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Protection of Rights for Senior Citizen in India: A Legal Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Every human being must experience the eternal process of growing older; no one can avoid it. Traditionally, family members have been responsible for providing care for the elderly, most frequently the children. However, because of the quick changes in the socioeconomic perspective, family members increasingly leave elderly individuals to face difficulties in life on their own. However, the aging population is becoming more vulnerable due to the growing trend towards nuclear families and the corresponding breakdown of the extended family structure. India is a country that has historically valued wisdom and age. In both privileged and developing nations, elderly individuals face significant issues in numerous aspects of their lives. The basic and fundamental rights of the elderly are not sufficiently protected and promoted by the current legislative laws. The most vulnerable stage of a person's life is old age. This is the stage when the elderly need the most protection and attention. Prior to 2007, India had no laws specifically safeguarding the rights of senior citizens. Under the protection of this, they were allowed to seek maintenance as well as defense against physical and mental abuse. Many general laws, including the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act of 2005, the Code of Civil Procedure 1908, the Indian Penal Code 1860, and the personal laws, as well as the Fundamental Rights outlined in Part III of our Indian Constitution. However, the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act of 2007 allows older people to get maintenance and protection under a single piece of law.

Keywords: legal protection, elderly people, rights, maintenance, tribunal.

I. INTRODUCTION

The only nation in the world where it is customary to touch the feet of the elderly out of respect is India. In the nation in which we live, elderly people have a special place in our customs, culture, and scriptures and are compared to God. The parents were regarded as divine beings who occupied very high position in the ancient Indian Vedic era. But unfortunately, we found that in a country like India, there are very few laws that protect the rights of senior citizens. The

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High Court of Kerala in the case of “ *Jayasree v. State of Kerala*”¹ reiterated the importance of the above or aforesaid expression. In this case, the Kerala High Court held that respecting elders, mothers, fathers, teachers, and God is a culture of a country like India. In those orders, in earlier times, a lot of respect was given to the parents. Then the court further criticized the younger generation for disregarding and avoiding their elders and refusing to take care of them. The burdens seen by the younger generation in families are generally health care expenses and increased financial dependency by the older ones. There are some main reasons that result in the neglect, isolation, and insecurity of the older person. generation gap, technological advancement, nuclear families, and increased longevity are also some of the reasons that cause age-based prejudice. The suffering of the elderly in our nation was something that the founders of our constitution were also well aware of. They were aware that reaching one’s 60s can be rather challenging. They would have to deal with issues including housing, taxation, medical facilities, social support and psychological assistance for ageing. They therefore provided our nation’s legislators with plenty of material for drafting laws on their behalf³

One could approach the situation of the elderly from the perspective of their fundamental rights. The Supreme Court stated in several rulings that the directive principles and the fundamental rights are intended to be implemented in accordance with one another, especially by enlivening Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. The Supreme Court’s approach cleared the path for the inclusion of the rights to social security, livelihood, and human dignity under Article 21.

As a result, the benefits of these landmark rulings can positively impact the system protecting senior citizens human rights. Both IPC 1860 and Section 125 of the CrPC impose fines on the wrongdoer and offer financial security, which the court also mainly relied upon. In the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007, the government of India had to integrate an act for protection and providing care to older adults by their children. Modernization is increasing the situation where these authentic joint family traditions are destroying themselves gradually, and the living patterns are shifting from traditional joint families to nuclear families. Smt. Shushma Swaraj introduced the 2006 Senior Citizens Maintenance, Protection, and Welfare Bill⁴. Her initial effort was made on March 3, 2006; however, it was unsuccessful. The Indian government learned about the existence of several international regulations pertaining to the maintenance and welfare of elderly people. The

³2014 KHC 549.

⁴ Bill No. X of 2006

Indian government launched a national policy on elderly people in 1999 and announced it. Certain rights were acknowledged for old age people. This policy also imposes duties and responsibilities with regard to providing economic and social security with health care facilities. The policy in question acknowledged the rights of older people and parents who are unable to maintain themselves. In similar terms, it imposed obligations on providers of health care facilities as well as financial and social security. And also the safety of senior citizens's lives and properties. Despite the aforementioned policies in the 1999 statement, nothing had been done to them into practice even after 10 years. Regarding its implementation, the administration came under constant and intense pressure from various NGOs and groups. As a result, the bill was approved in 2007. On December 31, 2007, the final asset of this bill was received from the president and became an act. This act's goal is to safeguard older citizens' rights and offer legal protection for their care and well-being.

