

Ageing in India

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Abstract

The senior citizens are an invaluable and an integral part of the Indian society. There is a continuous increase in number of elderly people. This is due to the general improvement in the health care facilities over the years. The major challenge is to ensure that the elderly persons do not merely live longer, but also lead a secure, dignified and productive life.

Keywords: Elderly, old age people, senior citizens etc

Introduction

The senior citizens are an invaluable and an integral part of the Indian society. During the course of their lives, they make tremendous contribution to home, family and society and to the overall development of our nation and our communities. Today's youth are immensely benefitted from their traditional values and experience in different walks of life. Currently, India is experiencing speedy urbanization and rapid economic development. This has brought about a complete shift in the lifestyle of the people. This is due to nuclear family system and the migration of younger generation from their rural areas to urban i.e. other cities in India and abroad for their careers. Some senior citizens are alone in the family. Some of them need special attention to health and others and needs some help in their day-to-day life. Some senior citizens still have a lot of energy in them and would like to do something more for the society. Some of them are not financially independent. Some of them want access to information related to senior citizens in particular. Yet many other just want to be connected with their peers.

The increasing number of older persons in India's population is mainly due to the general improvement in the health care facilities over the years. The major challenge is to ensure that the elderly persons do not merely live longer, but also lead a secure, dignified and productive life.

Concept of Ageing Population

Population ageing refers to the increase in number and percentage of older population aged 60

years and above, and at the same time, decreasing in number and percentage of the younger population aged 15 years old and below. Population ageing has now become a distinctive demographic phenomena in developing countries. Now-a-days, developing countries have become the home to the largest proportion of the older people in the world.

According to Census 2011, India has 104 million older people (60+ years) constituting 8.6% of total population. Amongst the elderly (60+), females are more than males, comprising 53 million females and 51 million males. In 2023, India's elderly population of 153 million (aged 60 and above) is expected to reach a staggering 347 million by 2050.

According to the Report of the Technical Group on Population Projections for India, there are nearly 138 million elderly persons in India in 2021, comprising of 67 million males and 71 million females. As per this report, there is an increase of nearly 34 million elderly persons are seen in 2021 over the population census. A report released by the United Nation Population Fund and Help Age India suggests that the number of elderly persons is expected to grow to 173 million by 2026.

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In India, the elderly have been traditionally assigned a higher honour and respect in the society. This is due to social values, norms and the social and economic organization of the Indian society. But the proportion of elderly in India has continuously grown.

Table no. 1

**Projected Number of Elderly (60-69 years),
2011-2051**

60 years & Above	2011	2021	2031	2041	2051
Number (in million)	96	133	179	236	301
Percent of the total population	8.2	9.9	11.9	14.5	17.3
Sex Ratio	1034	1004	964	1008	1007

Table no. 2

Projected Number of Elderly (70-79 years), 2011-2051

70 years & Above	2011	2021	2031	2041	2051
Number (in million)	36	51	73	98	132
Percent of the total population	3.1	3.8	4.8	6.0	7.6
Sex Ratio	968	970	936	891	954

Table No. 3

**Projected Number of Elderly (70-79 years),
2011-2051**

80 years & Above	2011	2021	2031	2041	2051
Number (in million)	9	11	16	23	32
Percent of the total population	0.7	0.8	1.0	1.4	1.8
Sex Ratio	884	866	843	774	732

Source: Registrar General and Census Commissioner,
2011, New Delhi)

Conclusion

The ageing population in India is increasing rapidly, bringing with it social economic, and healthcare challenges. While longer life expectancy reflects progress in healthcare and living standards. It also creates the need for strong social security schemes, better family/community support. Ensuring active, healthy, and dignified ageing must become a national priority so that the elderly can live not as dependents, but as respected and contributing members of society.

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