

Source: HelpAge India; Census 2011

# State of the elderly

On India's growing population of the aged and the mounting pressures on various socio-economic fronts.

BY R. SURESH

INDIA has 100 million persons above the age of 60, according to "State of the elderly in India: 2014", a report brought out by HelpAge India. By 2050, this figure is likely to rise to 324 million and the country is expected to have 48 million persons who are 80 or above.

Ageing of the population is caused by downward trends in fertility and mortality. Low birth rates coupled with long life expectancies have seen the percentage of persons aged 60 or more rise rapidly.

The report serves to highlight the dichotomy between an apparently happy picture of increased longevity and the reality of long years of hopelessness without family, society or state support, which the elderly in India face today.

It also focusses on the oft-overlooked area of abuse of the elderly. HelpAge says the abuser in most cases is the

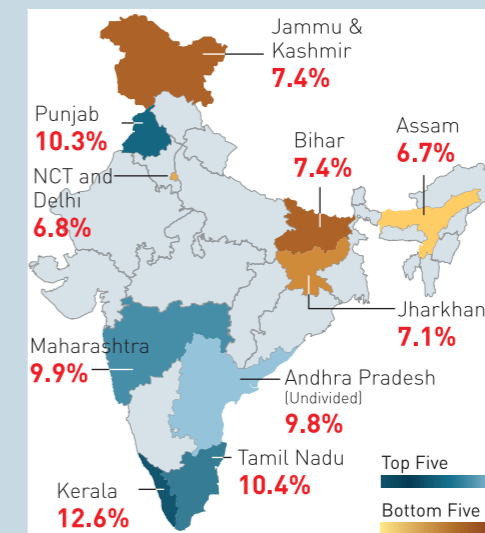
trusted carer, one's own child.

A report by Tulika Tripathi titled "Unhealthy, Insecure, and Dependent Elders" (Economic & Political Weekly, July 19, 2014) says that economic dependence and lack of income security have important implications on the health outcomes of the aged. It says the rise in old age population has increased the support burden on working age people (15-59). The socially backward communities such as the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes face a heavier burden.

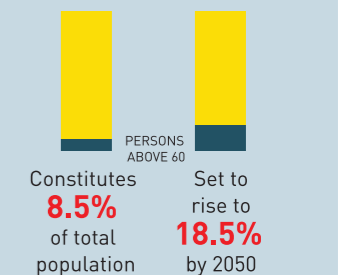
Health care is increasingly being privatised, which has led to massive increases in the cost of services. With the bulk of the aged population having little or no insurance cover, health is an increasing burden on households.

Manjira Khurana, HelpAge India's Country Head (Advocacy and Communications), says: "The issue of poverty, both relative and chronic, poses additional challenges when it comes to older persons, particularly those in rural and far-flung areas with inadequate access to health care facilities. Then there are those who are triply disadvantaged—women, the disabled, Dalits, and tribals in this category, with even more limited access to social security, health care and emotional security."

## People aged 60 and above in major States (as a percentage of total population)



## Total number of persons over 60: 108.2 million



By 2050 India's 80+ age population likely to be 48 million

## Percentage of people over 65 receiving a pension



## INDIA GLOBAL AGEWATCH INDEX 2014 RANK: 69

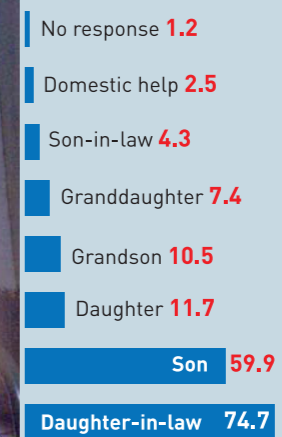
Out of 96 countries, according to the social and economic well-being of older people

## How many more years a 60-year-old can expect to live: 17

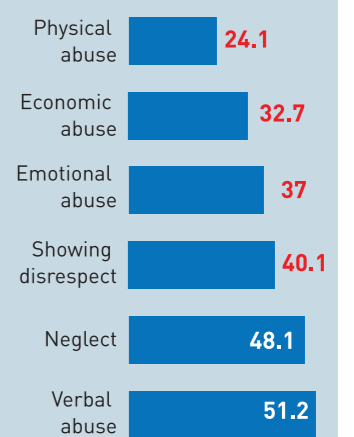
The average number of years a person can expect to live in good health at 60 : 12.6



## Person abusing at household level (%)



## Kind of abuse faced at household level (%)



Of those abused, 70% did not report the matter. "Maintaining confidentiality of the family matter" is the major reason for not reporting abuse (31%), and the second is "fear of retaliation" (23%). One-fifth of the elderly (20%) did not report abuse as they "did not know how to deal with the problem".

Based on a HelpAge India survey in eight cities of India covering 833 respondents aged 80 or more. Note: Total adds to more than 100 because of multiple responses