

India Ageing Report 2023: Unveiling Jammu Kashmir's Elderly Landscape

The 'India Ageing Report 2023,' a collaborative effort by the International Institute for Population Sciences and the United Nations Population Fund, delves into the aging demographic in Jammu Kashmir, revealing a nuanced picture of resilience, challenges, and the imperative need for comprehensive support.



(Source: The Kashmiriyat)

Remarkable Resilience Against Elderly Poverty

1. Low Elderly Poverty Rates: A Boon for Jammu Kashmir

Jammu Kashmir stands out as a region with remarkable resilience against elderly poverty, boasting a mere 4.2 percent of its aged population falling below the poverty line. This achievement is significant given the challenges often associated with the aging population.

2. Highest Life Expectancy After 60: Defying Odds

The region's elderly, constituting 9.4 percent of the population, demonstrate an exceptional life expectancy after the age of 60. Males exhibit a life expectancy of 20.3 percent, and females surpass with 23.0 percent, positioning Jammu Kashmir as a leader in this demographic indicator between 2015-19.

Insights from the LASI Survey: Understanding Usage Patterns

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Population Split (%)

Age Group ● 0-14 ● 15-29 ● 30-59 ● 60+



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Source: Youth in India 2022, MoSPI

(Source: LinkedIn)

1. Assistive Devices and Elderly Utilization: A Mixed Scenario



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Insights from the Longitudinal Aging Study in India (LASI) survey shed light on the usage of assistive devices among the elderly in Jammu Kashmir. Despite the availability of aids, only 44 percent of the elderly utilize them. Notably, spectacles (85.2 percent) and walking sticks (18.9 percent) are the most commonly used devices, revealing a correlation with age, urban residence, higher wealth quintile, and educational levels.

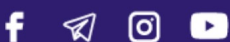
2. Challenges in Widespread Assistive Device Adoption

While the LASI survey highlights the prevalence of certain assistive devices, it also underscores the challenges in ensuring widespread adoption. Barriers such as affordability, awareness, and cultural perceptions may be contributing to the suboptimal utilization, pointing towards the need for targeted interventions.

A Closer Look at Mental Health: Challenges and Concerns



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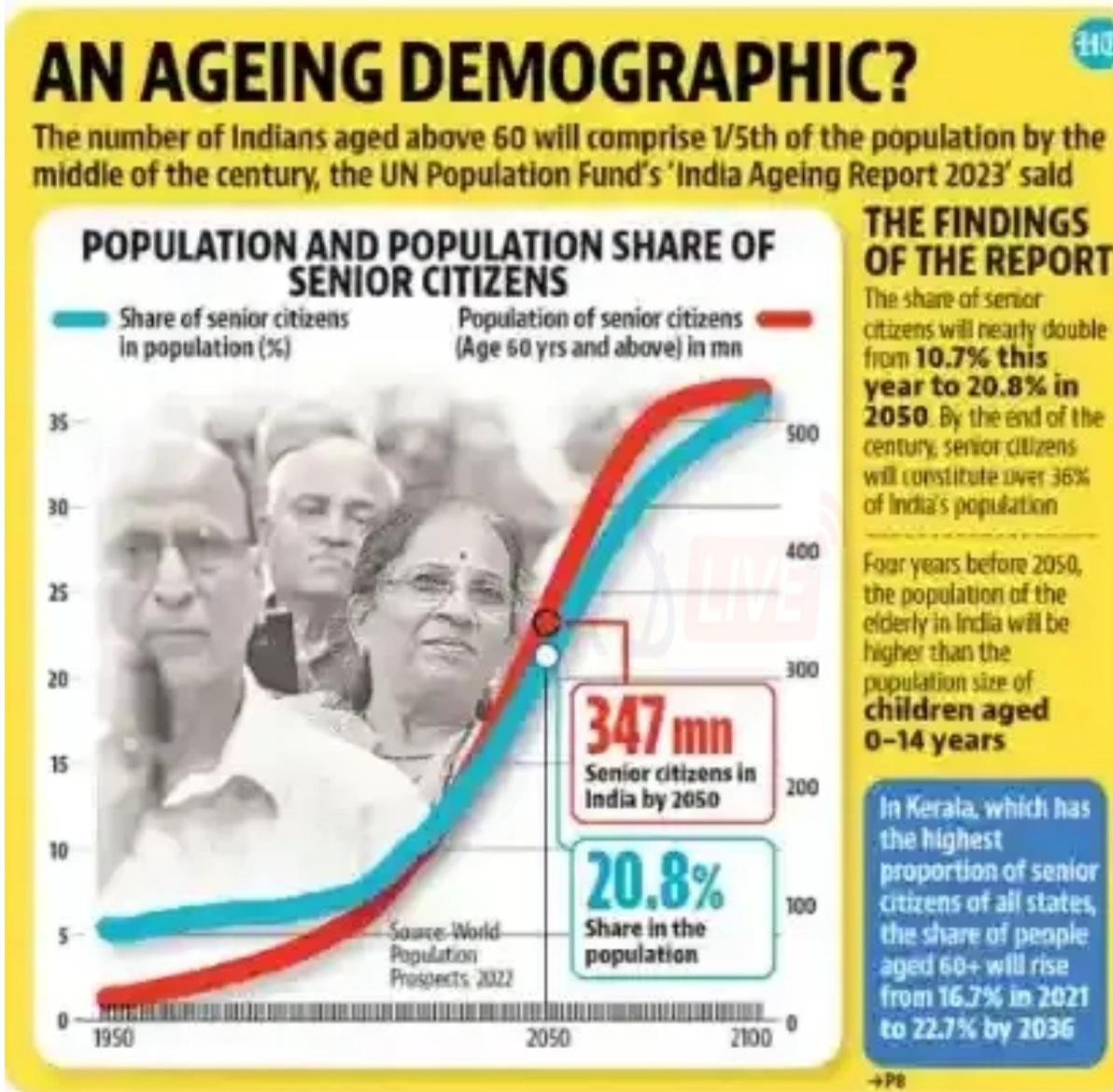
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(Source: Youth Destination IAS)

