



Mains Marathon

Day 32: "The Share of Old Age persons is projected to rise in the population composition of India in the coming years which is cause of concern for India". In this context discuss the issues faced by old age people and suggest a way out. (250 words)

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Approach / Explanation / Answer

Approach

- Start your answer by giving a brief about Ageing and status of the elderly in India.
- Discuss the problems associated with old age.
- Conclude your answer by giving a Way Forward.

Answer

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.

The National Elderly Policy defines people in the 60+ age group as elderly.

The UN World Population Ageing Report notes that India's ageing population (those aged 60 and above) is projected to increase to nearly 20% by 2050 from about 8% now.

Problems associated with old age

- **Social**
 - Today, the traditional values and institutions are in the process of erosion and adaptation, resulting in the weakening of intergenerational ties that were the hallmark of the traditional family.
 - Industrialization has replaced the simple family production units by the mass production and factories.
 - Negligence by kids towards their old parents.
 - Disillusionment due to retirement.
 - Feeling of powerlessness, loneliness, uselessness and isolation in elderly.
 - Generational gap.

- **Financial**
 - Retirement and dependence of elderly on their child for basic necessity.
 - Sudden increase in out-of-pocket expenses on treatment.
 - Migration of young working-age persons from rural areas have negative impacts on the elderly, living alone or with only the spouse usually poverty and distress.
 - Insufficient housing facility.
- **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.

Way Forward

Considering the demographic trends, India should reimagine its entire health-care policy for the next few decades, with an **elderly prioritised approach**.

- **Role of Government:** India needs to rapidly increase its public healthcare spending and invest heavily in the creation of well-equipped and staffed medical care facilities and home healthcare and rehabilitation services.
- **Socio-Economic Inclusion of Elderly:** Similar to countries like in Europe which have small communities to take care of the elderly and provide them related facilities, India can build such a type of youth army to help elderly in the far away areas.
- 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.
- **Health Related ‘Elderly-First’ Approach:** In the Covid-19 vaccination strategy, the seniors-first approach led to over 73% of elderly population receiving at least one dose and around 40% being doubly vaccinated by October 2021.

PDF Refernece URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/mains-marathon-daily-answer-writing-practice/papers/2022/share-old-age-persons-projected-rise-population-composition-india-coming-years-which-cause-concern-for-india-context-discuss-issues-faced-old-age-people-suggest-way-out-gs2-social-justice/print>