

Socio Economic Attributes of Ageing Population: Descriptive Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Population ageing refers to the trend and the process of rising percentage of the aged people in the whole population. This study is based on primary data which has been collected from 300 elderly respondents in the district of Sultanpur in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The data has been collected through a structured interview schedule on different demographic to social and economic variables. The paper outlines the general features of the respondents like age structure, sex composition, education level, family size, residential status, electricity connection, period of residence, communication facilities, sources of news, and awareness about programme and welfare schemes for elders.

Key words: Population Ageing, Elderly, Communication, Residential status, Demographic

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INTRODUCTION

Population ageing refers to the trend and the process of rising percentage of the aged people in the whole population. Elderly population is an important constituent of the total population in any economy or society. It has spent most active part of the life. This active engagement would have been in economic, social and cultural life and in the household also. Ageing is such a phenomenon that cannot be reversed. Rather, it keeps on increasing and sometimes it increases at a very lofty rate. With ageing, new types of challenges surface and not only the elderly people but economy as a whole has to brazen out such challenges. The challenges may be of different nature like economic, social, political, cultural, medical, health and emotional etc. Present paper discusses the common characteristics of elderly population of Sultanpur district of Uttar Pradesh in Northern India and has seven sections. Section 1 deals with the review of literature, section 2 talks about objective & hypothesis of the study, Section 3 deals with source of data and methodology, section 4 describes about structure of the respondents, section 5 deals with general background of respondents, Section 6 is related with conclusion, followed by section 7 which deals with references.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most of the existing literature clearly points out that the population in the older age group increases with the shrinkage of the working age group, implying that larger population group needs to be supported by a

smaller working group. This also has social and health care implications. Factors like education, family size, basic amenities, information and communication and awareness become critical in meeting out the major issues of the ageing population.

In an editorial of the *Journal of Public Health*, Michael Ewers (2005) argues for Germany that due to highly reduced fertility and increasing immigration, Germany's population size is going to shrink to 58.8 million in 2050. Moreover, relative share of the aged population of 65 years and older is bound to increase rapidly. He argues that the shrinkage of the working age population means that a growing number of people above retirement age will need to be supported by a decreasing number of people in employment with a lot of undesired implications for Germany's labour market, economy and welfare system. The growing number of old people and frail elderly as well as the constantly increasing number of chronically ill, shall have severe health and social policy implications of the demographic change because of their impact on the social and health care system. Chronic diseases shall become the most important causes of disability and premature death. These developments will add more pressure on society and especially on the German social and health care system and they will have to bear much heavier burden.

According to Golley and Tyers (2006), in the population projections by the United Nations (2005) it is noted, as elsewhere, that a key effect of low fertility has been the ageing of the population and labour force. Indeed, it is projected that China's population will age substantially over the next 25 years, with the percentage of over 60s predicted to more than double by 2030. Meanwhile, the percentage of the population of working age (15-59 years) is predicted to fall by more than a tenth during the same period. It is thereby suggested that, sometime between 2015 and 2020, the growth of the working age population will become negative, which in turn suggests that GDP growth will suffer as a consequence.

Choi (2009) has shown with the Korean experience that rapid growth of the elderly population is mainly a result of the rapid lengthening of the human lifespan and Korea's ever-falling fertility rate. The extension of the lifespan has been conspicuous over the past 40 years. Life expectancy at birth for men increased from 51.1 years in 1960 to 71.1 years in 2000, and for women the increase has been from 53.7 to 78.6 years. It is projected to reach 82.9 for men and 88.9 for women in 2050. It is argued that by the end of the 1990s basic policies for the welfare of elderly Koreans had been established. Still, it is found lacking on many basic issues like health, housing, income etc.

Wongboonsin et al (2005) present that associated with a rapid decline in fertility, Thailand is experiencing major changes in its age structure. The proportion of the population aged less than 15 is declining, while the proportion in labor force and older ages is increasing. In 2009, the proportion in labor-force group will reach a peak of 67.8 per cent and will then decline. Thus, the experts believe that before there is effective stage of ageing, it would be prudent to realize the maximum demographic dividends.

A study by Silvia Rueda and Lucia Artazcoz (2009) has provided evidence of the importance of simultaneously considering socio-economic position, household characteristics and social support, as well as different health outcomes, in order to fully understand health inequalities among elderly people. It has also emphasized the importance of examining family roles and health not only among women but also among men, as well as the different effects that gender patterns in old age have on different dimensions of health. An integrated approach to socio-economic inequalities, simultaneously studying indicators of household living standards, household structure and social support is needed both in research on inequalities in health as well as in social and health policies addressed to elderly people. Moreover, this study sheds some light on the mechanisms explaining gender inequalities in health among elderly people in Mediterranean countries.

