

Pension plans ain't best for retirement

Given the many limitations of such schemes, it may be better to explore other options

Suresh Sadagopan

Pension and annuity are generally associated with security and stability in the sunset years.

A stable annuity is definitely desirable in retirement. Who wants money/cash-flow worries when one would rather sit back and relax?

But, are pension plans the best avenue for retirement planning? Probably not, as we shall see here.

Pension plans from insurance companies

Pension plans are generally offered by insurance companies. These may be traditional products or unit-linked insurance plans.

The points to ponder over in such plans are as follows:

■ Pension plans from insurance companies have high cost structures, which impacts the corpus growth.

■ In traditional pension plans, the insurers have guidelines on where they could invest. This is both good and bad - good because it brings in stability and dependability to the corpus and bad because such avenues generally tend to give low returns.

■ At retirement, pension plans tend to distribute about 5.5-7% (as on date)

of the corpus as pensions. This again is lower than what a person would be able to earn otherwise. Indeed, this is a double handicap - the corpus tends to grow slowly during accumulation phase and tends to earn lower than market rates in the distribution phase.

■ Once the pension starts, the corpus cannot be taken back even if one wants to. At vesting, one could withdraw at the most 33%. So, even if there is some very good avenue for investment, the investor is stuck.

■ Pension annuities are treated as income and are thus taxable. All other insurance proceeds, apart from the pension annuities, are treated as tax-free. This is probably one of the most important drawbacks. Like I asked in the beginning, who wants to pay tax in retirement, after having done that all life long?

Some might argue that at retirement, one's income may not come into the taxable slab.

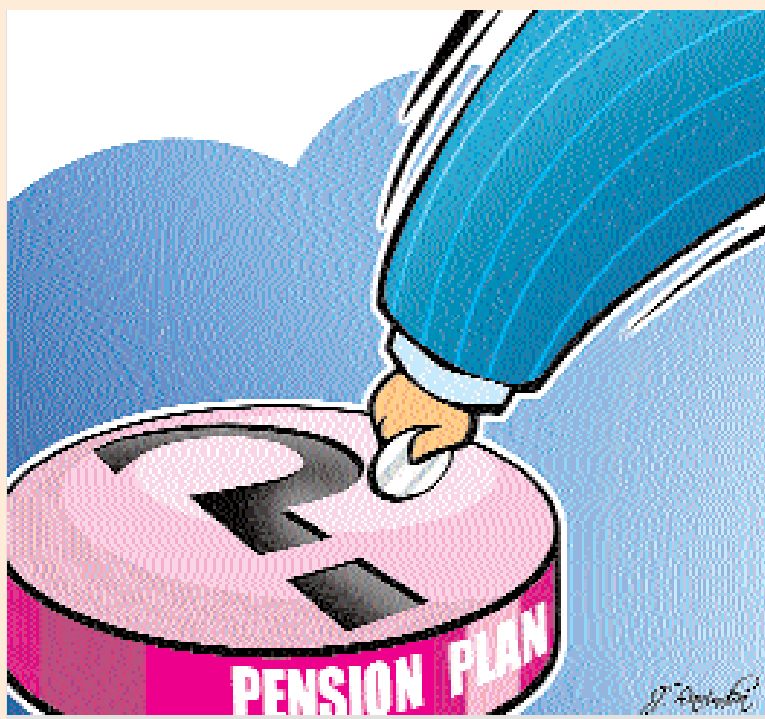
But then, can any investor say with conviction that his income after say 20 years will not fall into the tax net? It is difficult to predict what will happen in the next budget, leave alone 20 years later.

Clearly, then, several aspects of such pension plans are not in the investor's interest.

Pension plans from mutual funds

Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund and UTI Mutual Fund offer such plans at present.

The important points to note in



these plans are as follows:

■ While they do not suffer from most of the handicaps that afflict pension plans, the income is not tax-free even in their case. Under the options available, one could either claim long-term capital gains on the amount received at maturity or opt for dividend distribution where the mutual fund (MF) pays the tax (amounting to

14.16%) and the distributed income is tax-free in the investor's hands. Either way, there's no wishing away tax entirely.

■ Both these pension plans invest up to 40% in equities and the rest in debt securities. It may not be desirable to have such a conservative portfolio, especially if the investor has over 10 years to retirement.

