

## **Dependency and Family Care of the Aged in Village India : a Case Study**

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**Abstract :** The problems of the aged in India and other countries differ. Broadly speaking the problems have more economic overtone with other related problems of health and unemployment. A large segment of the aged population here lives in villages where poverty is widespread. However, with family bonds still existing, care giving to the old is not totally lacking in spite of breaking up of joint family due to urban, industrial influences. The magnitude of the problems of aged has possibly not reached the extent it has in the West, but is likely to catch up soon due to rapid transformation of Indian society. In this context the sociological knowledge of what is happening to India's ageing population is still very scanty because until recently these problems were dealt with general socio-economic problems of the country. This paper will make an attempt to understand, in time perspective, the specific nature of dependency and family care to the aged in a region.

In India, the percentage of the age-groups of sixty and above, called the ageing in this paper, is estimated to go up from five in 1901 to seven by 2000 A.D. Add to this natural growth, the drive that is on to bring down the rate of birth to the level of that of death within the same period. This, along with the longer lease of life for those existing through health care, would tend to result in a disproportionately high ratio of the ageing in comparison to that of the young. It is not difficult to foresee that by the end of the century, the preponderance of the ageing in the population of the country would exert a pressure under which the capacity for, and the attitude of the society to their well-being would exceed the limit.

The signs of the strain are showing already. The problem that will emerge from the factors stated, will be of baffling magnitude, even if only the vastness of the landmass and the population are considered. It will also be extremely complicated on account of the bewildering diversities in language, belief, way of life and level of material and social development.

To ignore the warning symptoms and to let things drift without any serious and determined effort would be disastrous. To avert catastrophic consequences, measures for the rehabilitation of the ageing in the changed condition of the society have to be worked out from now. The task is stupendous. The planning and the programmes to be adequate, have to be on the national scale and the initiative and execution to be effective, have to be by

the welfare state of the country. A basic prerequisite for such an undertaking is a comprehensive survey of facts for a proper assessment of the problem in all its scientific and sociological aspects. But as the awareness of the practical need of such a gerontological research is very recent, the assessment is lacking.

The present paper is an attempt towards the filling of the gap within a limited area, in time perspective from 1960 to 1982.

It aims at presenting in concrete terms, collected from the field of study, the nature and extent of the dependency of the ageing, as defined, as well as their participation in the work force of rural household, with agriculture as the principal occupation. By dependency is meant the parking of individuals in their old age.

The data are from 13 villages scattered within the range of 25 kilometers from the township of Giridih in the district of that name in the state of Bihar, eastern India.

The selection of villages has been made by adopting a 2-stage stratified sample on the basis of some socio-economic characteristics. The information of 1960 were collected from the secondary source. The re-survey in 1982 was done with the help of questionnaire.

The data have been presented in two sections : The first section deals with the condition of the ageing in the households, with focus on the demographic characteristics, economic activities and residential norm with variations if any. Explanation of the variations in the time perspective has also been offered in each case. The second section elaborates on the nature of dependency likely through direct interaction. The method employed is that of case study. In the discussion on the trend noticed among the reference group, attempt has been made to correlate the findings to those on food, shelter, health care, participation in the family work-force, daily labour time disposition, economic status, old-age security, and residential preferences. The opinion of the ageing regarding their standing with the rest of the family has also been obtained in order to get an idea of the nature of kinship bonds that integrate the rural families.

The paper concludes with a summary of the observations made from the study.

The 13 villages studied, lie to the north-east, south and south-west of Giridih. The longest distance is 25 kilometers but some are quite close to the town, five to seven kilometers only. Not all of them have the advantage of all weather roads. Yet none are difficult to reach. All are equally dependent on agriculture for living. There is no big industry in the region. A few individuals, however, are engaged in mining and quarrying.

The population of the 13 villages totalled 5,907 (male 3,167 and female 2,740) in 1960. In 1982 it rose to 10,092 (male 5,153 and female 4,939). The villagers interviewed, traced the rise to natural growth and ruled out influx or

Table 1.1

Year	Distribution of (1) village and (2) elderly population					
	Village (N=13)			Sixty and above years of age		
	Male (2)	Female (3)	Total (4)	Male (5)	Female (6)	Total (7)
1960	3167	2740	5907	66 (2.08)	73 (2.66)	139 (2.35)
1982	5153	4939	10092	257 (4.98)	337 (6.82)	594 (5.94)

settlement from outside. How far their opinion tallied with the government explanation has not been examined.

The break-up of these figures for our purpose gives 139 ageing (male 66 and female 73) in 1960 and 594 (male 257 and female 337) in 1982. That is, in 22 years, the increase was by 3.59 per cent, from 2.35 in 1960 to 5.94 in 1982 (Table 1.1). It was steeper in the case of the women — from 2.66 to 6.82 against 2.08 to 4.98 for the men. The number of households with ageing members also went up — from 10.73 in 1960 to 26.48 in 1982 (Table 1.2). In other words, there were more households with ageing members in 1982 than in 1960.

