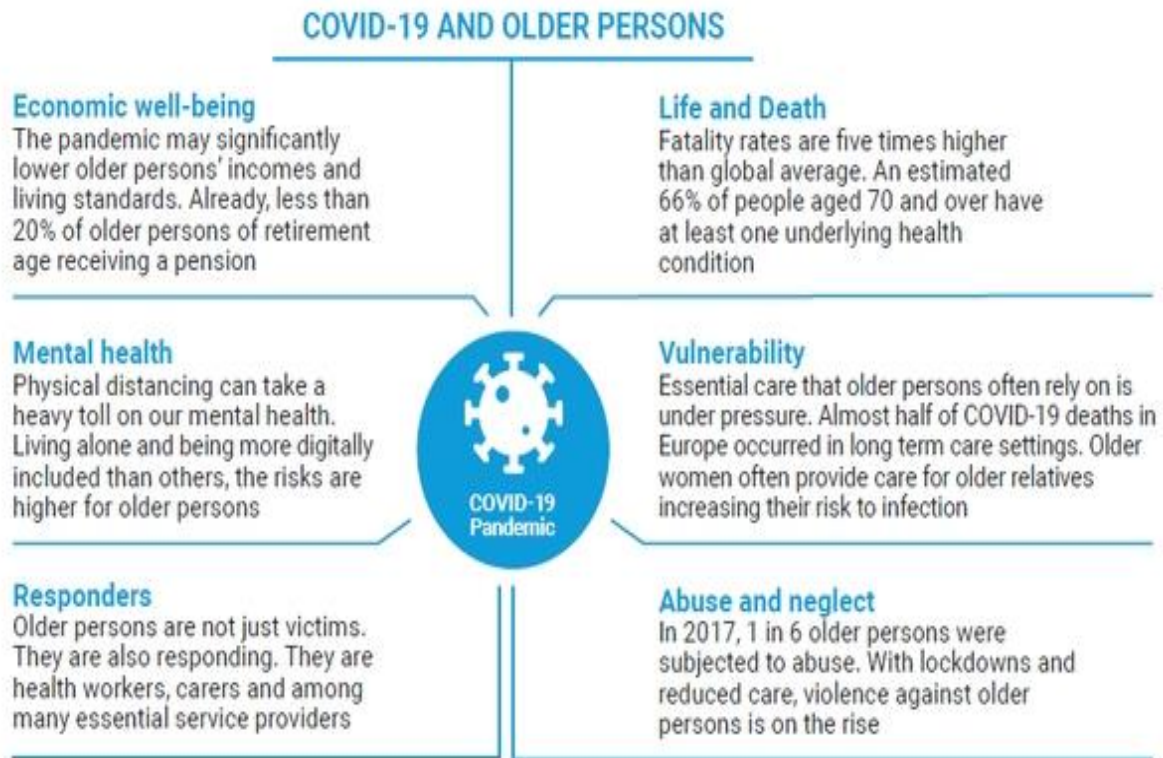




The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on older adult



Context:

➤ The most vulnerable persons during the COVID pandemic are the elderly

What are the difficulties faced by Older people due to COVID-19 Pandemic?

- If infected, the odds of survival for older people are the lowest.
- When isolated to save them from infection, they are likely to suffer from neglect — from lack of care and loneliness.
- Outpatient treatment of nearly all major non-communicable diseases has been severely affected due to COVID care. Older people seem to be missing out on treatment for illnesses.
- Lack of access to healthcare services could aggravate physical disabilities, hinder the effective management of communicable diseases and lead to mental ill-health problems amongst the elderly.



- The precarious nature of economic work of older persons and inadequate salaries means that more than 80% of such people in the workforce are either partially or fully dependent on others, who are anyway facing difficult circumstances
- Internet play an important role in maintaining access to essential care, services etc. In India, only 7% of older people have smartphones. The literacy rate among this segment is also low, further limiting access to technology and important information.
- In its first relief package, the government announced a one-off payment of Rs 1,000 and an increase in the pension for 30 million widows and senior citizens. But this will reach only to about 20% of the older people. There was no support for senior citizens in the second relief package.

Way ahead:

- Healthcare schemes like the Ayushman Bharat Yojana should have special provisions for the elderly.
- Tele-health and mobile home-based health care check-ups should be conducted for them.
- Direct subsidies to pensioners, especially in healthcare matters, can also help them tide over these difficult times.
- Older people have an invaluable role to play in our collective future. We must keep older people engaged, not shut them out to protect their bodies from the virus.