

Welfare Of Senior Citizens & Sustainable Development Goals: Learning For India

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ABSTRACT

The Sustainable Development Goals National Indicator Framework Progress Report 2023 ranked India 39th for Good Health and Well-Being. India ranks 112th out of 166 countries in the attainment of sustainable development goals, according to the Sustainable Development Report 2023. The Constitution of India, pertinent legislation, and many programs and initiatives at both national and state tier protects interests of senior citizens. Various countries implemented strategies, programs, and measures for the wellbeing of older persons within their jurisdictions. Studying the practices of Sweden, Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Canada, the United States, Australia, and Switzerland could enhance our country's ability to safeguard the interests of older residents more effectively. This study examines the welfare of older citizens in India and various other countries to enhance performance and safeguard their interests. The study proposes strategies and approaches for the wellbeing of older adults, informed by insights from many countries, utilizing a doctrinal research technique.

Keywords:- Sustainable Development Goals, the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007, Governmental Program and Schemes, Leave no one behind, Good Health and Wellbeing.

1. INTRODUCTION

Duty to maintain the senior citizens has been accepted in our holy texts and in ancient times. ¹ As per Census 2011, the Senior Citizens population in India is found to be 10.38 Crore in the year 2011, ² which is expected to reach at 17.32 crore in 2026. ³ The United Nations General Assembly Report noted that in nations that are developing, the elderly population is expected to quadruple over the next 50 years, with the increase being both the highest and the most rapid. This alteration in the global population profoundly influences all aspects of individual, communal, national, and international existence. ⁴

¹Biddappa R M, A Study on the harsh reality of senior citizens and family issues in India, *Legal Desire International Journal on Law*, 8(27). 23-32.

² Press Information Bureau, Government of India, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Population of Senior Citizens, <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1847436> (last visited on 13.04.2024)

³ World Health Organization, Ageing. (2020) https://www.who.int/health-topics/ageing#tab=tab_1 (last visited on 02.03.2023)

⁴ United Nations General Assembly, Report of the Second World Assembly on Ageing, held in Madrid from 8 April to 12 April 2022, UN Doc A/CONF.197/9 uploaded on <https://unece.org/DAM/pau/MIPAA.pdf> (last visited on 07.12.2022)

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs report indicates that by mid-century, the global inhabitants will be evenly divided between the young and the elderly as a result of the significant demographic transformation underway. In 2000, the global population of individuals aged over 65 was 70 million and is projected to exceed 350 million by 2050.⁵

In 2015, the concept of "healthy aging" was endorsed by the World Health Organization (therein after WHO). In addition to this, the "Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (2002)", "Active Aging: A Policy Framework (2002)", "the World Report on Ageing and Health (2015)", and "the Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health (2017)" have been adopted for the wellbeing of the senior citizens at international level.⁶

In India, the Preamble of the Constitution, Fundamental Rights⁷, Directive Principles⁸ and Fundamental Duties, a special legislation⁹ and allied provisions¹⁰ secures the privileges of the aged individuals and welfare thereto. In relation to privileges of senior citizens, the apex court had observed that, "The term 'social justice' in the Preamble of our Constitution is prominently positioned for valid reasons, as it represents a paramount and significant type of justice. The rights of elderly individuals represent a developing issue that may not have been fully anticipated by the founders of our Constitution. Consequently, although Article 39 of the Constitution addresses the health and strength of workers, both male and female, as well as the vulnerability of children, and Article 41 pertains to public assistance in instances of unemployment, old age, illness, disability, and other forms of unmerited deprivation, there is an absence of explicit mention regarding the health of the elderly, their housing during times of need, and their dignity and sustenance attributable to their age..¹¹

Thus, senior citizens welfare and concerns are significant and always have been matter of concern at local and international sphere. Some of the developed countries performed well in the betterment of the aged individuals. The present study focus on performance of countries i.e., Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherland, Canada, United States of America, Australia, Switzerland and India and suggesting mechanism assisting India in protecting the interest of senior citizen and helping in achieving relevant SDGs with the help of doctrinal research methodology.

