



# SOCIO-ECONOMIC LIFE OF ELDERLY WOMEN IN INDIA

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## ABSTRACT

In the present Indian society, due to the improvement of health spread of Education, health awareness and awareness among the people, the death rate has decreased in the country and the life expectancy age of the people has increased. But in the centurion of the research that the major problems of older women are physical disabilities and health problem. The government should make arrangements for regular free health check-up and treatment etc. Any other non government organizations, private and corporate sector should also take active post in coming forward to solve the health and medical problems of older women.

**Key Words:** Older Women– Men Situations, Problems, Contemporary, Health problems, Literacy status, Elderly Social, Economically, Institution, Physical disabilities.

## INTRODUCTION

Solutions of old age is a reality of life as this stage occurs in most human beings. If a person does not die in childhood, adolescence or youth, then this stage can also be called the last stage of human life. In the present Indian society, due to the improvement of health services and nutritional status, spread of education, health awareness and awareness among the people, the death rate has decreased in the country and the life expectancy age of the people has increased, which not only there has been a huge increase in the population of elderly citizens in India world. According to the report of the World Health Organization, where by the year 2021, the population of elderly people in the whole world is about 100 crores, while the population of elderly citizens in India is 10.39 crores and of this 5.11 crores are old people and 5.28 crores are old women. Whereas according to the 2001 census, this population was only 7.5 crores in the total population, thus on the basis of the above data it is known that the population of older women is more than the old men in contemporary Indian society. Mainly, the increase in life expectancy of women is one of the main reasons for increasing the age and engaging in low risk activities. Since older women are present in large numbers in the society, so in the country. From time to time, many studies have been done by researchers on various aspects related to the life of the elderly. Saras Kumari; The study of socio-economic status, morbidity-pattern and social assistance status of old women residing in Sri Karyam Panchayat in Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala found that majority (64.5 per cent) Older women were widows and 31 percent were illiterate, only 10 percent were dependent on old age pension

or other income source, the remaining older women were financially partially or wholly dependent on others and loneliness was a common problem. Older women were also suffering from poor health.

Sharma residing in Guwahati, Assam state, in various Indian societies, old women had a high and important position from the beginning and used to discharge their status and role in the family and society with respect, but in the last few decades, westernization, globalization, materialism and Consumerist culture has changed the values and values of our society. This has affected the relations due to which the number of nuclear families in Indian society has increased. In this form of family there is no place for old women and men, in such a situation old women are forced to live in loneliness. Due to the physical and economic dependence of older women in the contemporary society, their condition has become very pathetic and worrying. In addition, older women are facing physical, economic/financial, social and psycho-social problems. The Help Age India Report 2018 presented shocking facts and figures on the incidents of abuse of older women in the present times. At present, criminal incidents related to robbery, theft, dacoity and murder with old women are also increasing rapidly. Descriptive co-diagnostic research design has been used in the present research and this study is based on secondary sources. The research paper is divided into three parts. Old age in the first part. Status of women The problems of older women in the second part and solutions to the problems in the last part. Suggestions have been presented for A study of older people by socioeconomic status found that there was no significant difference in the nature of psycho-social problems in all socioeconomic groups, with loneliness, financial insecurity, life and property security, and health problems in all.

