AGEING & 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: PERSPECTIVE FROM INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Globally, the proportion of older people is rising in all countries. Across the globe, older people are more likely than any other group to experience exclusion and numerous challenges that jeopardise their well-being. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) establish targets for the world to attain by 2030 in order to improve welfare and prosperity for everyone. "No one is left behind" is the fundamental pledge of SDG. In light of this, the paper highlights different aspects of older- age exclusion; Major concerns associated with specific SDGs and ageing. In addition, some recommendations for age- inclusive sustainable development are outlined in the context of India.

KEY WORDS: Ageing, Older People, Exclusion, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), India

1. INTRODUCTION

The term "older age" refers to the later phases of life, when a person's age exceeds their average life expectancy (Patel and Gandotra, 2011). Ageing is often described by means of chronological age, with a cut-off age of 60 years (United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2017). According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the number of people aged 60 and older is expected to reach 1.4 billion in 2030 and 2 billion in 2050; with a significant portion of them residing in low- and middle-income countries. The senior population in India has been growing exponentially over the past few years. In the period from 1961 to 2011, the percentage of older people increased from 5.6 to 8.6 per cent. In India, there are about 103.8 million people over 60 years (Census, 2011). This rapid demographic transition necessitates increased attention

on the ageing population. Older people are particularly suspectable to issues like social isolation, poverty, increased long-term care and social security need (Aroonsrimorakot et al., 2019; Paltasingh and Tyagi,2012). The United Nations established the SDGs in 2015 with the overarching goal of leaving no one behind. By 2030, the world must achieve these targets in order improve everyone's well-being. By virtue of their commitment, these SDGs are strongly associated with the human rights-based strategy for addressing disparities (Cox, 2020). With this key commitment, the 2030 agenda has the ability to enhance older peoples' status and rights by integrating them into development policy and practices at the international and national levels. However, developing countries, like India, have faced the issue of these developmental discourses in the form of changes in demographic scenario and family structure. Consequently, we are at crossroads. Therefore, the significant demographic shift necessitates age-inclusive development activities that promote people's wellbeing throughout their lives, particularly in their later years.

A large portion of the population remains vulnerable as a result of the lack of inclusive growth and development in the last few decades. India is likewise having struggle achieving the SDG targets. Here, five of the objectives require specific attention. **Goal 1**: Eradicating poverty **Goal 3**: Good health and well-being for people: ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all age, **Goal 5**: Gender equality, **Goal 8**: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all, **Goal 16**: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. Reaching these SDGs is essential to promoting a healthy aging process and a good quality of life after retirement. In order to meet the SDGs, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners must critically assess how population ageing and age-related concerns relate to development targets and goals.

2. OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

This present paper has been carried out by using secondary sources of information with a major focus on older-age exclusion and sustainable development. The paper addressed the following objectives:

1. To highlight different aspects of older- age exclusion
2. To address key issues associated with specific SDGs and ageing.
3. To put out recommendations towards age-inclusive development.

For the present work, relevant articles were identified by using databases like Google Scholar, JSTORE, Science Direct, and Scopus. Furthermore, relevant data from websites and reports from the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation(MOSPI), Government of India, and

Census of India 2011 are included in this study. Additional literature was further included in the reference section of the eligible articles, which met the study objective.

3. OLDER- AGE EXCLUSION

The phenomenon of older-age exclusion is defined by a multifaceted process that culminates in unequal opportunities for older individuals to access resources, authority, and rights in several domains.

3.1 Financial Exclusion

Financial exclusion in later years includes old age Poverty, income insecurity and deprivation of material resources which is a major threat to the well-being of older people. As the population ages, fewer people are entering the employment and more people are reliant on various types of social support. In their later years, many minimize or quit their jobs because of retirement options and health issues. In most instances, pensions solely are insufficient to provide basic needs in old age (Maniar and Mehta, 2021).

3.2 Access to Services

Access to services includes health and social care services, information and communication technology (ICT) and social security. Ageing population has a direct impact on health care system by increasing demand for medical professional and services. Because older people are more prone to chronic and acute diseases. The requirement for long term- care support is crucial for healthy ageing. Furthermore, women who take on the role of family caregivers—typically without any official assistance—are the primary suppliers of this support. These women have lived through lifetimes of discrimination based on their gender, which has affected their roles, education, and financial situation. These variables make people more vulnerable to poverty, poor health, and a lack of social support as they get older. They become more susceptible to prejudice, which has an impact on their long-term well-being (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [UNDESA], 2017). ICT can promote active and healthy aging as well as enhance the quality of life for senior citizens. However, older persons are less likely to have had ICT exposure than younger generations. They are therefore particularly susceptible to losing out on the advantages of technology and becoming cut off from society due to the "digital divide. Insufficient digital literacy and access concerns are the main causes of older adults' less involvement in the digital spheres (Yao et al., 2021). Furthermore, in developing nations where the programmes and policies available to senior citizens are either non-existent or very limited. The majority of senior persons are not aware of these initiatives.

