Levelling Up Grades Through Skills

H2 Geography

Human Geography | Cluster 3.1

Chapter 7:
How do we create liveable cities for the elderly?

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1. Introduction to the Elderly

> The **Elderly** are defined as a group of individuals who are past the middle age, often 65 years of older.

- Activity patterns are constrained by a lack of access to a car, fear of crime and a lack of social integration.
- May be a dull experience for some, especially when a sense of belonging is lost.
- It is important to consider the facilities and amenities that are provided for by cities for the elderly to enhance their experience and alleviate issues faced when living in a city.

2. Increase in proportion of the Elderly in urban areas

- There has been a **general increase** in the number of elderly in most cities. Many cities such as Singapore, Tokyo are seeing such trends accelerate rapidly → Still important to consider that such trends may vary across space.
  - In OECD countries, the population share of those over 65 years old reached 17.8% in 2010, up from 7.7% in 1950, and is expected to climb to 25.1% in 2050. Cities are home to 43.2% of all older population (65+) in the OECD region.
- Urban areas are experiencing a notable demographic shift towards an ageing population due to factors such as **improved healthcare**, **better living standards**, and **decreased fertility rates**.

Type	Urban areas in LDCs	Urban areas in DCs
Factors	- Lack of healthcare services - More social isolation - Lack of convenient transport solutions - Lack of government policy intervention	- Advanced healthcare facilities - Social services available - Better transport infrastructure - Pension support and retirement schemes
Outcome	Elderly may move out of the LDC city to rural areas.	Increased migration of elderly into DC cities.

Increased Ageing Population = Longer Life Expectancy + Low Fertility Rates
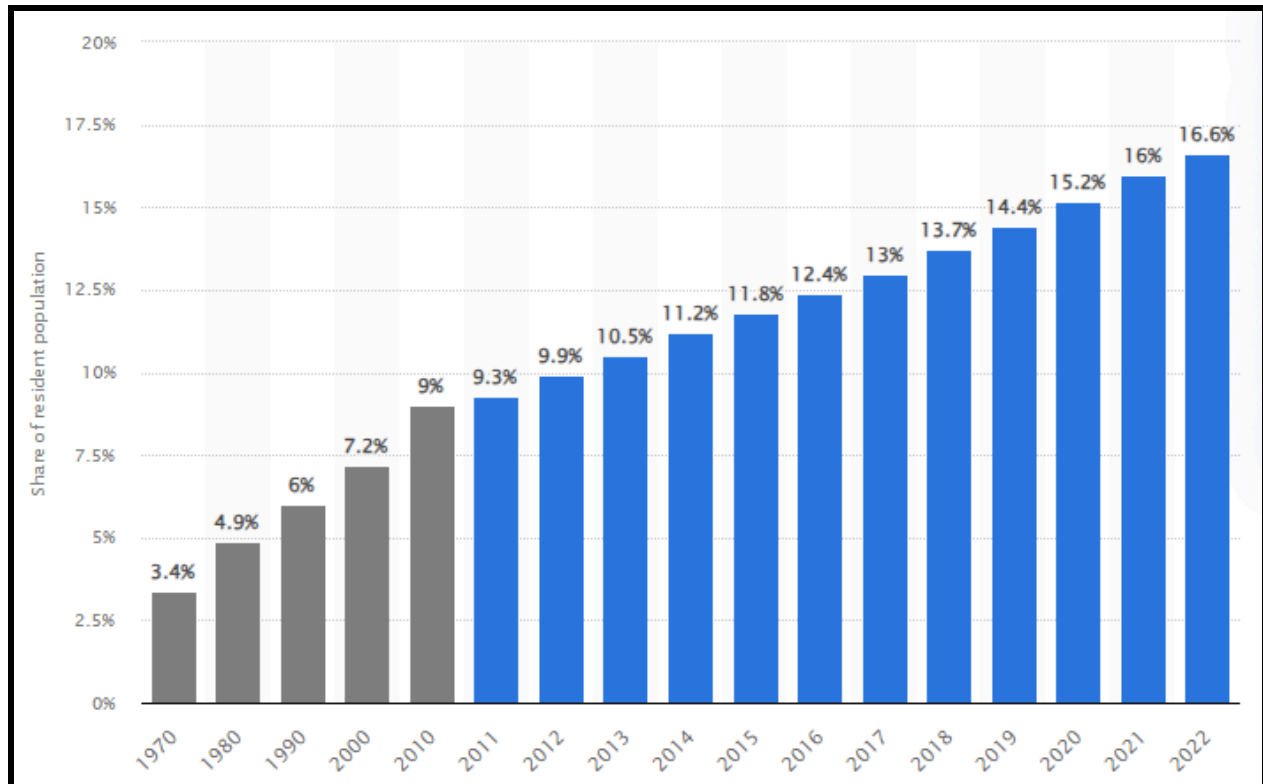
Figure: Residents aged 65 years and older as share of the resident population in Singapore from 1970 to 2022 (Statista, 2023)

3. Issues faced by the elderly living in the city

3.1. Economic Well-Being

Economic well-being for the Elderly refers to having **sufficient financial resources**, **access to essential goods and services**, and the ability to **maintain a comfortable standard of living** throughout retirement years.

