



## CONFERENCE SPECIAL

### ONE-DAY NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HEALTHY AGEING IN INDIA

4<sup>th</sup> Shehjaar National Conference was held on January 20, 2026 at Hotel Gardenia SIIDCUL Haridwar. The day marked the 22<sup>nd</sup> Foundation Day of Shehjaar Homes for Senior Citizens.

About 170 delegate/guests/invitees and media persons attended the Conference which started with the welcome address by Suresh Palgay, a proud member of Shehjaar family.

**He said -**

*“Today, we are honoured by the presence of distinguished delegates who have travelled from across the length and breadth of our country - Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Odisha, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Delhi NCR, Uttar Pradesh, and of course, our own beloved Uttarakhand. Your presence here is not merely geographical representation - it reflects a shared concern, shared values, and a shared commitment to meaningful and dignified ageing.”*

***The theme of the conference “Healthy Ageing in India; Challenges Opportunities & Our Collective Responsibility” is highly befitting to the current issue of elderlies.***

The Conference was inaugurated with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp by Prof. (Dr.) Surekha Dangwal, Vice-Chancellor of Doon University ; Mr. Matthew Cherian, Global Ambassador of HelpAge International ; Mr. M. K. Mittal, former Director, BHEL and Mrs. Malti Jaswal, Founder, Inspiring Seniors Foundation.

The formal welcome of guests was done by presenting bouquet and Shawl.

Shehjaar Geet was recited by Mrs Jaya Raina, Mrs Surekha Palgay, Mrs Savita Agarwal and Mr Raju.

A video film on SHEHJAAR OBJECTIVES and its activities was shown on large-size LED screen.

Mr. M K Raina from Shehjaar spoke on “Why this Conference” ? He said :-

***“Healthy ageing does not imply freedom from illness alone. It encompasses the ability of older persons to live independently, remain socially connected, feel emotionally secure, and retain dignity and purpose. Health related issues are amongst the foremost challenges. Geriatric healthcare remains largely hospital-centric, with limited emphasis on preventive and community-based care. The shortage of trained geriatric professionals and caregivers further compounds the problem.***

India’s ageing population, when viewed through the right lens, represents a powerful opportunity.

Senior citizens possess immense experience, wisdom and emotional resilience. With structured platforms, they can mentor younger generations, guide institutions and strengthen social cohesion. This “silver dividend” remains largely untapped.

On our Roles & Responsibilities, Raina said Civil society and NGOs must move beyond charity to rights-based advocacy, building evidence-driven models and engaging constructively with policymakers. Families must recognise that emotional support, respect for autonomy and inclusion are as important as financial assistance.

Senior citizens themselves must remain active participants - physically, mentally and socially while preparing early for ageing with awareness and confidence.

Malti Jaswal is the Founder Inspiring Seniors Foundation, Co-Chair FICCI Task Force on Active and Healthy Ageing, Chairperson, AISCCON Committee on Intergenerational Learning & Bonding. In her very vibrating presentation expressed :-

1. India is at a demographic turning point although longevity is there but it does not guarantee well being
2. Healthy Ageing cannot be addressed in silos. Some of the most pressing challenges include Health Burden, Economic Vulnerability, Social Isolation, Digital Exclusion, Caregiving Stress
3. From welfare to development : Reframing ageing

The shift we need is clear : *from passive welfare to active agency, from institutional dependence to community-based support, from viewing seniors as a burden to recognising them as partners in development. Healthy ageing is not about adding years to life - it is about adding life to years.*

The “**Ten Commandments of Healthy Ageing**”, rooted in Indian traditions and science-based practices, is a list of small, consistent habits which support healthier and longer life that individuals can adopt.

It is compiled by Prof. (Dr) Vinod Kumar, Retd. AIIMS, Emeritus Professor, St. Stephens Hospital (Delhi), Founder - Healthy Ageing Forum

Satvikta, Shramta, Sakriyata, Samparkata, Shaithalyata (Inner Peace), Shayanpurta, Sadhana & Adhyatmikata, Sanandata, Sakaratmakata, Swasth Parikshnata.

- Silver Population is Golden Asset
- Have Purpose Everyday
- Talk to Single Seniors Daily
- Be Contributor not merely Beneficiary
- No Retirement it is Reengagement
- Intergeneration Connection

**Mr. M K Mittal** is the former Director BHEL and a very social connect person of the town. According to him use of cells in brain is important to keep them active and thereby prevent the mental disease. On the active and healthy ageing he emphasized on few actions for seniors - always be connected socially, remain engaged in any type of activity, follow daily routine of Yoga Pranayama and walk. He gave mool mantra of happiness *दूसरो की खुशी में खुश रहो*।

**Mr. Mathew Cherian** is Global Ambassador of HelpAge International on Ageing. He is also Amicus Curie in Supreme Court on Ageing.