■ One would be better served by being more aggressive in the accumulation phase and progressively pare exposure to equities and MFs as he comes closer to the retirement date.

Does one have any other option?

There are all kinds of investment products available. Here's what one should keep in mind:

■ One could use a judicious mix of equity, MF, Public Provident Fund, fixed deposit (FD) and fixed maturity plan (FMP), etc to build the corpus in the growth phase.

■ Before retirement, the investments can be deployed in avenues like FDs, senior citizens' scheme, Post Office Monthly Income Scheme, MF investments with a systematic withdrawal option, FMPs in the dividend distribution mode and monthly income plans, etc to get periodic returns.

■ Also, rental income could be an avenue in retirement. Even reverse mortgage could be considered in appropriate cases.

■ A good advisor could plan a proper portfolio, which takes care of the liquidity requirements, risk containment and reasonable return concerns.

Remember, you can have a comfortable retirement without pension, and still have no tension.

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Nifty hourly resistances for September 11, 2008

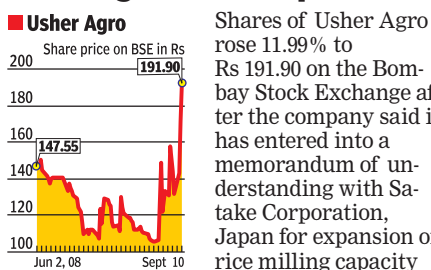
Time AM/PM	Resistance Upon surpassing	Rally of resistance exhausts
(1)	(2)	(3)
09.55 - 10.30	4453	4474 4496
10.30 - 11.30	4445	4468 4492
11.30 - 12.30	4437	4462 4488
12.30 - 13.30	4429	4456 4484
13.30 - 14.30	4421	4450 4480
14.30 - 15.30	4413	4444 4476

NOTES
Trading derivatives is a risky activity. These studies do not assure profits. Please consult a certified financial analyst before trading.

—Vijay Bhambwani

Short stories

Usher Agro shares up 12%



Shares of Usher Agro rose 11.99% to Rs191.90 on the Bombay Stock Exchange after the company said it has entered into a memorandum of understanding with Satake Corporation, Japan for expansion of rice milling capacity by another 1 million

tonne. Over 41.12 lakh shares were traded on the exchange.

Sure you know all there is to that health insurance cover?

Here are 10 questions to ask your TPA

Khyati Dharamsi, Mumbai

With the penetration of health insurance on the rise, making insurance claims could soon become the norm rather than an exception. After all, the cost of medical treatment is treading ever higher, and it makes sense for one to have an adequate medical cover for the entire family.

For settlement of claims, it is advisable to take the cashless settlement option, which helps one avoid the hassles of paying hospital bills from pocket and then running around for a reimbursement. Under this option, the hospital bills are paid by the insurance company subject to the extent of your cover.

Your friend, philosopher and guide in such settlements would be the third party administrator (TPA) to whom the insurance company has outsourced settlement of claims - mostly cashless.

Here are 10 questions you should ask your TPA in advance to be able



to ensure that you and your family don't have to run helter-skelter in times of crisis and the claim is cashless in the truest sense:

■ Which are the hospitals where cashless settlement is permitted? Is the list of network hospitals provided to me while taking the policy updated or has any of them been deleted since the list was printed?

■ What number can I contact the TPA on in case of emergency hospitalisation?

■ What number(s) should I call if hospitalisation is done abroad? Will the claims settlement process also change in that case?

■ What are the forms and documents to be submitted? Can any of my family members sign on the claims form or does someone have

to be nominated initially?

■ What details do I have to furnish for claims processing?

■ How long will it take for the authorisation - of whether the claim is permitted or - not - to come in?

■ What if I am not carrying my health insurance card or if a hospitalisation occurs between renewals when my new card hasn't arrived?

■ If I have a planned hospitalisation, how many days prior to it do I inform the insurer?

■ What is the time period allowed to me for intimating the claim to the insurer?

■ Do I need to retain the copies of bills even though the settlement is being made cashless, where the TPA has all the bills?

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Just 5 questions...

Saurabh Mukherjee
Head of Indian equities, Noble

■ What advantages does India have over other emerging markets?