Shukla found in a study on the health problems of the elderly people of Lucknow city that most of the elderly people were suffering from diabetes and eye diseases. Apart from this, problems of TB, prostate cancer, hypertension, arthritis etc. are also commonly found in older people. Chakraborty' In its research study on the elderly in Tripura, it was found that the retired elderly are financially, physically and psychologically self-reliant, whereas the widowed older women of the same age group are dependent on others in all respects. At the same time, it was also told that in comparison to the socio-economic factors related to the elderly, a deeper study of psychological factors is necessary. Sharma and Choudhary, in a study of the problems and care status of men and women above 60 years of age residing in the state of Assam, found that children take care of their aged parents, but the level of care satisfaction among the elderly is low. And older people face more health and economic problems. Hemvati and Swarooprani' A comparative study has been done on gender basis of the problems of elderly people residing in Mannapally village of Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. In which physical and economic problems are more in older men while psychological problems are more in older women and social problems are almost same in both types of elderly people. Anju' has studied the social status and problems of the elderly in the Indian society on the basis of secondary sources, in which it was found that earlier there was adequate security of the elderly in the joint family due to which the family also got a better position, but westernization, materialistic and consumerist culture made the elderly people status has changed. Due to which the problem of isolation and loneliness has increased and the main reasons for this are apathy, dependence, physical disability and incapacity etc. Bakshi and Pathak' Based on the analysis of data from National Sample Survey (1986-87, 1995-96 and 2004) and Building Survey Base for Population Aging in India Survey-2011 found that older women are more likely to participate in household activities than older men. and

married older adults are less likely to participate in these activities relative to their widowed counterparts. Working older adults who have movable/immovable property are more likely to be financially independent, while older women and financially dependent older male adults are more likely to face different types of abuse.

From the review of the above research studies it is clear that the condition of elderly people in Indian society is very worrying and this section is facing different types of problems and challenges in all walks of life. Therefore, there is a need to look at the above situations and problems especially from the perspective of the older women of contemporary society, because in the present time the population of old women is more than the old men and in future their population will increase more. Therefore, it is absolutely necessary to study the real status of older women (rural and urban women in the age group of 60 years or more than 60 years) in contemporary society as well as the problems being experienced by these women in different walks of life. . The above study will prove helpful for the government and society in formulating effective strategies and programs related to the care and protection of older women in the present and future.

The main objective of the present research paper is to shed light on the condition of older women and their financial/economic, physical, health and psycho-social problems. Also, suggestions are to be presented to solve the above problems. In this descriptive co-diagnostic research structure has been used and this research paper is based on the data obtained from secondary sources. The research paper presented first is divided into three parts, in the first part, analyzing the status / status and roles of older women in different periods (ancient, middle and modern) of Indian society, on the basis of factual data in contemporary society. The socio-economic, educational and marital status of women has been highlighted. After that, in the second part, financial /economic, physical, health, psycho-social and abuse related problems of old women have been discussed and in the last part, in the light of the present condition and problems of old women, suggestions for their care and protection were presented.

Before discussing the status and status of old women in the present Indian society, it is necessary to observe the status of old women in ancient Indian society. In this period, the institution of family (Vedic and later Vedic period) was the most powerful institution of the society and the head of this institution or all the members of the head of the family (women, men and children, old people etc.) Responsible for fulfilling different types of needs and aptitudes. Generally, the head of the family was the eldest male of the family, who used to perform all the external and some internal work, as well as the senior elderly lady of the family used to discharge the responsibilities of domestic work. Thus, in this period, old women had a high and respectable place in the family and society, but in the course of time, when the memories were created, after this the Indian society was governed by Manusmriti and since then the women who got respectable, dignified, dignified place in the society. But various types of restrictions were imposed and the evidence of which we still see in contemporary society in the form of discrimination, oppression, violence etc. It is mentioned in the Vishisht Smriti of Smriti period that 'Father Rakshati Kaumare Bhartarakshita youth, Rakshati Sthavare Putra: Na Swatantrayamarhati'. &#39; It is clear from the above that in old age women will be under the son and the responsibility of all maintenance, care, protection etc. will be of the son. In this way the independence of old women was guaranteed. At the same time, due to the ban on remarriage of widowed women, the condition of