- <u>Lack of Sustained Income</u>: Often, the Elderly rely on fixed incomes such as pensions, social security, or retirement savings, which may not adequately cover their expenses, especially as costs for healthcare and basic needs rise with inflation pressures.
- <u>Healthcare Costs</u>: As individuals age, they often require more healthcare services and medication, leading to increased healthcare expenses that can strain financial resources.
- <u>Longer Life Expectancy</u>: With increasing life expectancy, the risk of outliving one's savings becomes more significant, especially if individuals did not adequately plan or save for retirement

- Lack of Employment Opportunities: Age discrimination in the workforce can make it difficult for elderly individuals to secure employment or earn additional income through work, limiting their ability to improve their finances.

3.2. Social Well-Being

Social well-being for the Elderly is to feel **connected**, **valued**, and **engaged** within their **communities**, fostering a **sense of belonging**, social support, and meaningful relationships.

- Social Isolation: Often caused by physical limitations, loss of friends and family members, or lack of transportation, which can lead to feelings of loneliness. Moreover, social networks may diminish, resulting in fewer opportunities for social interaction and support, which are crucial for maintaining mental and emotional health.
- Reduced Sense of Belonging: Ageism and societal stereotypes about ageing can lead to discrimination and marginalisation, especially with rapid advancements in technology (digital divide) and generational gaps.
- Limited Mobility: Mobility issues, such as difficulty walking or driving, coupled with poor infrastructure can restrict an elderly person's ability to participate in social activities.

3.3. Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being for the Elderly refers to the overall state of **mental health** and **emotional resilience** with life.

- Chronic Health Conditions: Increasingly, a greater proportion of elderly are facing health issues mentally - deteriorating health conditions such as dementia, Alzheimer's disease (cognitive decline).
- Stress: Insufficient retirement savings or unexpected expenses can cause stress and anxiety, alongside sudden changes in health or environment.

4. Strategies to create liveable cities for the Elderly
4.1. Affordable living in accessible environments

Purpose: Ensure that the elderly have a low-cost yet holistic environment to live in for the long-term.

- Elderly tend to tend to face an elevated risk of poverty (lack of financial resources) and isolation, and suffer from reduced mobility, making it difficult to access essential services and employment.
- A holistic approach to affordable living is required:
  - **Affordable housing** → Housing prices and rent should be cheap, ensuring that the Elderly can tide through their accommodation expenses with limited financial resources.
  - **Availability of in-home care services** → Essential services such as healthcare, groceries, social support should be within reach for convenience given potential mobility constraints.
  - **Access to employment and convenient transport services** → A source of income for abled-individuals alongside public transport that is elderly-friendly is needed for long-term sustenance.

Case Studies
1. _____ → Short-lease 2-room Flexi Flats and Community care apartments, found in neighbourhoods with easy access to HDB facilities (minimum requirement for supermarket, healthcare provider, community area).
2. _____ → Living for Help programme brings students and older people in need of daily assistance together to share housing.

Benefits (+)	Drawbacks (+)
● Economic well-being: _____ _____ _____ ● Social well-being: _____ _____ _____ ● Psychological well-being: _____ _____	● Costly for the government: _____ _____ _____ ● Physical space constraints: _____ _____ _____ ● Long-Term Maintenance: _____ _____

_____	_____

Overall Evaluation

> *Qn. Who is the stakeholder group responsible for such a strategy? Can the success of such vary across space?*

4.2. Redesign and Restructure the Urban Area

Purpose: Ensure that the urban built environment is friendly for the Elderly, reducing barriers to move and connect.

- Improving urban legibility and ensuring a friendly built environment is crucial for the Elderly, who may often be physically or mentally impaired.
- Investments in improving the "walkability" of an urban core can help make it easier for older people and other citizens to access public services. This can take place in the form of escalators, ramps and lifts.
- Efficient public transport systems with vehicles that are elderly-friendly and easily accessible will greatly aid those who are physically immobile.

Case Studies

1. _____ → Countdown-technology at traffic lights, where the elderly can scan their IC to reduce the waiting time to cross the roads, alongside tactile paving and ramps, coupled with larger font size for signages.
2. _____ → Oyster 60+ acts as a concession card for the elderly to consume public transport at a reduced price.
3. _____ → An Executive Order for Complete Streets was enacted in 2010 to ensure that city streets are designed to be safe for pedestrians, bicyclists, drivers and transit users of all abilities and ages, improving walkability.