He shared some of health statistics on elderly in his own state Kerala, which is quite alarming due to longevity of 80 plus years.

Although, Kerala has a policy for ageing but much more needs to be done in other states.

### **Global and National Frameworks**

The global concern for ageing populations began with the Vienna International Plan of Action on Ageing (1982), emphasizing the integration of ageing considerations into national planning.

In the Asia-Pacific region, the Shanghai Plan of Action (2002) and Macau Outcome Document (2007) emphasized age-friendly environments and supportive ageing policies. The Decade of Healthy Ageing (2020-2030), launched by the World Health Organization (WHO), focuses on combating ageism, enhancing capabilities, and expanding integrated care.

*In India, the Constitution mandates public assistance for older persons under Article 41, reinforced by the Right to Equality and social security provisions.*

However, the health of senior citizens continues to be a cause of worry and the lack of governmental interventions at village and PHC level will continue to create a scenario of poor health in the country. There are 3 National Institutes of Ageing, one in AIIMS in Delhi, one in Kings Medical College in Adyar (Tamil Nadu) and the third in Banaras Hindu

University (Varanasi). In a country as large as India with 146 million elderly three are just not enough.

“In the Supreme Court, in a PIL filed by Dr Ashwani Kumar, the Court appointed me as Amicus Curie and my advice to the court has been 3 fold :-

- a. Right to Social Security
- b. Right to Universal Health Care
- c. Right to Universal Housing in Old age including Senior Care homes

The Court is yet to pass orders in this regard in spite of nine long years and we are yet to see a National Policy for older persons, implemented in its full earnest.

However, I will give you a personal talisman for active ageing :-

- a. Consume food in moderation and keep yourself hydrated.
- b. Have an hour of light exercise be it yoga, walking, swimming or some light jogging.
- c. Stay socially connected with your friends, families and neighbours which is very important to combat loneliness.

*In our ancient texts, it is said that you will live to be a Sahastra Darshi or a “Thousand moons’ which will be about 80 years.*

May you all live long and stay healthy and attain age of 100 years.

*Ayushman Bhava !”*

**M S Kalra** added few of his practical suggestions for Health assessment criteria :-

- ❖ Able to digest food - good health,
- ❖ Able to get good sleep - better health,
- ❖ Able to clean stomach in morning - perfect health.

*Happy life - lead a free life “मेरा नियम है की अब मेरा कोई नियम नहीं है” ।*

**Prof. Surekha Dangwal** is the Vice Chancellor of Doon University Dehradun. She has a very long experience of teaching in India and abroad as well a guide for research scholars. Her distinguished quality is that she is an extra ordinary orator.

In her mesmerising speech of 46 minutes, she addressed the delegates, coming from across the country, as cluster of knowledge-bearing persons in this period of history.

*एक पल में बात अपनी कोई यूँ समझा गया,  
गुनगुनाकर कोई अपने सारे नगमे सुना गया,  
आपके आने से यूँ लगा कि एक झौका खुशबुओं का खिड़की से आ गया ।*

She shared her concern for the women in hills having a routine of working whole day in outfield and maintaining their health due to laborious occupation are now, forced to spend lonely life due to children drifting in plains. Re-engagement of such population should be a target for Government and NGOs. Younger generation should more frequently mix-up with seniors and vice versa. Seniors should not remain dependent but contributor in any form depending on their knowledge and skill. The problem of depression is seen in elderly due

to isolation and abuse, remain actively connected with society is the best way. The Indian culture belongs to joint family where there is no identity crisis for elderlies, they need to spread their positivity and share experiences. Fixed routine should be followed in life with mix of Yoga, Pranayam, walking etc. AI by Bharat is new concept given by PM in which a control is exercised to minimise adverse effects of AI. Pollution of Indian culture by westernisation should be controlled by seniors. This is a very good engagement for seniors.

Energy need can be enhanced with association of younger generation She explained this fact by quoting the Noble prize winner novel "The Old Man and The Sea" by Earnest Hemingway.

She also referred to the poem "The Waste Land" by T S Eliot about brokenness and loss and Eliot's numerous allusions to the first world war, suggest that the war played a significant part in bringing about the social, psychological and emotional collapse in the west young population.

तूफ़ान की आवाज सुनो दा, दा, दा

दाता - The Donor

दया - Compassionate

दमते - The Control

In the end she said - religion of Humanity is the best where we say Walk with hand in hand.

