



Socio-Economic Profile of Elderly Population- A Case of India

KEYWORDS

Socio- Economic Profile, Elderly people, Sex Ratio, Economic solvency

Dr P V Nayak

Associate Professor, D C M Arts & Commerce College, Mandal Road, Viramgam-382150

ABSTRACT *Elderly or old age consists of ages nearing or surpassing the average life span of human beings. In India more than sixty years consider as an elderly people. This study is focus on socio-economic profile of the elderly population of India. This study is based on census years. Size and Growth elderly population, Sex Ratio, dependency ratio, economic solvency, have been analysed. There has been a steady rise in the share of elderly population in the total population over the decades. The study has found that higher ratio female to males, dependency ratio increased; per capita expenditure of urban elderly persons was more than rural elderly persons. The government should spread pension scheme for all elderly person who have no income source. The government should provide free medical treatment, transportation and other required services to elderly persons. The government should establish separate department for senior citizens.*

Section-I Introduction

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. People can be considered old because of certain changes in their activities or social roles. Also old people have limited regenerative abilities and are more prone to disease, syndromes, and sickness as compared to other adults. The medical study of the aging process is called gerontology and the study of diseases that afflict the elderly is geriatrics. The United Nations World Assembly on Ageing, held at Vienna in 1982, formulated a package of recommendations which gives high priority to research related to developmental and humanitarian aspects of ageing. The plan of action specifically recommended that "International exchange and research cooperation as well as data collection should be promoted in all the fields having a bearing on ageing, in order to provide a rational basis for future social policies and action. Special emphasis should be placed on comparative and cross-cultural studies in ageing". 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.

In India with majority of its population aged less than 30, the problems and issues of its grey population has not been given serious consideration and only a few studies on them have been attempted in our country. To reap the advantage of demographic dividend, the focus is mainly on the children and the youth and fulfilment of their basic needs for proper development. Also the traditional Indian society and the age-old joint family system have been instrumental in safeguarding the social and economic security of the elderly people in the country. However, with the rapid changes in the social scenario and the emerging prevalence of nuclear family set-ups in India in recent years the elderly people are likely to be exposed to emotional, physical and financial insecurity in the years to come. This has drawn the attention of the policy makers and administrators at central and state governments, voluntary organi-

zations and civil society.

In view of the increasing need for intervention in area of old age welfare, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India adopted 'National Policy on Older Persons' in January, 1999. The policy provides broad guidelines to State Governments for taking action for welfare of older persons in a proactive manner by devising their own policies and plans of action. The policy defines 'senior citizen' as a person who is 60 years old or above. It strives to ensure well-being of senior citizens and improve quality of their lives through providing specific facilities, concessions, relief, services etc. and helping them cope with problems associated with old age. Therefore, it is very important to study on Socio-Economic Profile of Elderly Population of India.

Section-II Central Alignment

Some studies have been carried out on elderly people. Followings are some important study on elderly people.

United Nations Fund (2012) studied about the status of elderly people of selected states of India. It has studied during 2011-12 of elderly people of selected states of India. Research team has studied on the socio economic conditions, health, living style dependency ratio etc of elderly people.

Goel; Garg; Singh and others (2003) studied about unmet needs of the elderly in a rural population of Meerut. They studied about psychosocial needs of elderly in a rural area and the availability and utilization of Geriatric welfare services. They found that out of 354 elderly studied 58.5% were financially dependent, 69.5% were found enjoying their leisure time at home, 55.1% were having sad attitude towards their lives, 46.3% were not aware of and 96% had never utilized any Geriatric welfare service. In 59.2% of cases the distance of government health facilities was more than 3 kms. They found that financial and social needs of the elderly fulfilled by preserving traditional joint family system, promoting light home based occupations, life style changes for healthy ageing and by increasing awareness and utilization of geriatric welfare services as

well as accessibility to government health services.

**Section-III
Objectives**

The objectives of the study are:

- (1) To study the size and growth of elderly population in India
- (2) To study the sex ratio of elderly people in India.
- (3) To study dependency ratio and economic solvency of elderly people in India.
- (4) To study the literacy ratio and marital status of elderly people in India.
- (5) To make suggestions to government for making rules and regulation of elderly people for their improvement status.

