

# THE TIMES OF INDIA

## New rules likely to bring back smiles on Sr citizens

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HYDERABAD: This New Year, the aged and the infirm have a good reason to smile as the state government has framed rules for effective implementation of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.

The rules clearly specify the procedures and the manner in which the tribunals would hold enquiries while dealing with applications filed by parents against their children and childless senior citizens against their relatives for maintenance.

Under the enactment, parents could claim provision of food, clothing, residence, medical attendance or treatment from one or all of their children provided the latter is above 18 years of age. The rules, framed under section 32 of the central enactment, were notified in GO No. 49, which was issued a few days ago.

"The rules will be implemented strictly to help the parents who have been deserted by their children," women and child welfare minister Sunita Lakshma Reddy told TOI. She said district-wise tribunals would be constituted to inquire into the complaints of parents.

But the aggrieved parents should first approach the appellate committees which would function under the chairmanship of a revenue divisional officer. If the grievance is not resolved at the committee level, then the tribunal headed by the district collector will look into the complaint.

The new rules have also a provision that in case of legal heirs not taking care of the parents, a maximum of Rs 10,000 would be paid to the parents. "It is better to settle the matter amicably through a conciliation officer. Tribunals should play a key role when it comes to dealing with complaints of parents facing serious health problems," said senior citizen's activist S Bhuma Reddy.

But experts are worried over the role of tribunals in solving the cases. "A lot depends on the functioning of the district officials in lending a ear to the woes of the complainant and solving their problems," observed V Yateendra Yadav, programme manager in a senior citizen's organisation.

The rules also provide for supervision on management of old-age homes under section 19 of the Act for housing those senior citizens who do not have means of a shelter. There are about 500 old-age homes in the state -- 100 are being run in Hyderabad alone -- where at least 25,000 senior citizens take shelter. Ten per cent of these homes would get government aid henceforth.