



## General Studies-1; Topic: Population and associated issues

### Elderly Population

#### Introduction

- The elderly are the fastest growing, but underutilized resource.
- **Re-integration of the elderly into communities may save humanity from mindlessly changing into a technology driven 'Industry 4.0'**

#### Demographic shift

- In 2050, 80% of older people will be living in low- and middle-income countries.
- The pace of population ageing is much faster than in the past.
- All countries face major challenges to ensure that their health and social systems are ready to make the most of this demographic shift.

#### Common Issues faced by Elderly Population

- They feel financially insecure and are economically dependent on their families for income.
- They are relied on pensions and cash transfers.
- Pension amount not enough for survival.
- High expenditure than savings.
- Elder abuse prevalent in society

#### Common health conditions associated with ageing

- Common conditions in older age include hearing loss, cataracts and refractive errors, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes, depression and dementia.
- As people age, they are more likely to experience several conditions at the same time.
- **Older age is also characterized by the emergence of several complex health states commonly called geriatric syndromes.**

## Challenges posed by growing elderly population in India

- **Isolation and loneliness among the elderly is rising.**
- **Rise in age-related chronic illness.**
- Heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic diseases will cause more death and illness worldwide than infectious or parasitic diseases over the next few years.
- In developed nations, this shift has already happened.
- Dementia and Alzheimer's disease are expected to almost double every 20 years, as life expectancy increases.

## Special challenges for less developed nations

- **Rise in the Health care costs:**
  - As older people stop working and their health care needs increase, governments could be overwhelmed by unprecedented costs.
  - According to a survey Japan, Italy, and Russia are the least confident about achieving an adequate standard of living in old age.
- **Elderly women issues**
  - The gendered nature of ageing is such that universally, women tend to live longer than men.
  - In the advanced age of 80 years and above, widowhood dominates the status of women.
  - Social bias often results in unjust allocation of resources, neglect, abuse, exploitation, gender-based violence, lack of access to basic services and prevention of ownership of assets.

## Way Forward

- As a signatory to **Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA)**, India has the responsibility to formulate and implement public policy on population ageing.
- Gender and social concerns of elderly, particularly elderly women, must be integrated at the policy level.
- The elderly, especially women, should be represented in decision making.
- **With the WHO declaring 2020 to 2030 as "Decade of Healthy Ageing", there is a need for Institutes like AIIMS to be in the forefront in promoting healthy ageing.**
- Increasing social/widow pension and its universalization is critical for expanding the extent and reach of benefits.
- Government must proactively work on life style modification, non-communicable disease management, vision and hearing problem management and accessible health care through Ayushman Bharat.
- Healthy elderly citizens can share their wealth of knowledge with younger generations, help with child care, and volunteer or hold jobs in their communities.

## Conclusion

- Globalization, technological developments (e.g., in transport and communication), urbanization, migration and changing gender norms are influencing the lives of older people in direct and indirect ways.
- A public health response must take stock of these current and projected trends and frame policies accordingly.