



Quality of Life for Elderly Index

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Why in News

Recently, the **Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)** released the **Quality of Life for Elderly Index**.

- The **share of elders, as a percentage of the total population** in the country, is expected to **increase from around 7.5% in 2001 to almost 12.5% by 2026**, and surpass 19.5% by 2050.
- **EAC-PM** is a **non-constitutional, non-statutory, independent body** constituted to **give advice on economic and related issues to the Government** of India, specifically to the Prime Minister.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - The Index has been created by the **Institute for Competitiveness** at the request of EAC-PM and it **sheds light on an issue often not mentioned- problems faced by the elderly**.
Institute for Competitiveness, India is an **international initiative centered in India**, dedicated to enlarging and purposeful disseminating of the body of research and knowledge on competition and strategy.
 - It **identifies the regional patterns of ageing across Indian States** and **assesses the overall ageing situation** in India.
 - **Ageing** is a continuous, irreversible, universal process, which starts from conception till the death of an individual.
 - However, the **age at which one's productive contribution declines and one tends to be economically dependent** can probably be treated as the onset of the aged stage of life.
 - National Elderly Policy defines people in the **60+ age group as elderly**.
 - It **will promote healthy competition among States** through fair rankings and highlights the pillars and indicators they can improve.

- **Pillars & Sub-Pillars of the Index:**

- **Four Pillars:**

- Financial Well-being, Social Well-being, Health System and Income Security

- **Eight Sub-Pillars:**

- Economic Empowerment, Educational Attainment & Employment, Social Status, Physical Security, Basic Health, Psychological Well being, Social Security and Enabling Environment.

- **Major Findings:**

- **State-wise Rankings:**

- **Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh are top-scoring regions in Aged and Relatively Aged States**, respectively.

- The Aged States refer to States with an elderly population of more than 5 million, whereas Relatively Aged States refer to States with an Elderly population of less than 5 million.

- **Chandigarh and Mizoram are top-scoring** regions in Union Territory and **North-East States category**.

- **Pillar-wise Performance:**

- The **Health System pillar observes the highest national average**, 66.97 at an all-India level, followed by **62.34 in Social Well-being**.
 - **Financial Well-being** observes a score of **44.7**, which is lowered by the low performance of 21 States across the Education Attainment & Employment pillar, which showcases scope for improvement.
 - States have performed particularly **worse in the Income Security pillar because over half of the States have a score below the national average** in Income Security, which is the lowest across all pillars.

- **Challenges:**

- **Feminization of Ageing:**

One of the emerging issues of population ageing is the “Feminization of Ageing”, that is many more women than men reaching older ages.

- **Income security:**

India has one of the weakest social security mechanisms globally as it only spends 1% of its **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** on pensions.

- **Integration of elderly in Economy:**

There is a need to cater to the present older person's unique needs, motivations, and preferences, and to give them a chance to contribute to society until they promote active ageing.

- **Health care and services:**

Good health lies at the core of society to ensure healthy ageing. As the life expectancy of older people increases in India, we need to ensure that people, while living longer, live healthier lives, which will translate into more significant opportunities and lower costs to older persons, their families and society.

- **Related Initiatives:**

- **SAGE (Seniorcare Aging Growth Engine):** It is a “one-stop access” of elderly care products and services by credible start-ups.

- **Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP):** To improve the quality of life of older persons by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities, etc.

- **Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY):** Aids and assistive living devices are provided to senior citizens belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) category who suffer from age-related disabilities such as low vision, hearing impairment, loss of teeth and locomotor disabilities.

- **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS):** Financial assistance is provided to persons of 60 years and above and belonging to families living BPL as per the criteria prescribed by Government of India. Central assistance of Rs 200 per month is provided to persons in the age group of 60-79 years and Rs 500 per month to persons of 80 years and above.

- **The Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana:** It is a pension scheme for senior citizens that comes with guaranteed returns on monthly, quarterly, half-yearly or on an annual basis for a period of 10 years. It is exclusively available to those who are 60 years of age and above.

- **Vayoshreshtha Samman:** Conferred as a National award, and given to eminent senior citizens & institutions under various categories for their contributions on International day of older persons on 1st october.

- **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (MWPSA) Act, 2007:** To ensure need-based maintenance for Parents and Senior Citizens and their welfare.

- **Global Initiatives:**
 - **Decade of Healthy Ageing (2020-2030):** The Decade of Healthy Ageing was endorsed by the 73rd World Health Assembly (decision making body of the World Health Organisation) in 2020.
 - The **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** calls for leaving no one behind and for ensuring that the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are met for all segments of society, at all ages, with a **particular focus on the most vulnerable—including older persons.**

Way Forward

- India is often portrayed as a young society, with a consequent demographic dividend. But, as with every country that goes through a fast process of demographic transition, **India also has a greying cum aging problem.**
- For the welfare and care for the older persons, **we must focus on the protection of already existing social support systems/traditional social institutions** such as family and kinship, neighborhood bonding, community bonding and community participation must be revived and kins should show sensitivity towards elderly citizens.

Source: PIB