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As a member country of the First World Assembly on Ageing, organised by the UN in 1982 in Vienna, Austria and the Second World Assembly on Ageing, organised by UN in 2002 in Madrid, Spain and as a signatory to VIPAA and MIPAA, the Bangladesh government has constituted a National Committee on Ageing. The Ministry of Social Welfare has finalised the National Policy on Older Persons, which is yet to be approved by the cabinet for gazette notification.

Research and recommendations

It is unfortunate that national mainstream education lacks proper curricula on ageing issues. Recently, some universities have begun offering courses on gerontology and geriatric medicine, which is encouraging. Among them, the Institute of Social Welfare and Research (ISWR) and Department of Sociology of the University of Dhaka, Department of Social Work of Rajshahi University and National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM) are mentionable.

Fiscal Year	Rate in BDT per OP	Total amount (Million BDT)	Total beneficiaries / Ops (in million)
1997-1998	100.00	125	0.40
1998-1999	100.00	485	0.40
1999-2000	100.00	500	0.41
2000-2001	100.00	500	0.42
2001-2002	100.00	500	0.42
2002-2003	125.00	750	0.50
2003-2004	150.00	1800	1.00
2004-2005	165.00	2603	1.32
2005-2006	180.00	3240	1.50
2006-2007	200.00	3840	1.60
2007-2008	220.00	4458	1.70
2008-2009	250.00	6000	2.00
2009-2010	300.00	8010	2.25
2010-2011	300.00	8910	2.48

Reference: GOB, Ministry of Social Welfare. Poverty Alleviation Human Resource Development and Ministry of Social Welfare, Dhaka, 2007; and National Budget Documents.

Research has helped to unearth hitherto unknown facts about the ageing situation in Bangladesh, allowing for the following recommendations to be made with regards to basic services for the elderly:

- Bangladesh National Committee on Ageing, the highest technical body to advise the authorities on ageing issues, formed in 1984 with the Ministry of Social Welfare as per Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing 1982, needs to be revised and activated, and should undertake appropriate and committed steps for the well-being of older persons in Bangladesh.
- Concerned authorities should take sincere initiatives to approve the long awaited National Policy on Older Persons, finalised by the Ministry of Social Welfare in 2006.
- The Bangladesh government needs to declare, through legislation, citizens of 60 years and above as senior citizens. This will enable them to enjoy some privileges as is practised in different countries, including our neighbouring ones. Similarly, legislation should be enacted so that children do not willfully neglect their ageing parents.
- The government has to shoulder the primary