

# Government of Maharashtra decides to lower senior citizens age from 65 to 60

Here is some good news for elderly people who are aged above 60 but have some more years to reach the 65-year mark. On 15<sup>th</sup> Decemebr 2015, the state government declared that any person who is aged 60 years and above will be treated as a senior citizen, and will be eligible for availing the entitled benefits.

Currently, people aged 65 years or above are certified as senior citizens by the state, whereas the Centre has 60 years as the eligibility mark. The new decision will come into effect from March 2016. Social Justice Minister Rajkumar Badole made the announcement in the state legislative assembly on Tuesday.

The minister was questioned by legislators cutting across party lines as to why the government was delaying implementation of the senior citizens' policy, and not lowering the age mark for eligibility to 60 years on par with the Centre.

The decision is expected to benefit about 40 lakh people. According to information available, some 11 per cent of the state's total population is aged 60 years or above.

The National Policy on Older Persons of India and the United Nations' Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), 2002, of which India is a signatory, stipulates that any person of and over 60 years of age is a senior citizen.

With the state's decision, the people who are 60 years old will benefit from welfare schemes such as 50 per cent travel concession on state transport buses and various schemes being run by the social welfare and other departments.

## **For the elderly**

Features of the senior citizens' policy to be implemented from early next year

- >> Public transport buses to have a low step at entrance doors
- >> Availability of government-owned public spaces, halls and temples for conducting functions/programmes at no cost
- >> Gerontology department at JJ Hospital in Mumbai
- >> 50% concession on state transport tickets
- >> Malls, restaurants, offices and movie theatres to provide wheelchairs to senior citizens. **11%** Percentage of the state's population aged 60 years or above.