Table 1.2

Year	Distribution of households	
	Village	Persons sixty and above years of age present
	(2)	(3)
1960	1118	120 (10.73)
1982	1707	452 (26.48)

Community-wise break-up reveals two opposite trends: It was upward for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Muslim, by 7.94, 0.59 and 0.16 per cent, respectively. The first is markedly higher than the other two. With the Caste Hindu and Other Communities the trend was the other way, of decline by 4.16 and 4.53 per cent respectively.

Within the communities, the ageing male swelled from 7.57 to 19.84 per cent among the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and the Muslim recording moderate increase from 22.73 to 24.52 and 6.06 to 7.78 per cent respectively. The Caste Hindu and Other Communities recorded a fall — the former from 53.03 to 47.47 per cent and the latter from 10.61 to 0.39 per cent respectively. On the female side, the Scheduled Castes again show an increase by 4.29 per cent, with the Other Communities coming in for a meagre rise of

0.59. Decrease switched over to the Scheduled Tribes, from 27.40 to 26.71, the Muslim from 9.59 to 8.31 and the Caste Hindu from 50.68 to 47.77 per cent.

The overall demographic index of the social groups indicates by and large gentle variations — both rise and fall, over the year. The largest variation occurred in the case of Scheduled Caste males (+12.27) and those of the Other Communities (-10.22). Variation in both the cases is above 10 per cent. The Scheduled Castes recorded increase in both the sexes while the Caste Hindu showed just the opposite. The Other Communities followed a declining curve heading from 5.03 towards zero point (0.50). The change in respect of the other two groups, that is, the Scheduled Tribes and the Muslim has been negligible.

The curves confirm the local opinion that there had been no migrational factor in the demographic change. The only case which might call for further probe is that of the Scheduled Castes (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3

Social Group	Distribution of elderly population					
	Total		Male		Female	
	1960 [N=139]	1982 [N=594]	1960 [N=66]	1982 [N=73]	1960 [N=257]	1982 [N=337]
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Caste Hindu	51.80	47.84	53.03	47.47	50.68	47.77
Tribal	25.17	25.76	22.73	24.52	27.40	26.71
Scheduled						
Caste	10.08	18.02	7.57	19.84	12.33	18.62
Muslim	7.92	8.08	6.08	7.78	9.59	8.31
Other						
Community	5.03	0.50	10.61	0.39	—	0.59
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

From the economic point of view, the dependence of the ageing, total and partial taken together, was of almost equal dimension, at both the time points of the study (Table 1.4). The percentage was 61.15 in 1960 and 63.64 in 1982, the difference being a negligible increase of 2.49 per cent over 22 years. For the men it remained below 22.00 per cent. 21.21 in 1960 and 21.79 in 1982. This was numerically a little more than one-fifth of the total male ageing population. The remaining major portion, therefore, were economically independent as well as providers.

Female dependence was also high in the same period: the percentage, however, was much higher than that of the men, being 97.26 and 95.55 in 1960 and 1982 respectively. Though the overall trend in dependence was one of decline by 1.71 per cent, the number of women providers increased from two,

Table 1.4

Year	Sex	Economic status of elderly persons in family		
		Provider	Dependent	
(1)	(2)	(3)	Partial (4)	Full (5)
1960	Male (N=66)	52 (78.79)	1 (1.51)	13 (19.70)
	Female (N=73)	2 (2.74)	—	71 (97.26)
	Total (N=139)	54 (38.85)	1 (0.72)	84 (60.43)
	1982	Male (N=257)	201 (78.21)	19 (7.39)
Female (N=337)	15 (4.45)	—	322 (95.55)	
Total (N=594)	216 (36.36)	19 (3.20)	359 (60.44)	

that is, 2.74 per cent to 15 or 4.45 per cent. These figures were still much smaller than those for men in this respect, which were 52 and 201.

It is significant that the economic dependence of women did show a decrease against the increase by 0.58 per cent for the men, however low the rates. The status of partial dependence or partial provider as viewed from the other end, was restricted to the men only. It grew from 0.72 to 3.20 per cent or from one to 19 over the years. The women compensated for their total dependence on the family by being useful in small household services.

Participation in the household work-force included both manual and non-manual work (Table 1.5). In 1960, 46.00 per cent of men between 60 and 70 years of age and cent per cent above that age were doing some kind or other of non-manual work. In that year there was virtually no woman of that category. There were only two exceptions and they belonged to the lowest age group of 60-70. Among the men also, it was this junior group only that did manual labour (54.00 per cent). Of the older groups, only two in the 71-80 group and one of 81 years carried on with non-manual work. The obvious deduction is that beyond 71 years, the men tended to withdraw from participating in work entailing toil.