most of the women who grew up as widows became very pathetic. Widow old women were seen as a curse in the family and gradually these women started facing discrimination, harassment etc. In the course of time, the said women were forced to leave their families and a large number of these women started residing in the temples and old age homes of Kashi, Mathura, Vrindavan, Haridwar and this practice is still prevalent in the society. After the arrival of the Mughals in medieval Indian society, the status and status of women became low and pathetic because during this period the customs of sati, child marriage, female feticide, purdah Pratha etc. became a part of the then society. After this, at the beginning of the renaissance, there were movements to end the above malpractices, but these malpractices still exist in some form or the other in contemporary society. Even during this period, old women remained a part of the family, but in some areas of the country, they were not given protection by the families, due to which their condition became pathetic. In the modern period, where industrialization, urbanization, westernization have oriented the society towards development, on the other hand it has given rise to many new problems and challenges. Due to the industrialization and urbanization in the country, people from rural areas migrated to the cities in search of employment and good standard of living, due to which the responsibility of care and protection of elderly people was reduced on the institution of family and gradually the rapid fragmentation of joint family. From which the nature of nuclear families emerged and in this family the care and protection of elderly people was not given importance. In this way, the high and respectable position of old women in ancient times gradually became worrisome and low and pathetic as soon as it came from medieval times to modern times. The process of globalization, privatization and liberalization started in the country in the nineties and it gave rise to a different kind of culture, values and relations, in which individualism, consumerism, occultism, materialism etc. It has influenced the strong social institution and social relations and moral values of the present society like family. In contemporary society, issues such as increase in nuclear families, live-in relationships, marriage at an older age, tendency of women to remain single and unmarried, divorce have emerged rapidly. Along with this, the cases related to abuse, harassment, exploitation and violence towards the elderly people come to light day by day. Older women are not different from the above situations and circumstances because these women are also a part of some family as well as most of the women are dependent on the families. That is why their condition is more serious.

**Table - 1**

**Participation of elderly people in India's population**

| Year    | Participation (in %) | Decadal Growth (in %) |
|---------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1951-61 | 5.5-5.6              | 0.1                   |
| 1961-71 | 5.6-6.0              | 0.4                   |
| 1971-81 | 6.4                  | 0.4                   |
| 1981-91 | 6.4-6.7              | 0.3                   |
| 1991-01 | 6.7-7.4              | 0.7                   |
| 2001-11 | 7.4-8.6              | 1.2                   |
| 2011-21 | 8.6-10.7             | 2.1                   |

(Sources- Indian population report - 2011)

In the last two decades, there has been a rapid increase in the population of elderly people in the total population of India. The analysis of Table No. 1 shows that the decadal growth in the population of elderly people was only 0.1 percent in 1951 to 1961 and the growth rate reached 0.4 percent in 1961-71, 1971-1981. This growth rate is 1.2 percent in 2001 to 2011 and according to the report by the technical group, the decadal growth in 2011 to 2021 will be 2.1 percent. Thus, based on the above data, it can be concluded that in the coming years there will be a rapid increase in the number of elderly people in which the percentage of women will be higher because the life expectancy age of women is higher than that of men. If a clear study of the condition of older women in the present Indian society is to be done, then it is necessary that the population of old women in the total population of the country is shown through the following table.

**Table - 2****Population of elderly women [Aged 60 years and above in India (in million)]**

| Year | Total Older | Women | Male |
|------|-------------|-------|------|
| 1961 | 24.7        | 12.4  | 12.3 |
| 1971 | 32.7        | 15.8  | 16.9 |
| 1981 | 43.2        | 21.2  | 22.0 |
| 1991 | 56.7        | 27.3  | 29.4 |
| 2001 | 76.6        | 38.9  | 37.7 |
| 2011 | 103.8       | 52.8  | 51.1 |

(Sources- Indian population report - 2011)

If we look at the increasing population of elderly people in India, it is found that in 1961, the total population of old people was 24.7 million in which 12.4 million were old women and 12.3 million were old men, while in 1971 there were 15.8 million old women and 16.9 million old men. Thus, it is known from the above table number 2 that in 1981 and 1991, there were almost equal numbers of male and female elderly in the total population of old people, but it is clear from the 2011 census data. That out of 103.8 million elderly people in the country, males are 51.1 million while older females are 52.8 million. From this it is known that in contemporary Indian society, older women are about 1.7 million more than men. Older women in our society become socially, economically, physically and medically dependent on their family in old age and spend their life under their protection and care. Older women in this stage also suffer from various health related problems in which they require medical services/facilities.