II. RIGHTS OF SENIOR CITIZENS IN INDIA

Senior citizens are among the targeted categories subjected to anguish. Though it seems like everyone is always acknowledging "human rights," it's crucial to remember that these rights can be asserted from the moment of birth until death. When people don't know that these elderly individuals are also protected by fundamental human rights, the issue gets more serious. This is how they end up as the human population that is neglected. Given this, it is important to comprehend the following human rights, as they are perceived exclusively by older citizens.

(A) Right to life:

Elderly individuals who suffer abuse and neglect suffer atrocities to the point of death. These deaths could be direct or indirect. Thus, it is crucial to discuss the contentious topic of euthanasia here, which includes the practice of killing the elderly in order to relieve them of their illnesses and sufferings sooner rather than later. Both passive and active euthanasia are possible, i.e., it's also critical to understand that the "right to life" encompasses more than just human existence; still it protects the rights to housing, health, and a life of dignity, among other things.

Freedom from torture and inhumane treatment:

It's tough to determine exactly what constitutes "torture" and "inhuman treatment" with regard to old people. The vulnerability level of elderly people is higher than that of other age groups.

For instance, a senior citizen may experience more severe health problems than people in other age groups, who might not be as severely impacted if they are without meals for a day. Thus, the concept of torture and inhumane treatment can be understood in light of the atrocities people endure, such as starvation and a lack of access to healthcare. It may even include psychological abuse like sexual assault, coercion to enter old age homes, or acts of humiliation and intimidation.

(B) Right to privacy:

Senior citizens' right to privacy can be violated in a number of ways. Seniors' physical privacy is breached in hospitals and assisted living facilities since they are kept in an open ward and only have a partial wardrobe. Even so, they were moved from one ward to another when they were only partially clothed. Even now, cameras are watching them all the time. Confidential health and medical records of elderly residents might be shared by the personnel of assisted living facilities with their offspring and relatives. Their right to privacy is violated by this. When someone entrusted with utilizing an ATM card or overseeing an elderly person's accounts in order to help and make purchases on their behalf misuses this information by committing fraud, it raises issues of legal and financial privacy.

Freedom from arbitrary detention:

When elderly people are compelled against their choice to remain in an assisted living facility even when they have a residential home, this is known as arbitrary detention. Undoubtedly, ending them in elderly care homes is justified in certain situations, but it violates their rights and limits their freedom from confinement. In certain cases, elder abuse victims' voices are silenced by confining them within the four walls of their homes, preventing them from interacting with the outside world and preventing offense to other residents.

(C) Right to family life:

Remaining in the same house and continuing to spend time with their spouse, kids, grandchildren is part of an elderly person's right to family life. Mostly, a problem arises when they start to live separately from their close ones for various reasons, like children's education, medical treatment, or income source from another place. Taking care of just one parent might often lead to children preferring the idea of sharing their aging parent's responsibilities; this leads to the separation of older couples because, for the most part, their children work or live in separate cities.

(D) Right to fair and judicial determination:

Sometimes an elderly person is the subject of accusations or initiates legal action. The justice system now has an obligation to provide them with a prompt, equitable hearing while considering their age and overall health. It is extremely difficult for elderly people to receive benefits when the process of filing claims for pension and medical coverage under government programs is made by administrative authorities so drawn out and complicated.

Social, economic, cultural, and political rights:

Seniors' protection from the effects of old age and disability is part of their right to social security. They can achieve a respectable and dignified quality of life with the help of social security. Broadly speaking, it also encompasses the right to home and shelter, which are essential to having a sufficient quality of life. For the protection of the rights of elderly people, instantaneous efforts must be put into action to ensure the right to speedy and equitable determination. By offering senior citizens a variety of old-age benefit programs, economic rights can be safeguarded. In the instance where senior citizens are willing to work, this can involve offering post-retirement benefits or opening up employment prospects. While discussing the political right, it is important to note that individuals must have appropriate access to voting locations in order for their right to vote to be protected. To ensure that their voices are heard, senior citizens should be permitted and encouraged to join a variety of organizations and initiatives. The justification for this is that they are also the primary objective of government policies.