2. WELFARE OF SENIOR CITIZENS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

There are 37 countries in the list developed countries. Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Canada, United States of America, Australia, Switzerland performed well for the welfare of senior citizens.

a. Sweden

During World War II, suspension of reforms gave senior's citizen's sense of exclusion from welfare society in Sweden.¹² In 1939; the Swedish Pensioners' Association (SPF) was established to improve the condition of pensioners. In 1941–1942, with support from the Social Democratic Party and unions, the National Organization of Pensioners (PRO) was founded as the principal advocate for elderly persons, using the historical and organizational capabilities of labor unions.¹³ The collective action frames of the Swedish senior rights movement articulated either support for or resistance to the Social Democratic objective of creating a People's House for

⁵ Leaving No One Behind In An Ageing World, United Nations, Department of Economics and Social Affairs, World Social Report 2023, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2023/01/2023wsr-chapter1-.pdf> (last visited on 14.04.2024)

⁶ Shevelkova, V., Mattocks, C. & Lafortune, L. (2023). Efforts to address the Sustainable Development Goals in older populations: a scoping review. *BMC Public Health* 23(456), 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-15308-4>

⁷ Article 21 of the Constitution of India

⁸ Article 41 of the Constitution of India

⁹ The Government of India passed the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007

¹⁰ Section 125 of The Criminal Procedure Code 1973 provides a remedy to wives, children and parents to claim maintenance. The provision even empowers the Magistrate to enforce the said Order. The essential factor for grant of maintenance however is that the children against whom the maintenance claim is filed by the parents should have sufficient means to maintain the parents and still neglect or refuses to maintain the parents

¹¹ Ashwani Kumar v. Union of India, (2019) 2 SCC 636

¹² Jönson, H. (2005). Social democratic aging in the People's Home of Sweden. *Journal of Aging Studies* - J AGING STUD. 19. 291-308. 10.1016/j.jaging.2004.07.005.

¹³ Ibid.

Swedish citizens during the poor-law period and part of the welfare state era.¹⁴

Presently, in Sweden, total 21 regions organize and finance healthcare and rehabilitation through taxes. Persons under the age of 85 are required to pay lower charges for outpatient treatment. The State also contributes in financing of social security and medical care. Social welfare and healthcare at home are administered regionally by the 290 local governments, except for Region Stockholm, which provides all services. Senior citizens have been offered appropriate services of their choice at their door step by private or public service provider on assessment of their needs by the social care managers of the municipalities. In addition to this patient co-payments, tax revenue have been primarily utilised to fund social services.¹⁵ In Sweden, the Senior Alert Program is also in existence and the same caters to health problems which are a result of age related factors.¹⁶ The program focused on pressure ulcers, nutrition and falls and subsequently oral health was also added¹⁷. Sweden ranks 2nd in achieving SDG's¹⁸ for its ideal social security and medical care and through the Senior Alert Program.

b. Norway

Norway is known for spending per person more money on elderly care than any other developed or developing country. About 221 000 people (4.5% of the population) have been found above 80 years of age or older in 2011. Statistics Norway predicts rise from 4.5 to 11.7 percent and from 221,000 to 904000 of above 80 by 2100. Care for the elderly has been one of the biggest service sectors, with more than 25% of municipal spending and nearly 3% of GDP in the country. 10% of the annual budget is devoted to the provision of facilities and services. In Norway, with adequate support and care, a cost-free private apartment after retirement is arranged for the senior citizens.¹⁹

Norway's health administration comprises three tiers: national, provincial (or regional), and local (municipal). The National Health Policy is formulated and implemented by the country's Ministry of Health and Care Services, with support from several subordinate agencies. The Norwegian Primary Health Services Act of 1982 established the primary health services to fulfill the need of the population.²⁰ In 2012, the "Coordination Reform" took initiative for coordination between primary and secondary levels of care centres adopting regulatory initiatives, including upcoming economic incentives, structural reforms, and new health legislation.²¹ A new initiative, "Live Your Whole Life (Å leve hele livet)," was introduced to enhance the well-being of older adults.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Agerholm J, Pulkki J, Jensen NK, Keskimäki I, Andersen I, Burström B, Jämsen E, Tynkkynen LK, Schön P, Liljas AEM. (2023) The organisation and responsibility for care for older people in Denmark, Finland and Sweden: outline and comparison of care systems. *Scand J Public Health*. Mar;52(2):119- 122. doi: 10.1177/14034948221137128. Epub 2023 Jan 24. PMID: 36691975; PMCID: PMC10913333. (last visited on 01.08.2023)

¹⁶ Sweden's Senior Alert Program: How an Information System Can Reduce Health Risks Among the Elderly, The Commonwealth Fund, <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/case-study/2016/sep/swedens-senior-alert-program-how-information-system-can-reduce>, (last visited on 10.04.2024)

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Sustainable Development Report, Rankings, The overall performance of all 193 Member States, <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/rankings>, (Last visited on 12.04.2024)

¹⁹ Gupta N (2013), Models of Social and Health Care for Elderly in Norway, Nidhi Gupta, *Indian Journal of GERONTOLOGY*, 27(4), 574-587.

