

## **Ageing and Human Development : A Study of Rural Orissa**

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### **Backdrop**

The process of ageing will be one of the most distinctive demographic events of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Initially experienced by the more developed countries, the process has recently become apparent in much of the developing. For the near future, virtually all countries will face population ageing, although at varying levels of intensity and in different time frames. The shift in age structure associated with population ageing has a profound impact on a broad range of economic, political and social conditions. For example concerns are growing about long-term validity of intergenerational social support system, which are crucial for the well being of both the older and younger generations (UN 2001).

### **Statement Of The Problem**

In India, the states of Kerala, Goa and Tamil Nadu had substantial proportion of population aged 60+. These states have completed the demographic transition and experiencing rise in life expectancy. Many other states, which are experiencing, moderate decline in birth rate and increase in longevity will have similar trends. The shift in age structure associated with population ageing has a profound impact on a broad range of economic, political and social conditions. For example concerns are growing about long-term validity of intergenerational social support system, which are crucial for the well being of both the older and younger generations (UN 2001). The socio economic implications of elderly population may be viewed at macro and micro level. At the macro level, higher proportion of elderly demands increase in public expenditure on health care as well as economic support. This in turn reduces the budgetary allocation from other productive sectors. At the micro level, it requires support from the family, both economic, social and emotional. The ageing process is associated with a number of social, health and economic issues. Some of these are providing health care facilities to the elderly, economic support and setting up of old-age homes.

## **Objectives**

This study mainly attempts to understand the utilization of human resources among elderly in Rural Orissa. It also attempts to highlight the gender perspective in health seeking behavior. The elderly populations are the potential human resources for any nation or state. Human development has two sides, namely, the supply side which focuses on improvement in skill and demand side where the focus is on utilization of these skills. Here the demand aspect of human development among elderly will be viewed, i.e., utilization and willingness to participate in productive work.

## **Data and Methodology**

Various bivariate, multivariate techniques have been utilized. Ageing index and dependency ratio has been computed. The variables to be studied for living arrangement: living alone, with spouse only, with married sons, with married daughter, with unmarried children, with others. The variables to be studied for utilization of human resource: employment, working/not working, willingness to work, type of employment etc. The study has been carried out in the Ganjam district of Orissa. According to 1991 census there were 6.8 percent of people aged, but it has increased in many fold giving rise to serious concern for the policy makers.

## **Summary of findings**

There exists a great disparity between the male and the female elderly regarding their health care. Potential of the older persons remains unutilized; their services should be utilized to make it productive. Plight of the elderly are very serious as far as their living arrangements are concerned. Most of the older people are deprived of better health care facilities.

## **Policy Implications**

The state government should be ready to bear the additional burden of growing pension. As a result of which funds from other sectors will be diverted in order to meet the growing demand. Which may hamper other developmental activities. So, the state should try to utilize the service of the older people after their retirement by engaging them in other additional activities. Health care facilities should be provided wherever it is

necessary. The state machinery may try to encourage NGO's who were working for the elderly by providing them some incentives such as financial assistance.