

JUNE 15-21, 2025

SUNDAY POST

HERE . NOW

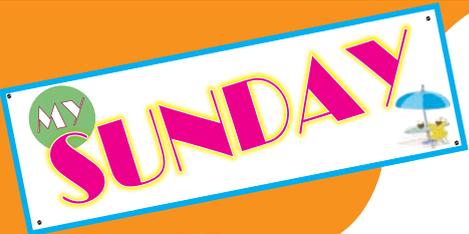


Magic still on

COVER STORY

P
3,4





With co-actors



With actor Anubhav Mohanty

Launching his career as the lead in hit TV series 'Sindurara Adhikara', Berhampur-born actor Sanoj Kumar Behera went on to garner a strong fanbase with his performances in several music videos. Later, he transitioned seamlessly to cinema. While he shone playing a supporting role in 'Karma', his breathtaking show in 'Ghamaghot' put him in big league. When not in the spotlight, Sanoj spends time indulging in creative hobbies that keep his artistic spirit alive

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

Hanging out with buddies

When I'm not working, I love hanging out with friends. Since I enjoy traveling, we often plan trips together — and sometimes, I even go on solo adventures.

Creative talk

My filmmaker friends and I often watch movies from different genres and engage in deep discussions, aiming to offer the audience something fresh and meaningful every time.

Love for music

Recently, I've discovered a growing interest in music, so whenever I get time, I enjoy learning musical instruments and indulging in creative activities like painting and doodling.

Unscheduled Sunday

As an actor, I don't have a fixed routine—so my Sundays completely depend on the work schedule lined up for the week.

Break from work

In my leisure time, I enjoy reading, working out, and meditating. Occasionally, I treat myself to some healthy, home-cooked food prepared by me.



WhatsApp This Week

Only on **Sunday POST!**

Send in your most interesting WhatsApp messages and memes at: features.orissapost@gmail.com
And we will publish the best ones

THE BEST MEMES OF THIS ISSUE

- If I'd shot you sooner, I'd be out of jail by now.
- What do ghosts serve for dessert? I Scream.
- Teacher: "Which book has helped you the most in your life?" Student: "My father's checque book!"
- The human brain is one of the most complex objects in the universe. Is it any wonder that so many people never learn to use it.



Reservoir of life

Sir, This refers to last week's cover story 'Voices of the blue' on World Ocean Day. Oceans cover over 70% of the Earth's surface and play a crucial role in sustaining human life. They are the planet's largest ecosystems, supporting a vast array of marine life that provides food for millions of people worldwide. Oceans also regulate the global climate by absorbing carbon dioxide and heat, mitigating the impacts of climate change. They generate oxygen through phytoplankton, which produces nearly half of the Earth's supply. Additionally, oceans drive weather patterns, influencing rainfall and temperature. They serve as critical transportation routes for trade and commerce, connecting nations and fostering economic growth. Moreover, oceans offer recreational opportunities and cultural significance, enriching human well-being. Protecting these vast bodies of water is essential for the continued survival and prosperity of humanity.

SAMBIT NANDA, SONEPUR

LETTERS



A word for readers

Sunday post is serving a platter of delectable fare every week, or so we hope. We want readers to interact with us. Feel free to send in your opinions, queries, comments and contributions to

Features.orissapost@gmail.com
B-15, Industrial Estate, Rasulgarh,
Bhubaneswar - 751010, Orissa.
Phone (0674) 2549982, 2549948

Magic still on

At a time when many youths see traditional festivals like Raja Parba as outdated, there exists a section of passionate souls who celebrate them with fervor, actively preserving their essence for future generations

ANISHA KHATUN, OP

Banaste Dakila Gaja, Barasake Thare Asichi Raja, Asichi Raja Lo, Gheni Nua Sajabaja !!

