It is a great honour for me to be the patron of this project. Senior citizens are a valuable asset to the society. By virtue of their wealth of experience in various facets of life, they are a beacon light of the family and young can learn a lot from them. They are our treasure house of cultural heritage, knowledge and wisdom. Although there is a significant decrease in all physiological systems with ageing, but one should remember the great master of painting and sculpture like Michael and Picasso who in their 8th and 9th decade of life created their masterpieces. The global effort today is not to heal but to protect and prolong ageing. In other words, ageing period should be as healthy as possible and reasonably meaningful confirming to the WHO’s slogan “It is not sufficient to add years to life but the more important objective is to add life to years”. The well-being of older person has been mandated in ‘The constitution of India’, Article 41, which is a ‘Directive Principle of The State Policy’, has directed that the state, shall make effective provision for securing the rights of public assistance in case of oldage. Rights of equality have been guaranteed as Fundamental Rights, which applies to older persons as well.

The fast changing socio-economic fabric of Indian society and the presence of women in workforce have imprinted a deep impact on the family structure and joint family system. In India, the old family and traditional values are rapidly breaking down where poverty continues and there is little or no
government support for welfare work. There are increasing number of sons and daughter in law who either do not wish to look after the elders or due to circumstances beyond their control are not able to do so. Money has over taken all moral, social and cultural values. Families are small and dispersion of the family is the norm. Understanding between old and the young is declining and compatibility has become difficult. Elderly people, whether single or couples are being left alone to fend for themselves regardless of their ability to do so, when grown up children move on to green pastures for more money, better status and living condition and independence. Undoubtedly family is the best place for any person to spend the later part of his or her life and living with children is the most preferred living arrangement of aged. When they are taken care by their children, the elderly persons feel satisfied and rewarded for all that they have done for them. Given the pressure of managing a home, careers and the conflicting needs of children and old people, it is elders in the family who are expected to adjust to the younger people’s needs while their own takes a back seat. Under such conditions, poor elderly are without shelter or means of livelihood and lack social and physical security. Such elderly are the ones who need new homes in the form of oldage home. Where they can begin to live again as useful citizens of the society, rather than becoming a burden or hindrance in its development and progress. Ageing needs to be treated as a priority area because of the dramatic changes in life expectancy resulting in a world where old people would outnumber children. The question of providing means of
decent living to the elderly is causing a serious problem, since our resources are limited and the country is already pressed with the problems of poverty, unemployment and under-employment of the younger generation. Besides this, the burden of the taxes to provide for the facilities to the increasing older population may become greater on the younger lot.

It is high time and if we do not address this rapidly increasing problem of the “Elders Neglect” very soon, it may assume epidemic proportions in the coming years. On one hand there are oldage homes mushrooming up and on the other hand there is concern about the problems associated with this “graying population” and the hidden cost that the society is unwilling to bear. Hence, under such state of confusion, an attempt is being made to study and analyze this challenging scenario so as to sensitize the policy makers and planners towards the factors which may influence successful ageing and facilitate identification of strategies for strengthening linkages between the formal and informal care and supportive resources important to aged persons.

The present investigation is an attempt to study the general well being of Institutionalized and non-institutionalized aged subjects.