Shelton (2008) argues that changes in the retired fraction of the labor force have been relatively modest. But advanced economies face a tidal wave of the ageing post-war generation and a dearth of children replacing them in the workforce: the ratio of retirees to workers is about to climb steeply. As public debate in these countries centers on what levels of retirement benefits are sustainable, it looks as though the historical relationship between retirees and per capita benefits will be strained as fiscal leakage becomes unsustainable. The fiscal leakage channel is not of first-order importance in describing the past but it may become relevant in the near future.

Mizushima (2009) has done a work on ageing wherein his aim was to analyze the macroeconomic impact of intergenerational transfers of time from adult children to their aged parents with an ageing population. To

examine these issues, he extends a two-period overlapping generations' model by introducing uncertain longevity and household health production. He also assumed that: (i) old agents use a household health production with time as only input to improve their own health status; and (ii) young agents can contribute to this production by transferring their own time. Christina M. Blaschke & others (2009) states that considerable literature has appeared suggesting that Assistive Technologies (ATs) and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) may improve quality of life, extend length of community residence, improve physical and mental health status, delay the onset of serious health problems and reduce family and care-giver burden.

Eastman and Iyer (2004) state that research on the use of ICTs has shown that they may positively impact on the quality of life for older adults

Bradley and Poppen (2003) states that for homebound older adults, internet access appears to improve connections with the outside world and may help them avoid or reduce feelings of social isolation

UN Report (2009) articulate that the success story of increasing longevity in India is now creating a new challenge for ensuring the well-being of the enormous number of the elderly population. Ageing has a profound impact and implications for all facets of human life. In the economic aspects, it affects economic growth, savings, investment, consumption, labour markets, pensions, taxation and intergenerational transfers. In the social sphere, it influences family composition and living arrangements, housing demand, migration trends, epidemiology and the need for healthcare services. In the political arena, population ageing may shape voting patterns and political representation. Prakash (1997) states that changes in population structure have a several implications for health, economic security, family life and wellbeing of the people, both in rural and urban areas. Rural and urban areas provide a striking contrast in terms of living conditions, availability of supportive socio-economic infrastructure.

OBJECTIVE & HYPOTHESIS

It is hypothesized that with the advancement of demographic transition incidence of ageing increases which may lead to dependency resulting in issues relating to health care and socio economic security. So our objective of the study is to analyse the demographic profile of the sample with respect to age, gender, education, family size, residential status, basic amenities like communication and awareness about welfare programmes for elders so as to probe and analyse the implications resulting out of these features of demographic transition.

SOURCE OF DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Present study is based on primary data which has been collected from 300 elderly respondents in the district of Sultanpur. The data has been collected through a structured interview schedule by the researcher and data on different variables has been collected ranging from demographic to social and economic variables, directly

from the elderly population and not from their representatives.

STRUCTURE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The Figure 1 highlights age structure and sex composition, of the 300 elderly respondents; the majority belong to the Age group 60-69 years (58.3 per cent).