1. Composite Cognition Score: A Cause for Concern

The India Ageing Report 2023 delves into mental health concerns among the elderly in Jammu Kashmir. Findings reveal that 15 percent of those aged 60 years and above fall into the lowest 10th percentile of the composite cognition score, indicating potential cognitive challenges that need attention.

2. Depressive Symptoms: A Growing Concern



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Nearly 30 percent of elderly individuals exhibit depressive symptoms, with mental health issues correlating with factors such as education, age, gender, place of residence, widowhood, living arrangement, and work status. The report emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to address these mental health challenges.

3. The Role of Social Support in Mental Well-being

Living arrangements play a pivotal role in the mental health of older persons. Traditional joint family systems have given way to altered living arrangements, leaving older individuals with limited support as their children migrate for employment. This shift significantly affects the mental health of the elderly, pointing towards the importance of fostering social support systems.

Navigating Changing Living Arrangements

1. Impact of Changing Family Structures on Elderly Support

Traditional joint family systems in Jammu Kashmir have undergone significant transformations, impacting the living arrangements of the elderly. As children migrate for employment, older individuals find themselves with limited support, influencing their mental well-being. The report underscores the importance of understanding and addressing the implications of shifting family dynamics on the elderly.

2. Elderly Isolation and its Ramifications

The changing living arrangements have led to increased instances of elderly isolation. As family structures evolve, the elderly are at risk of being left without the necessary emotional and physical support networks. Addressing this issue requires not just policy adjustments but also societal awareness and community initiatives to provide a sense of belonging and support.

Empowering Elderly Well-being: The Role of the Private Sector

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(Source: News9live)

1. Private Sector Intervention: A Crucial Catalyst

Despite governmental efforts, the India Ageing Report 2023 emphasizes the need for increased attention from the private sector. Under Schedule VII of the Companies Act, 2013, corporations are mandated to allocate 2 percent of their net profits for social development, including aging-related initiatives. This presents a unique opportunity for the private sector to contribute financially and technically, thus improving the lives and living conditions of the elderly in Jammu Kashmir.

2. Corporate Social Responsibility in Aging Initiatives

The private sector's involvement can extend beyond financial contributions. Corporations can actively engage in aging-related initiatives, such as developing vocational skills, livelihood enhancement projects, establishing old age homes, day care centers, and providing benefits for armed forces veterans and war widows. This comprehensive approach ensures that the elderly receive not only financial support but also access to various services that enhance their overall well-being.

Bridging the Awareness Gap for Comprehensive Well-being

1. Security Schemes: A Critical Awareness Gap

The report also indicates a significant awareness gap among Jammu Kashmir elders regarding social security schemes, including health insurance coverage. With a mere 0.2 percent of elderly individuals having health insurance coverage, bridging this awareness gap becomes imperative as the elderly population continues to grow. Comprehensive well-being for all requires an informed and covered elderly population.

2. Government and Private Sector Collaboration in Awareness Campaigns

Bridging the awareness gap necessitates collaborative efforts between the government and the private sector. Awareness campaigns can be launched to educate the elderly about available social security schemes, emphasizing the importance of health insurance coverage. This collaboration can leverage the reach and resources of both sectors to ensure that every elderly individual in Jammu Kashmir is aware of and enrolled in relevant schemes.

Collaborative Efforts for Holistic Well-being

The 'India Ageing Report 2023' serves as a comprehensive guide to the multifaceted challenges and strengths within Jammu Kashmir's aging population. Collaborative efforts from both the public and private sectors are crucial to address these challenges and enhance the overall well-being and quality of life for the elderly in the region. As the elderly population continues to grow, a holistic approach that encompasses financial, physical, social, and emotional support is essential to ensure a dignified and fulfilling life for the elderly in Jammu Kashmir.

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