



Ageing Population in India: Its Implications

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ABSTRACT

Ageing of population is a major aspect of the process of demographic transition. It is generally expressed as older individuals forming large share of the total population. Such an increase is considered to be an end product of demographic transition or demographic achievements with a decline in both fertility and mortality rates and consequent increase in the life expectancy at birth and older ages. The elderly population as per the 2001 census is 77 million which is estimated to rise to 169 million by 2025 in India, which causes to many socio-economic and other problems. This paper highlights the Ageing population in India and its implications based on secondary data.

Keywords : Ageing index, Sex ratio, Median age, Potential support ratio, Parent support ratio, Dependence ratio and Labour force rate

Introduction

Population ageing is an international concern, in part because of consequences of coming age-structure change, e.g; growth in the number of elderly, decline in the number of youth, and accompanying economic-social costs(Sanderson and Scherbov,2011). Ageing is the process by which older individuals became a proportionally large share of the total population. Biologically, ageing has been defined as "a natural and irreversible life process; generally associated with fatigue, decline in functional capacity of the organs of the body, decreased ability to cope with the stress of disease or trauma". It is one of the most distinctive demographic events of the twentieth century. It will surely remain important throughout the twenty first century. Ageing initially had experienced by the more developed countries. Now the process has recently become apparent in much of the developing world as well.

OBJECTIVES

The present study has been carried-out with the following objectives.

- To examine the growth of aged population in India from 1881 to 2001;
- To identify the spatial patterns of aged population (2001) among the states in India
- To study the sex ratio of ageing population from 1881 to 2001, comparing with general sex ratio and.
- To study the population ageing implications and to recommend policies.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on the secondary data viz., Census of India, Sample Registration System (SRS) and U.N. Report on Ageing Population (1950-2050).For having the spatial patterns of ageing population "Ageing index" has been carried out to all the Indian states. It is calculated as "the number of person 60 plus years old per hundred persons under age 15 years old". This ageing index has been divided into three regions like Region of high ageing intensity (24), Medium intensity (15.70 to 23.75) and low intensity (15.70). Simple mathematical tools like percentages, averages and ratios are used in the analysis.

GROWTH OF AGED POPULATION

Table-1 reveals that the proportion of aged population is fluctuating slightly during 1881 to 1951. Since 1961 onwards, it is showing the signs of steady increase till 2001. In 1881, India had 193.6 million of which 10.1 million of population was aged (5.3 per cent). Male and female aged population during the same period was 4.6 and 5.9 per cent respectively. More or less similar trend was found till 1951. In 1961, the population of India was 439 million, of which the share of aged population was 5.6 per cent (25 million). The male and female aged during the same period was 5.5 and 5.8 per cent respectively. In 2001, the population of India had reached to 1029 million in which aged population constitute 76 million (7.4 per cent) and the male and female aged was 7.1 and 7.8 per cent in order. Thus, the share and size of aged population in India has been steadily increasing. It will continue to grow faster in future.

SPATIAL PATTERN OF AGEING POPULATION

As per 2001 census,77 millions of Indian population (7.4 per cent) was aged(60+ years) out of the total population of 1028 millions. Again, the trend of ageing population different among the Indian states, which depends on the socio-economic and demographic aspects. Ageing index of Indian states in hierarchical order is given in Table-4.

All the South Indian states (except Andhra Pradesh), Punjab, and Himachal Pradesh in North India are showing the signs of high ageing index. Kerala holds the highest index with 40.2 followed by Goa, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Maharashtra, Orissa and Karnataka, and the lowest ageing index has recorded in the North Eastern states like Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Sikkim, Mizoram and Assam. The rest of the states especially the Northern states consisting of the regions of Central and India gangetic belt comes under medium Index (Table-4).

The analysis reveals that the ageing of population is faster in the southern states as compared to north and north-eastern states. It is attributed to socio-economic and technological development access to health facilities, and better implementation of public health care system etc., which are responsible for sharp decline in mortality and an increasing life expect-

ancy at birth. The other factors like literacy level, female work participation and improvement in life style of the people has also made significant contribution for this trend. However, the process of ageing is not so rapid in the north and north-eastern states. This is mainly due to lower life expectancy, and higher fertility and mortality rates in this region. Therefore, the population here predominates with young and adult population. The other aspects such as poor socio-economic and technological development, poor access to public health services, low literacy level, higher percentage of SC / ST population, poor status of women etc are also responsible for this trend in ageing.

IMPLICATIONS OF POPULATION AGEING

The ageing of population has several socio-economic, demographic implications at the national as well as at the household level. The large size of elderly people are in need of socio-financial and medical facilities etc., Keeping in view, the implications of population aging are discussed here under aging implications aspects viz., older ages and ageing index, broad age group and medium age, potential support ratio, parents support ratio, dependency ratio and labour force participation (Table-5). The analysis of these ageing aspects only can provide a firm foundation for programmes and intervention policies for elderly persons.