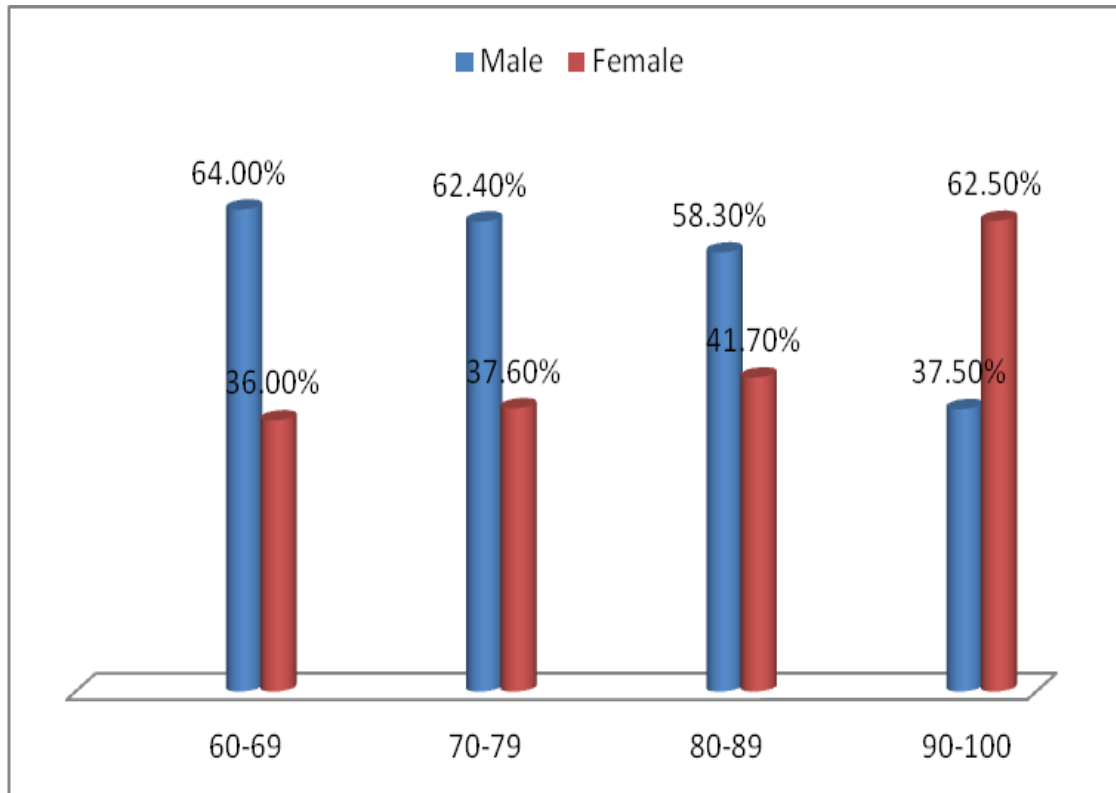


Figure 1: Age Group wise distribution of male and female elderly

Further probing of Figure 1 gives some insights into the gender wise distribution of the respondents. There were 62.3 per cent male respondents and the remaining 37.7 per cent were females. But the pattern has been varying with the change in age group. In the youngest elder population (60-69 years) male share (64.0 per cent) was much higher than the female respondents (36.0 per cent). The next higher age group (70-79 years) share composition was somewhat similar but there has been some slide down in the male share. In the next higher age group of 80-89 years share of male population declined to 58.3 per cent and female share increased to 41.7 per cent. In the eldest elderly (90-100 years) population share of the female became higher at 62.5 per cent and share of male drops to 37.5 per cent. Sex composition of the different age group suggests that chances of survival for the elderly women are higher

than elderly men. This pattern is in conformity with experience of elderly population at the national or state levels in India.

In the Indian social system power of the household head generally lies with the head person in the family. This power may be in terms of economic matters, social relations, dispute settlement, decision making on various issues, etc. Given this, it is curious to learn whether the elderly respondents still have the privilege to be the head person in the family. In the table below the column headed as same implies that respondents were also the head of the family/ household, under the column 'different' table, depict respondents were not the head. Table 1 shows that almost three fourth of the respondents were the head person of the households while in the remaining one fourth cases, elderly respondents were not the head of the household.

Table 1: Relationship between Respondents and Head of the Family

Age Group / Gender of Respondents	Same	Different	Total
AGE GROUP			
60-69	134	41	175
	76.6%	23.4%	100.0%
70-79	71	22	93
	76.3%	23.7%	100.0%
80-89	13	11	24
	54.2%	45.8%	100.0%
90-100	5	3	8
	62.5%	37.5%	100.0%
GENDER			
Male	182	5	187
	97.3%	2.7%	100.0%
Female	41	72	113
	36.3%	63.7%	100.0%
Total	223	77	300
	74.3%	25.7%	100.0%

Some other members in the households had taken over the position. This situation is visible in the younger elderly population age groups. In the advanced elderly age group 80-89 years the ratio of the elders occupying the position of the head declined to 54.2 per cent and it was somewhat similar for the 90-100 years respondents. It must have been due to inability of advanced elderly people to shoulder the household responsibilities. Still it is remarkable to note that in large number of cases elderly people act as head of the family.

GENERAL BACKGROUND OF RESPONDENTS

Before going into the analysis of specific details about the elderly population in the district of Sultanpur, it would be pertinent to discuss the common background of the respondents. First, let us know about the area of residence of these three hundred respondents (Table 2).

Table 2: Place of residence

Age group of respondents	Place where respondent lives in		Total
	Rural	Urban	
60-69	107	68	175
	61.1%	38.9%	100.0%
70-79	71	22	93
	76.3%	23.7%	100.0%
80-89	18	6	24
	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
90-100	4	4	8
	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total	200	100	300
	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%

The table above shows that there were 200 respondents (66.7 per cent of the total) from rural area. The remaining 100 respondents (33 per cent of the total) were from urban location. In all the four age groups respondents were distinguished between the rural and urban location providing enough representation in the sample for this study. Religion and cast distribution of the people in India have their impacts on the behaviour of the people. In some situation the valuation may be small while in other situation it could be more. This is considered to be a type of cultural characteristic of the people. (Table 3) below gives the religion wise distribution of respondents in different age groups.

Table 3: Religion of the respondents

Age group of respondents	Religion of the respondent			Total
	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh	
60-69	167	4	4	175
	55.7%	1.3%	1.3%	58.3%
70-79	93	0	0	93
	31.0%	0.0%	0.0%	31.0%
80-89	21	2	1	24
	7.0%	0.7%	0.3%	8.0%
90-100	8	0	0	8
	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%	2.7%
Total	289	6	5	300
	96.3%	2.0%	1.7%	100.0%

In all 96.3 per cent of the respondent were Hindu while 2 per cent were Muslims and 1.7 per cent were Sikh respondents. Thus the sample covers the three religious groups in the study for Sultanpur District. Caste system in our society is no less important. It is widely held that caste system broadly indicates socio- economic condition of the people although there are signs of improvement and betterment in their socio-economic condition. It is considered very important determinant for any socio-economic analysis including for the current study.