While many festivals today are becoming Instagram moments, Raja still finds a heartbeat in the lanes of Odisha — thanks to a generation of youngsters who are holding on, not out of obligation, but out of love. As the air fills with the earthy aroma of poda pitha and the sound of laughter rings from backyard swings, young people are proving that traditions don't have to be old-fashioned to be meaningful.

At a time when culture is slipping through our fingers like sand, here're a few youngsters who turn their palms upward — ready to catch, hold, and carry it forward. Through each game, song, and bite of pitha, they aren't just celebrating Raja — they're keeping the soul of Odisha alive.

As the festive spirit of Raja takes over, **Sunday POST** caught up with a few such culture enthusiasts shared with Sunday POST how the festival holds a special place in their lives.

'NOT MANY CULTURES CELEBRATE MENSTRUATION LIKE ODISHA DOES'

Trupti Mayee Sahoo, 21, B.Tech Student, Bhubaneswar, says, "Raja is the soul of our Odia identity, and in our house, it's not just celebrated — it's lived. Even though we stay in Bhubaneswar, a busy



city that's always on the move, our home turns into a slice of rural Odisha during these three days. My mother makes sure everything — from the poda pitha to the flower decorations — reflects the authenticity of Raja. I may be a college student now, running around with exams and projects, but when Raja comes, everything else takes a backseat. On the eve of Pahili Raja, we start with cleaning the house and setting up the doli (swing) in our balcony

city that's always on the move, our home turns into a slice of rural Odisha during these three days. My mother makes sure everything — from the poda pitha to the flower decorations — reflects the authenticity of Raja. I may be a college student now, running around with exams and projects, but when Raja comes, everything else takes a backseat. On the eve of Pahili Raja, we start with cleaning the house and setting up the doli (swing) in our balcony



takes a break from her usual kitchen duties. The aroma fills the house, and neighbours drop by just for a bite or two. This year, we're planning a small get-together with our colony friends — most of whom are from different states."

Trupti loves explaining the significance of the festival to her friends, especially how it honours womanhood and Mother Earth.

"It's so empowering to be part of a tradition that actually celebrates menstruation in a positive light. Not many cultures do that openly. What makes it more special is how our family slows down during these three days. My mother doesn't cook meals, my father avoids going to office, and we all spend time together — playing in-

door games, singing

old Odia songs, swinging, and reminiscing childhood stories. It's a rare pause from our otherwise hectic lives.

bloom — just like the girls on the swings, flying high but holding onto the ropes of their culture," she concludes.

'IT IS ABOUT BONDING, STORIES, FOOD, &PRIDE'

Sanskarika Subhadarshini, 14, Class 10, Cuttack, says, "Every year when Raja ar-



rives, it feels like a warm, colourful pause in our regular lives.

During these three days, our home transforms completely — not just in decoration, but in mood. The entire house feels lighter, happier, like it's smiling with us. Raja is not just a festival for us — it's a celebration of being girls, of resting and of remembering who we are."



I feel rooted, recharged, and proud," she shares.

"Even though I'm studying in a modern college environment, Raja reminds me that traditions aren't old-fashioned — they're timeless. As long as we celebrate them with heart, they will continue to





Explaining how the family celebrates the festival, she continues: “On the first day, my elder sister and I wake up early, even though there’s no school. We help our mother decorate the front porch with jhоти and rangoli, and our father hangs flowers and mango leaves at the door. There’s a swing tied to the old guava tree in our backyard. My sister and I decorate it with balloons and paper flowers, and later we take turns swinging on it while singing old Odia songs. I love the feeling of the breeze brushing my face as I go higher — it feels like flying.”

Subhadarshini further shares, “My favourite part is wearing new clothes and applying alta. My sister applies it on my feet so neatly, and we take pictures together. Sometimes we even dress alike — last year we both wore yellow. It’s these small things that make Raja feel magical. There’s a different kind of joy in seeing my mother laugh freely while flipping poda pitha on the tawa, or watching my father bring in fresh jackfruit and mangoes for the occasion. During Raja, girls don’t work — it’s our time to rest and enjoy. Even my mother, who’s usually busy from morning till night, takes time to sit with us, eat pitha and play cards. There’s no pressure, no scolding, just love and togetherness. In our house, Raja means sitting in a circle on the floor with plates full of pitha, talking about old family stories and laughing at jokes only we understand.”