²⁰ The Norwegian Primary Health Services Act of 1982 established to meet the need of the society. The Norwegian healthcare system composed hospitals and specialized care (scope of centre) on one side and primary care with long-term care on the other. With the help of this act, local health and social services can be better coordinated, their ties to institutional care are strengthened, resource use is improved, preventive care is strengthened, and the groundwork for more effective staffing of medical facilities is laid. Norwegian municipalities, referred to as Kommune, are mandated to deliver medical care for the elderly, encompassing home healthcare, practical aid with daily activities, and, where necessary, nursing facilities.

²¹ Ibid.

The primary objective of the policy is to disseminate and execute creative strategies to facilitate aging at home, promote social participation and community inclusion for elders, provide dietary and nutritional services, and ensure continuous and synchronized medical care.²² Norway ranks 7th in for its achievement²³ for allocating budget for policies and program for the welfare of the aged.

c. Denmark

In Denmark, five regions and 98 municipalities oversee the healthcare system. States establish overarching policies, assess standards of treatment, and supervise the comprehensive structure of the health care industry, while municipalities and regions deliver essential services. Social care has been the responsibility of the local governments. Municipalities arrange social services such as home care (social and health services), home nursing, and other care facilities²⁴ and help senior citizens maintain their independence as long as possible.²⁵ The Government of Denmark has started the Senior Citizens Councils which is to be found in each municipality and consisting of people aged above 60 years. The municipalities have to consult the Council on any issue relevant to the elderly.²⁶ Denmark obtained the 3rd position for achieving SDG's²⁷ because of power distribution between the municipalities and the nation.

d. Netherland

The Netherland Organization for Health Research and Development oversaw the Dutch National Care for the Elderly Program from its inception in 2008 until 2016 to accumulate information of frail elderly persons, analyze their necessities and desires, and present suitable model of person-centered and integrated care. The program is categorized in three phases viz, developing regional geriatric networks with executive support; delivering innovative and transitional projects; and disseminating and implementing successful projects across the country which was funded with 88 million euro budget by the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare, and Sports.²⁸ Further, the "Integrated Neighbourhood Approach project" was initiated to create an integrated network of support for elderly people at risk and so as to provide them quality of life²⁹, "the Chronic Care Model" and "the Kaiser Permanente Triangle" offered community-based older adults care and support, "Transitional Care Bridge project" focused on connection between primary care and medical care in the Hospital. In addition to this, specific legislations i.e., "The Health Insurance Act", "the Social Act", "the Long Term Care Act", and "the Youth Act" brought Dutch system of betterment for the elderly nearer to being one of the significant system. All citizens have been required to have health insurance, covering minor children automatically in their parents' insurance under "Health Insurance Act". "The Social Support Act" is carried out by the municipalities for self reliance and taking part in society for fostering social interactions of person with disabilities, including the chronically ill, elderly,

²² Norwegian Government's Quality Reform for the Elderly, The Commonwealth fund, <https://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/newsletter-article/2018/nov/norwegian-governments-quality-reform-elderly#:~:text=A%20new%20Norwegian%20program%2C%20Live,healthy%20aging%20for%20their%20residents> (Last visited on 10.03.2024)

²³ Sustainable Development Report, Rankings, The overall performance of all 193 Member States, <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/rankings>, (Last visited on 12.04.2024)

²⁴ Elderly person in good health receive home visits every two years until the age of 82, at which point visits become yearly for those who are medically and socially vulnerable and between the ages of 65 and 81. These visits are known as preventive home visits as the municipalities visit the homes of the elderly to verify and check upon the health of the elderly and prevent any disease or untoward incidence.

²⁵ Agerholm J, Pulkki J, Jensen NK, Keskimäki I, Andersen I, Burström B, Jämsen E, Tynkkynen LK, Schön P, Liljas AEM. (2023) The organisation and responsibility for care for older people in Denmark, Finland and Sweden: outline and comparison of care systems. *Scand J Public Health*. Mar;52(2):119- 122. doi: 10.1177/14034948221137128. Epub 2023 Jan 24. PMID: 36691975; PMCID: PMC10913333. (last visited on 01.08.2023)

²⁶ Statutory elected Senior Citizens' Councils in Denmark, European Commission, Interoperable Europe, Open Government, <https://joinup.ec.europa.eu/collection/open-government/document/statutory-elected-senior-citizens-councils-denmark>, (Last visited on 17.03.2024).