**Section-IV
Methodology**

Secondary data have been used for the study. Data have been collected from various report of the government, private research agency and from published papers. The study is based on census year. Ratio analysis and growth rate have been used for the data analysis.

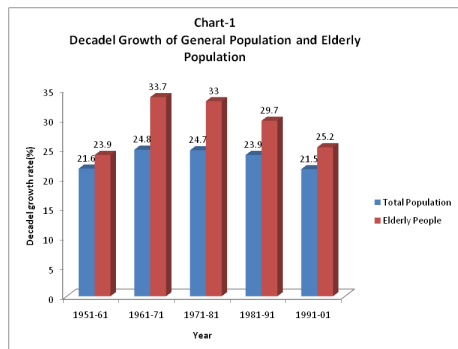
**Section-V
Data Analysis**

Size and Growth of General Population and Elderly people in India

Growth of General Population and Elderly people in India are shown in Table 1 and chart no.1. Table 1 indicates that elderly people growth rate was more than total population growth rate during the study period. The highest decadal growth rate of general population and elderly population were 24.8% and 33.7% respectively during 1961-71. The lowest decadal growth rate for general population and elderly people were 21.5% and 25.2% respectively during 1991-01.

Year	Total Population	Elderly People
1951-61	21.6	23.9
1961-71	24.8	33.7
1971-81	24.7	33.0
1981-91	23.9	29.7
1991-01	21.5	25.2

Source: (i) The United Nations Population Fund (2012), "Report on the Status of Elderly in Select States of India, 2011", United Nations Population Fund, New Delhi.(ii)Government of India(2011), "Situation Analysis of Elderly people in India" Central Statistics Office Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, New Delhi.



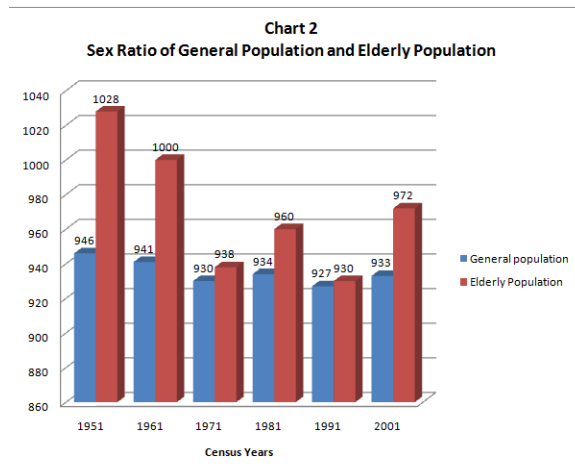
Sex Ratio of General Population and Elderly People

Sex Ratio of General Population and Elderly people in India are shown in Table 2 and chart no.2. Table 2 indicates that elderly population sex ration was more than total population sex ratio during the study period. The highest sex ratio of general population and elderly population were 946 and 1028 respectively in 1951. The lowest sex ratio for general population and elderly people were 927 and 930 respectively in 1991.

Table 2
Sex Ratio

Year	General population	Elderly Population
1951	946	1028
1961	941	1000
1971	930	938
1981	934	960
1991	927	930
2001	933	972

