

Elderly show the will to change for the better

With changing times, older persons throughout the country refuse to diffidently adjust to their existing environment. They want change and refuse to be sidelined by mainstream society.

A survey conducted by Agewell Foundation — “Changing trends of old age” — among 15,000 older persons from rural and urban areas across 135 districts in 25 States and Union Territories revealed a major shift in the thought process of the older generation today. Over 90 per cent of those questioned said **they want to change things for the better in their old age.**

Enthusiastic to change

The survey categorised the desire to change across age groups and gender in old age. While more people in the age group of 60-69 years (98.97 per cent) were enthusiastic about change, it was found lower (96.55 per cent) in the 70-79 years group and much lower (48.4 per cent) in the age group 80 and above. The survey showed that 93.61 per cent of the older men were dissatisfied with their surroundings compared to 87.11 per cent older women.

In rural areas, 83.51 per cent older people were found expecting or working for change in their lives. Among older rural women, 78.93 per cent thought of change in their lives whereas this number in urban areas was found to be 95.39 per cent. As many as 88.26 per cent rural older men were also found in favour of changing their present environment.

Major issues

Major areas where older people want to see change, according to the survey, were social environment, medical set-up, psychological condition, financial status, interpersonal relationships, legal set-up and religion or spirituality, in that order.

Of the 15,000 interviewees, 32.3 per cent persons said lack of love and compassion in their life featured highest among their social needs and 30.1 per cent felt the need for more money or income opportunities to meet their needs. With regard to religious freedom, 45.6 per cent said they prefer peace of mind to freedom of worship or greater spiritual development in old age.

Among the major findings of the survey was the fact that older people feel they have enough knowledge, experience and capability to change things for betterment of post-retirement life.