²⁷ Sustainable Development Report, Rankings, The overall performance of all 193 Member States, <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/rankings>, (Last visited on 12.04.2024)

²⁸ Jong, B. M., Wynia, K., & Geluk-Bleumink, A. (2018). Ageing Better in the Netherlands. *Gerontology, InTech*. doi: 10.5772/intechopen.74748 (Last visited on 01.08.2023)

²⁹ Ibid.

and mentally challenged. Integrated package of care and facilities have been ensured by “The Long Term Care Act (WLZ 2015)” to the citizens in the country³⁰ In 2018, the government initiated the Pact for Elderly Care (Pact voor de Ouderenzorg) aimed at promoting healthy aging at home, mitigating loneliness, and enhancing nursing facility services.³¹ For, its insurance system and other policies, Netherland ranked 20th in achieving the SDG’s.³²

e. Canada

In Canada, "social security" encompasses programs related to elderly people, impairment, survivors' benefits, as well as health, education, joblessness, and household and child aid. Canada's Public Pensions System refers to a group of programs providing income support specifically for the elderly, disabled, and survivors.³³ Canadian Criminal Code³⁴, provide protection to the senior citizens from abuse.³⁵ Additionally, the "Canadian Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (CNPEA)" is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the liberties of older individuals via information mobilization, cooperation, reform of policies, and education.³⁶ Canada remained 26th in achieving SDG’s³⁷ owing to the public pension system and other policies in force.

f. United States of America

Adult protective services (APS) gained attention of US government in 1974. However, federal funding for Social Services Block Grants reduced by 36% since 2000 and 73% since 1982. In 1992, ombudsman programs were established to investigate reports or accusations of elder neglect in long-term care facilities. “The Elder Justice Act (EJA) of 2002” has been the first federal initiative pertaining to elder abuse and enabling private and public sectors to "protect older people legally, morally, and structurally." The National Centre on Elder Abuse receive funding from the under the Act addressing abuse of older adults. The Act mandates for publication of reports, recommendations on enforcement actions and offers grants to support local initiatives, long-term care facilities, and academic research.³⁸ The Aging and Disability Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (ADEPP) in the USA assists people in understanding existing scientifically supported initiatives and procedures related to aging and impairment, enabling them to identify those that best suit their requirements. The Aging and Disability Resource Centers Program/No Wrong Door system offers guidance and aid for assisted living planning.³⁹ Because of its

³⁰Youth Policy in the Netherlands, https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Netherlands_2007_Youth_Policy_Overview.pdf, (Last visited on 01.08.2023)

³¹ AARP International, <https://www.aarpinternational.org/initiatives/aging-readiness-competitiveness-arc/netherlands#:~:text=Aware%20of%20these%20strengths%20and,and%20improving%20nursing%20home%20services> (Last viewed on 03.04.2024)

³² Sustainable Development Report, Rankings, The overall performance of all 193 Member States, <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/rankings>, (Last visited on 12.04.2024)

³³ The Canadian Safety Net for the Elderly, Social Security, Office of Retirement and Disability Policy, <https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/ssb/v68n2/v68n2p53.html> (Last visited on 20.08.2023)

³⁴ There are general provisions that deal with crimes like assault causing bodily harm, aggravated assault, and sexual assault when it comes to physical abuse. Theft, fraud, extortion, breach of trust, abuse of a power of attorney, manslaughter or murder, forced confinement, criminal negligence, and failure to provide for basic needs is an additional offense covered by the Criminal Code.

³⁵ Podnieks E. (2008) Elder abuse: the Canadian experience. *J Elder Abuse Negl*;20(2):126-50. doi: 10.1080/08946560801974612. PMID: 18928213.

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³⁶ Cnpea Rcpmta, Canadian Network for the prevention of Elder Abuse, <https://cnpea.ca/en/about-cnpea/who-we-are>, (Last visited on 10.04.2024)

³⁷ Sustainable Development Report, Rankings, The overall performance of all 193 Member States, <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/rankings>, (Last visited on 12.04.2024)

³⁸ Lu, P & Shelley M. (2019). Comparing older adult and child protection policy in the United States of America. *Ageing and Society*. 41. 1-21. 10.1017/S0144686X19000990.

³⁹ Administration for Community Leaving, <https://acl.gov/about-acl/administration-aging> (Last visited on 08.04.2024)

effective protective program for Senior Citizens, United States of America ranks 39th in the SDG's in achieving SDGs.⁴⁰

g. Australia

The number of aged people in Australia is found increasing significantly.⁴¹ A "Draft Strategy for Safeguarding Older People 2014-2021" was published by the South Australian government outlining seven different types of elder abuse, including neglect, sexual abuse, financial abuse, psychological abuse, and chemical abuse and providing protection to such citizens. Moreover, there has been absence of specific legal safeguards for the protection of elderly people from abuse aside from state guardianship, mental health laws, and state criminal laws recognizing elderly abuse as a crime.⁴² Australia has several programs, such as Advance Care Planning Australia, a national initiative that advocates for planning for future care, encompassing resources and a national syllabus for education.⁴³ There is also the care finder program which provides support for vulnerable older people to so as to help them to interact with people and access other relevant supports in the community.⁴⁴ Australia remained at 40th rank⁴⁵ for better enforcement of law.