Benefits (+)	Drawbacks (+)
• Economic well-being: _____	• Costly for the government: _____

_____ _____ ● Social well-being: _____ _____ _____ ● Psychological well-being: _____ _____ _____ ● Potential spillover effects: _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ ● Only tackles one aspect of well-being: _____ _____ _____ ● Disruption: _____ _____ _____

Overall Evaluation

> *Qn. Is this a strategy that can be enforced overnight? Who will need to step in to make these adjustments to the city?*

4.3. Community-building Programmes

Purpose: Ensure that a supportive and inclusive environment is created for the Elderly.

- Community-building programmes foster social connections, engagement, and well-being amongst the Elderly.
- These programs often involve a range of activities and initiatives tailored to the interests and needs of the Elderly, such as social gatherings, recreational outings, educational workshops, and volunteer opportunities.
  - Digital divide workshops, handicrafts, cooking/baking, exercise classes.
- Connecting with peers and the younger generation helps to combat loneliness, isolation, and age-related stigma.

Case Studies

1. _____ → "Senior Volunteer Center" coordinates volunteer opportunities specifically tailored to Elderly in the form of disaster preparedness initiatives, and support for local schools and community centres.
2. _____ → "Elderly Friendly Spaces" program transforms public spaces into recreation and accessible environments for the Elderly.

Benefits (+)	Drawbacks (+)
● Social well-being: _____ _____ _____ ● Social well-being: _____ _____ _____	● Only tackles one aspect of well-being: _____ _____ _____ ● Education requirement: _____ _____ _____

Overall Evaluation

Qn. Who are the stakeholders involved in this? Is it more of an immediate or longer-term solution?

4.4. Improving Financial Security

Purpose: Ensure that the Elderly have sufficient avenues of 'income' to adequately sustain themselves throughout retirement.

- Initiatives such as strengthening retirement savings programs and pension benefits can go a long way in ensuring that Elderly do not have to worry about meeting their basic needs.
- Promoting financial literacy and planning among older adults (from young) can help them make informed decisions about budgeting, managing debt, and safeguarding their future assets.

- Policies that address age discrimination in the workforce and promote opportunities for older adults to remain employed or engage in flexible work arrangements will ensure a source of healthy income.

Case Studies

1. _____ → Tripartite system introduced to expand employment opportunities for older workers. SkillsFuture programme also introduced for skills upgrading to ensure the older generation remains employable and relevant.
2. _____ → CPF Retirement Account, CPF LIFE ensures monthly allowances for Elderly to meet basic needs.
3. _____ → Free healthcare at the expense of very high taxes.

Benefits (+)	Drawbacks (+)
- Economic well-being: _____ _____ _____ - Psychological well-being: _____ _____ _____ - Contributions to Economy: _____ _____ _____	- Mindset Receptiveness: _____ _____ _____ - Potential effects of inflation: _____ _____ _____ - Disruption to normal life: _____ _____ _____

Overall Evaluation

Qn. When must such a strategy start for it to be fully effective? Will this strategy's effectiveness vary across different individuals?

Exam Requirements

- Understand the reasons for the increase in proportion of the elderly in urban areas in countries at different levels of development
- Be able to explain the issues faced by the elderly living in the city related to economic well-being, social well-being and psychological well-being.
- Be able to discuss the varying success of strategies to address the issues faced by the elderly living in the city.

Sample Exam Questions

Q1. The issues faced by the Elderly today are a cause for concern. Explain why this might be the case.   [10]

Q2. Assess the various strategies that can be employed to meet the needs of the elderly in cities.   [20]

Q3. 'Addressing the financial needs of the Elderly should be the priority of all governments.' To what extent do you agree with this statement?   [20]

Practice Question

Follow these Steps:

Step 1: Break down key terms of the question (3 Cs)
- Identify the **C**ommand word, **C**RUX, **C**ontext

Step 2: Draft out an Essay Plan in **5 minutes**.
- Write in FULL your 1) Stand + Ev; 2) 4 Topic Sentences + Ev Elements; 3) Case Studies to be used in each BP

Step 3: Write out the full essay.

Ev elements: **4S1T1P** [**S**pace, **S**cale, **S**ustainability, **S**takeholders, **T**ime, **P**lace]

Q3. 'Addressing the financial needs of the Elderly should be the priority of all governments.' To what extent do you agree with this statement?   [20]

Stand + Ev:

TS1 + Ev:

Case Studies for BP1:

1)

2)

<u>TS2 + Ev</u>:

Case Studies for BP2:
1)

2)

<u>TS3 + Ev</u>:

Case Studies for BP3:
1)

2)

<u>TS4 + Ev</u>:

Case Studies for BP4:
1)

2)