and the planning commission. Five states were represented on the council by rotation. Adequate representation was given to non-official members representing non-government organizations, academic bodies, Media and experts on ageing issues from different fields. Every three years a detailed review has to be prepared by the nodal Ministry on implementation of NPOP. There have non- official participation in the preparation of the document. This review is always considered as public document. In order to make effective implementation of this policy at different levels, from time to time the public administration officials and experts shall be taken to prepare the details of the organizational setup for the implementation, coordination and monitoring of the policy. The whole user involvement was very effective in setting up of and implementation of this Policy. As media provided the concept of ageing and highlighted the old age care issues in society. Media helped to strengthen inter-generation bonding between older and younger so that an individual, family or group can transform. Also media played an important role in promoting or generating awareness among society about the ageing process also highlighted the healthy and active ageing to aware especially older people. Also Involvement of NGOs, Voluntary organizations was very effective too. As important stakeholder in civil society NGOs and voluntary organizations dealing personally with the problems of older people in society. Even some trusts, charity organizations promoting research in field of ageing so that better facility can be provide to older people and government can run effective programmes for their plight and welfare. So this effective communication or networking between NGOs and Government makes this

policy's implementation and setting up successful. Hence NGOs and voluntary organization's participation was indeed effective. After implementing the policy, media was an important tool through which older persons, caregivers and their families were informed about this. Also at grass root level, local NGOs, community workers, social activists played a prominent role to carry this policy in the civil society. Also Government played an important role to make people aware about this policy through publishing this as an important public document in their annual reports as well. NGOs and other voluntary organizations received funds from Government to organize sensitization or awareness programmes for this policy in public. So that every unit of society was informed about this.

Outcome: The participation of older people was not direct in the setting and implementation of this policy. However the views of older people were account in implementing this policy through the National Council of Older persons in India. The NCOP consists 25% of its members drawn from the government and 75% comprising academics and retired persons both from rural and urban communities. The Governments accepts the Council as a watchdog agency designed to monitor policy on ageing. Even though, NPOP is indeed effective for the welfare and empowerment of older persons in India. As it provides a holistic approach for elderly welfare as it is promoting active ageing. This policy has an impact in lives of older people in terms of providing them financial, health, legal, social and psychological security. The crux of the policy was to prevent the all social problems of older persons rather than cure it. The policy highlights the plight of the vulnerable within the older person's category such as widows, women in general, the poor, rural residents, the disabled and chronically (including mentally) ill and

others. The national policy is open ended. It promises an array of state interventions �" support for financial security, health care, shelter and welfare, special focus on older women, protection against abuse and exploitation and special attention to rural areas. It also recognizes that the state by itself cannot achieve these objectives, except partially. Conclusion and Recommendations: After reviewing the NPOP, It is to be concluded that keeping the view in mind that demographic transitions are taking place and issues and challenges for older people are increasing as well. The decision was taken to frame a policy for older persons was first mooted in the '80s, following the World Assembly on Ageing held at Vienna in 1982. Also as we have discussed earlier that apart from Vienna plan of action on ageing there were many user involved and acted as pressure groups to formulate such policy for the upliftment of older persons so that ageing can come in main stream of the society. The NPOP was clearly ambitious in the breadth of its area of intervention and action strategies the seek mobilize all levels of government, NGOs, family, and older persons themselves in helping to meet the challenges of older persons in India. Important aspect or feature of NPOP is that it gives complete freedom or opportunity to every state and Union territory to organize and generate programmes in different geographical areas, with different age- groups, different needs, depending upon their social cultural backgrounds. Also, another feature highlights the heavy reliance on NGOs, both social welfare organizations and associations of older persons. NGOs play a Vitol role in any society for old age care. Interventions and support from external organizations such as Help age International, the International Federation on Ageing, Rotary International could play important role in training and capacity building of NGOs through technical and financial

support especially for small organizations working at the grass root level in the society. In addition, the family is the safety net for the aged, but the NPOP does not adequately address how to strengthen familial abilities, including economic capacity, to carry out this vital role. The problems with the administration of the national old-age assistance and Annapurna programs must also be corrected. Other administrative and coordinating issues need attention as well. An effective coordinating mechanism clearly needs to be instituted. In addition, the effort to create a voluntary organization, more or less run by the national government, seems contradictoryas a mechanism to promote more participation. Additionally, overreliance on governmental grants-in-aid to NGOs needs to be re-examined. The growth of the program attests to its popularity with NGOs, but there are no established ongoing mechanisms for monitoring the progress and viability of the programs or of the organizations running them. Especially in regions where no stable NGOs are operative, thought must be given to building up that kind of capacity. Finally, the present policy appears to be dominated by demographic considerations, rather than the personal experience of aging. Based on the reviewing of NPOP I have made some recommendations for further implications of National policy on older persons. Key recommendations are as follows:-The existing policy reads like a statement of recognition of the problem and not its reconciliation. New laws, policies and programmes should be streamlined with internationally agreed standards based on the mippa's framework. Guideline need to be developed to screen laws, policies or programmes for their relevance to ageing societies. There is no specific recommendation for older women which address their particular circumstances on account of gender and age. Abuse

of older persons has been mentioned in the policy but no special reference to violence against older women finds a place in it. Older women have been placed to more an account of their lack of legal entitlements. Successful mainstreaming means including all relevant stakeholders in decision-making, to ensure that the needs of all age groups are met in all policy fields. Participation of other potential stakeholder like the NGOs, the private sector, and trade unions should have institutional prescription. Coordination is necessary at the national level as well as regional and local level where policy decisions are taken. The budget should be systematically evaluated as to the benefits to different age groups with respect to ageing related section. An advocacy campaign might help to sensitise the public to the concern and condition of older individuals. Mainstreaming ageing involves a shift from developing policies for older persons to inclusion of older person in the policy making process, taking into account their views and opinions when developing and implementing policies that affect them.