

# Report of the Technical Consultation on “Productive Ageing: Challenges and Opportunities for Senior Citizens

**Date:** 12th February 2026

**Venue:** IAEA House

**Time:** 10:30 AM – 2:00 PM

## I. Inaugural Segment

The programme commenced with the inauguration of the K.C. Memorial Hall, marking the formal beginning of the consultation.



## II. Welcome Address – Prof. Rajesh, Honorary Director, IAEA and Sr. Prof. DCEE

Prof. Rajesh delivered the welcome address and outlined the vision and objectives of the platform. He highlighted:

- The role of IAEA and the need for professionalisation in community-based initiatives.
- The importance of community engagement and institutional partnerships.

- Emerging challenges and opportunities in senior citizen welfare.
- The concept of “Happy Ageing” as a developmental and social priority.

He emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts between academic institutions, community organizations, and social groups to strengthen elderly support systems.

### **III. Expert Deliberations**

#### **1. Address by Prof. S. Y. Shah, Patron, IAEA**

Prof. S. Y. Shah shared his extensive institutional experience in addressing issues concerning senior citizens. He reflected on the challenges faced in establishing residential facilities and explained the transition toward more sustainable, community-based models of support.

Key highlights included:

- The increasing proportion of senior citizens and the emerging demographic shift.
- The need for structured institutional and community-based support mechanisms.
- Reflections on earlier attempts to establish old-age homes that encountered infrastructural, administrative, and financial constraints.
- A strategic shift toward community-level engagement programmes conducted on a monthly basis.
- Introduction of initiatives such as “Friends of Senior Citizens,” involving youth and research scholars in collaboration with RWAs.
- The importance of intergenerational bonding, academic partnerships, research dissemination, and collective responsibility in promoting productive and healthy ageing.

#### **2. Special Address by Prof. Vinod Kumar (Former Professor of Geriatric Medicine, AIIMS)**

Prof. Vinod Kumar delivered a comprehensive address on ageing, socio-economic transitions, and policy frameworks related to elderly care and social development. Drawing upon his academic and clinical experience, he highlighted the implications of India’s demographic transition and the growing ageing population.

Referring to national data sources such as the 42nd Round of NSS, he discussed the socio-economic profile of first-generation learners and rural populations, emphasizing how structural inequalities influence access to education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities. He observed that many challenges intensify when individuals move away from their familiar socio-cultural environments.

He underscored the importance of understanding socio-cultural dimensions of ageing, including health concerns, demographic shifts, and educational access. Referring to the National Policy on Older Persons (1999) and subsequent developments, he emphasized the need for targeted and inclusive interventions, particularly for marginalized elderly populations.

The address also focused on empowerment strategies such as financial inclusion, collective action models, government programmes, and re-employment opportunities. He highlighted initiatives like SACRED (Senior Able Citizens for Re-Employment in Dignity), which facilitate dignified post-retirement livelihood opportunities.

### **3. Address by Mr. K. P. Mandilwar, Former Director, Indian Oil Corporation**

Mr. K. P. Mandilwar shared his personal experience of participating in GMOHA engagement programmes. He reflected on how involvement in games, fitness activities, music, and social interaction significantly enhanced his sense of purpose and well-being.

His address illustrated how community participation and active engagement can revitalize life in later years and reinforce the spirit of meaningful and joyful ageing.

### **4. Book Release and Reflections by Dr. Mridula Seth**

Dr. Mridula Seth released her book *“In Search of Life: A Journey Within.”* She shared that writing became a therapeutic process following the demise of her husband in 2016. Compiling three decades of poetry into a book provided renewed purpose and emotional healing.



She discussed the evolution of her work, from a collection of poems, to a poetic diary of a volunteer, and now to a poetic diary of a seeker, reflecting a deeper journey of self-discovery and spiritual exploration.

Dr. Seth emphasized that ageing should not be associated with stigma or limitation. Drawing from her work in mental health and life skills education, she highlighted the importance of “silver-aged life skills,” experiential wisdom, and emotional resilience. She advocated for self-acceptance, creativity, and continued engagement as essential aspects of the ageing journey.

### **5. Therapeutic Interaction by Dr. Rajkumari**

Dr. Rajkumari, a PhD in psychology and experienced geriatric counselling practitioner, conducted a therapeutic interaction focused on mental well-being. She introduced simple mind-relaxation and stress-management exercises aimed at promoting emotional balance and positivity.