At last, Subhadarshini adds,

“Sometimes people think festivals are just for rituals or for show — but for me, Raja is about bonding, stories, food, and pride. It teaches me that being a girl is something worth celebrating. I feel lucky to be part of this tradition. One day, when I’m older, I want to teach my daughter everything my mother and sister have taught me — to pause, to celebrate, and to always wear her alta with pride.”

‘RAJA IS ABOUT CONNECTION — TO OUR ROOTS, TO EACH OTHER’

Simran Das, 23, Marketing Associate, Cuttack, says, “Raja is that one festival which makes me forget I’m an

adult with a full-time job. I might be working in a corporate setup now, dealing with presentations and client calls all week, but when Raja comes, I’m just Simran again — the middle child, the pitha lover, the one who fights over the swing with her siblings. Raja in our house is a complete event. It starts with my mother announcing the pitha menu a week in advance. Trust me, that list gets edited more times than my office reports. From poda pitha to kakara and arisa, we go all in. The night before Pahili Raja, our house smells like roasted rice and jaggery, and honestly, no perfume in the world can beat that.”

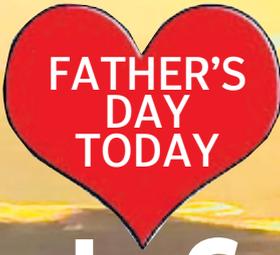
Das further shares, “Raja morning feels different — the air, the sky, every-

thing seems happier. My mother draws beautiful jhоти at the entrance, and we decorate our old swing with marigold garlands and mango leaves. It’s the same swing my father tied for us when we were kids, and we still argue about who gets the first turn. I wear a traditional saree — yes, a proper cotton saree — and apply alta with my sister.

She always messes it up and we end up laughing till our stomachs hurt. My brother jokes about how we girls suddenly become royalty during Raja. He’s not wrong. We don’t touch household work for these three days. It’s like the house runs on magic. We play indoor games, listen to old Odia folk songs, and my parents share their Raja memories from their village days. No phones, no deadlines, just conversations and laughter.”

“It’s not about grandeur. It’s about connection — to our roots, to each other. I know people my age often distance themselves from tradition, but for me, Raja is empowering. It celebrates womanhood, rest, nature — things we hardly pause to acknowledge in our fast-paced lives. I don’t follow every ritual to the dot, but what I do comes from the heart. Years from now, when I might be in another city or country, I know Raja will still be that reminder — of warm pithas, red alta, giggles on the swing, and a house where time slowed down just enough for love to linger,” she signs off.





Redefining fatherhood



ANISHA KHATUN, OP

In a society that is still learning to appreciate the many forms of parenthood, single fathers deserve not just recognition, but heartfelt gratitude also

In a world that often highlights the nurturing role of mothers, the silent strength of single fathers often goes unnoticed. Yet, behind the closed doors of countless homes, these unsung heroes are rewriting the definition of fatherhood with quiet resilience, unconditional love, and tireless devotion. Their journey is one of sacrifice—juggling careers, cooking meals, helping with homework, and often drying tears—all while carrying the emotional weight of being both protector and provider.

These fathers are not just filling a void; they are building a foundation of trust, love, and stability from scratch. Many wake up each day questioning if they're doing enough, yet never stop trying. They miss promotions to make it to school events, skip meals to ensure their children don't go without.

In a society that is still learning to appreciate the many forms of parenthood, single fathers deserve not just recognition, but heartfelt gratitude.

Here're a couple of such dotting dads who share with Sunday POST their journey of single parenthood.

'It's a blessing wrapped in heart break'

Subham Jena, 37, an IT professional and a father of a 6-year-old daughter, Bhubaneswar, says, "When my wife left during the second wave of COVID, everything in my life collapsed overnight.



