

Observance of International Day of Older Persons

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On 14th December 1990, the United Nations General Assembly designated **October 1st as the International Day of Older Persons**. The International Day of Older Persons was observed for the first time on October 1, 1991. According to United Nations, with the life expectancy at birth now exceeding 75 years in half of the world's countries, 25 years longer than in 1950, by 2030, older persons are projected to outnumber youth globally, with this increase most rapid in developing countries. The observance of this day provides an opportunity to acknowledge the contribution, wisdom, dignity and needs of our senior citizens and to rededicate our efforts to ensure their well-being.

The Department of Social Justice and Empowerment along with Department of School Education & Literacy is proposing a range of activities for the entire month of October, 2024 to help inculcate values of respect and gratitude towards senior citizens among students from an early age. These initiatives will foster respect and care for senior citizen among youngsters. This will lead to inter-generational bonding and empathy. In this regard, the following key initiatives are proposed to be undertaken viz:

- Educational Institutions may host annual Grandparents' Day with activities like storytelling and games to connect generations. They can also hold pledge-taking ceremonies for students, teachers, and staff to pledge respect for senior citizens, with these pledges displayed prominently in the institutions as a reminder.
- As part of morning assemblies or language classes, students may be encouraged to recite poems or shlokas that highlight the importance of respecting elders. These can be drawn from India's rich cultural heritage, resonating deeply with students.
- Educational Institutions may introduce regular sessions where students and senior citizens from the community interact through various activities, such as sharing stories, discussing history, or learning about traditional crafts. This will help students develop an appreciation for the experiences and knowledge that senior citizens possess.
- Encouraging students to engage in community service with senior citizens fosters inter-generational solidarity, mutual respect, and understanding. Educational Institutions may collaborate with local communities to create mentorship programs where seniors guide students in arts, culture, and vocational skills. This initiative benefits both generations by giving students valuable insights and providing seniors with purpose and connection.

For the month-long celebration of the **International Day of Older Persons starting from 01.10.2024**, the above initiatives have been shared with the States/UTs and Educational Institutions to instil the values of care and concern for the senior citizens among the youth as well as to involve the community in addressing to the issues and challenges faced by the senior citizens.

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