Situation Analysis

Of

The Elderly in India

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Central Statistics Office
Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation
Government of India

PREFACE

The phenomenon of population ageing is becoming a major concern for the policy makers all over the world, for both developed and developing countries, during last two decades. But the problems arising out of it will have varied implications for underdeveloped, developing and developed countries. Ageing of population is affected due to downward trends in fertility and mortality i.e. due to low birth rates coupled with long life expectancies.

In India the size of the elderly population, i.e. persons above the age of 60 years is fast growing although it constituted only 7.4% of total population at the turn of the new millennium. For a developing country like India, this may pose mounting pressures on various socio economic fronts including pension outlays, health care expenditures, fiscal discipline, savings levels etc. Again this segment of population faces multiple medical and psychological problems. There is an emerging need to pay greater attention to ageing-related issues and to promote holistic policies and programmes for dealing with the ageing society.

I sincerely hope that this publication will prove to be useful to the planners and policy makers, as well as to the research workers, and will help in enhancing their understanding of the problems of the elderly in the country. I shall be thankful to receive suggestions from the readers in order to enhance the coverage, content and quality of the publication.

New Delhi   **(S.K. Das)**
June, 2011   **Director General**
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Highlights

- The elderly population (aged 60 years or above) account for 7.4% of total population in 2001. For males it was marginally lower at 7.1%, while for females it was 7.8%. Among states the proportion vary from around 4% in small states like Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Nagaland Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya to more than 10.5% in Kerala.

- Both the share and size of elderly population is increasing over time. From 5.6% in 1961 it is projected to rise to 12.4% of population by the year 2026.

- The sex ratio among elderly people was as high as 1028 in 1951 but subsequently dropped to about 938 in 1971 and finally reached 972 in 2001.

- The life expectancy at birth during 2002-06 was 64.2 for females as against 62.6 years for males. At age 60 average remaining length of life was found to be about 18 years (16.7 for males, 18.9 for females) and that at age 70 was less than 12 years (10.9 for males and 12.4 for females).

- There is sharp rise in age-specific death rate with age from 20 (per thousand) for persons in age group 60-64 years to 80 among those aged 75- 79 years and 200 for persons aged more than 85 years.

- The old-age dependency ratio climbed from 10.9% in 1961 to 13.1% in 2001 for India as a whole. For females and males the value of the ratio was 13.8% and 12.5% in 2001.

- About 65 per cent of the aged had to depend on others for their day-to-day maintenance. Less than 20% of elderly women but majority of elderly men were economically independent.

- Among economically dependent elderly men 6-7% were financially supported by their spouses, almost 85% by their own children, 2% by grand children and 6% by others. Of elderly women, less than 20% depended on their spouses, more than 70% on their children, 3% on grand children and 6% or more on others including the non-relations.

- Of the economically independent men more than 90% as against 65 % of women were reported to have one or more dependants.

- mong the rural elderly persons almost 50% had a monthly per capita expenditure level between Rs. 420 to Rs. 775 and among the urban elderly persons, almost half of aged had monthly per capita expenditure between Rs. 665 and 1500 in 2002.

- Nearly 40% of persons aged 60 years and above (60% of men and 19% of women) were working. In rural areas 66% of elderly men and above 23% of aged women were still participating in economic activity, while in urban areas only 39% of elderly men and about 7% of elderly women were economically active.

- Even in 2007-08 only 50% men and 20% of women aged 60 years or more were literate through formal schooling.

- In rural areas 55 % of the aged with sickness and 77 % of those without sickness felt that they were in a good or fair condition of health. In urban areas the respective proportions were 63 % and 78 % .

- The proportion of elderly men and women physically mobile decline from about 94 % in the age-group 60 − 64 years to about 72% for men and 63 to 65% for women of age 80 or more.

- Prevalence of heart diseases among elderly population was much higher in urban areas than in rural parts.

- About 64 per thousand elderly persons in rural areas and 55 per thousand in urban areas suffer from one or more disabilities. Most common disability among the aged persons was loco motor disability as 3% of them suffer from it.

- In age-groups beyond 60 years, the percentage of elderly women married was markedly lower than the percentage of men married.

- More than 75% of elderly males and less than 40% of elderly females live with their spouse. Less than 20% of aged men and about half of the women live with their children.

CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

Elderly

Elderly or old age consists of ages nearing or surpassing the average life span of human beings. The boundary of old age cannot be defined exactly because it does not have the same meaning in all societies. Government of India adopted 'National Policy on Older Persons' in January, 1999. The policy defines 'senior citizen' or 'elderly' as a person who is of age 60 years or above.