**Table - 3****Elderly Female-Male Ration in India's population**

| Year | Ratio in General population | Old female-Male Ratio |
|------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1951 | 946                         | 1028                  |
| 1961 | 941                         | 1000                  |
| 1971 | 930                         | 938                   |
| 1981 | 934                         | 960                   |
| 1991 | 927                         | 930                   |
| 2001 | 933                         | 972                   |
| 2011 | 943                         | 1033                  |

(Sources: Indian Population Report 2011)

A major indicator of the social status of women in the population of any country in the world is the sex ratio or sex ratio. This ratio shows the social, economic, political and health status of the country. If we look at the sex ratio in the Indian perspective, then from 1951 to 2011 (Table No. 3) it has only declined. But when we look at this ratio in the population of older people, it is known that where the male-old age ratio in the country was 1028 in 1951, the same ratio was 1000 in 1961, 938 in 1971, 960 in 1981, 930 in 1991 and 972 in 2001. Happened. Thus, it is clear from the analysis of the data that from 1951 to 2001 there has been a decline in the old sex ratio. But in the year 2011, the situation has changed because in this census this ratio has become 1033. There are many reasons behind the increase in the above ratio, mainly due to improvement, access and development of health services and facilities. The improvement in the quality of health facilities in the country has a direct impact on the life expectancy age of the citizens of the country. According to the Indian Old Age Report, the life expectancy of older women is 69.3 years and that of men is 65.8 years. 10 Thus in the coming years, due to the higher life expectancy of women in the population of the country, the population of older women will be more than that of older men. The study of the Situation Analysis of Elderly in India Report June 2011 published by the Government of India also clarifies the marital status of the elderly, according to which at present 66 percent of the elderly are married, 32 percent widowed and 03 percent divorced. In the country, where 82 percent of older men are married, only 50 percent of older women are married and 48 percent of older women are widows. Thus, from the above data it is revealed that the population of widowed old women is more in the country. In our society, husband and wife are complementary to each other, there is such a tradition and rituals, because after the death of husband, old women have to face many types of adverse situations and situations in life. Thus, based on the above data, the condition of older women in contemporary society is quite worrying. To study the status of older women in contemporary Indian society, it is very necessary to analyze the data related to the status of education or literacy rate in this category because education plays an important role in making women empowered. The status of literacy among older women is displayed through the following table.

**Table - 4**

**Literacy Status Among Elderly in Women and Men**

| Year | Total Literacy | Women's Literacy % | Men's Literacy % |
|------|----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1991 | 27             | 13                 | 41               |
| 2001 | 36             | 20                 | 53               |
| 2011 | 44             | 28                 | 59               |

(Sources: Indian Population Report 2011)

It is clear from the analysis of the above table 4 that in 1991, where the literacy rate among older people was 27 percent, in which this rate was 41 percent among older men and only 13 percent among women, which was very low, similarly if the data of 2001 and 2011 were studied. If we do, it is known that in 2001 the literacy rate among the elderly was 36 percent, in which 53 percent among older men and only 20 percent among older women, whereas in 2011 the total literacy rate among older people was 44 percent, while among older men it was 59 percent and The literacy rate among older women is only 44 percent. The education status of older

women is quite clear from the above figures. Because where in older men this rate is about 60 percent, in older women this rate has not yet reached the figure of 50 percent. Thus the educational status of older women in contemporary society is not satisfactory. Also, if this situation is studied in rural old women, then the situation is very frightening. (Rural old women 08 per cent in 1991, 13 per cent in 2001, 18 per cent in 2011).

