

Ageing Situation and Support Systems in Bangladesh.

A.S.M. Atiqur Rahman, Ph.D.

Bangladesh is one of the densely populated disaster prone LDCs in the world having about 13 million (8%) older persons (OP). In 2025 and 2050 projected number of OPs will be 18 million (12%) and 45 million (20%) respectively. This change in population characteristics will have serious consequences on the overall socio-economic development of the country.

Mass poverty, increasing huge population size, decreasing small usable land, growth of nuclear families, rise in both internal and international migration, erosion of rich cultural tradition, absent of sufficient GO and NGO intervention Bangladeshi OPs are increasingly confronting from physical, economical, social and emotional challenges. Older women, OPs with disabilities, without families and widows are among the most vulnerable in this country.

Bangladesh society still stresses the importance of showing respect and providing care for the OPs through family, kin, neighbors, community, social organizations etc. Government introduces Retirement Pension system in 1925, Old Age Allowance Program in 1998, and formulated the National Policy on Older Persons and Maintenance of Parents Act in 2013. Studies and information on ageing issues are seriously inadequate in Bangladesh. Recently, this issue receives increasing interest of social scientists and some universities start offering courses on Gerontology.

Having thousands of registered NGOs, only a handful of them working with OPs in Bangladesh. BAAIGM, the oldest and largest NGO working exclusively on ageing issues since 1960 with a vision to providing health care, accommodation, publication, training, advocacy, liaison, collaboration, and doing wellbeing for OPs in close association with GoB, UN, INGO & NGOs throughout the country. Preparing the younger generation for their active and healthy ageing, BAAIGM tries to sensitize the academia, media and civil society by different ways. With 56 years of experience BAAIGM has achieved sustainability in her age-care activities involving the Government and other stakeholders.