Table 4: Category- wise Distribution of the Respondents

Age group of respondents	Category of the respondent			Total
	General	OBC	SC	
60-69	122	42	11	175
	40.7%	14.0%	3.7%	58.3%
70-79	61	28	4	93
	20.3%	9.3%	1.3%	31.0%
80-89	21	2	1	24
	7.0%	0.7%	0.3%	8.0%
90-100	6	1	1	8
	2.0%	0.3%	0.3%	2.7%
Total	210	73	17	300
	70.0%	24.3%	5.7%	100.0%

Table 4 provides the cast distribution of respondents in Sultanpur district. It shows that 70 per cent of the respondents belong to the general category which happens to be the predominant social category in the current sample. Almost one fourth (24.3 per cent) of the respondents were from the other backward caste. Only 5.7 per cent of the respondents belong to the Scheduled caste. It is generally found that in Sultanpur district Scheduled tribe population does not exist. In all the age groups the above three categories are represented.

Educational Attainment

Literacy and education are considered to be important means of empowerment which is true for male or female, rural or urban population, younger or elder population, rich or poor people. Education is a type of asset that helps a person to derive greater economic, social and political benefits that alternately enhances overall human development in a country. The literacy and education standard has been presented through the figure given below

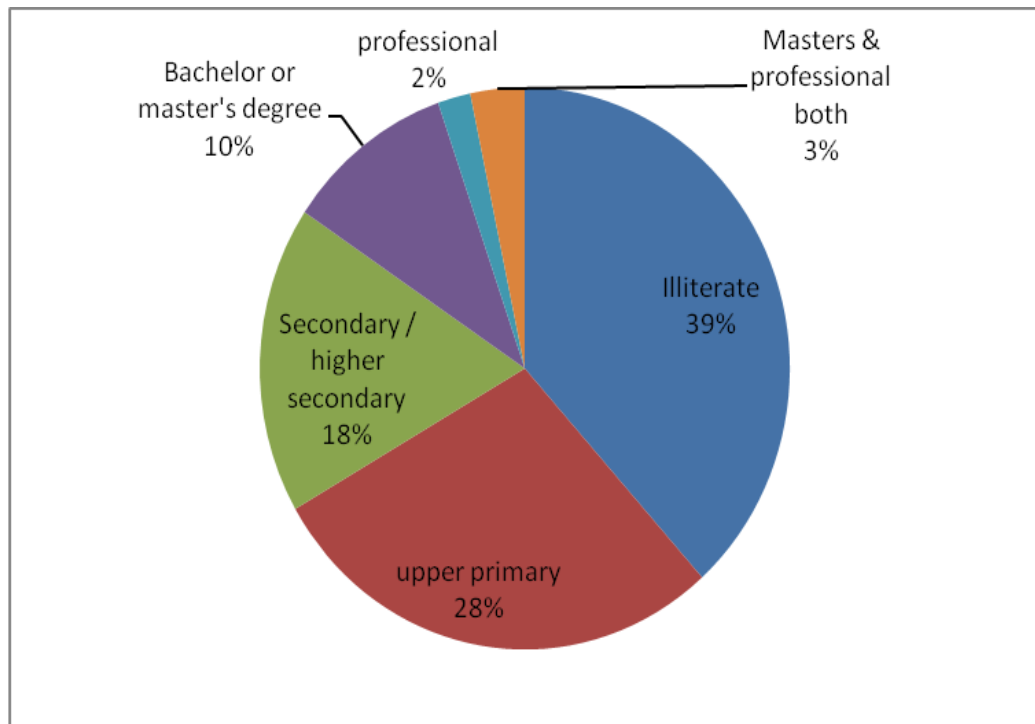


Figure 2: Educational status of the elderly at all ages

Overall 38 per cent respondents were illiterate while only 3 per cent had highest qualifications of master's degree. The table 5 shows the educational attainments by age group.

Table 5: Highest education of the respondents

Age group	Respondent's highest educational standard						Total
	Illiterate	upper primary	Secondary / higher secondary	Bachelor or master's degree	Professional	Masters & professional both	
60-69	55	51	34	22	3	10	175
	31.4%	29.1%	19.4%	12.6%	1.7%	5.7%	100.0%
70-79	44	25	14	7	3	0	93
	47.3%	26.9%	15.1%	7.5%	3.2%	0.0%	100.0%
80-89	10	9	3	2	0	0	24
	41.7%	37.5%	12.5%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
90-100	6	0	2	0	0	0	8
	75.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	115	85	53	31	6	10	300
	38.3%	28.3%	17.7%	10.3%	2.0%	3.3%	100.0%

It is brought out that 38.3 per cent of the respondents were illiterate. The youngest elders group show the lowest rate of illiteracy (31.4 per cent). Thus the youngest elders (60-69 years) have highest rate of literacy. Moreover these age group respondents have the highest educational attainments like master degrees as well as professional degree. This trend seems to be in conformity with the literacy and education pattern in a developing country where younger population is found to be more literate and higher educational standards.