h. Switzerland

In Switzerland population of 65 years or above is supposed to increase to 30% by 2060. In 2017, 13% of persons at age 65 and older received supplemental benefits⁴⁶. The social security system providing redistributive old-age pension, costs for food, housing, and medical care helped the poor including old aged persons.⁴⁷ The nation has been proactive in the realm of old individual welfare. In 1990s there had been increase in elder abuse and scandals involving long-term care facilities. Alter Ego a group dedicated in preventing elder abuse in Switzerland's Italian-speaking and French cantons was founded in 2002. Pro Senectute, the Organization for elders primarily provide social and administrative support along with actively participating in the prevention of abuse of elders nationwide. In 2010 and 2015, an elder abuse national strategy was proposed by National Council Member proposed which was rejected for cantons jurisdiction for preventing elder abuse. The Council asserted on presence of national strategies on dementia and palliative care for senior citizen's quality of life.⁴⁸ Switzerland rank 15th in achieving SDG's⁴⁹ for its effective policies.

3. WELFARE OF SENIOR CITIZENS IN INDIA & SDGS

The Sustainable Development Goals have been articulated by the United Nations with the fundamental tenet of "leave no one behind" to ensure comprehensive progress across nations and address global challenges.⁵⁰ The goals are required to be achieved by 2030 including the betterment of aged individuals in the terms of good health and

⁴⁰ Sustainable Development Report, Rankings, The overall performance of all 193 Member States, <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/rankings>, (Last visited on 12.04.2024)

⁴¹ The persons over the age of 85 (the "older old") will increase from the current 1.5% to 5% of the total population in the year 2045 and the older will account for more than 25% of the country's population. ⁴² Lacey W., (2014), Neglectful to the Point of Cruelty? Elder Abuse and the Rights of Older Persons in Australia, Wendy Lacey, Sydney Law Review, 36(99), 99-130.

⁴³ Advance Care Planning Australia, <https://www.advancecareplanning.org.au/> (Last visited on 05.04.2024)

⁴⁴ Care finder Program, Australian Government, Department of Health and Aged Care, <https://www.health.gov.au/our-work/care-finder-program>, (Last visited on 05.04.2024)

⁴⁵ Sustainable Development Report, Rankings, The overall performance of all 193 Member States, <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/rankings>, (Last visited on 12.04.2024)

⁴⁶ Lewis C & Ollivaud P., (2020). "Policies for Switzerland's ageing society," OECD Economics Department Working Papers 1600, OECD Publishing. [https://one.oecd.org/document/ECO/WKP\(2020\)8/En/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/ECO/WKP(2020)8/En/pdf), (Last visited on 20.08.2023)

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Roulet Schwab, D., & Wangmo, T. (2021). Perceptions of Elder Abuse From Community-Dwelling Older Persons and Professionals Working in Western Switzerland. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(1- 2), NP135-NP161. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260517732345>

⁴⁹ Sustainable Development Report, Rankings, The overall performance of all 193 Member States, <https://dashboards.sdindex.org/rankings>, (Last visited on 12.04.2024).

⁵⁰ Conboy, P. (2021). Social Exclusion in Later Life, Interdisciplinary and Policy Perspectives, Patricia Conboy, Social Exclusion in Later Life, Interdisciplinary and Policy Perspectives **8**, 359-372, <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-51406-8>.

In various countries, social protection systems cover unemployed persons, children, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, expecting mothers, infants, the poor and the vulnerable persons, work-injury victims.⁵⁵ India is recorded at the bottom in providing social security to their citizens including to the old aged persons. Figure No. 1 illustrates the proportion of individuals receiving at least one form of social protection benefit in the year 2020.

Share covered by at least one social protection benefit, 2020

The percentage of the population that either benefits from or contributes to at least one social protection scheme. This includes programs such as retirement benefits, unemployment benefits, and pensions.

Country	Share covered (%)
Argentina	99%
Ecuador	98%
Colombia	97%
Paraguay	96%
Honduras	95%
Guatemala	94%
Nicaragua	93%
India	92%

Source: International Labour Organization (ILO)

Downloaded from <https://www.ilo.org/publications> on 2021-09-20

⁵¹ Goal 3:- Optimal health is fundamental to sustainable development, and the 2030 Agenda encapsulates the intricate relationships and interdependencies between the two. This analysis considers the expanding economic and social disparities, the swift pace of urbanization, the looming threats to our climate and environment, the persistent challenges posed by HIV and other infectious diseases, as well as the rising concerns related to non-communicable diseases. It necessitates a reinvigorated emphasis on matters pertaining to mental health as well. The attainment of this objective necessitates universal health coverage, which encompasses financial risk protection, accessibility to quality essential health care services, and the availability of safe, effective, quality, and affordable medications.