The pattern of participation shows interesting changes by 1982. Against none in 1960, 1982 shows 54.55 per cent of the women between 60 and 70 years engaged in manual work. The blank held in this respect, for the senior age groups. In non-manual work participation, 1982 recorded three in the 71-80 age range and one above it. Female participation had always been low — only

Table 1.5

Age-Class (Year) (1)	Type of occupation of elderly working population					
	Non-manual		Manual		Total	
	Male (2)	Female (3)	Male (4)	Female (5)	Male (6)	Female (7)
(1960)						
60-70	23 (46.00)	2 (100)	27 (54.00)	—	50 (100)	2 (100)
71-80	2 (100)	—	—	—	2 (100)	—
81 & above	1 (100)	—	—	—	1 (100)	—
(1982)						
60-70	35 (19.34)	5 (46.45)	146 (80.66)	6 (54.55)	181 (100)	11 (100)
71-80	11 (31.43)	3 (100)	24 (68.57)	—	35 (100)	3 (100)
81 & above	3 (75.00)	1 (100)	1 (25.00)	—	4 (100)	1 (100)

2.74 per cent in 1960 and 4.45 per cent in 1982 — as compared to the masculine participation of 80.30 and 83.27 per cent in those two years.

On the whole, participation was on the increase in both the sexes — 2.97 per cent men and 1.71 per cent women, in 1982. A marked shift from manual to non-manual work was very clear in men with the decline in physical capacity with growing age. 80.66 per cent for the 60-70 years old men came down to 68.57 in the next senior group of 71-80 years and still down to 25.00 per cent for those above 80. The age-wise downward curve for manual participation had a corresponding upward bend for non-manual engagement. Here the senior most group of 80 years and more registered 75.00 per cent involvement with a mere 31.43 per cent for the next younger group of 71-80 years — a difference by almost half. In 1982 only 19.34 per cent of the 60-70 years old were manual workers.

Non-manual work claimed 49.06 per cent in 1962 and 22.26 per cent in 1982 of the ageing male population. The corresponding figures for manual occupation were 50.94 and 77.74 per cent for the same period. As noted above, in 1960 women were in non-manual occupations only, but by 1982 there were 40.00 per cent of them in manual and 60.00 per cent in non-manual work (Table 1.6).

The rate of participation was analysed under sub-classification of occupations, sedentary and mobile, under the two main categories of manual and non-manual. 'Sedentary' comprises occupations that do not require movement away from the place of residence, such as farming or agricultural supervision,

Table 1.6

Sex (Year)	Occupational details of elderly working population							Total (9)
	Non-manual				Manual			
	Sedentary			Mobile	Sedentary	Mobile		
	Farmer	Petty trader	Service holder	Service holder	Craftsman	Cultivator/ Agri-Labour	Non-Agri-cultural worker	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	
Male :			[49.06]			[50.94]		
1960	16	4	5	1	2	22	3	53
	(30.19)	(7.55)	(9.43)	(1.89)	(3.77)	(41.51)	(5.66)	
1982	38	5	3	3	7	107	57	220
	(17.27)	(2.27)	(1.36)	(1.36)	(3.19)	(48.64)	(25.91)	
			[22.26]			[77.74]		
Female :			[100.00]					
1960	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2
	(100.00)							
1982	6	3	—	—	—	1	5	15
	(40.00)	(20.00)				(6.67)	(33.33)	
			[60.00]			[40.00]		

petty trades including those that calls for movement within a limited distance such as pedling and hawking, services and crafts, this last only coming under manual. 'Mobile' groups such services as those of overseer, chowkidar, railway guard etc., and under manual owner cultivators, agricultural labourer and non-agricultural workers such as unspecified labour, mason, stone-cutter etc.

Our first observation from this angle is that there has been a noticeable rise in the participation in mobile occupations, manual as well as non-manual, by both the sexes — from 49.06 to 75.91 by men and from zero to as high as 40.00 per cent in the course of the period. At both the two time points participation in mobile agricultural activities, manual as well as non-manual, was 84.61 and 64.07 per cent for men. Though high, the percentages indicate a decline whereas non-agricultural activities of the same category of both types registered an increase from 15.39 to 35.93 per cent. This means that non-agricultural occupations were gaining in preference to the agricultural by the men.

In this context, it was noted that agricultural activities offered decreasing scope or attraction to the ageing men. The exact reason for this remains unknown for certain. Was it due to shortage of land which rendered superannuated labour uneconomical? Or maybe, new avenues of occupation opened easier and better employments for the old.

On the sedentary occupations our data indicate an increase in the non-manual farming participation by men, from 59.26 in 1960 to 71.70 in 1982. The incidence is much lower in case of other pursuits such as trade, service and craft which were 40.74 and 28.30 per cent only.

Farming of the non-manual and agricultural activities of the manual type, together ranked higher than any other occupation, equally for the men and women, though in a lesser degree for the latter. They however differ from the men in the diversity of their occupations in 1982. Three of them were in the trade and five in non-agricultural activities. The general picture that emerges from the analysis is of agriculture as the major employment with a rising trend in both the sexes to change over to non-agricultural pursuits, viz men — 5.66 to 25.91 per cent and women — zero to 33.33 per cent in 1960 and 1982 respectively.