Family Size

For elder people living alone makes the life very difficult because as their age advances their physical and mental abilities deteriorate. It deteriorates quite fast for senior elders. The family provides enough support in many ways like economic, social, shelter, emotional and physical. Table 5 gives the size of family where the elder people live.

Table 6: Number of family members

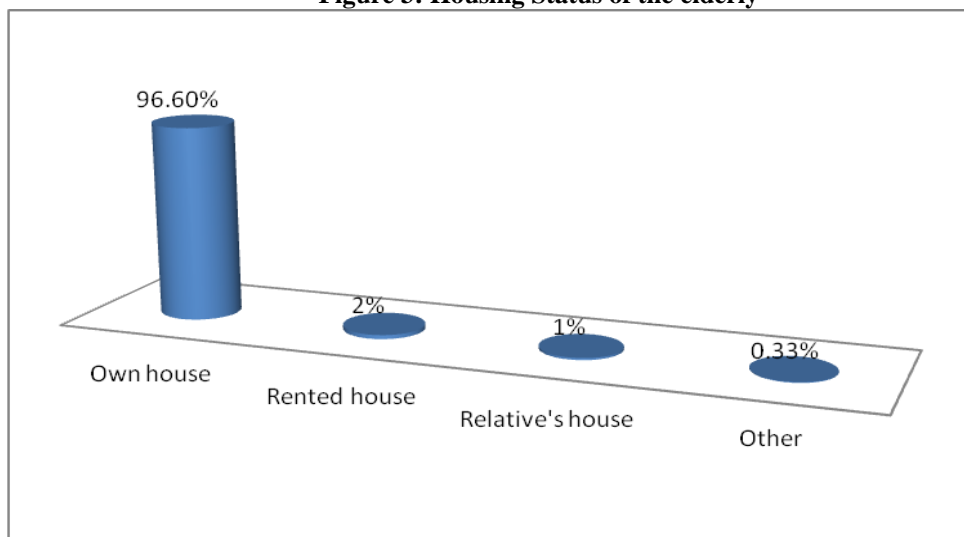
Age group of respondents	Total number of members in family				Total
	1	2-5	6-10	>10	
60-69	5	55	75	40	175
	2.9%	31.4%	42.9%	22.9%	100.0%
70-79	3	18	45	27	93
	3.2%	19.4%	48.4%	29.0%	100.0%
80-89	2	4	14	4	24
	8.3%	16.7%	58.3%	16.7%	100.0%
90-100	0	3	1	4	8
	0.0%	37.5%	12.5%	50.0%	100.0%
Total	10	80	135	75	300
	3.3%	26.7%	45.0%	25.0%	100.0%

It is found that quite a few elders lived alone in the family (3.3 per cent), however, none of the senior most elder lived alone and it is not possible for such people to live alone. It is quite interesting that one- quarter of the respondents lived as members of very big family (more than 10 members). More or less similar incident was found for all age group people in Sultanpur district. Around one- quarter of the respondents (26.7 per cent) lived as a member of small family (2-5 members). The majority (45.0 per cent of the) respondents lived with the middle size family (6-10 members). Thus we find that generally the elders are living with other family members making their lives and living more secure because family provides enough security despite of several constraints existing in the family.

Residential Status of the Respondents

In the old age, people want different types of securities. Residential security is one of such securities. It is at this stage of life when people want that they have some secured place to live. It could be found from figure 3 that around 96.5 per cent of the respondents lived in their own house. Only 2 per cent of the respondents lived in rented house while another 1 per cent was residing in their relative's house. Such relatives happen to be other than their sons, grandsons, etc. If they are residing in the relative's house, there must have been some special situation that warranted living with the relatives. Generally all the elders had very high incident of residing in their own houses.

Figure 3: Housing Status of the elderly



Nature of the house helps in making an idea about the economic status and other facilities in the house particularly for elderly population. We may begin table 7 that shows the nature of the construction of the house. It is derived that 17.3 per cent of the respondents resided in the kachcha house; such houses are constructed with mud and with grass (chappar) roof top.

Table 7: Nature of the construction of respondents' house

Age group / Gender	Kachcha	Pucca	Semi pucca	Total
AGE GROUP OF RESPONDENTS				
60-69	26	104	45	175
	14.9%	59.4%	25.7%	100.0%
70-79	19	50	24	93
	20.4%	53.8%	25.8%	100.0%
80-89	5	14	5	24
	20.8%	58.3%	20.8%	100.0%
90-100	2	6	0	8
	25.0%	75.0%	0.0%	100.0%
GENDER				
Male	32	113	42	187
	17.1%	60.4%	22.5%	100.0%
Female	20	61	32	113
	17.7%	54.0%	28.3%	100.0%
Total	52	174	74	300
	17.3%	58.0%	24.7%	100.0%

In such houses living can't be very comfortable particularly for the elderly people. Another around one- fourth of the respondents resided in semi- pucca houses while majority of the respondents (58.0 per cent) resided in pucca houses. More or less this pattern is observed among all the age groups of respondents. This pattern of residential status suggests that large sections (42.0 per cent) of elderly people are not residing in the pucca houses making their lives difficult.