Table - 5

## Population of Working Elderly Women and Men (in%)

| Mainly and Partially Employment |             |       |      |
|---------------------------------|-------------|-------|------|
| Year                            | Total Older | Women | Man  |
|                                 | Gender      | 2001  | 2011 |
| Village                         | Male        | 65.6  | 66.4 |
|                                 | Female      | 24.9  | 28.4 |
| City                            | Male        | 44.1  | 46.1 |
|                                 | Female      | 9.0   | 11.3 |
| Not working                     |             |       |      |
|                                 |             |       |      |
| Village                         | Male        | 34.4  | 33.6 |
|                                 | Female      | 75.1  | 71.6 |
| City                            | Male        | 55.9  | 53.9 |
|                                 | Female      | 91.0  | 88.7 |

(Sources: Indian Population Report 2011)

In order to assess the social status as well as the economic status of older women in India, it is necessary to study the working data of these women mainly or partially. It is clear from Table No. 5 that in the year 2001, in rural areas where 65.6% of old men were mainly or partially employed, only 24.9 percent of older women are employed and about 75.1 percent of older women are not employed. Thus it is shown that in contemporary society even today majority of women in rural areas are engaged only in domestic work whereas a large section of older men are mainly or partially employed, similarly when looking at these figures from the perspective of urban areas It is found that in the year 2001, where 44.1 percent of older men were mainly or partially employed, only 9.1 percent of older women are employed and 91 percent of urban older women are not employed, whereas 55 2011 66.4 28.4 46.1 11.3 male female 33.6 71.6 53.9 88.7 percent of the urban elderly are also not employed. It is clear from the above data that the economic dependence of older women in urban areas is completely on their family. That is why their condition is very pathetic as compared to men. Similarly, when analyzing the data of the year 2011, it is known that 66.4 percent of old men are employed in rural areas and only 33.6 percent of old men are not employed while only 28.4 percent of old women are employed in comparison to older men and A large section (71.6) of them are not employed and when we look at the condition of working elderly in urban areas, it is found that in the year 2011, 46.1 percent of older men are mainly or partially employed while urban old women are employed only 11.3 percent and 88.7 percent women are not working.

Thus it is clear from Table No. 5 that compared to 2001, there has been an increase in the partial functioning of older women in rural and urban areas, but it is much less in older men and the status of older women in both the areas is negligible. Whereas the condition of older men is quite satisfactory as compared to older women. Based on the observation and analysis of various statistics related to older women in

contemporary society, it is concluded that the number of older women in present Indian society is about 1.7 million more. As well as sex ratio older women are also more in terms of sex ratio and the number of widowed older women in marital status (about 48 percent) is also higher. Along with this, the literacy status among older women is much lower than that of older men because even today less than 50 percent of older women are educated and the situation in rural areas is quite dire. In which the literacy rate among rural older women is only 18 percent as of 2011. After this, when we analyze the condition of working old women, it is known that in 2011 only 28.4 percent women are employed in rural areas and this percentage is 11.3 from urban areas, thus the number of old women working in both rural and urban areas The number is very less. The above data explains the socio-economic status of older women. Also, the health and morbidity condition of these women is also not good as compared to older men.

In contemporary society, the social, economic, health-related condition of older women is very worrying and in such a situation it is necessary to shed light on what kind of financial/economic, physical and psycho-social problems older women are facing in life. Various social scientists and researchers related to the condition and problems of old women have done many researches in different states of the country, mainly Saras, Sharma, Anju etc. In the light of these studies, the problems faced by older women in contemporary society are discussed in this section.

A major indicator of old age is a decline in physical ability. In this stage, the person suffers from loss of vision and hearing power, fatigue, decrease in sexual ability etc. Due to dependency, old women are forced to live in very unhealthy conditions in the family, after which gradually they suffer from various types of diseases. Due to the physical dependence of older women, these women are treated indifferently by the family members.

The financial/economic problem of the elderly is a major problem in the contemporary Indian society. Most of the old people retire from their government/private services during old age and their main source of income and expenses is their pension. But most of the population in our country works in the unorganized sector. Those who do not get any kind of regular social support in old age and due to the decline in physical ability in the elderly, most of the elderly are not even in a position to work again. Thus, in old age, women have to face more economic problems like lack of proper treatment, adequate food and nutrition.