To note another observation of a special interest : almost all the working ageing, male and female, took to the same occupations as those of the households they happened to belong. Only three departures from this norm were noted—two in 1960 and one in 1982. In 1960, one changed over from farming to non-agriculture and the other from non-agriculture to cultivation, and in 1982, the third from cultivation to non-agriculture. This norm tells of immobility in respect of occupation centring round the household. A further indication is that the ageing in the work force of the family, are economic assets either providing or supplementing the family budget with their earnings.

Children are said to have an important role to play in the economy of the peasant family for the support of their parents. There are two ways for that : (1) as potential labour in the economic activities and (2) as a source of support of the parents in their old age (Nag *et al*, 1978). Attempt is made here to assess this aspect of parent-children economic relation with the former at the receiving end, in the communities studied. This will be examined in the context of virilocal family. To do this we first discuss the pattern of household arrangement in the villages surveyed.

In 1960 there were 18 couples, and 48 and 58 single men and women, respectively. The corresponding figures in 1982 were 137, 120 and 207. The wives of three couples in 1960 and seven in 1982 were under 60 years of age (Table 1.7 entries with asteric). The rest of the couples including the husbands were above 60. Three couples, seven single men and two single women in 1960, and 34 couples, seven single men and 13 single women lived by themselves, with none to support them, they made their own living. These numbers give 9.68 per cent in 1960 and 11.64 per cent in 1982 of self-dependent ageing. Such couples were slightly more in 1982. Another point to be marked is that a large number of couples — (25.00 per cent in 1960 and 62.96 per cent in 1982) — were self-reliant and such single men (77.78 per cent in 1960 and 53.85 per cent in 1982) decreased in number, in the same period of time. Why has it been so,



Table 1.7

Living in household with (1)	Residence pattern of elderly persons in two time points							
	1960				1982			
	Living as				Living as			
	Single		Couple (4)	Total (5)	Single		Couple (7)	Total (8)
Men (2)	Women (3)	Men (6)			Women (7)			
None	7	2	3*	12	7	13	27+7*	64
other	(14.68)	(3.46)	(16.87)	(9.68)	(5.83)	(6.28)	(24.82)	(11.64)
Son (± wife)	40	42	15	97	105	167	103	375
	(83.33)	(72.42)	(83.33)	(78.22)	(87.50)	(80.68)	(75.18)	(80.82)
Sibling (± family)	1	2	—	33	6	10	—	16
	(2.08)	(3.46)	—	(2.42)	(5.00)	(4.83)	—	(3.45)
Grand children	—	8	—	8	2	2	—	4
	—	(13.79)	—	(8.46)	(1.67)	(0.97)	—	(0.86)
Daughter (± husband)	—	4	—	4	—	15	—	15
	—	(6.89)	—	(3.22)	—	(7.25)	—	(3.23)
All	48	58	18	124	120	207	137	464
	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

\*Wife below sixty years of age.

the question naturally arises. Has the growing survival rate of women in the higher age brackets some bearing on this phenomenon?

Parking of the aged on sons and other kin was high all along — 90.32 in 1960 and 88.36 in 1982 at the two time points. Of the different kinds of residence other than that of independent establishment, living with sons with or without wives, was as high as 78.22 and 80.82 per cent in 1960 and 1982 respectively. It is true equally of couples and single individuals. These findings establish that the parents in their advanced age depend, in the household economy of the peasant communities of the villages under study, on their children for care and sustenance. To home with sons was usual than with daughters, the latter being only 6.89 and 7.25 per cent in 1960 and 1982 against 78.22 and 80.82 per cent for the former as noted already. Only some widowed mothers were found living with their daughters. Conversation during 1982 fieldwork with some of the village women revealed that aged widows next to sons, preferred daughters to the kin of the husbands, to live with. It was otherwise with the aged men. They considered it humiliating to live on the sons-in-law, as homing with the daughters would in practice mean. So they avoided it as best as they could. In substance, therefore, sons were the first choice for old age care, and they were often referred to as old age insurance for which property was transferred to the sons, as premium.

Down the generation line at the next stage, it was found that dependence

on grandchildren was low and on the decline in contrast to dependence on sons which was high and on the increase. In 1960, dependence on grandchildren was a meagre 6.45 per cent and that too only by grandmothers. In 1982, it became as low as 0.86 per cent including the grandfathers also. Here is another trend that seeks for explanation. Might the reason be that with the increase in the life expectancy, sons had longer lives which in its turn meant longer living of the aged parents with them? This presupposes an attitude in the virilocal system of residence which considers grandchildren for dependence only in the absence of sons. In other words, grandchildren are substitutes to fill the place of sons, dead or otherwise not available. Normally therefore the question of homing with grandchildren would not arise where the sons live longer than their parents. The very low incidence of dependence on grandchildren in contrast to the very high incidence of that on the sons is accordingly understandable in the light of increasing longevity. Chi-square values, also, confirm our observation.

Residence with siblings, that is brother's or sister's family was very uncommon, as evident from the statistics. The percentage was 2.42 and 3.45 in 1960 and 1982 respectively, against 87.89 and 81.68 of filial dependence.