OLDER AGES

The young aged population (60+ years) has steadily increased from 5.6 per cent in 1950 to 7.6 per cent in 2000 and will reach to 12.5 per cent and 20.6 per cent by 2025 and 2050 years respectively. Among the aged population, the proportion of 'Aged old' (65+ years) has also shown the posi-

tive growth, which is about 3.3 in 1950 increased to 5.0 per cent in 2000 and estimated to reach 8.3 per cent and 14.8 per cent by 2025 and 2050 years respectively. However, oldest old (80+ years) constitutes about 0.3 per cent in 1950 and 0.6 per cent in 2000 and would reach to 1.3 per cent and 3.1 per cent by 2025 and 2050 respectively, which is very meager of the total aged population. The above figures show that in the near future, there would be sharp increase in young old (60+ years) and aged old population (65+ years) (Table-5).

AGEING INDEX

It is the "number of older persons (60+ years) per hundred persons under age 15". It implies the proportion between the young and the old population. It was 14.4 in 1951, increased to 33.5 in 2000 and estimated to reach 53.6 and 106.0 by the year 2025 and 2050 respectively (Table-5). It implies that the aged population surpasses the young population, which requires more socio-economic and other welfare programs.

SUGGESTIONS FOR POLICY MAKING:

In view of the above population ageing concern, the following suggestions are recommended for policy implications.

- A separate department of social security is to be established to focus on the issues of the aged and their problems.
- Comprehensive support are to be provided for financial security, health care, shelter, welfare and other needs of the elderly.
- Educate the public about the likely consequences of longevity and make them responsible for care of the elderly.

TABLE 1: Dimensions of Growth of Elderly Population in India

Year	Total Population (in millions)	Total Aged Population (60+) (in millions)	Percentage	Aged males (in millions)	Percentages	Aged Female (in millions)	Percentage	Decadal Growth		Sex ratio	
								General	Aged	General	Aged
1881	193,608,599	10,171,521	5.3	4,565,686	4.6	5,605,835	5.9	---	---	NA	1228
1891	233,322,228	12,203,867	5.2	5,498,845	4.6	6,705,022	5.9	20.5	19.6	NA	1219
1901	237,514,756	12,059,846	5.1	5,501,791	4.6	6,558,055	5.6	1.8	-2.2	972	1192
1911	25,116,6913	13,168,787	5.2	6,181,329	4.8	6,987,458	5.7	5.8	6.6	964	1130
1921	250,430,169	13,484,764	5.4	6,482,389	5.1	7,002,375	5.7	-0.3	0.2	955	1080
1931	287,051,133	14,208,391	5.1	6,944,128	4.9	7,264,263	5.4	11.0	3.7	950	1046
1941	317,041,900	18,040,000	5.7	8,890,700	5.5	9,149,300	5.9	14.0	26.0	945	1029
1951	356,787,299	19,612,270	5.5	9,671,048	5.3	9,991,222	5.7	12.5	9.2	946	1033
1961	438,653,773	24,705,721	5.6	12,352,548	5.5	12,353,173	5.8	23.0	23.6	941	1000
1971	547,949,810	32,699,703	6.0	16,873,877	5.9	15,825,826	6.0	25.0	28.1	930	938
1981	665,287,849	43,167,384	6.4	22,022,867	6.4	21,144,517	6.5	21.4	33.6	934	960
1991	838,567,936	56,681,640	6.8	29,363,725	6.8	27,317,915	6.8	26.1	29.19	927	930
2001	1028,610,328	76,622,321	7.4	33,768,327	7.1	38,853,994	7.8	22.7	42.2	933	1151

Source: 1. Upt to 1971 years : S. B. Mukherjee; 1976; The Age Distribution of the Indian Population, East-West Population institute, Honolulu , p-65.

2. From 1981 on wards; censuses of India.

TABLE- 2: Fertility & mortality indices in India

Year	T.F.R	C.B.R	C.D.R
1971	5.2	36.9	14.9
1981	4.5	33.9	12.5
1991	3.6	29.5	9.8
2001	3.1	25.4	8.4
2005	2.9	23.8	7.6

Source: Govt. of India, 2006: Family welfare statistics in India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi.

TABLE- 3: Expectation of life at birth in India

Gender	Censuses Years											
	1901-10	1921-30	1941-50	1951-60	1961-70	1976-80	1986-90	1996-01	2001-05	2006-10	2016-20	2021-25
Male	22.6	26.9	32.4	41.9	46.4	52.5	57.5	62.3	63.8	65.8	68.8	69.8
Female	23.3	26.6	31.7	40.6	44.7	52.1	58.1	65.3	66.1	68.1	71.1	72.3
Combined	22.9	26.8	32.1	41.3	45.6	52.3	57.7	63.8	64.9	66.9	70.0	71.1

Source: Govt. of India, 2006: Family welfare statistics in India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, New Delhi.

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