

## Navigating the Epidemiological Landscape of Aging in Rural India: Imperative for Policy Pathways

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India is currently experiencing a significant demographic transition characterized by a remarkable increase in its elderly population, particularly in rural areas.(1) The country's aged population is expected to grow by 279% between 2022 and 2050, with the expectation that by 2046 they will outnumber children aged 0-15 years (2,3). This demographic change comes with a range of challenges including poverty, gender inequality, social isolation and limited access to quality healthcare (4).

There are complex and varied healthcare needs of elderly people in rural India, with declining physical and mental health, vulnerability to multiple health problems such as chronic diseases, mobility difficulties and cognitive decline (4). During this period of life, access to quality healthcare becomes very essential but many aged individuals in India do not have the means or support required to maintain their wellness (1).

To tackle these issues the Indian government introduced policies such as; The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 and the National Policy for Senior Citizens. Under the Maintenance and Welfare

of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, children "shall" legally bound to provide maintenance for their parents/ senior citizens by way of a monthly allowance. It should be able to provide a convenient means to protect the life as well as property of older persons that is also simple, fast, inexpensive (5). However, National Policy for Senior Citizens offers State support to ensure financial security and food supply along with adequate shelter; it also envisages protection of all aspects of life for senior citizens. (6)

But this efficacy depends on understanding the needs of rural aged people in a delicate way (1). These complexities are unveiled by the interventions that have been enacted so as to serve the elderly better; they also have significant implications on the well-being and empowerment of aging individuals living in India (1). As such, reviewing current policies becomes necessary with a view to finding ways of making them more effective (4). This involves strengthening public health care provision, implementing poverty reduction programs, providing social security for the elderly and reducing inequities in healthcare use (1).

## CONCLUSION

To summarize, as India confronts the difficulties presented by its rapidly growing old population, it is paramount to take a comprehensive nuanced approach towards improving well-being and empowerment of senior citizens in a rural setup. The predicted growth in elderly population calls for a review of present policies as well as development of measures that focus on specific requirements associated with this group. By unravelling these intricacies and proposing strategic directions for progress, India can advance towards an inclusive and efficient system ensuring healthy ageing with dignity.

## AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

NKJ: Designed the study concept and authored the study. PB: Provided critical feedback and guided the study.

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There are no conflicts of interest.

## DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

The authors haven't used any generative AI/ AI assisted technologies in the writing process.

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