



India Ageing Report 2023

For Prelims: [Poverty](#), India Ageing Report 2023, [UNFPA \(United Nations Population Fund\)](#), International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS),

For Mains: India Ageing Report 2023 and its Recommendations.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [UNFPA \(United Nations Population Fund\)](#) India, in collaboration with the **International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS)** has unveiled the India Ageing Report 2023, highlighting the rapidly growing elderly population in India.

What are the Key Highlights of the Report?

▪ Demographic Trends:

- India's elderly population is growing rapidly, with a decadal growth rate of 41%.
- By 2050, over 20% of India's population will be elderly.
- The elderly population in India will surpass the **population of children (0 to 15 years old)** by 2046.
- The population of people aged **80+ years is expected to increase by around 279%** between 2022 and 2050.

▪ Higher Life Expectancy of Women:

- Women have a **higher life expectancy at ages 60 and 80** compared to men, with variations across states and territories.
 - For instance, in Himachal Pradesh and Kerala, women at **60 years have a life expectancy of 23 and 22 years**, respectively, which is four years greater than men at **60 years in these States** — as compared to the national average differential of only 1.5 years.

▪ Poverty and Well-being:

- More than 40% of the elderly in India are in the poorest wealth quintile.
 - **Poverty** among the elderly is a concern, affecting their quality of life and healthcare utilization.
- A substantial proportion of elderly individuals, especially women, are living **without any income, affecting their quality of life** and healthcare utilization.

▪ Regional Variations:

- There are significant inter-State variations in the elderly population and their growth rates.
- Most States in the southern region and select northern States such as Himachal Pradesh and Punjab reported a **higher share of the elderly population** than the national average in 2021, a gap that is expected to widen by 2036.

▪ Sex Ratio of the Elderly Population:

- The sex ratio among the elderly has been **climbing steadily since 1991**, with the ratio in the general population stagnating.

- Between 2011 and 2021, the **ratio increased in India as a whole and across all regions**, barring the Union Territories and western India.
- In the northeast and the east, while the sex ratio of the elderly increased, it **remained below 1,000 in both years**, indicating that **men still outnumber the women** in these regions even at 60-plus years.
 - However in central India, where the sex ratio went from 973 in 2011 to 1,053 in 2021, implying that the women caught up with and outperformed the men in survival after 60 years over the decade.
- **Low Awareness of Social Security Schemes:**
 - The elderly in India have **low awareness about the various social security schemes** designed for them.
 - A little more than half of the elderly (55%) are aware of the [old-age pension scheme \(IGNOAPS\)](#); 44% about the widow pension scheme [\(IGNWPS\)](#); and 12% about the Annapurna Scheme.
- **Concern and Challenges:**
 - Poverty is **inherently gendered in old age** when older women are more likely to be widowed, living alone, with **no income and with fewer assets** of their own, and fully dependent on family for support.
 - The major challenges facing India's aging population are the **feminisation and ruralisation** of this older population.

What are the Recommendations of the Report?

- Address the **lack of credible data on various issues** related to the elderly by including relevant questions in data collection exercises such as the [National Sample Survey](#), the [National Family Health Survey](#), and the [Census of India](#). This will help in informed policymaking.
- Increase awareness about **existing schemes for older persons and bring all Old Age Homes** under regulatory purview. Encourage the creation and running of elderly self-help groups.
- Emphasize the **importance of elderly people living in multigenerational** households. Encourage policies that facilitate and support this living arrangement.
- Encourage in **situ (at home) ageing** as much as possible by creating short-term care facilities like creches or day-care facilities. The report suggests that elderly people receive better care when living with their respective families.

What is the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)?

- **About:**
 - It is a subsidiary organ of the [UN General Assembly](#) and works as a sexual and reproductive health agency.
 - The [UN Economic and Social Council \(ECOSOC\)](#) establishes its mandate.
- **Establishment:**
 - It was established as a trust fund in 1967 and began operations in 1969.
 - In 1987, it was **officially renamed the United Nations Population Fund** but the original abbreviation, 'UNFPA' for the **United Nations Fund for Population Activities** was retained.
- **Objective:**
 - UNFPA works directly to tackle [Sustainable Development Goals](#) on health (**SDG3**), education (**SDG4**) and gender equality (**SDG5**).
- **Fund:**
 - UNFPA is not supported **by the UN budget, instead, it is entirely supported by voluntary contributions** of donor governments, intergovernmental organizations, the private sector, foundations and individuals.