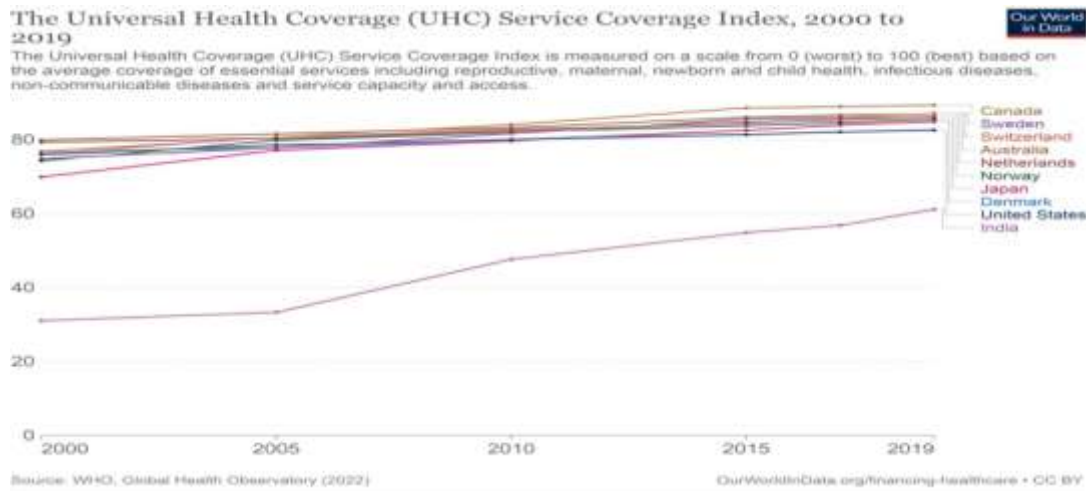
⁵³ Goal 10:- The objective entails a systematic approach to diminishing not only disparities in income but also variations in outcomes by guaranteeing equitable access to opportunities and fostering the social, economic, and political inclusion of all individuals, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion, or any other pertinent societal status. It seeks to improve the representation and influence of developing nations in the decision-making processes of international economic and financial institutions.

⁵⁵ Our World in Data team (2023) - "End poverty in all its forms everywhere". Published online at OurWorldInData.org. Retrieved from: '<https://ourworldindata.org/sdgs/no-poverty>' [Online Resource] (Last visited on 09.09.2023)

b. Good Health and Wellness of Aged Individuals

Constitutional protections and legislations have been enacted for Good Health and Wellness of Aged Individuals in India⁵⁶ for meeting with the SDG 3 i.e. “Good health and wellbeing” of all the population including senior citizens. From 2015 to 2019, the country performed well and reached from 54.89 in 2015 to 61.19 in 2019 in proving good health and well being to the citizens including senior citizens. However, India remained at bottom as per “the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Service Coverage Index, 2000 to 2019”.

Figure No. 2- The Universal Health Coverage (UHC) Service Coverage Index, 2000 to 2019.



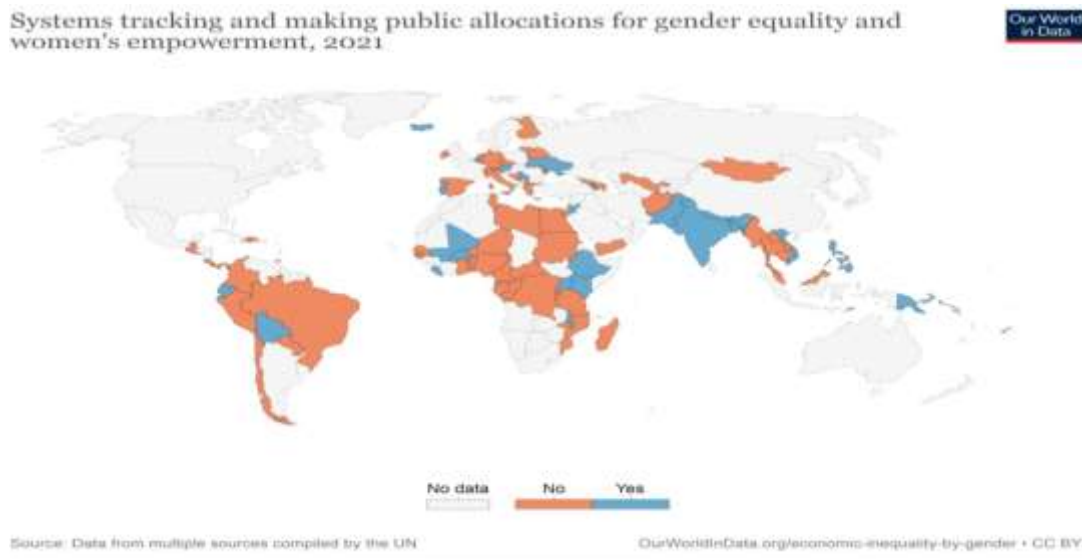
{Source:- Our World in Data team (2023)}