Types of sanitation facilities available in the house is quite important for the household members and it is more so for the elderly people because for different reasons elderly people require sanitation facilities within the house. Table 8 highlights that in 36 per cent of the houses latrine facilities are not available at all.

Table 8: Nature of the toilet facilities available to the respondents

Age group / Gender	Flush toilet	Dry latrine	Open space	Total
AGE GROUP OF RESPONDENTS				
60-69	94	24	57	175
	53.7%	13.7%	32.6%	100.0%
70-79	43	12	38	93
	46.2%	12.9%	40.9%	100.0%
80-89	10	5	9	24
	41.7%	20.8%	37.5%	100.0%
90-100	3	1	4	8
	37.5%	12.5%	50.0%	100.0%
GENDER				
Male	99	23	65	187
	52.9%	12.3%	34.8%	100.0%
Female	51	19	43	113
	45.1%	16.8%	38.1%	100.0%
Total	150	42	108	300
	50.0%	14.0%	36.0%	100.0%

Household members including the elder members in the house have to go for open air toilet even if they are not well and have difficulty in movement. Only in 50 per cent of houses flush latrine facility is found to be available. In other 14 per cent of the cases dry latrine facility is claimed to be available. But problem with such latrine is that it is difficult to manage and clean such latrine. Therefore, it can be argued here that elders don't have sufficient access over in-house toilet properly.

Electricity Connection

Electricity connection is a dimension of people's empowerment as we can find that electricity has transformed the economy, society and the lifestyle of the people in a significant manner. Electricity makes life easier and comfortable. It is helpful to all age group people including elder members in the household. Table 8 shows that in 80.7 per cent household electricity connection is available while the remaining one-fifth of the respondents live without electricity connection in their houses.

Table 9: Electricity connection in the houses of the respondents

Age Group of Respondents	electricity connection in the residence		Total
	Yes	no	
60-69	146	29	175
	83.4%	16.6%	100.0%
70-79	70	23	93
	75.3%	24.7%	100.0%
80-89	20	4	24
	83.3%	16.7%	100.0%
90-100	6	2	8
	75.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total	242	58	300
	80.7%	19.3%	100.0%

The pattern is almost similar for different age group respondents in Sultanpur district.

Period of Residence

This is an indicator of the length of their residence in the current place. Here it needs to be clarified that if the people are residing in the same place but their house have been shifted within that location we take it as their residence has not been shifted. This is so because overall location and facilities remain unchanged. This also suggests that the elderly population may continue to live in their houses. Stay at residence has been given in table 10. This table shows that three-fourth (75.7 per cent) of the elderly respondents were living in the present residence for over 40 years.

Table 10: Period of present residence in the current place (in years)

Age Group of Respondents	Period of present residence in years				Total
	<10	10-20	20-40	>40	
60-69	4	16	34	121	175
	2.3%	9.1%	19.4%	69.1%	100.0%
70-79	2	4	5	82	93
	2.2%	4.3%	5.4%	88.2%	100.0%
80-89	0	3	4	17	24
	0.0%	12.5%	16.7%	70.8%	100.0%
90-100	0	1	0	7	8
	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	87.5%	100.0%
Total	6	24	43	227	300
	2.0%	8.0%	14.3%	75.7%	100.0%

This is fairly long period, almost major portion of life. Another 14.3 per cent respondents were residing in the same house for a long period of 20- 40 years. Only two percent of the respondents lived in the current house for less than 10 years. In this regards some further clarification can be provided with help of table 10 this shows that short span of residence cannot be attributed to only rented house where the residents may require to shift their residence more frequently.

Table 11: Place of residence and period of present residence

Nature of house	Period of present residence (in years)				Total
	<10	10-20	20-40	>40	
Own house	3	20	41	226	290
	50.0%	83.3%	95.3%	99.6%	96.7%
Rented house	2	2	1	1	6
	33.3%	8.3%	2.3%	0.4%	2.0%
Relative's house	1	1	1	0	3
	16.7%	4.2%	2.3%	0.0%	1.0%
Other	0	1	0	0	1
	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%
Total	6	24	43	227	300
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Even people living in their own houses currently have to shift the houses for different reasons. The above table shows that the largest incidence of elders living for short duration in the current house is people residing in their own houses. Thus we can say here that most of the respondents lived in their present house for fairly long period. It means that elderly are well placed and customized in present house and location. This helps them in their smooth lifestyle.

Communication Facilities

In modern age there has been revolutionary changes and growth in the communication sector across the world including India. This has helped in cheaper and quick connectivity. This is beneficial for economy and society both. Elder population can also take advantage of the different means of communication. For this, we may discuss about land phone and cellular phones to describe the status of elders in our study, (table 12).