III. AN INTERNATIONAL SCENARIO ON SENIOR CITIZENS'S RIGHTS

In addition to being a biological and cultural process, aging is an irreversible and universal occurrence. It is an issue that practically all nations, developed or developing, experience. Prior to 1982, there were no international instruments designed specifically to address the needs of elderly people. According to Article 25(1) of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has the right to a standard of living that includes nourishment, clothing, housing, healthcare, and social services. They also have the right to security in the face of unemployment, illness, widowhood, old age, or other lack of life brought on by situations beyond their control. These rights are granted to all people. In addition, the United Nation General Assembly promoted the idea that elderly people should be seen as assets to their communities rather than a burden in its "proclamation on aging 1992." The universal declaration of human rights

(UDHR) was expanded upon forty years later with the development of the United Nation “principles on older persons” in 1991.⁵ These guidelines cover senior care, independence, and dignity. That being said, nothing in this contact binds you legally. The “Madrid international plan for action on aging” (MIPAA), which was the first to balance social and economic progress with the rights of older people was accepted by the second world assembly in 2002, 10 years later. In addition, universal protection for the elderly is provided under the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, (ICESCR) universal comment no 6. A convention known as the Convention on the Rights of the Person with Disabilities (CRDP) was adopted on December 13, 2006. The older women with impairments are the focus of this event. The main question is, however, how much old age qualifies as a disability. It is necessary to go beyond the traditional concept of disability, which is limited to mental or physical deficiencies. On the 70th anniversary of the UDHR, the United Nation International Day for Older Persons (UNIDOP) recently reaffirmed its commitment to the fundamental freedoms of human rights for older people. UNIDOP bases this commitment on the idea that growing older does not dismiss one’s right to live life with dignity.

IV. LEGAL ANALYSIS OF SENIOR CITIZENS’ S RIGHTS IN INDIA

Senior citizens in India have generally preserved a high status. When their family obligations declined, they were supposed to move out and have a greater impact on shaping social identity. Ageing was a less obvious social issue in traditional Indian society. However, due to a shifting social structure, The Indian family system’s duty to care for, respect, and honor the elderly is eroding daily. Rapid urbanization and modernization are major contributors to this issue. Older people now viewed as a nuisances by their families, they can’t receive sufficient care and comforts due to their children’s migration. Actually, there aren’t many laws, regulations, or other policies protecting the dignity of elderly people. However, there is a lack of serious execution of the current rules and policies. But these laws and regulations, are a drop in the ocean as compared to the larger proportion of older people. There is no particular law in India that maintains and develops the fundamental liberties and human rights of elderly.

(A) Constitution of India, 1950:

Article 21⁶ Guarantees the fundamental rights to life and personal liberty, including the inherent

⁵ Resolution A46/91 of 1991

⁶ The Constitution of India, 1950.

right to live a life of dignity. Every Indian citizen has the fundamental right to clothing, food, shelter, and a reasonable level of living. Therefore, it is evident that elderly people have the right to a dignified and high-quality existence since they are also a part of the human population.

Article 41 states that the state must create sufficient measures to ensure the right to work, education, and public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, illness, disability, and other inappropriate desires, within the bounds of its economic growth and capacity.

Article 46 also addresses safeguarding the financial interests of the weaker segments, which presumably include senior citizens.

Article 37 makes it obvious that the rules in Part IV will not be upheld by any court, rather than the ideas outlined therein, which are vital to the country's governance, and the state has an obligation to incorporate these values in the legislative process.

In fact, the state is required to uphold the directive principles found in Part IV of the Indian Constitution. The Supreme Court declared that no order can be enforced by the courts against the state. Furthermore, even though while the state must carry out the directions, it can only do so within the restrictions imposed on it by the various legislative and executive authority sections of the constitution. The guidelines established by the government for the adoption of legislation and programs concerning the welfare of elderly people, as well as the principles of welfare state.