India's per capita GDP is rising and we have a population that is going to get progressively younger till the year 2040. Even China can't claim that kind of potential in human resources. This is sure to drive growth in the country.

■ Is the worst behind us as far as the subprime crisis is concerned?

This might not be the end of the subprime crisis. We might see some more news yet.

■ How exposed are Indian banks to a similar problem?

Banks are more conservative in their lending. They are also less vulnerable to the effects of leveraging and structured products.

■ Do you see a change in investor sentiment since the meltdown started in January?

Investors aren't panicking anymore. There has been some return of investor confidence.

■ Where do you see opportunity for the investor now?

Multi-baggers lie in the mid-cap space below the top 50 stocks. They have fundamentals comparable to the top 50 across a broad range of metrics. Despite this, they trade at a 20% discount to the top 50.

BULK DEALS ON BSE

Scrip name	Client name	Deal type	Traded Price (Rs)
Axon Infotech	Hasmukhi M Gandhi	IFP-CR-BT	5.15
Brushman Ind	Blue Square Corp Serv P Ltd	IFP-CR-BT	150.00
FACT	Latin Manharal Sec Pvt Ltd	IFP-CR-BT	34.73
G S Auto Int	Sarda C Pujara	IFP-CR-BT	30.90
Gemstone Inv	Bharat S Thakkar	IFP-CR-BT	101.00
Genzyme Int	Bhupesh Rathod	IFP-CR-BT	45.00
Koff Br Pict	Laxmi Cap Broking Pvt Ltd	IFP-CR-BT	47.56
Kohinoor Ind	Basmati Securities Pvt Ltd	IFP-CR-BT	57.53
Lotus Chocolate	H.J.H. Javeri	IFP-CR-BT	200.00
Lotus Chocolate	Prashantha Acharya	IFP-CR-BT	300.00
Natraj Fin	Narendra Vallabhai Bahava	IFP-CR-BT	50.00
Reflex Refrigerant	Tushar Rameshchandra Patel	IFP-CR-BT	115.00
Setco Auto	Harish Kiritibhai Sheth Huv	IFP-CR-BT	275.00
Setco Auto	Setco Engineering Pvt Ltd	IFP-CR-BT	275.00
Usher Agro	Swiss Finance Corporation	IFP-CR-BT	188.55
Vishesh Infotecn	Ivory Consultants Pvt Ltd	IFP-CR-BT	216.01
Well Pack Paper	Subhakaran Tilokchand Agarwal	IFP-CR-BT	40.00

average price

DELIVERY SPIKE OVER PREVIOUS DAY

Company	Dely qty	Prev qty	Chng	% Price	% Chng
SAIL	5947431	2220345	3727086	167.86	139.20 -6.92
GUI NRE Coke	4462319	1894748	2567571	135.51	79.90 -7.47
Tata Steel (Mah)	3301642	874405	2427237	277.59	27.35 -3.01
Tata Steel	2950205	63084	2319365	367.66	53.15 -5.05
Apollo Tyres	3257534	998364	2259170	226.29	35.50 -3.33
ElIH	2075564	66292	2009272	3030.94	176.30 -7.16
Sesa Goa	2893871	983352	1910519	194.29	141.90 -3.93
Sterilite Ind	712034	2826059	1898975	66.74	50.55 -11.78
IOCI Bank	472628	3030535	1696193	55.97	70.10 -1.56
Zee Entertainment	2526770	844374	1682296	199.25	224.15 -0.60
Reliance Petro	4045641	2499397	1545704	63.80	158.70 -0.60
Hindalco Inds	2429036	859674	1569362	182.55	124.75 -1.07
Reliance Inds	2298237	759365	1538872	205.62	208.62 -2.80
Jaiprakash Assso	2020868	742160	1260788	196.82	167.50 -2.27
HDL	1869174	605255	1263918	208.82	296.50 -4.72
Reliance Power	4403502	3147114	1248788	39.58	170.10 0.56
Mphasis	1275847	33536	1242341	3704.41	246.65 0.59
GTL Infracon	1845263	755919	1082434	144.11	38.35 -1.27
Unittech	1566898	518998	1065898	206.49	159.25 -2.33
Isapt Inds	2088651	1130748	957903	84.71	23.20 -2.26