Table 12: Availability of the means of communication

Age group of respondents	Availability of communication				Total
	Land phone	Cellular phone	None	Multiple	
60-69	1	117	38	19	175
	0.6%	66.9%	21.7%	10.9%	100.0%
70-79	0	50	38	5	93
	0.0%	53.8%	40.9%	5.4%	100.0%
80-89	0	12	12	0	24
	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	0.0%	100.0%
90-100	1	1	6	0	8
	12.5%	12.5%	75.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	2	180	94	24	300
	0.7%	60.0%	31.3%	8.0%	100.0%

It is found that almost one- third (31.3 per cent) respondent didn't have any access over such phone facilities. Here it is interesting to mention that higher the age group, higher would be the deprivation in terms of phone facilities. Three-fifth of the respondents in Sultanpur district got mobile phone facilities. Another 8 per cent have facilities of land phone as well as mobile phone. This suggests that phone facilities are expanding fast among the elders also wherein senior elders have lesser access over this facility. A further analysis through table 13 shows that women elders have greater deprivation in terms of access over phone facilities.

Table 13: Gender and phone facilities

Gender of respondents	Availability of communication				Total
	Land phone	Cellular phone	None	Multiple	
Male	2	119	48	18	187
	1.1%	63.6%	25.7%	9.6%	100.0%
Female	0	61	46	6	113
	0.0%	54.0%	40.7%	5.3%	100.0%
Total	2	180	94	24	300
	0.7%	60.0%	31.3%	8.0%	100.0%

As the table suggests, 40.7 per cent women didn't have any access over phone whereas this deprivation has been only 25.7 per cent for male respondents. Here it needs to be specified that any phone facility means availability in the household. It does not necessarily means personal ownership of phone facility. Such response of phone facility from the elder respondents shows that they feel ownership of such items available in household.

Sources of News

Awareness and understanding of the world in which a person lives is important for him/her. Greater the degree of awareness among the people, greater is the empowerment among them. Information helps the person to understand the world around him/her and thereby use the relevant information for his/ her betterment. In modern days role of information has become very important and critical. There are different sources of information. Table 14 provides sources of news for the respondents.

Table 14: Sources of news

Age group of respondents	Sources of news					Total
	Radio	Television	Newspaper /magazines	None	Multiple	
60-69	7	37	3	55	73	175
	4.0%	21.1%	1.7%	31.4%	41.7%	100.0%
70-79	4	15	1	42	31	93
	4.3%	16.1%	1.1%	45.2%	33.3%	100.0%
80-89	1	1	3	10	9	24
	4.2%	4.2%	12.5%	41.7%	37.5%	100.0%
90-100	0	2	0	4	2	8
	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	50.0%	25.0%	100.0%
Total	12	55	7	111	115	300
	4.0%	18.3%	2.3%	37.0%	38.3%	100.0%

Here only formal and established sources like radio, television, newspaper, etc are being discussed. It shows that 37 per cent of the respondents do not use any source of information implying that these respondents are not keen about the awareness in the world. This ratio has been the lowest in the younger elders (60-69 years) where it has been 31.4 per cent. The table shows that 38.3 per cent of the respondents are depending on multiple sources for gathering information and news, notably by multiple sources we mean use of more than one sources stated here for news and information. Therefore, television has become the largest source of information and news for the respondents. Ironically, newspaper, magazines and radio have not been very significant for such purposes for the respondents. Increasing acceptability of television for news and information may be attributed to other reasons like it has become a major source of entertainment for the viewers.

Table 15 provides a comparative acceptability of newspaper and television among the sample respondents.

Table 15: If the respondents read newspapers and watch television

Age group of respondents	Newspapers		Television		Total
	No	Yes	Yes	No	
60-69	136	39	64	111	175
	77.7%	22.3%	36.6%	63.4%	100.0%
70-79	77	16	47	46	93
	82.8%	17.2%	50.5%	49.5%	100.0%
80-89	18	6	13	11	24
	75.0%	25.0%	54.2%	45.8%	100.0%
90-100	8	0	4	4	8
	100.0%	0.0%	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Total	239	61	128	172	300
	79.7%	20.3%	42.7%	57.3%	100.0%

This shows that almost 80 per cent of the respondents do not read newspaper at all and only one-fifth of them read newspaper. Thus the readership of newspaper and magazine has been very low among the elder population in the district on the whole; the above discussion shows the level of general awareness among the elder population has not been enough. Therefore the information gathered by them may be either insufficient or unreliable or a mix of the both. This situation does not occur well for the elderly population. The above table shows that around 43 per cent of the elder watch televisions while the majority (57.3 per cent) don't watch the television here it needs to be underlined that elders in the district have greater access over television than the newspapers because access over television is more than twice the access over newspapers. Even the senior elders have greater access over television whereas their access over newspaper was too low.

Awareness about Programme for Elders

The government has been formulating and implementing various welfare schemes for different section of the society in accordance with their needs. This is being done by different governments- central government, state government, and local government. Such schemes and programmes are being rolled out from time to time for elder population also. It is gaining momentum in the last two decades. However its success lies only if the stakeholders are able to take advantage properly. The first step in this direction is awareness about such welfare schemes among the stakeholders. Table 16 suggests that 99 per cent of the respondents are aware about one or the other facility or programme launched by government for their welfare.

