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Title: Regarding the increasing incidents of abuse on senior citizens.

SHRIMATI KIRRON KHER (CHANDIGARH): It is estimated that by 2020, India will have the highest working age population in the world. But during and after this period, the number of senior citizens in India is also expected to rise sharply. Indeed, different studies peg the number of senior citizens in India by 2025 between 15 and 20 per cent.

I am bringing to the attention of this House these numbers because increasingly we hear stories of elder abuse in our own families, in our communities and in our friends' circles. While senior citizens today have a higher life expectancy in India than ever before, the quality of life, for many of them, is not what they dreamt of.

Studies done by NGOs, who work for the welfare of senior citizens, show that 50 per cent of seniors in India have faced some form of abuse. Sometimes it is verbal abuse; sometimes it is disrespect; and sad to say, it is also physical abuse; many times, it is willful neglect from their children and families. One has heard stories of people leaving their older parents in old age homes, saying that they would be back, but disappear and move away from cities. This is happening every day.

While the Government has several schemes for promoting the welfare of senior citizens to make sure that they are comfortable in their old age, I urge the Government to also engage with the youth of India to bring in a culture of love and respect for the elderly because we in India have traditionally always venerated our elders. I also ask the Government to fast track the setting up of a toll free helpline across the country, in all States and Union Territories, which can be used by senior citizens to report such abuse and get immediate help from the respective authorities, whether it is hospitals, police, social workers or any other institutions.