

Landscape study on ageing and longevity in India seeks reshaping of narrative

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The report takes stock of the latest data, programmes and narratives on ageing in India



Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies has launched an all-inclusive report on ageing and longevity in India. Produced in collaboration with Dalberg Advisors and Ashoka Changemakers, the report “Longevity: A New Way of Understanding Ageing”, seeks to reshape the narrative around aging through a comprehensive, multi-faceted approach - not just longer lives, but better ones.

The report has been built-off interactions with leading expert organisations over ten months, allowing the capturing of diverse perspectives on longevity, its ideal approach, gaps in the ecosystem, and opportunities for intervention.

The learnings from these organisations which include, Carers Worldwide, WisdomCircle, Vayah Vikas, Silver Talkies, HelpAge India, Nightingale Medical Trust, AARP, GreyShades, Happy2Age, St. John's Hospital, Tata Trusts, Khyaal, Agewell Foundation, and One Billion Literates Foundation, have been further supplemented with interviews with over 15 other experts in the field.

Secondary data analysis has strengthened the report with key trends, models the socio-economic impact of inaction, and projects the benefits of enabling older adults to lead empowered lives.

In 2023-24, older adults contributed \$68 million in labour income, accounting for 3% of India's GDP. Annually, they dedicate approximately 14 billion hours to caregiving within their families and an estimated 2.6 billion hours to community-building activities. Findings indicate that if older adults in India who wish to remain in the workforce were to re-enter the labour market, the country's GDP could potentially increase by 1.5%.

Four dimensions shape the report's exploration of longevity, based on the needs of older adults: economic security, health and well-being, freedom to participate, and social connectedness.

The report highlights three pivotal priorities for Samaaj Innovators and philanthropies to advance the longevity agenda. These include embedding longevity into societal consciousness as a shared mission, fostering groundbreaking ideas to improve older adults' quality of life, and addressing systemic gaps in data, capacity, and collaboration to enable deeper, scalable

change.

Rohini Nilekani, Chairperson, Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies comments, “By 2047, India will have 300 million older adults, and we will need much better structures for providing care and support to millions of people. Yet, older adults are not a homogenous, frail group. The elderly are also a seat of value. Can India take the lead in redefining what it means to be an older adult? Can we do it in time for the seismic shift in our demographics? Private philanthropy is critical to kickstart the multi-sectoral innovation we need to squarely and fairly address the issues that will arise with an ageing population. It's my hope that this report will spur deeper public discourse on an issue that concerns us all.”

Swetha Totapally, Regional Director, Asia Pacific at Dalberg, says, “One of our most important findings is that there is already a whole ecosystem of Samaaj innovators who are rewriting the script of what it means to be an older adult in India. These organizations are creating a deeper understanding of older adults’ – and their families’ – lived realities, advancing important policies, developing new models for care, and supporting older adults to live life on their own terms.”

Maria Clara Pinheiro, Ashoka’s New Longevity Co-Leader, shares, “This study has been invaluable in helping us learn from the ecosystem about the vast opportunities in longevity in India. One of the most powerful insights has been the chance to shift the narrative around lifelong contribution — recognising that everyone, at any age, can remain active, engaged, and make a meaningful impact in society.”