(B) The National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP):

The state's commitment to ensuring the well-being of older adults was reaffirmed in January 1999 with the announcement of the National Policy on Older Adults (NPOP). The policy envisions state assistance to guarantee food and financial stability, health care, housing, and other requirements of the elderly, as well as an equitable part in development, protection against exploitation and abuse, and access to resources that will improve their standard of living. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment established a committee in response to the nation's changing senior citizen demographics over the previous ten years. The Committee's duties included: (i) assessing the current state of various issues pertaining to senior citizens in general and the implementation of the NPOP, 1999 in particular; and (ii) drafting a new NPOP while taking into account emerging trends in demographic, socioeconomic, technological, and other pertinent fields

(C) Indian Penal Code 1860:

Another general law, the Indian Penal Code 1860, prohibits abuse, particularly of the body, without prejudice to an individual's age, caste, gender, or religion. However, there is also the Act Protecting Women from Domestic Violence 2005, which has been biased toward women and exclusively safeguards senior women from monetary, emotional, and bodily abuse. Both statutes simply address citizen abuse and assault; they make no discussion of the particular regulations pertaining to senior citizen maintenance and protection.

(D) Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1956:

Section 20(3) of the Hindu Adoption Maintenance Act of 1955 provides maintenance to parents who are elderly or elderly. which is exclusively applicable to Hindus. According to the law, both male and female children are responsible for their elderly and disabled parents. In addition, the duty is personal and irrespective of an individual's ownership of any property.

Section 3(b) of the act states that (1) provisions for clothing, food, housing, medical care, and attendance should always be included in maintenance's, In cases where these parents have multiple children, they are eligible to receive maintenance from any or all of them.

(E) Criminal Procedure Code of 1973:

Section 125-128: Maintenance against negligence or refusal to support dependents—spouses, Kids and parents who are unable to support themselves was enacted. The objective of one of these provisions was to offer an immediate, affordable, and efficient remedy; however, parents were not able to receive faster relief under these provisions, and the obligation of a daughter to support her parents is not expressly specified in Section 125(1). However, SC held that daughters are also equally entitled to maintain their parents. It follows that the daughter, married or not, bears equal responsibilities.

(F) The Maintenance and Welfare of Senior Citizens and Parents Act, 2007:

In order to provide more efficient arrangements for the care and well - being of parents and senior citizens, the Senior Citizen Act was passed. The Act addresses matters related to or incidental to the Constitution, as well as the rights of the elderly that are guaranteed and acknowledged by it. Parents, grandparents, and elderly people without children have the right to take action against their own children or family members. Children and relatives have a duty to see to it that these people's requirements are met so they can live "normal lives." The legislature passed this act with the understanding that many elderly people are not receiving the care they need from their families, especially widowed women who are left to live out their

twilight years alone and subjected to emotional abuse, a lack of financial support, and being treated like trash. This was accomplished in light of the declining families that live together and the loss of traditional Indian norms and values. The statement of object and reason also mentions providing senior citizens with better medical care and taking precautions to protect their property and lives. The creation of old age homes in each district, the provision of suitable mechanisms to be set up to provide need-based maintenance to parents and senior citizens, enhanced senior citizen medical facilities, and the legalization of a suitable mechanism for the protection of old age people's lives and property are also mentioned. "**Maintenance**" is defined under Section 2(b) of the aforementioned act as providing for medical care, appropriate nourishment, housing facilities, and attendants. It is hard to argue that the term of maintenance essentially refers to financial support for the previously mentioned categories of clothing, food, etc. Maintenance for parents and elderly citizens or other sources may be provided by their relatives, as stated in Section 4 of this act. Section 5 of this act deals with maintenance applications from parents, elderly individuals, or any other person or organization that has been authorized by them if they are unable to do so. The state government shall create one or more tribunals, as may be stated in the notification, for each sub division in order to determine and make a decision about the maintenance order under Section 5 of the aforementioned Act within the time frame of one month. This is included in Section 7 of this Act. In accordance with Section 7(2) of the aforementioned Act, the tribunal will be constituted by an officer who holds a rank equivalent to that of a state sub-divisional officer. The tribunal should make a decision on the application within a maximum of ninety days. A state-established appellate panel may hear appeals, which must be decided within a month in accordance with Section 16. The maximum maintenance allowance, as set forth in Section 9(2), is ten thousand rupees per month, subject to tribunal order. This sum frequently won't cover the elderly's reasonable quality of living, for instance, if their medical or other expenses are higher. It might not be possible for parents or elderly individuals to make ends meet with a low income in certain situations if they have enjoyed a lavish or extremely high standard of living their entire lives. Under Section 17 of the Act, a crucial rule for legal representation is provided. It specifies that a lawyer shouldn't represent the parties. This clause is intended to protect the parties from costly legal fees. However, practically speaking, considering their old age and state of health, the elderly people will not be able to visit the tribunal on their own. Who may make a representation on behalf of older people is not made clear by the section's wording. The protection of older citizens

