

ONE INDIA ONE PEOPLE

Patriotism Redefined

Silver Innings



Ageing gracefully

**Where there's a WILL
there's a way**

Adding life to the years

FACE TO FACE
A R K Pillai

KNOW INDIA BETTER

Amritsar: The fabled city of Golden Temple



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Ageing gracefully: Thanks to the progress made in medical science, we all live longer. Post retirement, all those who enjoy reasonably good health, still have 10-20 productive years of life before we move on. There are many inspiring stories around us of people who have made significant contributions to society in the golden years of their life.

To cite a few examples: A friend's aunt, who is a professional Carnatic musician and at 65 has embraced new technology using both the telephone and internet to teach students music. By using this new medium she has expanded her reach, which is now global, and she has students all over the world, paying her to teach them by the hour. She has stayed relevant, focused and knows what needs to be done to be successful in the new world. Her self worth does not come from her children or grand children and friends and neighbours, but from her own capabilities.

Then there is Dr. Armida Fernandes who led a path breaking initiative of bringing down the mortality rate in the

premature babies' ward at Sion hospital. After her tenure, she expanded her vision and set up a NGO to cater to the needs of the underprivileged residents of Dharavi. And, Dr. V. Arvind of Arvind Eye Clinic started his quest for eye care after he retired at the age of 58 with a small 12 bed hospital. The number of cataract operations done are more than that of the entire National health services of the UK.

There are seniors who have began learning a new language at 80+ and those who have gone to get a degree at 65+. There are many such sterling examples from whom we can draw inspiration.

Yet, we hear many senior citizens often express these sentiments:

My children have no time for me, they don't not care for me..., My grandchildren do not listen to me or respect me, ...I am tired doing this and that for my children and grandchildren ..., When I was GM....so on and so forth. Most of us are prone to developing a victim's mentality, and live the rest of our life in self pity, helplessness and harbouring negative thoughts. The truth is that one's happiness is one's own responsibility. And to find ways to be happy in all situations to me is ageing gracefully.

Retirement blues: I stopped working formally for a corporation at the age of 52. Today, I am 61 and have enjoyed every minute of my 'retirement'. I work for 10 to 12 days a month and enjoy what I do in Leadership development. I am also involved with an organisation on employability education. My wife has been an avid bird watcher and the hobby has rubbed on to me. I love to be in the forest and together, we travel to many places enjoying watching nature and the winged creatures, which gives us both immense pleasure.

The retirement age is what I call the 'golden age' as this is time where one can be the most productive as a Contributor. At this stage we have the richness of past experiences and also that of time. Therefore, one can choose to make this phase, either of sound contribution, or to spend this period strengthening the feelings of misery and of thinking how unfair the world has been to me.

Me to You: As Viktor Frankl said, "We as humans have the power to choose." There are many possibilities of being relevant and useful if we wish to take responsibility for our own happiness, and decide to contribute and make a difference in the world around us

As seniors we could:

- ◆ Teach the children of maids and drivers English and Maths
- ◆ Run classes to teach Vedas / devotional songs
- ◆ Be a citizen journalist
- ◆ Working with an NGO
- ◆ Handle investments/banking/income tax returns etc for our children
- ◆ Help out or take responsibility at the Co-op Housing society work
- ◆ Study something that expands our mind
- ◆ Learn a new skill
- ◆ Run a cookery class
- ◆ Help others to be PC literate

We can make the golden years truly beautiful if we choose to be active and positive.