Next, **Conference souvenir** and new **Shehjaar logo** were launched by the guests.

**Shehjaar Vishisht Sewa Samman** was bestowed on Mr R N Mital, 99 years, dedicated for the wellbeing of elderlies from Hyderabad. In his absence, Mr P Ramachandraiya received the award.

**Distinguished Music Teacher award (Elder care)** was given to Mr Rahul Arora, a young music teacher and Director String Music Care, Haridwar.

## **POST-LUNCH SESSION**

**Mr Ravikant Gupta** gave a talk on “Shehjaar - A Lovely Home”.

**Dr Sanjay Raina** from Amrita Hospital, Faridabad in his presentation, explained the medical science behind ageing and the mental and emotional challenges for healthy ageing.

**Dr Indu Subhash** of Guide Samaj Kalyan, Lucknow shared her field work in supporting the needy unattended elderlies and her resolve to provide legal help to seniors affected by the atrocities from family members.

**Dr P K Sinha** from Prayagraj explained as to how he has been able to integrate the younger generations with elderlies to exchange energy and experience.

Following delegates expressed their thoughts and brief about their associations' activities :-

1. Nancy Kaul Pune
2. R M Pattanaik Bhubaneshwar
3. Deepak Gupta & Ramakant Sharma Faridabad
4. V Narayanmurty Andhra Pradesh.
5. Dr N Gopal Krishna Andhra Pradesh spoke few lines on Bhagwat Geeta.

**Mrs Veena Singh** gave vote of thanks.

She briefed on importance of the Conference theme. She thanked Dr Dangwal, Mr Cherian, Mr M K Mittal, Mrs Malti, Dr Snjay Raina, Dr Indu Subhash, Dr A P Das Director for continued support and Patron, Dr N L Zutshi for guidance and support for the Conference in a big way.

She also thanked Mr Rahul Arora, Conference Organising Committee and Hotel Management - Mr Sanjeev Gupta.

## CULTURAL EVENING

After the day-long conference, it was the time to sit back, relax and enjoy the cultural evening. It was in 2 parts :-

### Part A) Performances :

1)	:	"Ganesh Stuti" by a multitalented child, Master Aviral Arora.
2)	:	Famous "Ganga Arti" was performed by our Shehjaar Parivar. Vocal by Suresh Palgay, Jaya Raina, Savita Agrawal, Suman Roy, Nirmal Sridhar and Rahul Arora On keyboard were, Surekha Palgay, R K Aneja, NK Raju, SK Agarwal and master Aviral. Audience fully enjoyed the divinely vibe
3)	:	One of our senior most member, H N Gupta, sang an all time hit old song - "ना ये चाँद होगा ना तारे रहेंगे....."
4)	:	Our multitalented artist N K Raju, gave a solo performance with a song - "आए हो मेरी जिंदगी में तुम बहार बन के....."
5)	:	Suresh and Surekha Palgay sung a duet song - "ये रातें, ये मौसम नदी का किनारा....."
6)	:	Bhajan Queen, Mrs Nirmal Shridhar presented a bhajan - "श्वसों के तार तार में, प्रभु नाम को पिरोलो....."
7)	:	Sunita Bamzai, who came all the way from Pune, performed a bhajan - "मेरी छोटी सी है नाव, तेरे जादू भरे पाँव....."
8)	:	Sudhir and Savita Agrawal presented a self-scripted हास्यनाटिका - "ज़िन्दगी ज़ी भर के जियो"
9)	:	Barada Shankar Mishra of Bhubneshwar sung a classic song from the film Anand - "कहीं दूर जब दिन ढल जाए....."
10)	:	Vinay and Geeta Goyal from Chandigarh gave a sensational live performance on the song - "प्यार हुआ इकरार हुआ....."

इसी के साथ, रंगीन शाम का प्रथम चरण पूर्ण हुआ।

Compering was done by Sri S K Agarwal.

## **Part B)**

**Dr PK Sinha**, a single man orchestra, from Prayagraj along with his team support kept the audience spellbound and made them to dance on the floor for more than an hour with his various songs.

**Damodar Mudafre** from Bhilai presented few thrilling songs to end the session.

Overall, it was a memorable evening filled with joy and excitement.

**It was followed by a sumptuous dinner sponsored by Dr Zutshi.**

The Conference was highly successful and fulfilled the goal.

**Compiled by –**

*Suresh Palgay,  
S C Goel &  
S K Agarwal*

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## **Shehjaar Homes For Senior Citizens**

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# Glimpses of the Conference.....







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