property and lives is the subject of Chapter V of this legislation. This includes all of Sections 21-23. Section 21 of the aforementioned act specifies measures for publicizing, raising awareness, etc. for senior citizen welfare. Section 22 of the aforementioned act lists the authorities who may be designated to carry out the act's requirements. Section 23 of this act describes the situations in which a senior citizen property transfer may be null and void. Chapter VI of the aforementioned act addresses offenses and punishment. An individual will be punished for the time period of one month imprisonment or until the payment of charges for maintenance, whichever is earlier, if they do not pay the monthly allowance fee. If an accused person abandons their parents or older people, they may be subject to a fine of five thousand rupees, a maximum three-months jail sentence, or both.

V. JUDICIAL ASPECTS

The aging population is having a significant impact on the legal system. Elderly people are using the courts at an increasing rate, and the volume and complexity of their legal problems will only rise. As a result, court and judicial officials must start formulating plans for handling the growing senior population. Elderly people involved in the judicial system frequently face difficulties because judges and courthouse workers lack expertise in the aging process and have not given the issue sufficient attention. The judiciary is vital to the nation's protection of the Constitution and the fundamental rights granted to its people. The court bears the main duty of ensuring that the rule of law is implemented, as it is the cornerstone of democracy. Judicial review is responsible for ensuring that democracy is inclusive and that those who possess or exercise public power are held responsible. The Supreme Court has ruled that all laws, including amended ones, are subject to review by the courts.

In the case of *Namdeo and Anr v. State of Maharashtra*,⁷ there was a situation where the husband's parents used the Senior Citizens Act to get an eviction order against their son and daughter-in-law. It was alleged that the son had forcibly and illegally taken possession of a portion of the father's self-acquired property and was acting in such a way as to seriously threaten the parents' safety and security. Additionally, claims of physical abuse and obstruction of guests, including the other kids, were made. However, the son brought accusations against the father before the Patna High Court, which the learned Judge decided were not appropriate for a son in the traditional Indian community. We cannot, with all due respect, agree with such

⁷ AIR 2022, Bombay High Court

a remark in a court judgement. It was decided that removing children from the residential home to protect the senior citizen's peace of mind was legal.

In the case of *Justice Shanti Sarup Dewan v. Union Territory*,⁸ the court ruled in this case that the son's stubborn and unreasonable attitude cannot render the courts unable to support the senior citizen, whose rights are safeguarded by the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act of 2007. In accordance with protecting elderly people's lives and property as specified by Section 22 of the aforementioned Act, the court orders the Chandigarh Union Territory Administration to take the necessary measures to implement the regulations specified in Section 32(1) of the aforementioned Act for the grounds listed in Sub-section 2 of Section 32, as intended by Section 22 of said Act. The court determined that the MWPSA Act extends beyond the provision of maintenance and imposes a duty on those who inherit senior citizens' property to preserve their relations by safeguarding their life and liberty's According to Section 125(1)(d), a person who has enough money to support his parents in the instance that they are unable to support themselves must do so. Due to the fact that this type of petition is filed in criminal court rather than civil court and is governed by the C.R.P.C., the mitigation process proceeds quite quickly. It is applicable to everyone, including adoptive parents, regardless of their religious beliefs and persuasions. In its decision, the Supreme Court examined this clause to mean that sons and daughters, married or single, are equally obligated to support their parents.