c. Removing Inequalities

All forms of discrimination against all the citizens including senior citizen particularly women are required to be eliminated as per Goal No. 5 of the SGDs. The best possible method to see whether the countries are on track to in achieving Goal No. 5 is to find out which countries have established a system for tracking and making public allocations for egalitarianism. India throughout its history had to fight many challenges in the form of the caste system, deplorable status of women and widows etc but even the India has a system in place for tracking and making public allocations for egalitarianism. In figure No. 3, India is depicted in blue, indicating its effective system for monitoring and publicly allocating resources towards gender parity and the advancement of women.

⁵⁶ Article 21 and 41 of the Constitution of India, along with Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code and the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007, constitute the legal framework that ensures the health and well-being of senior citizens. Additionally, there exist frameworks such as the Integrated Programme for Older Persons (IPOP) and the National Policy on Older Persons. The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment bestows the Vayoshreshtha Samman upon distinguished senior citizens and organizations in acknowledgment of their contributions to the elderly population.

Figure No. 3- Systems tracking and making public allocations for gender equality and women's empowerment, 2021.

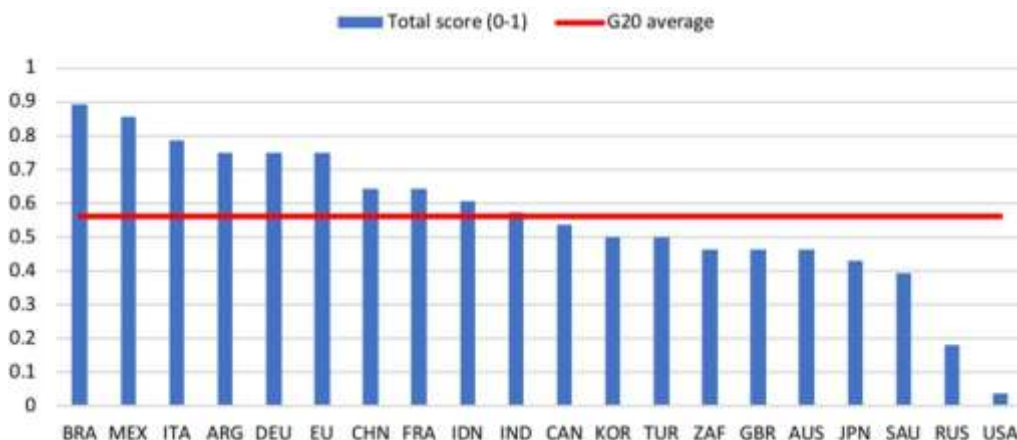


{Source:- Our World in Data team (2023)}

d. Mechanisms for national coordination and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals within the G20 context

The Sustainable Development Goals serve as a comprehensive assessment tool for evaluating progress in development across nations. Each nation is undertaking measures to attain their objectives and is operating within their respective capacities. Figure 4 illustrates that India's score stands at 0.6 regarding national cooperation and execution mechanisms to achieve the SDGs among G20 nations. In the figure, the score is starting from 0 (lowest score) to 1 (highest score). The countries have employed different policies and legislations so as to coordinate and implement the SDG's through the said policies and legislations.