To check on the observations from the 2-point study, case study was undertaken in two more villages selected for the purpose. The characteristic features of those villages are now presented.

Two principles guided the selection of the field: (1) one of the two villages was to be close and the other removed from the headquarters town to get an average for a balanced picture, and (2) one of the two again had to be outside the 13 villages mentioned earlier. The data were collected from these villages. On the preliminary study, however, no significant variation was found between the two. The data were pooled and analysed. The account that follows is based on that analysis.

The two villages selected for case study were Chirki and Purnanagar with population of 1275 and 2609, respectively in 1982, comprising all the social groups except the 'Other Communities' of the preceding survey.

The strength of the ageing was 153 (Tables 2.1 and 2.2); 63.40 per cent of these were in the work-force, with nearly equal share of men (68.25 per cent)

Table 2.1

Respondent (1)	Occupational status of elderly person		
	Working [N=97] (2)	Not working [N=56] (3)	Total [N=153] (4)
Male (N=83)	88.25	31.75	(100)
Female (N=90)	80.00	40.00	(100)
Total	83.40	38.00	(100)

Table 2.2

Respondent	Reasons : Elderly persons working					Total [N=97]
	Control on farm- ing [N=12] (2)	Indepen- dence [N=19] (3)	Sole earner [N=4] (4)	Partial provider of family [N=18] (5)	Domestic help re- quired [N=44] (6)	
Male (N=43)	25.58	41.86	2.33	30.23	—	(100)
Female (N=54)	1.85	1.85	5.56	9.26	81.48	(100)
Total	12.37	19.59	4.12	18.56	46.36	(100)

and women (60.00 per cent). Some of the reasons for the continuance in active participation in advanced age as obtained from such persons 97 in number may be listed as under :

- i) Urge for personal supervision of cultivation (male 25.58 and female 1.85 per cent).
- ii) Reluctance to part with the status of full economic independence (male 41.86 and female 1.80 per cent).
- iii) Wish to retain the prestige of household earner including that of provider of supplementary income (male 32.56 and female 14.82 per cent).
- iv) Drive to continue to be useful in performing domestic chores (only female 81.48 per cent).

The general tendency of the men appears to have been to retain their economic independence as long as possible, while the women it has been to withdraw from outdoor labour and fill the gap with small indoor work. The former registered 67.44 and the latter 18.52 per cent respectively. Numerically out of 54 working women 48 were engaged in such domestic work. Such domestic work was either in their own households (44) or earning money by serving as maid servants in other households(4). Of such as were otherwise employed, one supervised her own cultivation, and others sold milk, leaf-cups and such other articles in demand. Of the men the corresponding occupations were farming (11), cultivation(5), agricultural labour (11) and petty trade, craft, service including cattle grazing. Only one was a pensioner. Of these, cultivation was the single most important avenue of income for the men (62.80 per cent).

Desistance from any kind of work was caused by physical disability, due to disease (8), being handicapped (23) and incapacitated from senility (25) (Table 2.3). More than half the women — 52.78 per cent were rendered incapacitated by age whereas men in almost same proportion, retired for being

Table 2.3

Respondent	Reasons : Elderly persons not working			
	Diseased	Physically handicapped	Incapacitation	Total
	[N=8] (2)	[N=23] (3)	[N=25] (4)	[N=56] (5)
(1)				
Male (N=20)	30.00	55.00	15.00	(100)
Female (N=36)	13.89	33.33	52.78	(100)
Total	14.29	41.07	44.84	(100)

handicapped (55.00 per cent). Disease worked greater havoc with men (30.00 per cent) than with women (13.89 per cent). Incapacitation on the other hand was much less among the men (15.00 per cent) than among the women (33.33), amounting to one-third of them, including the handicapped. That is to say, where physical disability and disease forced men out of work, physical handicap and senility have proved the major constraints for the women.

In terms of hours of labour, men in non-manual work put in four to seven hours a day, seven being the normal standard (Table 2.4). 75.56 of the women

Table 2.4

Time Disposition (Hour)	Daily labour—time disposition of elderly working persons			
	Type of work			
	Non-manual		Manual	
	Men [N=12] (2)	Women [N=45] (3)	Men [N=31] (4)	Women [N=9] (5)
(1)				
Intermittent	—	75.56	12.90	—
1 to 3	—	24.24	25.81	44.44
4 to 6	8.33	—	54.84	55.56
7 & above	81.67	—	6.45	—
Total	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

in the same category work intermittently, and one-fourth of them for three hours a day only. In manual work, 25.81 per cent of men and 44.44 per cent of women put in one hour to three. The ratio in 4 to 6 hours a day was 54.84 per cent for men and 55.56 per cent for women. The sex variations in labour time disposition are explained by the nature of the occupations.

