

Senior Citizens Act, 2007 - Indian Polity

The Senior Citizens Act, officially called the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 was enacted in 2007 by the Indian Parliament. This was a landmark legislation initiated by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Senior Citizens Act

- The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act was enacted in 2007.
- The chief objective behind this law was to make the provision of maintenance and welfare to old parents and senior citizens more effective.
- This Act makes it legally obliging for adult children and heirs to provide for parents by way of a monthly allowance.
- This Act provides inexpensive and speedy procedure to claim monthly maintenance for parents and senior citizens.
- According to this Act, parents could mean biological, adoptive or step parents.
- Under this Act, there are also provisions to protect the life and property of such persons (elderly).
- Since enacting this Act, senior citizens who have transferred their movable or immovable property, on the condition that the transferee shall provide them basic amenities and take care of their physical needs refuse to do so, such a transfer of property shall be considered to have been made by fraud or by coercion or under undue influence. Such transfer can be made void.
- Abandoning a senior citizen in any place is a criminal offence.
- The Act also provides for the state governments to establish at least one old age home in every district of the state, and also ensure adequate medical care for senior citizens.

Proposed Amendments to the Senior Citizens Act, 2007

The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (Amendment) Bill 2018 is a pending legislation. It proposes certain amendments to the act passed in 2007 with a view to reducing abuse of the elderly.

This amendment expands the definition of children to include daughter-in-law and son-in-law as well. It also proposes:

- Removal of the maximum ceiling of maintenance allowance
- Extension of the right to appeal to the respondents also
- Extension of benefit of revocation of transfer of property to parents also
- Reckoning of time limit for disposal of applications by the Tribunal from the date the application was received, etc.

Need for a Senior Citizens Act

- Indian society holds parents with the same regard as God, and their protection and care is of utmost importance. But the withering of the old joint family system and traditional values have led to the erosion of this principle.
- Currently, many elderly people are either abandoned entirely or have to live alone without adequate medical, social, financial and emotional support.
- Many face abuse including verbal and physical at the hands of their own families.
- By 2026, the percentage of senior citizens in the population is expected to rise to 12.4% as per a 2006 report of the National Commission on Population.

UPSC Questions related to Senior Citizens Act

When was the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizen Act passed?

The Act was passed in 2007.

What is the age of a senior citizen?

As per the Senior Citizens Act, the government of India recognises any person above the age of 60 years as a senior citizen.

What are the rights of senior citizens in India?

Senior citizens are given many benefits and concessions by the government in order to make their lives easier. Government and even some private hospitals give them treatments and medicines at discounted rates. The Indian railways and Air India offer tickets at discounted rates.