I didn't just lose my partner—I lost my best friend, my support system, and the mother of my child. Our daughter was only six months old. She didn't fully under-

stand what had happened; she just kept asking why mama wasn't coming home. I didn't have the heart or the words to explain death to a child so young, but I had to learn. That's what it's been like since—learning everything on the go, with no manual, no backup, and no pause button."

Jena further shares, "I had never braided hair before. I had never attended a PTA meeting alone or dealt with a child's breakdown in the middle of the night. But I've done all of that and more in the last few years. I've stayed up after long workdays to help with school projects, watched over her when she had fever, and tried to be the soft place she could land on, even when I felt completely shattered inside.

Every milestone she crosses now, she looks for her mother in the sky, and I look at her and see both of us surviving in each other."

"There are nights I cry alone, wondering if I'm doing enough, and days when her smile tells me I am. People often say men aren't built to nurture, but I know now that love rewires everything.

Being a single father is not a burden—it's a blessing wrapped in heartbreak. I lost my world, but in raising my daughter, I've slowly rebuilt a new one," he concludes.

'In raising kids, I somehow rebuilt myself too'

Abhijit Senapati, 56, Businessman and father of two, Cuttack, says, "I was 42 when cancer took my wife. It happened so quickly—one moment we were discussing weekend plans, and the next I was left alone with two children, a broken heart, and a mountain of responsibilities I had never imagined carrying on my own. My daughter was eight, my son just five. They needed answers, routine, love, and stability. I didn't

know how to give any of it—I was grieving myself. But I had no choice. I had to be their everything."

Senapati further shares, "The first few years were chaos. I didn't know how to pack a school lunch that they wouldn't throw away, how to handle tantrums, or how to talk about loss without breaking down. I burned meals, missed school notes, and cried in the shower so they wouldn't see me fall apart. But every morning, I showed up—sometimes unsure, always tired, but never absent. I went from being just a father to being the one who held it all together, even when I didn't feel whole myself."

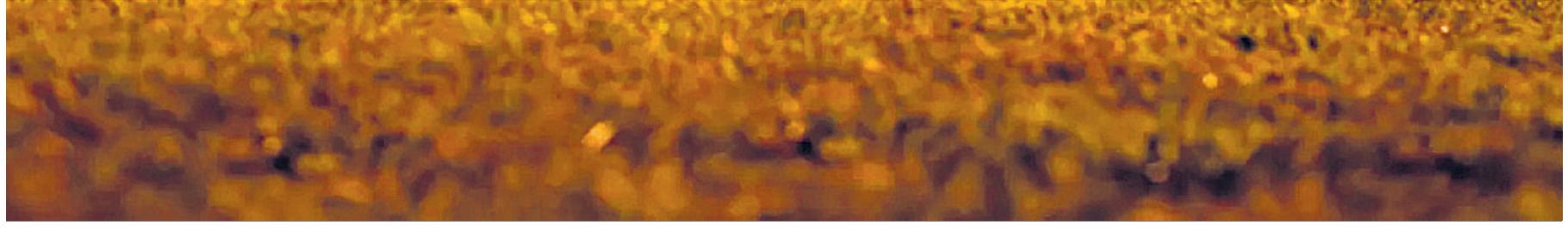
"Now both my children are in college. They're independent, kind, grounded—and I couldn't be prouder. I sometimes sit on the balcony with my evening tea and wonder how I made it through. The



truth is, I didn't do it alone. They gave me strength on days I had none. We grew together—me learning to nurture, them learning to cope. I sacrificed a lot—career growth, friendships, even peace—but I gained a bond with my children

that's unbreakable. Being a single father wasn't the life I chose, but it became my greatest purpose. And in raising them, I somehow rebuilt myself too," he adds.