Life Expectancy

Life expectancy is the expected (in the statistical sense) number of years of life remaining at a given age. It is denoted by e_x, which means the average number of subsequent years of life for someone now aged x, according to a particular mortality experience. (In technical literature, this symbol means the average number of *complete* years of life remaining, excluding fractions of a year). These are based on life table derived by comparing the population $p(1)_x$ at age x in one census with their survivors reported at age $0(2)_{x+10}$ in the next census. From the 10 years survival ratios, survival ratios for individual years have been estimated. For younger and older ages, special methods have been adopted. With these survival ratios (p_x) and smoothed- age data, mortality rates (q_x) are worked out and the life table is prepared. The life tables are also prepared with the age-specific death-rates obtained by the Sample Registration System.

Mortality Rate

Mortality rate is a measure of the number of deaths in some population, scaled to the size of that population, per unit time. Mortality rate is typically expressed in units of deaths per 1000 individuals per year; thus, a mortality rate of 9.5 in a population of 100,000 would mean 950 deaths per year in that entire population, or 0.95% out of the total.

Crude Death Rate

The crude death rate is the total number of deaths per year per 1000 people.

$$= \frac{\text{Number of deaths during the year}}{\text{Mid-year population}} \times 1000$$

Age-specific Mortality Rate (ASMR)

Age –specific mortality rate is defined as the number of deaths in specific age-group per thousand populations in the same age-group in a given year.

$$ASMR = \frac{\text{Number of deaths in a particular age-group}}{\text{Mid-year population of the same age-group}} \times 1000$$

Dependency Ratios

The dependency ratio is an age-population ratio of those typically not in the labour force (the *dependent* part) and those typically in the labour force (the *productive* part). It is used to measure the pressure on productive populationand is normally expressed as a percentage. In international statistics, the dependent part usually includes those under the age of 15 and over the age of 64. The productive part makes up the population in between, ages 15 – 64. It is normally expressed as a percentage.The (total) dependency ratio can be decomposed into the child dependency ratio and the old-age dependency ratio.

Old –Age Dependency Ratio

In India, generally, persons aged 15 to 59 years are supposed to form the population of working ages and at age 60, people generally retire or withdraw themselves from work. Thus, the *Old age dependency ratio* is defined as the number of persons in the age-group 60 or more per 100 persons in the age-group 15-59 years.

Economic Independence

A person is considered economically independent if he/she does not require to take financial help from others in order to live a normal life.

Monthly Per capita Consumption Expenditure (MPCE)

For a household, this is the total consumer expenditure over all items per month (30 days basis) divided by the size of the household. A person's MPCE is taken as that of the household to which he or she belongs.

For studying income distribution of the population twelve MPCE classes may be formed after arranging the entire population by value of MPCE. The upper limits of these classes correspond broadly to the MPCE level of cumulative proportions of poorest 5%,

10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, 95% and 100% of the population. From the data on NSSO Consumer Expenditure Survey, these MPCE classes are obtained separately for rural and urban part of the country.

Usual Activity Status

The usual activity status relates to the activity status of a person during a reference period. In NSSO surveys the activity status on which a person spent relatively longer time (major time criterion) during the 365 days preceding the date of survey is considered the principal usual activity status of the person. The broad principal usual activity status is obtained on the basis of a two-stage dichotomous classification depending on the major time spent. Persons are first classified as those in the labour force and those not in the labour force depending on which of the two statuses took the person's major time in the year. In the second stage, those who are found in the labour force are further classified into working (i.e. engaged in economic activity or employed) and seeking and/or available for work (i.e. unemployed) based on the major time spent. Thus the principal usual status is one of the three: (i) employed, (ii) unemployed, (iii) out of labour force.

Literacy Rate

A person who can both read and write with understanding in any language is considered as literate. It is not necessary that a person who is literate should have received any formal deduction or should have passed minimum educational standard. The literacy rate is the number of literates per 100 persons in any population.

Educational level

It refers to the stage of educational attainment. It is the highest level a person has completed successfully.

Ailment – Illness or Injury

Ailment, i.e. illness or injury, mean any deviation from the state of physical and mental well-being. An ailment may not cause any necessity of hospitalisation, confinement to bed or restricted activity. In other words, one is treated as sick if one feels sick. This also includes cases of visual, hearing, speech and locomotor disabilities. Injuries cover all types of damages, such as cuts, wounds, fractures and burns caused by an accident, including bites to any part of the body.