3.3 Socio-cultural aspects

Sociocultural domains include symbolic exclusion and ageism. According to Conboy (2021), ageism is the practice of treating individuals unfairly based only on their age. Symbolic exclusion is the term for derogatory portrayals, such as those that characterize older people as inferior or marginal. Ageism is the prejudice and discrimination with older people that occurs at individual and in institutional level. It erodes older people's status as holders of rights, such as the rights to autonomy, participation, health and social care, security, and decent work. Furthermore, existing disadvantages that people suffer with throughout their lives due to their gender, race, ethnicity, disability and other variables are aggravated during old age. In addition, older persons were more likely to be in the most excluded group based on their education level, wealth, and overall health (Walsh et al., 2021).

4. SDGs AND AGEING: EMERGING ISSUES

By 2030, the SDGs seek to end extreme poverty, realize everyone's human rights, and guarantee that everyone can live up to their full potential in a place of equality, dignity, and health. The 2030 Agenda is more expansive and aspirational than the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were established prior to it and ended in 2015. Because of its scope and emphasis on an integrated approach, the SDGs do offer an opportunity to address specific aspects of exclusion as well as the interactions between different areas of discrimination for people of all ages. The 169 specific targets and 230 indicators that are meant to monitor the success of the SDGs' implementation provide the specifics of the 2030 agenda (UNDESA,2015; Conboy (2021). "No one will be left behind" is the central theme of the SDGs, which were formulated by the United Nations in 2015(UNDESA,2015). Inequality, global poverty, environment, climate change, peace, and justice are merely some of the different issues that the SDGs intend to address. In order to achieve the SDGs' primary goals of equality and dignity, prejudice against particular groups must be addressed. The five SDGs listed below have significant impacts on lives and inclusion of older people.

4.1 Goal 1: Eradicating Extreme Poverty for all People Everywhere

Older persons are disproportionately poor in low- and middle-income nations, and poverty among them is pervasive without sufficient social security. Social pensions and old age pensions linked to employment are two important strategies for lowering poverty among older people. Almost 68 percent of people over the age of retirement receive an old age pension globally, yet the amount of money is sometimes insufficient to keep them out of poverty according to International Labour Office (ILO), 2017. The old-age financial dependency ratio in India increased from 10.9 per cent in 1961 to 14.2 per cent in 2011, according to a report published in

2016 by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI). A significant number of workers in developing countries are employed in the unorganized sector. Just fewer older people get pensions based on their work. The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) launched the National Social Assistance Program in 1995. The National Social Assistance Program presently incorporates a number of financial programs designed to guarantee older individuals will get financial support in their later years. However, the monthly pension, which varies from 200 to 500 rupees, is insufficient to cover older people's essential needs (Help Age India, 2016). These further increases the risk of old age poverty.

4.2. Goal 3: Ensure Good Health & Well-being for all at all ages

Many variables contribute to healthy aging, with the environment and society being key players. Older people's health is significantly impacted by the existence of various health conditions, which complicates treatment and management(Paltasingh and Jena, 2021). An increasing number of both communicable and non-communicable diseases affect India's aging population. In addition, mental illnesses are very common among the older population due to socioeconomic problems such as decline in economic independence lack poor living conditions, and of family support, as well as age-related changes in the brain. Dementia is the most common mental illness that older people experience (Ingle and Nath, 2008; Paltasingh and Jena, 2022).Their quality of life is negatively impacted by numerous diseases and disabilities that arise from age-related changes and immune loss in old age. According to a Government of India (GoI), (2011) report, older males and females had a higher incidence of cardiac illnesses in both urban and rural locations. Patel et al. (2022) in their study looked at the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as diabetes, heart disease, cardiovascular disease, and cancer, among older women. This study also reveals that older women were more likely to have diabetes (7.30 per cent) and hypertension (30.38 per cent).India is considered as the global capital of hypertension and diabetes, according to Joshi and Parikh (2007), because these two NCDs are more prevalent among older people. The prevalence of disabilities in later life has a significant effect on the caregiving responsibilities and day-to-day experiences of older people. GoI (2011) report states that the most prevalent impairment among the older people is locomotor disability. The percentage of older adults with disabilities is slightly higher in rural areas than in metropolitan ones. Unfortunately, the poor individuals frequently have the highest health demands as they get older. Safe, efficient, and reasonably priced drugs and therapies, as well as easily accessible care systems, are essential for providing older persons with high-quality healthcare. An experienced geriatric staff with an understanding the concerns of aging populations is necessary to address these issues. In broadly, a multitude of interventions are necessary to ensure the health and well-being of older individuals(Paltasingh and Tyagi, 2015).