What makes you a man isn't the ability to make a child; it's the courage to raise one.
BARACK OBAMA



Nitanshi takes a walk down memory lane

Actress Nitanshi Goel, who is known for her work in *Laapataa Ladies*, is celebrating her 18th birthday last week. On the occasion, the actress took a walk down the memory lane, and recollected her best birthday celebration when her parents organised a Barbie-themed party for her at their home.

The actress spoke with this news agency, and shared her best childhood birthday memory that she still loves, and finds the joy in.

The actress said, "That would definitely be the one where my parents surprised me with a Barbie-themed party at home! All my friends were there, we had a magician, games, and my favourite pink cake. I remember feeling like the happiest girl in the world. That day still makes me smile".

She further mentioned how she is planning to spend her special day, as she said, "This year, I'm keeping it simple and heartfelt. I'll start the day with some quiet time with my family, who've been my biggest strength always. Later, I'll meet a few close friends, maybe cut a cake or two (laughs). I also love spending part of my birthday giving back, so I plan to visit a children's shelter, it fills my heart in the most beautiful way".



Genelia bats for age-appropriate casting

Genelia Deshmukh is set to star opposite Aamir Khan in the upcoming emotional drama *Sitaare Zameen Par*, where she plays his wife. In a candid conversation, Genelia opened up about how the industry responded positively to her casting, yet also highlighted the lack of roles offered to her post-marriage. She revealed that she auditioned three times for the role and credited Aamir for seeing her potential. "When people heard I was doing *Sitaare Zameen Par*, they said, 'Oh my god! So lucky!' But Aamir sir saw something and gave me a chance. Others can do that too," she said.

pointed out a prevailing mindset in Bollywood that married actresses don't require substantial roles. She emphasised the need for age-appropriate

casting, stressing that younger actors often can't capture the nuances required for mature roles. "Filmmaking has changed, and our mentality should too," she added.

Directed by R.S. Prasanna of Shubh Mangal Saavdhan fame, *Sitaare Zameen Par* is a Hindi remake of the Spanish film *Campeones*. Marking Aamir Khan's return to cinema post-*Laal Singh Chaddha*, the film explores a heartfelt narrative and is set to release in June 2025, with Genelia and Aamir's unique pairing promising fresh on-screen chemistry.

AGENCIES



Genelia

When Fatima burst into tears

Actress Fatima Sana Shaikh, who is awaiting the release of her upcoming film *Metro... In Dino*, has shared an interesting anecdote from the shooting of the film.

