UN World Social Report 2023

For Prelims: United Nations World Social Report 2023: Ageing Population, National Commission on Population, Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY), SAMPANN Project, SACRED Portal for Elderly, Decade of Healthy Aging.

For Mains: Status of Ageing Population in India, Problems Associated with the Ageing Population, Current Schemes Related to Old Age Population.

Why in News?

According to the **United Nations (UN) World Social Report 2023: Leaving no one behind in an ageing world, the number of persons aged 65 years or older** worldwide is expected to **double over the next three decades.**

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

- The elderly population will reach **1.6 billion in 2050**, accounting for more than **16% of the global population.**
- **North Africa, West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa** are expected to experience the fastest growth in the number of older people over the next three decades.
    - Also, **Europe and North America** combined now have the **highest share of older persons.**
    - This demographic shift brings into **question current arrangements of** old-age support in young and old countries.
- **Gender inequality** also persists into old age. Economically, **women's lower levels of formal labour market participation**, shorter working lives and **lower wages during working years lead to more economic insecurity in later life.**

What is Ageing of the Population?

- **About:**
    - It refers to the **process by which the proportion of older individuals** in a society increases over time.
    - This is typically measured by the **proportion of the population that is over a certain age**, such as **65 years or older.**
- **Status in India:**
    - According to the **National Commission on Population**, the share of the elderly in India's population, **close to 9% in 2011,** is growing fast and may reach **18% by 2036.**
    - Life expectancy **in India has more than doubled since Independence** from around 32 years in the late 1940s to 70 years or so today.
- **Problems Associated with the Ageing Population:**
    - **Healthcare Costs:** As people age, they are **more likely to experience chronic physical health conditions** and require more healthcare services.
        - This can lead to increased healthcare costs for **governments, insurers, and**

individuals.
- **Social Security Imbalance**: Ageing populations can put a strain on **social security** systems, as a **smaller proportion of the population is working and contributing to the system,** while a **larger proportion is retired and drawing benefits.**
    - This can lead to increased pressure to raise taxes or reduce benefits.
- **Mental Health Issues:** According to a recent survey, **30% to 50% of elderly people had symptoms that make them depressed** due to feelings of powerlessness, loneliness.
    - A large majority of **elderly persons living alone are women,** especially **widows.**
- **Other Problems:**
    - Negligence by kids towards their old parents, Disillusionment due to retirement, Feeling of powerlessness, loneliness, uselessness and isolation in elderly, Generational gap.
- **Current Schemes Related to Old Age Population:**
    - **Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY)**
    - **Integrated Program for Older Persons (IPOP)**
    - **SAMPANN Project**
    - **SACRED Portal for Elderly**
    - **Elder Line: Toll-Free Number for Elderly**
- **International Initiative**: The World Health Organization **and the UN** have designated **2021-2030 as the Decade of Healthy Aging,** building on the **Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing** is a good step for elderly empowerment.

Way Forward

- **Focusing on Healthcare and Social Security:** There is a need to Increase funding for healthcare and social security programs to support older citizens.
    - Also, **promoting healthy ageing and** preventive healthcare can reduce the burden of chronic disease.
- **Financial Security to Elderly:** Increase pension coverage and improve **pension schemes** to ensure older citizens are financially secure.
- **Linking CSR with Elderly Empowerment:** There is a need to encourage **private sector participation** in the provision of elderly care services through **Corporate Social Responsibility.**
    - Private sector can also help in the development of age-friendly **infrastructure and environments** to support older citizens.
- **Old Age Self Help Groups: Old Age** Self Help Groups can be formed at the local level linked with **handloom and handicraft activities** to keep elderly **socially and physically active and busy.**
    - Time to **time board games programmes** can also be organized at **local levels** to promote **intergenerational bonding** through activities that bring **together older and younger citizens.**

Source: DTE