In the case of *Vinod Sharma v. Smt Shanti Devi*,⁹ the Act of 2007 was passed in order to safeguard the welfare and well-being of the elderly by enacting laws governing the establishment of housing facilities for elderly people and making the state government, as well as district magistrates and other officials who report to them, fully responsible for safeguarding the lives and means of subsistence of the elderly. Furthermore, the court declared that the purpose of Sections 4 and 5 of the Act of 2007 was to ensure that elderly individuals or families received sufficient resources to live in a respectable manner.

The Kerala HC upheld the Maintenance Tribunal's order to provide welfare means to the relative. *In Reju & Ors v. The Maintenance Tribunal, Thiruvananthapuram & Ors*,¹⁰ notwithstanding the fact that the older citizens property did not grant the petitioner any successor rights, A significant provision of the Act pertains to the transfer of property, and it

⁸ AIR 2013, Punjab - Haryana High Court

⁹ CIVIL PETITION NO. 1936 OF 2022

¹⁰ AIR, 2016, (KER)97

may be void in certain circumstances, such as when family members or offspring decline to provide basic necessities and comforts for senior citizens. This pertains only to cases in which the property was transferred subsequent to the Act's beginning in 2007. A person who abandons a senior citizen in their care may face up to three months in jail and/or a fine of up to five thousand rupees, according to Section 24 of the Act.

The HC of Delhi said in the case of *Sunny Paul and Anr. V. State NCT of Delhi and Ors*,¹¹ that children who mistreat their parents while residing with them may be forced to leave the home. Justice Manmohan noted in his decision that the parents did not have to own the home. The court ruled that parents could evict their unruly adult children as long as they were the rightful owners of the property, noting that even judges in their rulings continuously emphasize the rights of parents and old people to live their lives with peace and dignity.

The parties involved in the litigation in *Santosh Surendra Patil v. Surendra Narasgopnda*,¹² were parents and their sons. The petitioner's son, the respondent, was contesting a ruling that ordered him to leave the home they had constructed and owned. The court then discussed the precise justification for the 2007 Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizen Act. The moral need to take care of one's parents became a legal obligation with the passage of this Act. The state is also accountable for providing care for old, sick parents and senior citizens. Since Section 23 of the Act of 2007 authorizes such an order, the court upheld the eviction order.

The central administrative tribunal ruled in *K.K. Ambjashy, Superintendent, Regional Passport Officer, Kochi v. Under Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs (CPV Division), Government of India, New Delhi and Another*,¹³ that the applicant is a widow and is responsible for caring for her bedridden, 90-year-old father-in-law, who recently suffered a heart attack. As the applicant has pointed out, she is required by law to care for and support her father-in-law in accordance with Section 4 of the 2007 Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens. The respondents are required to be informed of this legal requirement.

VI. CONCLUSION

Currently, India has the possessed second-largest senior population in the world. Indian

¹¹ (W.P.(C) 10463/2015 & CM APPL. 43227/2016

¹² AIR,2017 SCC, Bom.3053

¹³ AIR 2010, Indlaw. CAT 780.

society's ancient norms and beliefs placed a strong emphasis on treating the elderly with respect and care. Usually, the family took care of its senior relatives on their own. Nevertheless, the joint family system has been gradually but definitely eroding in modern society, and as a result, many parents are no longer being supported by their offspring as was generally done. As a result, the elderly are now subjected to emotional abuse as well as a lack of material and financial assistance. The lack of sufficient social security is causing them a great deal of difficulty. In India, the Indian Constitution and many regulations, especially personal laws, place a high priority on maintenance and welfare measures. The Indian Constitution's Article 41 addresses, among other things, the social security of the elderly. Numerous laws address the welfare of senior citizens, either directly by addressing maintenance or indirectly through other welfare initiatives. After reviewing all the provisions, it is evident that, in the instance that the parents are unable to support themselves, the son or daughter has a personal responsibility to care for their parents. Personal laws allow for this to be enforced through a court decision, but because to an overwhelming number of pending cases, Indian courts are now overburdened and it will take a long time to finalize the case hearing and any ensuing execution of the decree, if any, in the parent's favor. Although the Code of Criminal Procedure enacted a provision for a rapid remedy, it proved ineffective because there is no time restriction for case disposal and it is excessively costly. Even if the government has created a number of laws and policies to safeguard and advance the welfare of the elderly, caring for our senior citizens is not just the responsibility of the government. Legislation or coercion cannot fulfill our moral obligations.

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