The apparently intriguing point of the women's intermittent application to non-manual work against sustained performance of manual work is easily explained in that way. Domestic chores do not admit of long spells of unbroken

efforts, even though they last the whole day long. They come in spurts and the duration of the concentrated efforts put in may be very brief. Manual work on the other hand is mostly with stages with fixed time-schedules, that have to be covered at a stretch. This is evident in the case of the men, whose main non-manual work was farming supervision, demanding long hours stretches of attendance. Man's incidentally was day-time work mostly — more than woman's — except for domestic tasks which however could not be always computed in terms of labour hours.

The position of the members depends on their contributions to the earnings of the family at least towards the basic necessities of life. The findings on this aspect were as follows :

Of the cases studied, 46 ageing were providers, full and partial ; 26 were the sole providers, 19 of whom were also the heads of the families. The rest were officiating for their sons in their temporary absence from home. 18 were supplementary providers. 65.00 per cent of the men were the major earners in the households, and 60.00 per cent of the women were supplementary earners.

Nearly 5:4 is the ratio between the sole and partial providers among the ageing compared to roughly 1:2.25 between providers and dependent. Of the latter, non-working men constituted 76.92 and women 55.00 per cent higher and of high percentage respectively. As noted earlier, non-working dependent men were mostly physically incapable of hard toil and women primarily incapacitated (45.00 per cent). They, however, did light household tasks when occasions demanded.

Obviously as a general rule, no financial responsibility vested with the economically dependent. As Table 2.5 shows, 69.94 per cent of the ageing were economically dependent. The same percentage is noted in Table 2.6 in such persons unsaddled with financial burden which was shouldered by their

Table 2.5

Sex	Economic status of elderly persons in family						
	Provider [N=46]			Dependent [N=107]			
	Full	Partial		Total	Assist domestic chores	Not working at all	Total
	Family head	Son(s) outside home	Family income inadequate				
[N=19]	[N=9]	[N=18]	[N=50]	[N=56]			
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Male	48.65	16.22	35.13	(100)	23.08	76.92	(100)
Female	10.00	30.00	60.00	(100)	55.00	45.00	(100)
<b>Total</b>	<b>41.30</b>	<b>19.57</b>	<b>39.13</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>47.17</b>	<b>62.83</b>	<b>(100)</b>
		<b>[30.06]</b>				<b>[69.94]</b>	

Table 2.6

Respondent	Financial responsibility assumed by elderly persons				Total [N = 163] (5)
	No responsibility since sons are adult [N = 107] (2)	Marriage of sons, daughters, grand children [N = 22] (3)	Responsibility		
			Looking after wife/husband's mother [N = 24] (4)		
(1)					
Male	41.27	26.98	31.75		(100)
Female	90.00	5.56	4.44		(100)
Total	69.94	14.38	15.88		(100)

grown-up sons. Where financial responsibility devolved on the ageing men were special cases, such as maintenance of wives (31.75 per cent), marriages of sons and daughters or sometimes of grandchildren even (26.98 per cent). The duty of care of mother-in-law fell as a social obligation on the daughters-in-law, though aged themselves, in the absence of husbands (4.44 per cent). In the same circumstances, financing children's nuptials also had to be managed by them (5.56 per cent). Despite these, the over-riding stand was (90.00 and 41.29 per cent men and women respectively) that financial responsibilities shifted to grown up sons, relieving the aged parents of the onus.

Table 2.7 outlines the economic status of the ageing resting on the ownership of property. Only 6.54 per cent turns out to be totally devoid of property.

Table 2.7

Respondent	Old age security of elderly persons				Total [N = 153] (6)
	None [N = 10] (2)	Owns [N = 98] (3)	Property Transferred to sons		
			After husband's death [N = 33] (4)	Being old [N = 12] (5)	
(1)					
Male	3.17	84.13	—	12.70	(100)
Female	8.89	50.00	36.67	4.44	(100)
Total	6.54	64.05	21.57	7.84	(100)

98 (84.13 per cent men and 50.00 per cent women) owned property, and 45 men and women had transferred the ownership to their sons. Such transfers were made when the owners were too old to manage the property (men 12.70 and women 4.44 per cent respectively) and by women only on the death of their husbands (36.67 per cent).

The high percentages of 84.13 for men and 50.00 per cent for women in Table 2.7, brings out the prevailing propensity in the ageing to retain control over the landed property even when parked with relatives. This propensity was stronger in the men as they had been more involved in the management of land and continue active longer. It had a considerable hold on the women too, as is evident from the 41.11 per cent of the 75.00 per cent of them staying with their sons, who handed over the control to the latter. In virilocal residence, a division of control and management is evident between the dependent ageing and the active young. That is, the sons were expected to manage the working on the land without any legal or moral right on it during the life-time of their parents. The pervasive nature of this convention is apparent in the large number — as many as 107 men homing with their sons and only a few with other kin. The percentage for women was also very high 82.23, higher, in fact than a little more than 50.00 per cent for men (Table 2.8).