Participants were encouraged to regularly practice these techniques to enhance psychological resilience and overall well-being in later life.

### **6. Health and Well-being Address by Prof. Dr. Sunil Sharma, Dean, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, New Delhi**

Prof. Dr. Sunil Sharma focused on practical strategies for maintaining health among senior citizens. Referring to WHO guidelines, he emphasized four pillars of healthy living:

- Regular physical exercise
- Balanced nutrition
- Adequate sleep
- Mental fitness

He elaborated on the importance of aerobic exercise, muscle-strengthening, balance training, and stretching, while discouraging prolonged sedentary behavior.

He further highlighted mindful dietary practices, including seasonal fruits, vegetables, salads, complex carbohydrates such as millets, portion control, and disciplined eating habits. He advised maintaining a consistent sleep schedule and avoiding caffeine and heavy meals before bedtime.

The address concluded with practical take-home messages, reinforcing that small, consistent lifestyle modifications can significantly improve healthy and active ageing.

## **7. Address by Guest of Honour – Dr. H. C. Sridhar Reddy, Deputy Director, National Institute of Social Defence (NISD)**

Dr. H. C. Sridhar Reddy provided an overview of national-level initiatives undertaken by NISD under the Senior Citizens Division. He elaborated on capacity-building and professional development programmes, including awareness workshops aimed at strengthening intergenerational bonding.

He discussed outreach programmes related to physiotherapy, wellness initiatives, and legal awareness under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.



Dr. Reddy also highlighted structured training programmes aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP), including certificate courses in geriatric care and caregiving designed to create employment opportunities.

Overall, his address presented NISD's comprehensive approach toward awareness generation, skill development, counselling, and holistic empowerment of senior citizens.

## **8. Academic Perspective by Prof. Archana Kaushik, Department of Social Work, University of Delhi**

In her address, Prof. Archana Kaushik, an expert in gerontological social work, spoke on the growing elderly population in India as both a triumph of human civilization and a pressing social challenge. She highlighted that in the coming years, most families will be caring for two or three generations simultaneously, leading to significant caregiving gaps. Citing that nearly 11.3% of elderly persons in India live alone, she emphasized the rising epidemic of loneliness, noting its severe mental health implications.

She stressed that productive and active ageing is not a luxury but a necessity, warning that lack of preparedness for demographic ageing could have devastating consequences. She further underscored that no nation can progress unless older adults are placed at the centre of development discourse. Concluding her address, she called for strengthening community bonds, social coherence, and India's indigenous ethos of collective responsibility and togetherness

#### **IV. Certificate Distribution and Vote of Thanks**

The programme concluded with the distribution of certificates to volunteers who supported the 66th All India Adult Education Conference held at KIIT, Bhubaneswar.

Shri Suresh Khandelwal delivered the Vote of Thanks, expressing gratitude to all speakers and participants for their active involvement. He emphasized the importance of organizing similar technical consultations on a regular basis. Special appreciation was extended to members of the Anna Nagar community for their participation.

Dr. N. K. Ambasht recommended the development of structured academic and training courses in geriatric care and well-being.

#### **V. Concluding Observations**

The half-day technical consultation brought together academic experts, medical professionals and community leaders to deliberate on the multifaceted dimensions of productive ageing. The discussions underscored the need for integrated, community-based, and policy-supported approaches to ensure dignity, participation, and well-being for senior citizens.

#### **Key Recommendations**

- Develop structured short-term and long-term certificate courses in geriatric care and counselling aligned with national skill development frameworks.
- Promote community-based ageing models with active involvement of RWAs and local groups.
- Establish intergenerational engagement platforms involving youth, research scholars, and senior citizens.
- Strengthen mental health and psychosocial support systems through counselling, peer groups, and mindfulness practices.
- Encourage productive ageing initiatives focusing on re-employment, volunteering, skill-sharing, and creative engagement.
- Expand awareness regarding government schemes and legal rights under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.

- Promote research, documentation, and policy advocacy on demographic ageing and socio-economic vulnerabilities.
- Strengthen collaboration among academic institutions, medical professionals, civil society organizations, and corporate stakeholders for holistic elderly care

**Report compiled by:** Ms. Neha Gupta, Librarian-cum-Documentation Officer, Indian Adult Education Association and Ms. Poonam Rajput, PhD Scholar, Department of Continuing Education and Extension, University of Delhi and a life member of the Indian Adult Education Association.