4.3. Goal 5: Gender Equality

It has been observed that women live considerably longer than men. Between 2001 and 2011, the proportion of old women in India increased from 938 to 1000. This would illustrate the feminization of the aging population (GoI, 2011). India has 104 million senior citizens, 51 million of whom are men and 53 million of whom are women, according to the 2011 Census (Census, 2011). Due to their growing dependence on others and the feminization of aging, which is made worse by the loss of a spouse, they become more vulnerable as they age. Gender discrimination is pervasive in society and affects girls and women in areas such as work, education, and financial resources. It also adds to lifetime inequality. More marginalization in later years is a result of the inequality that is experienced throughout life. Women's lifetime earnings are lower due to gender differences in income and educational prospects, which raises their risk of poverty and marginalization as they get older. Compared to older males, older women are more likely to be impoverished and receive smaller pension payments in both developed and developing nations. The fact that working women usually have interrupted careers is one factor contributing to this poverty in later age. Women make up a disproportionate share of workers in low-wage, low-productivity professions; most of them are unpaid home-based workers. They are sometimes prevented from entering the workforce by social norms, safety concerns, and security-related issues (Birla, 2021). According to United Nation Development Programme [UNDP], 2018 many women who fulfil the traditional role of caregivers for others quit their jobs because it is challenging to balance work and care giving. It raises their own risk of poverty in the future when they leave the workforce. Among the most vulnerable sections of society, older women are marginalized in developing as well as developed nations. With regard to women's inclusive development, governments in India have implemented numerous empowerment measures since the country's independence (M. Indhirapriyadharshini et al., 2023). However, older women have less access to and awareness of these initiatives Thus, policy makers in India should give special consideration to the feminization of the aging population

4.5. Goal 8: Decent work & Economic Growth

SDG Goal 8 includes encouraging full and productive employment, decent work for all, and sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth. A steady and productive workforce is essential for sustained economic progress. Nevertheless, this stability is undermined by the difficulties older persons face in the workforce. The main barrier to long-term employment is discrimination in hiring, promotions, and training. Many companies are influenced by negative perceptions that portray older individuals as untrainable, rigid, ill, and incapable of learning new skills. These beliefs hinder their capacity to hold down a job and restrict their access to professional advancement and on-the-job training (Cox, 2019).Older workers have a higher

chance of long-term unemployment following a job loss than their younger counterparts, and in the circumstance if that they find new employment, their salary will likely be lower. Ignoring and undervaluing older people is detrimental to the individual and unfavourable to society's overall productivity. Supportive services and flexible work options are crucial actions that can encourage their active engagement and benefit society at large (Maniar & Mehta, 2021).

4.6. Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institution

SDG Goal 16 promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. Justice and inclusion are supported when older persons are acknowledged by institutions and the government; given the opportunity to participate in decision-making and to influence policy (HelpAge International, 2012; UNFPA, 2017). In order to support senior citizens' continued independence in their own homes, a number of Asian cities with fast aging populations have concentrated on encouraging their involvement in city and community planning (Cox, 2019). Encouraging the social inclusion of older persons can be achieved through empowerment in the same way that it can be beneficial for personal skill development.

5. TOWARDS AGE-INCLUSIVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: SOME RECOMMENDATION

Anticipating the economic and social transformations associated with aging and old age is essential to ensuring that the SDGs are achieved. Encouraging older people to live independent, healthy, and productive lives and to express their right to self-determination in all areas that have an impact on their life is also crucial. The recommendations listed below focus toward the wellbeing of senior citizens.

- In order to end old age poverty, it will be necessary to increase social safety benefits and protections, including older people in formal labour markets, offer them with more possibilities based on their skills, knowledge, and experience, and recognize the unpaid services they give. strengthening retirement benefits, which will help people attain financial stability in later life.