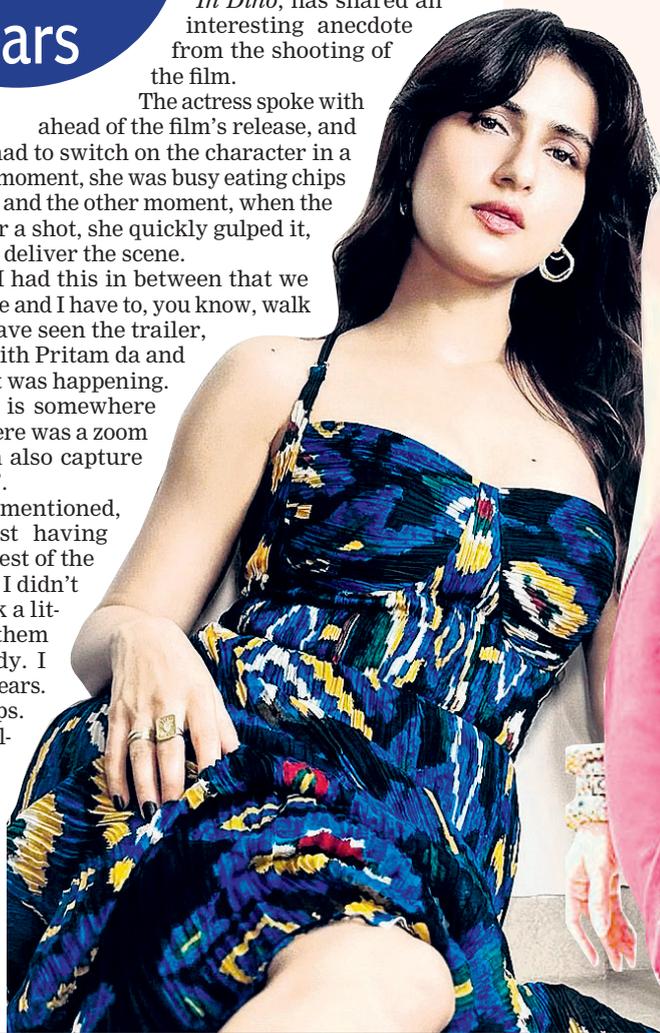
The actress spoke with

this news agency ahead of the film's release, and shared how she had to switch on the character in a split second. One moment, she was busy eating chips during the break, and the other moment, when the director called for a shot, she quickly gulped it, and was all set to deliver the scene.

Fatima said, "I had this in between that we were doing a scene and I have to, you know, walk and cry. If you have seen the trailer, there's a scene with Pritam da and Papon. So all that was happening. And the camera is somewhere far away. But, there was a zoom lens, so they can also capture you very clearly".

She further mentioned, "And, I was just having chips while the rest of the people got ready. I didn't know. And it took a little time to tell them that they're ready. I had to burst into tears. I was eating chips. So Dada said, 'Rolling'. And I was like, 'f***'. And I quickly gulped and I started crying. But this is not found in any other set, that you can perform on call. That is only possible with him".

IAN S



Shraddha on travel spree

Actress Shraddha Kapoor turned on her "ghummakad" mode as she travelled to several places like the museum and a renowned Parsi restaurant in Mumbai.

Shraddha took to her Instagram, where she shared a string of pictures from her visit to the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, the oldest museum in Mumbai, which was originally established in 1855 as a treasure house of the decorative and industrial arts. The images had Shraddha posing in the museum and with the flowers she received. The actress also shared a few glimpses from her visit to the Parsi restaurant Britannia & Co., which was established in 1923.

The *Stree* star posed with the owner and shared pictures of the caramel custard she had, along with the interiors of the restaurant.

For the caption, she wrote: "Next picnic kahan jaoon ??? #Ghummakad-ModeOn."

On the professional front, reports claim that Shraddha will be joining hands with Tumbbad maker Rahi Anil Barve for her next. Going by the reports, she has signed a multi-film contract with producer Ektaa Kapoor, who will also back the untitled drama.

She was last seen on screen in the 2024 film *Stree 2: Sarkate Ka Aatank*, a comedy horror film directed by Amar Kaushik. IAN S

In Indian conditions, older people are often neglected by those for whom they have sacrificed and given everything at their prime

CHITTARANJAN DAS

It is often said that a house without an elderly person around is like a tree standing without leaves, barren and incomplete. But how many of us truly believe in this saying?

To obtain data on how the aging population is treated, two prominent global organizations, the International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (INPEA) and the World Health Organization (WHO), launched a survey in 2010. The findings indicated an increase in the number of elderly individuals, and shockingly, they often face abuse from society. This data was presented to several agencies established by the United Nations.

Due to improved nutrition, sanitation, advanced medical facilities, healthcare, and economic well-being, the elderly today enjoy a remarkably increased life span, according to the survey. However, there has also been a rise in cases of elder abuse. These two organizations strongly advocated that the elderly, being a reservoir of accumulated experiences, are precious assets to the nation. Hence, there is a need to offer them a graceful aging experience and space to lead dignified lives.

International recognition

Consequently, all nations and the United Nations Organization felt that the elderly population needs to be protected against all sorts of abuse—civil, social, or by government agencies. The UNO viewed the subject as a matter of importance and declared in 2011 that June 15th of every year be observed as “World Elder Abuse Awareness Day.”

Types of elder abuse

Any act that causes harm to an elderly person is considered abuse.