Table 2.8

Respondent	Type of residence preferred by elderly persons			Total
	Alone since none to support [N=6] (2)	Conjugal family to avoid misunderstanding [N=40] (3)	Sons and others for security [N=107] (4)	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Male	3.17	44.44	52.38	(100)
Female	4.44	13.33	82.23	(100)
Total	3.94	26.14	69.94	(100)

23 out of 153 persons (15.03 per cent) declared their preference for conjugal life in the old age, in a general way without assigning any specific grounds for it. 17 others (11.11 per cent) justified the preference on the ground of avoidance of misunderstanding due to maladjustment. In all 40 out of 147 (27.21) individuals (6 couples living separately) preferred independent household. Even then dependence on offsprings was high on the whole. The residence pattern emerging from the statistics of Table 2.9 indicates a general dislike in men for lodging with daughters and grandchildren, and greater reluctance (5.26 per cent) to dependence on sibling than women (7.14 per cent). Both would rather continue with their son, even at the risk of maladjustments. These are caused by complaints about the basic requirements of life, shelter, food and health-care and surface in the old age. Table 2.10 suggests that 50.79 per cent of the men and 31.12 per cent of the women entertained no dissatisfaction with the food served to them, or with the living arrangements made for them. Those who felt aggrieved on these accounts, comprised 14.29 per cent men and only 57.78 per cent women. The implication that suggests is that

Table 2.9

Living in household with (1)	Residence pattern of elderly persons			
	Living as			Total [N=147] (5)
	Single		Couple [N=8] (4)	
	Men [N=57] (2)	Women [N=84] (3)		
None other	8.77	5.95	100.00	10.18
Son (± wife)	84.22	75.00	—	75.52
Sibling (± family)	5.26	7.14	—	6.12
Grandchildren	—	7.14	—	4.08
Daughter (± husband)	1.75	4.76	—	3.40
Total	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

while the men were, by and large, not very demanding in these respects, the women were more choosy. The statistics — 50.79 men and 57.78 women — endorse that conclusion. In our sessions, it frequently came out that the old women proved to be irksome burden being more in the family life. They lived longer too than men. So they had to face greater neglect. The other reasons might be that men in a man ridden society would naturally get greater consideration. They also happened to be more often the controllers of the household lands and the heads of the households. Complaints where they were expressed concerned accommodation and amenities more (23.81 per cent men and 5.55 per cent women) than food (11.11 per cent men and 5.55 women).

Table 2.10

Living arrangement (1)	Food and living arrangement available to elderly persons			
	[Male = 63, Female = 90]			
	Food			
	Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory	
Male (2)	Female (3)	Male (4)	Female (5)	
Satisfactory	50.79	31.12	23.81	6.55
Unsatisfactory	11.11	5.55	14.29	57.78

24 men and 57 women were found suffering in health. Treatment and care in illness were the duty of the respondents (41.67 per cent), or husband (11.11 per cent) or other members of the family (47.67 per cent). The 81 persons in ill health stated, that is, one-third of the men and more than half the women, felt that they were not properly cared for. Table 2.11 compares the care meted out to the ageing and their health conditions. 5.55 per cent women suffered from ill health and complained of inadequate care. There was no man



Table 2.11

Care received (1)	Health condition and care received by elderly persons			
	[Male=63, Female=90]			
	Health condition			
	Good		Not good	
	Male (2)	Female (3)	Male (4)	Female (5)
Satisfactory	61.90	46.67	34.93	40.00
Inadequate	3.17	7.78	—	5.55

in this category. 61.90 per cent of them enjoyed good health and were satisfied with the care they received. 46.67 per cent of the women also came under this head. The general impression is that though the care of the ageing ill was not discouraging on the whole, the women were received less attention than the men. A reason, apart from those adduced above was, it has to be borne in this context, the general poverty of the people.

A probe into the emotional attitude to the relation of the parked ageing with the rest of the family at the personal level was attempted (Table 2.12).

Table 2.12

Age-class (1)	Opinion of elderly persons about their relation with other family member(s) (Excluding single member unit)				
	Good		Not good		Total (6)
	Men [N=49] (2)	Women [N=56] (3)	Men [N=12] (4)	Women [N=30] (5)	
60-70	33.91	37.40	6.95	21.74	(100)
71-80	34.48	44.82	6.90	13.80	(100)
81 & above	—	—	66.67	33.33	(100)
Total	33.33	38.09	8.17	20.41	(100)

This subtle psychological aspect may be represented in concrete statistical terms : 30 men and 12 women might be put down as completely unhappy and impatient of their condition. 49 men and 56 women were also not happy but accepted the unhappiness as unavoidable and natural grew in intensity with age — the bitterness being the greatest (66.67 and 33.33 per cent in the men and women respectively) in the age-range above 80 years, and the least in the lower ranges (6.94 and 20.14 per cent in the men and women respectively). Is it because the approaching shadow of death casts its shade deeper rendering the last stretch acutely demanding of commensuration ?

The findings from the two surveys may be summed up in the following observations :

1. The ageing population is on the increase along with the growth of the general population, in the country. It may be an indication of population ageing. Rural households are getting more with ageing members, and ageing women tend to outnumber men in the upper age brackets. The demographic characteristic of the social groups suggests a probable natural growth of population over time.