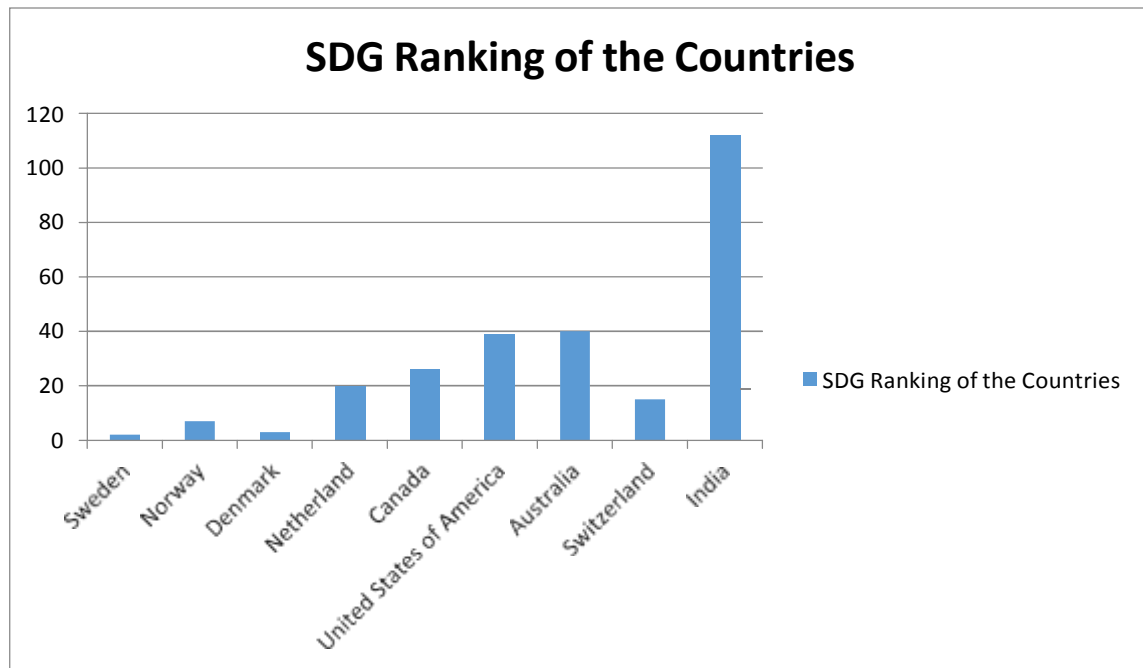
Figure No. 4- Mechanisms for national coordination and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in G20 nations, 2018. The composite score ranges from 0, representing the lowest possible value, to 1, denoting the highest attainable value.



{Source:- Farahani, M. (2022)}

e. Overall ranking between the countries

The overall comparison of the countries which have been evaluated would lead to the conclusion that India requires a lot of policy renovation and reinforcement. The overall comparison of the SDG's ranking is given in a tabular form under Figure No. 5.



{Source:- Created by the Author}

Fig. 5 represents the countries with the strong laws program and policies for the welfare to the senior citizens in their jurisdiction. Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, Netherland, Canada, USA and Australia have been top counties working for the welfare of aged citizen and India requires learning from these countries.

4. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In June 2023, The World Bank asserted that “India continues to be the most rapidly expanding major economy, which constitutes a significant milestone for the nation. The Goldman Sachs Report indicates that India is projected to overtake the United States to emerge as the world's second biggest nation by the year 2075.⁵⁷ Betterment of the aged population attracted the attention in the country much latter to other countries. However, The Indian Constitution and other legislation with other program have been initiated for the Senior Citizens by the government including the old age pension scheme. While India's position in the Sustainable Development Goals Report has been quite disappointing, the growth rate presents a more optimistic outlook. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007⁵⁸ which focuses its attention towards welfare of the aged attracted the attention in India much latter compared to other countries. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act 2007 has been a step in achieving target no. 1.4 and target 5.a of the SDG's by protecting ownership and control over the land.

In submission, various programs and scheme have been launched in addition to special and other legislation for the betterment of the aged in India. Various countries like Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Netherlands, Canada, United States of America, Australia and Switzerland are above our country in ensuring welfare to the senior citizens therein. India, although, being a developing country which is trying to provide the best services to senior citizens however, lessons from the other courtiers could facilitate in providing improved welfare to aged

⁵⁷ Goldman Sachs, How India could rise to the world's second-biggest economy, <https://www.goldmansachs.com/intelligence/pages/how-india-could-rise-to-the-worlds-second-biggest-economy.html> (Last visited on 09.09.2023).

⁵⁸ In terms of Section 23 of the Act, any senior citizen who has after the commencement of the Act transferred his property by gift or any other mode to a transferee on the condition that the transferee would provide basic amenities and needs to the senior citizen and in case the transferee fails to do the same then the senior citizen is free to get the transfer declared as void.

individuals and achieve related sustainable development goals. Adequate budget may be assigned for the welfare of senior citizen on the line of Norway, increasing the participation of local government like Denmark, providing better health insurance to senior citizens as in Netherlands, initiating a comprehensive Public Pension System for Senior Citizens in both the governmental and private sphere in line of Canada and establishing institution of Ombudsman like United States of America would go a long way to tackle cases of abuse of the aged and improve the condition of the aged in India. In addition to this, strict mental health laws, and criminal laws recognizing elderly abuse as a crime may be introduced in India with specific laws on welfare of senior citizens. Further, the joint partnership between India and the countries for the welfare of the aged and adequate health care services and insurance care system may help in furtherance of welfare of senior citizen in India.

5. STATEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

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