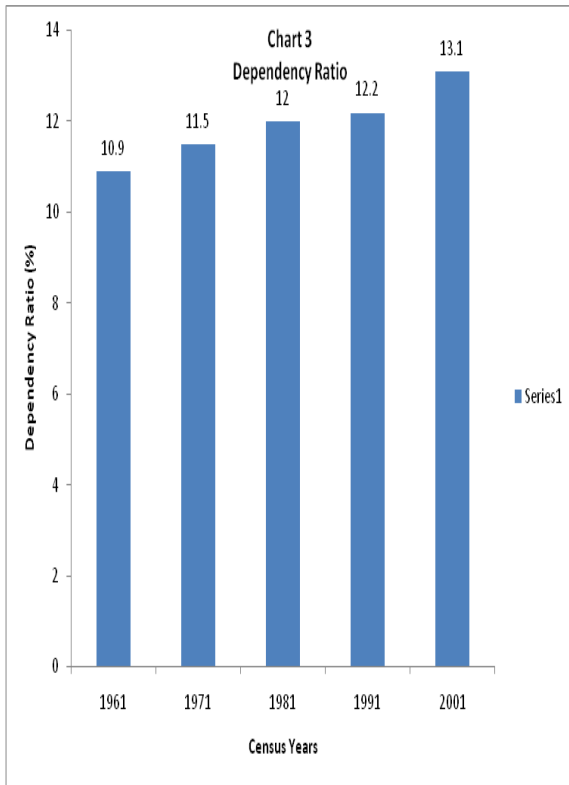
Source: Same as table-1



Dependency Ratio

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 population. As the ratio increases there may be an increased burden on the productive part of the population to maintain the means of livelihood of the economically dependent. This results in direct impacts on financial expenditures on things like social security, as well as many indirect consequences. The (total) dependency ratio can be decomposed into the child dependency ratio and the aged dependency ratio.

In our country, 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, in India 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.



The movement of the ratio over time indicates an ever-increasing trend in this ratio which climbed from 10.9% in 1961 to 13.1% in 2001 for the country as a whole. Between rural and urban ratio there has been considerable difference all through with urban old-age dependency ratio hovering between 8 to 10 per cent, while in rural areas it increased from 11.4 to 14 percent during 1961 to 2001. This is often due to relatively higher concentration of working age population in the urban areas.

The female old-age dependency ratio as well as the gap between female and male old-age dependency ratio are increasing over time and the two assumed the values 13.8% and 12.5% respectively in 2001, which is a matter of grave concern.

Economic Solvency of Elderly Persons

Another important dimension to the subject of economic conditions of the elderly persons is the monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) of the aged population in rural and urban India.

For this one may examine the percent distribution of elderly population across the MPCE classes separately obtained

for rural and urban part of the country in the NSSO surveys.

Among the rural elderly persons almost 50% have a monthly per capita expenditure level between Rs. 420 to Rs. 775 and as expected more males than females are there in higher expenditure classes. On the other hand, among the urban elderly persons, almost half of males and females have monthly per capita expenditure between Rs. 665 and 1500.

Limitation of the Study

The study confined to 2001 census year. Separate data related to elderly people dependency ratio for the census year 2011.

Section-VI

Conclusion

Socio-economic profile of elderly people in India is very important part of the country. The whole study was focus on the various socio-economic conditions of the elderly people. The study made on size and growth of general population and elderly population, sex ratio, dependency ratio and economic solvency of elderly population in India. Another feature in India is a relatively higher ratio of females to males in the elderly population than in the general population for all the years since independence.

The study found that elderly people growth rate was more than total population growth rate during the study period. The highest decadal growth rate of general population and elderly population were during 1961-71 and the lowest decadal growth rate for general population and elderly people were during 1991-01. The highest sex ratio of general population and elderly population were 946 and 1028 respectively in 1951. The lowest sex ratio for general population and elderly people were 927 and 930 respectively in 1991.

The dependency ratio in urban area and rural areas increased during the study period. Rural dependency ratio was more than urban area during the study period due to relatively higher concentration of working age population in the urban areas. It was also found that the rural elderly persons' monthly per capita expenditure was less than urban elderly people in India. The government should introduce special pension scheme for elderly people. The government should establish working house where elderly people can work there. It will be very useful to earn something and to maintain their health also. The government should establish a special club for elderly people. The government should establish special court for elderly people to solve their problems.

REFERENCE

1. Goel, P. K.; Garg S.K.; Singh, J. V.; Bhatnagar, M.; Chopra, H; Bajpai, S. K.(2003), "Unmet Needs of the Elderly in a Rural Population of Meerut", Indian Journal of Community Medicine, Vol. XXVIII. No.4, Oct.-Dec., pp. 165-166. | 2. Government of India(2011), "Situation Analysis of Elderly people in India" Central Statistics Office Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, New Delhi. | 3. The United Nations Population Fund (2012), "Report on the Status of Elderly in Select States of India, 2011", United Nations Population Fund, New Delhi. |