2. Economic compulsion forces the ageing into the workforce of the family. The participation varies in character between men and women. The aim of men is to secure economic independence and they enjoy larger scope to achieve it as they have larger number of avenues open to them. Agricultural occupations however continue to be the major avenue. Women's scope is rather constricted and hence their economic independence restricted.

This difference in work opportunities is reflected in their social conditions. Men more often than not own property, both by acquisition and inheritance. Inheritance is the only way for women to attain that status. For earning, both men and women take up the occupations of the household. With the changing times both tend to go in more and more for non-agricultural callings such as stone-cutting and quarrying in the present study. This shift has been caused by two developments—(i) Land gets inadequate for absorption of superannuated labour, and (ii) Newer occupational opportunities are opening for the ageing. Yet the choice is very limited, and the aged even above 80 cannot help accepting hard manual work, if they have to earn. This is different from conditions about two decades before. In those days both the sexes had a wide range of choice in non-manual work, of which farming-cultivation was the most favoured. The women were primarily non-earner assisting hands in domestic work and were rarely to be seen working outside their homes. But today, they have to accept outdoor manual work. Some even though fully dependent on the family are obliged to go out as maids in the neighbouring houses.

3. The ageing with assets (property) strive to retain the legal right as long as they live. It is because in an unorganized rural setup, property is thought to ensure security in the old age. The potential or expectant inheritors of the property, who normally are the children, look after the aged parents as well as their property even if they do not hope to own the property during their life time. In this way, the parents seek old age insurance in their children for which the premium would be the transference of the property.

Observations in the surveys bring out this social mechanism into relief as :

- I i) A very large number of the ageing of both the sexes owned property.
- ii) Widows predominated among those who transferred the titles during their life time.
- iii) Only debility or senility made the ageing of other categories to surrender the ownership.

- iv) The women transferred only to their sons and after the death of their husbands.

A very important point in this context deserves special noting. About 65.00 per cent of the ageing held to themselves the title and management of the property (Table 2.7). But nearly 70.00 percent of them felt that that did bind them to undertake the financial responsibility whatsoever for the running of the household (Table 2.6). That responsibility by social norm and convention rested with the grown-up sons, as a return for the trouble taken over their up-bringing.

II The pattern of homing of the ageing also underlines that social mechanism.

- i) By and large, the residence pattern is virilocal, that is, homing with sons, married usually.
- ii) Grandsons are the next alternative to sons, where the latter predecease the parents or are otherwise unavailable.

This normal order may be disturbed only when the parents and their sons and grandchildren fail to keep good relation. So long as the sons run the house as its head on the retirement of the father from active management, the question of the old people leaving the house to live with the grandsons does not arise. So in the normal system, the old look out for undisturbed residence in their home as long as live, provided, however, that home is not broken up following some abnormal circumstances.

iii) Parking with siblings or other relations is only forced by special socio-demographic developments. This factual observation is endorsed by the opinion expressed by the ageing themselves during the survey.

Nearly 70.00 per cent of them would choose to spend their entire days with their sons, as that would be right (Table 2.8). This preference was suggested in spite of the unhappy relation in the family for many of them.

There were a few—very small in number—though, who choose to live away from their sons to avoid family tensions. There were also ageing couples who lived by themselves, keeping free of any help by or dependence on others—economically, physically or otherwise. Such aloofness however cannot last long, and is sure to end with degeneration through age. So this type of residence is exception, not the rule.

The high incidence of virilocal residence of the ageing with their sons, is not unique to the area of the survey. The same or very similar pattern is common not only in India but also in many of southeast Asian countries (Nag *et al*, *ibid*; Maeda, 1978), as well as Nepal, Malaysia, Japan, China etc.

III The inter-personal relationship of the ageing with the other members of the family occasions noticeable points :

- i) A sizeable majority of the ageing is bound to the other members of the family, by bonds of reciprocal respect, love and affection, irrespective of their complaint about accommodation, food and old-age care.

ii) Dissatisfaction on these grounds usually gets loud mostly with the ageing who feel more or less fully dependent on their supporters.

iii) The dissatisfaction grows keener and more bitter with age.

IV Physical disability is the primary cause of dependence. Otherwise, old men in the lower age brackets are often the bread earners of the family and old women subsidiary earners adding to the family coffer.

V Difference in attitude and treatment meted out to the ageing, derives from the different character of their participation in the family task force. Men have been or still may be bread-earners of the household and so more demanding in esteem due to that status, and they do receive it in service and amenities. The women on the other hand lack that economic background and so cannot command consideration for respect and attention. So they as a rule are neglected and have to submit to suffering in food, accommodation and old age and illness care. Their assistance in the household chores does not help them much in gaining commensuration. Solid earning only counts in this respect.

This differentiation is more open and cold in homes other than the woman's husbands. May it be then for this reason that a woman looks upon her husband's house as the happiest home for her? And, when he is departed, the house is still better than others, where her image of the mistress of the house still lingers and evokes some consideration at least. In this way only a woman in the old age, hopes a part of what a man gets.

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