In Indian conditions, older people are often neglected by those for whom they have sacrificed and given everything. The degradation of traditional, social, joint family structures, the impact of modernization on society, and the lack of value-added education at the family level are also responsible for such incidents.

The mistreatment of elderly people can be categorized into physical abuse, where there are assaults; emotional abuse, where there is neglect by their own people and they are abandoned to live alone; and financial abuse, where they are left helpless. These neglects lead to a severe negative psychological impact on older people, resulting in the highest order of abuse.

In India, the rural population is affected more due to the lack of financial stability for themselves and their children. Their urban counterparts may have a more comfortable life due to financial stability, but they suffer from other forms of abuse, which are no less painful.

What stats say

Coming to some statistics, the elderly population in 2024 was 1.44 billion worldwide, expected to reach 2.01 billion by 2030 and 4.26 billion by 2050. India had an elderly population of 150 million in 2024,



WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY - JUNE 15

Elderly abuse: A growing concern

which was 8.6% of the total population of India. It is expected to rise to 12% to 13% by 2030 and reach 190 million. The year 2025 may see a rise to 20%, and the elderly population may reach 340 million.

In Odisha, the elderly population was about 3.88 million in 2011 (9.5%) and reached about 6.269 million by 2023 (13.8%).

Legal & policy framework

While several laws have been formulated globally to address this issue, India passed an Act named “The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens” in 2007. The state government created a rule in 2009, a policy in 2016, and thereafter formulated a project ABADAN for the implementation of the aims and objects of the relevant Act/Rule/Policy to render services to elders and protect them from abuse.

Way forward

So, what is the way forward for this older population?

The foremost remedy for such ill-treatment is that people should plan for their own comfortable living in their old age. Senior citizens must take an active part in organizational and social activities. They must remain aware of the facilities provided by the government as per the relevant Act/Rule/Policy/Projects and

avail themselves of them. Senior citizens must also work on sensitizing the younger generation to this issue.

Govt responsibilities

India, as a welfare state, is duty-bound to take care of this vast population. The government has a vision, as mandated in laws and projects, for establishing a coherent, comprehensive, and sustainable social framework for the welfare of senior citizens. This includes designing, developing, and promoting participatory processes, critical service delivery, and empathetic initiatives for senior citizens.

Providing social security, healthcare, food, and shelter to the economically poor is the primary function of the government. There is also a need to remove barriers to access public places, ensure unrestricted access to financial and other resources, and support organizations working for the welfare of senior citizens.

The main objective of the government should be to ensure and promote the concept of “Aging in Peace” by creating a conducive, safe, and secure environment in homes and communities. Educating

future generations within families and society to ensure that senior citizens are cared for, respected, and valued is an important task not only for the government but also for senior citizens’ organizations and social activists.

Every state has a separate department named “Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities,” which takes care of implementing the government’s policy projects to provide comfortable lives for senior citizens. The programs include the establishment of old age homes, day care centers, geriatric centers, health on wheels senior citizens service, helplines, and counseling, as well as strengthening organizations working for senior citizens.

For the redressal of grievances and abuse, sub-divisional/district-level tribunals have been constituted under the relevant Act. The duties of all categories of officers in the police and administrative departments at all levels, from panchayat to district and state, have been codified in the Act/Rules.

The government has projected much in policy, but its implementation depends on the active participation of relevant officials at all levels. The role of senior citizens is also important for educating the younger generation, planning for old age, and keeping themselves involved in organizational and social activities. Creating awareness against the abuse of older people is a comprehensive package, and its success lies in the active participation of all stakeholders. The government is the biggest stakeholder and should be careful not to be named the “Biggest Abuser” for not implementing projects/programs.

The author is Advisor, Federation of Senior Citizen Associations of Odisha, Bhubaneswar

The abuse of elders is a violation of human rights and we must work to end it once for all.
BAN KI MOON | FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL, UNITED NATIONS



LIPSA



WANT TO BECOME A MODEL?

Send us your photographs at features.orissapost@gmail.com