

Vision 2031
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Empowering the Elderly

Kerala is undergoing one of the most advanced demographic transitions in India, marked by a rapidly ageing population comparable to trends observed in several East Asian and European societies. Persons aged 60 years and above constitute a significantly higher share of Kerala's population than the national average, driven by sustained low fertility, rising life expectancy—particularly among women—and large-scale outmigration of the working-age population. Projections indicate that by 2031, more than one-fifth of Kerala's population will be elderly, accompanied by sharp increases in old-age and very-old dependency ratios. These shifts present complex challenges related to healthcare, income security, caregiving, and social inclusion, while also creating opportunities to reconceptualise ageing as a productive and participatory phase of life.

The Government of Kerala has responded with focused public action. In the 2026–27 Budget, it presented the country's first Elderly Budget, allocating ₹36,812.14 crore—constituting 18.74 per cent of the total State Budget—towards elderly welfare. In another landmark decision under the same Budget, the Government allocated ₹50 crore for a Pneumococcal Vaccination Drive for senior citizens, marking an important step towards positioning Kerala as a leader in geriatric care.

More than three-fourths of older persons in the State receive social security pensions. Geriatric healthcare has been strengthened through dedicated clinics, community-based programmes, telemedicine services, and elderly-friendly hospital facilities. In addition, the State has recently constituted the Kerala State Elderly Commission.

The State is now moving beyond welfare alone towards enabling active and meaningful ageing. This includes expanding community spaces such as *Pakalveedu* and *Vayo Clubs*, improving home-based delivery of essential services, training caregivers, and creating age-friendly public spaces. Kerala is also exploring opportunities in care services, health tourism, and senior-friendly livelihoods.

The objective of this session is to review Kerala's policy and experience in empowering the elderly, to discuss national and international best practices in the field, and to provide a vision for Kerala in this field in 2031, the 75th anniversary of the formation of the state.