

SAHAJ: Release of “Vridha Mitra Toolkit” and “Shrinkhala HUM” (Second Edition) – “Anubhav aur Utsaah ka Sangam” Talk Series

Posted On: 23 SEP 2025 9:43PM by PIB Delhi

Department of Social Justice & Empowerment has launched several flagship initiatives to advance senior citizens’ well-being, strengthen intergenerational bonds, and promote innovative models of elderly care. In line with the Department’s ongoing commitment for welfare of the senior citizens, two initiatives “SAHAJ”: Release of the “Vridha Mitra Toolkit and “Shrinkhala – HUM” – “Anubhav aur Utsaah ka Sangam”: Second Edition of Talk Series held together on 23rd Sept 2025 at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, in New Delhi.

The Department of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE), has facilitated the launch of Vriddha Mitra Toolkit of the Society of Community Health Oriented Operational Links (SCHOOL) under the ambit of “SAHAJ”. It serves as a vital bridge between policy and people, emphasizing its role in bringing empathy and grassroots action into the policymaking process. This program brings together senior citizens, government officials, social sector representatives, youth delegates, and partner organizations. This approach ensures that elders are not treated merely as beneficiaries but are recognized as active participants in shaping community life.



“Shrinkhala” a talk Series was launched in 2024 with the inaugural theme of “Ageing with Dignity”. It was conceived as a platform to bring policymakers, citizens, and thought leaders together to discuss elderly issues with empathy and action. The 2025 edition, themed “(HUM)- “Anubhav aur Utsaah ka Sangam”, builds on this momentum by showcasing real-life stories and community models of senior citizens that inspire the nation to embrace collective responsibility for the elderly.

Hon’ble Union Minister Dr. Virendra Kumar, while releasing the Vriddha Mitra Toolkit highlighted the significance of the toolkit as a comprehensive, user-friendly resource designed to strengthen community-based elder care. He emphasized that this release marks a shift from isolated welfare measures to an integrated, community-driven model where senior citizens remain active, empowered participants in their

local environments.



He emphasized that “ (HUM) ” – “*Anubhav aur Utsaah ka Sangam*” is more than a theme — it is a transformative consciousness moving from “I” to “We.” Hon’ble Minister lauded the grassroots change makers such as Poonambhai Patel’s Community Kitchen model, PICO Farm Stay and Maitri which have demonstrated that community-led initiatives can address loneliness and social exclusion among the elderly and their empowerment. The Department is already working to strengthen the intergenerational bond and mentorship programs in schools and colleges to bring youth closer to elders, thereby nurturing a society built on respect, inclusion, and shared responsibility.

Hon’ble Minister of State Shri B.L. Verma described the Talk Series as “*a living tradition of dialogue, dedication and cooperation,*” noting that the “HUM” platform serves as a bridge between policy and emotion, ensuring that elderly citizens are not only beneficiaries but active participants in shaping their communities. He highlighted the release of the **Vriddha Mitra Toolkit** under “SAHAJ” program and its role in bringing empathy at grassroots level. He stated that the Department is committed for the holistic wellbeing of the senior citizens.

Hon’ble Minister of State Shri Ramdas Athawale stated: “*Our country’s elders are not just pages of the past; they are living books, rivers of experience that guide and nurture us. Those who respect and care for their elders see their own life, knowledge, reputation, and strength grow manifold. When you make your elders feel valued and connected, you become one of those rare individuals who hold not only success but also deep satisfaction. Elders’ blessings do not just inspire us; they strengthen the very foundation of our values and society.*”

Shri Amit Yadav, Secretary, Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, highlighted how global trends of nuclear families and rapid urbanization have increased isolation among senior citizens. He underscored India’s unique strength in its joint families, intergenerational bonds, and community responsibility. Outlining the Department’s priorities, he said the focus is on improving elderly well-being and encouraging partnerships with private and non-profit organizations to deliver innovative models of elderly care.

Sh. Parimal Desai who was invited as a speaker shared the story of “Maitri Grih” — a home where friendship and family blur into one. He recalled how his forefathers began this tradition over 80 years ago, uniting two families under one roof.

Amongst speakers, Sh. **Poonambhai Patel** from Mehsana, Gujarat shared the story of his Community

Kitchen for senior citizens. It is a warm, bustling space where elders cook together, share meals, and exchange stories.

Similarly, Sh. Kiruba Shankar, son of Ms. **Kastoory Amma, 74, and grandson of 94-year-old mother Lakshmi Ammal** narrated how their family's once-barren ancestral land became the thriving PICO Farm Stay — an organic oasis that fuses farming, rural employment, and heritage tourism in Rettanai, Tamil Nadu. He highlighted the efforts of two ladies who fought with life odds and successfully started the farm stay which is now giving employment to others.

The Department of Social Justice & Empowerment reaffirmed its commitment to making Ageing in India dignified and inclusive. The Department is actively working to build a nationwide ecosystem where elderly citizens remain connected, respected, and empowered. The Department also highlighted the importance of State Governments, civil society, corporate to pilot innovative models such as rural elderly-driven ecosystem, community-based models, intergenerational mentorships and women-led enterprises for the elderly.

KV

(Release ID: 2170387)