Table 16: If elders are aware of any facility / programme for them

Age group of respondents	Respondents ever heard of any facility provided to senior citizens		Total
	Yes	No	
60-69	174	1	175
	58.0%	0.3%	58.3%
70-79	92	1	93
	30.7%	0.3%	31.0%
80-89	23	1	24
	7.7%	0.3%	8.0%
90-100	8	0	8
	2.7%	0.0%	2.7%
Total	297	3	300
	99.0%	1.0%	100.0%

This shows that the elders also keen for their own welfare particularly when the government is initializing anything towards their welfare. This is a positive sign.

Awareness is the first step in making such efforts successful. However, its real success lies in its use for the welfare of the stakeholders. Table 17 shows that only one- third of the respondents had availed benefits from one or other schemes.

Table 17: If elders availed any facility / programme

Age group of respondents	Respondent has ever availed any kind of facility		Total
	Yes	No	
60-69	54	121	175
	30.9%	69.1%	100.0%
70-79	40	53	93
	43.0%	57.0%	100.0%
80-89	7	17	24
	29.2%	70.8%	100.0%
90-100	1	7	8
	12.5%	87.5%	100.0%
Total	102	198	300
	34.0%	66.0%	100.0%

The remaining 66 per cent respondents failed to take advantage from such facility or programme. In the age group 70-79 years the respondent took the maximum advantage (43 per cent). Whereas, the eldest age group had the lowest incidence (12.5 per cent). Therefore, it becomes necessary to understand how to make the government schemes more successful among the elder population.

Elders desire to take some gainful employment

Economic security and independence is paramount even among the elders. It can be found from Table 18 that that more than one – quarter of the respondents are in favour of joining some gainful work where the incidence is higher among the males than among the females.

Table: 18 Elders readiness to take some gainful employment

Gender / Age group	Ready to do some kind of work if opportunity comes					Total
	Completely disagree	Somewhat disagree	No opinion	Somewhat agree	Completely agree	
GENDER						
Male	117	9	3	14	44	187
	62.6%	4.8%	1.6%	7.5%	23.5%	100.0%
Female	75	2	10	10	16	113
	66.4%	1.8%	8.8%	8.8%	14.2%	100.0%
AGE GROUP OF RESPONDENTS						
60-69	101	9	5	14	46	175
	57.7%	5.1%	2.9%	8.0%	26.3%	100.0%
70-79	64	1	8	8	12	93
	68.8%	1.1%	8.6%	8.6%	12.9%	100.0%
80-89	21	0	0	1	2	24
	87.5%	0.0%	0.0%	4.2%	8.3%	100.0%
90-100	6	1	0	1	0	8
	75.0%	12.5%	0.0%	12.5%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	192	11	13	24	60	300
	64.0%	3.7%	4.3%	8.0%	20.0%	100.0%

If we look among the different age groups of the elders, it could be found that as the age of the elder people advances, their inclination or opinion for joining any gainful work or employment declines. This might be attributed to the reason that with the advancement of the age, the elder people may not find themselves fit to work for economic gains. Thus age as well as the gender of the elder people is the determinants in this regard.

CONCLUSION

The analysis so far reveals that elderly women have higher survival chances than their counterparts. Though the status of the head of the household shows a gender bias in favour of males (97%), nevertheless, 36 per cent women respondents also headed their family. The headship reduces as we move up the age group and declines from 76 per cent (70-79 years age group) to 54 per cent (80-80 year's age group) which is logical. Rural background of majority of respondents (2/3rd) is also indicative of problems relating to access to basic amenities, sanitation and infrastructural facilities. The youngest age group (60-69 years) has lowest illiteracy but highest educational attainment which clearly earmarks the latest trend in the demographic transition. Family bonds are strong as very few (10 respondents) lived alone while 25 per cent lived with family of 10 or more members. Residential security a must for the elderly is also high with 97 per cent respondents having own houses with fairly long stay in the same location. Though not very high but a sizeable sample lived in kachha houses with 36 per cent using open space for sanitation.

With electricity connections in sufficiently large number of houses, lack of communication facility in terms of phone or mobile, amongst 31 per cent of respondents is not a good sign. A large sample did not use newspaper or television for information/entertainment is also to be viewed with concern. Almost all the respondents were aware about the programmes for elderly, two third of them did not avail any benefits. Around one third of the elderly from the youngest age group were found willing to take up employment, is an encouraging feature. To put it in a nutshell though ageing does not pose immediate challenges which may be threatening, nevertheless it would be worthwhile to increase awareness, improve connectivity through email, internet and also health care services. The approaches based on information communication technology (ICT) with behaviour monitoring, smart homes and telehealth tools used in other parts of the world should be borne in mind while framing future strategies for elders in India.

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