ISING VOLUME, RISING DELIVERY AND RISING PRICE

% Chng	Price (Rs)	% Chng	Company
167.86	139.20	-6.92	Container Corp
135.51	79.90	-7.47	EIH
277.59	27.35	3.01	FACT
366.66	53.15	-5.05	Grasim Ind
226.29	37.55	-0.11	Hercules Hoist
303.94	156.30	7.31	Idea Cellular
194.29	141.90	-0.93	Indowind Energy
66.74	50.55	-11.78	Lotus Chocolate
55.97	70.10	-1.56	National Retail
135.75	234.15	3.06	Prajay Engg Syst
63.80	180.70	-1.07	Setco Auto
182.55	124.75	-1.07	Shanthi Gen
202.65	2082.65	-2.80	Take Solutions
196.82	167.95	-2.27	Zandu Pharma
208.82	296.50	-4.72	Zee Entertainment
39.58	101.00	0.56	
33.41	246.65	0.99	
38.95	23.27	0.27	
80.49	159.25	-2.33	
246.71	23.80	-2.26	

Such data help identify stocks which are genuinely in a trend, which have seen regular buying orders. Trade above the three-day high with stop-losses

ISING VOLUME, RISING DELIVERY AND RISING PRICE

Company	Traded	Del	NSE	Traded	Del	NSE	Traded	Del	NSE
Apollo Tyres	1102135	52.71	37.80	2175967	45.88	37.60	3500728	93.05	37.55
Cairn India	2706148	44.73	231.45	2974437	44.45	229.00	3270642	48.50	224.20
Canara Bank	388598	28.71	231.05	664422	42.76	223.55	1308660	46.90	219.70
Cipla	860986	67.34	234.70	1552733	80.38	233.35	2069735	76.57	230.00
Edumap Soln	154211	18.75	3725.05	180411	28.64	3625.40	366588	16.68	3533.90
GMR Infracon	3711244	25.65	104.90	4716173	41.72	102.75	5270114	44.17	98.90
GUI NRE Coke	2550986	50.06	91.80	3665804	51.66	86.35	8278222	53.90	79.90
Hind Zinc	19628	49.69	569.00	100676	75.97	500.00	157933	73.13	525.35
IVRCL Inds	367773	48.22	316.55	464779	59.49	309.85	1345226	60.78	300.95
Jindal Steel	312130	45.01	1835.15	140545	47.88	1802.50	108083	46.58	1659.30
Jindal Steel	1252569	30.15	153.75	1537652	31.78	153.75	46.84	153.75	153.75
Jindal Steel	441666	30.45	160.04	650408	36.92	149.55	1495239	39.78	139.25
Satyam Comp	1807406	46.45	428.60	2335057	42.97	425.00	3387878	51.56	423.30
Star Biotech	591195	40.41	174.00	763012	48.81	173.50	884749	66.49	172.05
Sterilite Ind	2866919	42.87	621.85	8809567	32.08	575.35	1336373	35.26	507.55

Though there is a rise in volume, the falling share price indicates genuine selling. One can either go short or get out below the low of three days

ISING VOLUME, RISING DELIVERY AND FALLING PRICE

Sep 10, 2008				NSE			
Company	Traded	Del	NSE price	Company	Traded	Del	NSE price
Apollo Tyres	1102135	52.71	37.80	Cairn India	2706148	44.73	231.45
Canara Bank	388598	28.71	231.05	Cipla	860986	67.34	234.70
Edumap Soln	154211	18.75	3725.05	GMR Infracon	3711244	25.65	104.90
GUI NRE Coke	2550986	50.06	91.80	Hind Zinc	19628	49.69	569.00
Hind Zinc	19628	49.69	569.00	Jind Steel	100712	100.00	190.30
Jind Steel	100712	100.00	190.30	Neyveli Lignite	4670478	22.37	16.80
Neyveli Lignite	4670478	22.37	16.80	SAIL	4444444	20.00	77.75
SAIL	4444444	20.00	77.75	Satyam Comp	1805555	25.81	62.10
Satyam Comp	1805555	25.81	62.10	STERI Biotech	5114405	72.16	19467.80
STERI Biotech	5114405	72.16	19467.80	Sterile Ind	195978	68.18	234.15
Sterile Ind	195978	68.18	234.15				
which have seen losses				Though there is a rise in share prices, One can either go short on the market or invest in the stock market. Please			