- Exclusionary policies and practices not only dehumanize the individual but also impede economic progress. However, older people's poverty and unemployment violate their human rights and lower the economy's social capital. For structural changes to occur in the workplace, macro interventions focussed on revising government employment-related policies are essential. Policies guaranteeing older retirees access to sufficient social safeguards after they are unable to work are necessary for developing nations.

- Older workers must be allowed to continue working and contributing to the economy in order to maintain sustainable economic growth and productivity. Encouraging initiatives to support decent work for all should be complemented by steps to improve older people's capacity to sustain a sufficient level of living.

- Involving senior citizens can play a significant role at the local level in bringing attention to the financial difficulties they confront and the reforms they require from their peers and the community. Including many stakeholder groups in the initiatives helps to better understand the causes and consequences of poverty among older people.

- The percentage of older women who are financially dependent is much higher. Most of the time, their needs are disregarded. Thus, their requirements must come first. In light of the growing ageing population, the government must ensure some important provisions under ageing and well-being programs/policies.

- In order to improve women's and girls' status in society, empowerment is essential. People who engage in empowerment practices develop a sense of personal strength and an understanding of the links between the issues they face and the issues facing the community. Due to the fact that older women serve as vital role models and encourage others to take up advocacy responsibilities, empowering older women has a significant positive impact on both their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of their families and communities. To ensure women's rights and equality in society, macro-level actions necessitate modifications at all levels of policy. A fundamental aspect of human rights is ensuring that people have opportunities and are not subjected to discrimination because of their cultural background. Macro reforms should focus on key areas of gender disparity, like fair compensation and workplace regulations that encourage women to take up caregiving roles. Women need equitable wages and benefits, as well as flexible work hours that allow them to continue working, in order to have financial stability as they age. Physical strength declines with age, especially if health care is overlooked. Aging is a natural and inevitable process. In their later years, older people need to receive appropriate medical care. The insufficiency of healthcare and financial instability are the main causes of the deteriorating health of the older population. Economic insecurity and a lack of access to healthcare are major contributors to the poor health of the older people. At primary healthcare facilities in both urban and rural areas, specialized geriatric care and improved health programs are key to promoting healthy aging. Proper health care is necessary for senior citizens as they age.

- Removing all material and structural obstacles to healthy aging is the main goal of policies that take a right-based approach. Nowadays, it is imperative that older

individuals be positively included in both their communities and society at large. Encourage the creation and implementation of human rights-based, age-sensitive, and inclusive policies at the national and local levels, with quantitative indicators to monitor progress on the condition of older people.

- To reflect and encourage the contributions of older people to society, fundamental legislative changes as well as attitudinal changes on aging are thus required.

6. CONCLUDING REMARK

In order to build a more sustainable, and inclusive society, where nobody is left behind, the SDGs provide a crucial road map. Older persons face multiple challenges that jeopardize their well-being and the risk of exclusion all over the world. The difficulties of aging differ among cultures and groups and are not always the same. Developing nations with limited resources, such as India, deal with issues of poverty, social protections, and basic healthcare access; in contrast, the main concerns of the aging population in low- and middle-income countries are the sufficient pensions, and long-term support facilities. Address these issues and the SDGs' objectives while keeping in mind the morals and ethical standards that prioritize advancing human rights for all. The challenges of aging differ among cultures and groups and are not always the same. Age must not be a determining factor in eligibility, care, or treatment for older people in order to eradicate discrimination. Rather, equal opportunities and services for older adults must be extended to all age groups. Many overarching deficiencies characterize the multidimensional poverty that afflicts a large portion of the Indian population. People encounter scarcity or limited access to resources related to their level of living, education, and health. Some are deprived of decent lives by this kind of poverty, which is also generational. Supporting inclusive and equitable development as well as healthy aging requires taking these difficulties into account when formulating macro policies. Encouraging inclusive and equitable development as well as healthy aging requires incorporating these issues into the policy formulation process. Labor markets and economic growth are related to aging outcomes. If the state is to support better and longer-lasting repercussions of aging, meticulous preparation and execution are required. The active participation of senior citizens in society at large is essential to the development of inclusive communities. Thus, it is imperative that the 2030 agenda address the vulnerability and exclusion of many older people, but it is even more imperative to go beyond viewing older people as a disadvantaged group. Older people need to be recognized as active participants in the development of society in order to achieve development outcomes that are truly transformative, inclusive, and resilient.

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