According to a study, only 13 percent of Indians in the country are doing any kind of pension scheme and 28.4 million old people are living life without any pension. In such a situation, the condition of those who are farmers, laborers or people doing other work becomes pathetic. Government old age pension is usually available to only a few old people and it is not enough for those who get it.

When we look at the above situation in the context of older women, it comes to know that the economic problems of women are more serious. These economic problems of old age become the basis for other problems and challenges.

Old age is a stage in which there is a decline in the physical capacity of men and women and the person is not able to discharge the roles according to his status as before, due to which various types of problems related to social adjustment arise within and outside the family. Due to adjustment related problems, the elderly



have to face different types of difficulties and challenges in all areas of their life and this condition is especially more in older women. Since women have a longer life expectancy and women generally marry men older than their age, most of the older women are also widows. In this way, women have to face three disabilities in old age - one of being a woman of old age and the other of widowhood.

The present materialistic and consumerist culture has given birth to new values and relations in our society. The number of nuclear families is increasing rapidly in the contemporary society, due to which older women are also facing the problems of isolation and loneliness. At the same time, the conflict between the values of the younger generation and the values and relationships of older women is also a problem. In which the views and values of older women are ignored by the youth, due to which these women feel very distressed and neglected. In this way, old women are suffering from problems like neglect, contempt, disrespect, loneliness, isolation in the present time.

Physical disabilities, economic dependence and family problems during old age give rise to various types of psycho-social problems in older women. • In which mainly there are anxiety, tension, panic, depression, incoherent fear, delusions, hallucinations etc. The main reasons for these psycho-social problems are loss of physical ability in older women, low financial/economic status, insignificant social status and role, high rate of morbidity etc.

In recent years, there has been a rapid increase in the incidence of abuse of elders in Indian society. Help Age India, a nationally working NGO working in the field of welfare, care and protection of elderly people, has studied the abuses faced by the elderly in different regions of the country. The abuse statistics published in the 2018 report are quite shocking.

In contemporary society, older people are suffering from verbal, physical, economic, emotional and neglectful abuse. Elderly persons are being abused mainly by the family members (57 per cent) by the son and (38 per cent) by the daughter-in-law. They are abused by the society as well as the family, but the rate of abuse is high inside the home. In the contemporary society, the incidents of crime related to elderly people have also increased in the last few years. The main reason for this is that most of the elderly people stay away from the family. Most of the elderly people are compelled to live alone due to the family not keeping elderly people with them, due to which incidents like cheating, assault, theft, dacoity, robbery and murder occur easily with them. The above incidents are happening more with widowed, abandoned, divorced old women. Apart from this, even in the greed of movable and immovable property, incidents related to murder and robbery of single old women are more. Government, society and non-government organizations as well as private and corporate sector will have to come forward to improve and protect the present condition of older women. To strengthen the economic condition of women, the government system of social assistance programs (pension/insurance) should be made more effective to make the old government more effective and adequate pension amount should be provided to the old women so that this class can live their life normally. . Along with this, healthy old women should be provided employment or self-employment at the local level so that women can become financially self-dependent in old age.

The major problems of older women are physical disabilities and health problems. That is why the government should make arrangements for regular free health check-up and treatment etc. at their home or at the community level. Along with this, the government, non-government organizations, private and corporate sector should also take active part in coming forward to solve the health and medical problems of older women.

In the field of health and medicine, there is a need to develop more research, training and facilities in the field of geriatric science, geriatric social work and health care of the elderly, because in the coming years, these facilities will be needed as the population of this class increases. There will be more demand. Therefore, public-private partnership has to be promoted in the field of geriatrics, training and rehabilitation etc. Along with this, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) will have to be motivated to work in this area.

In old age a large number of women suffer from psycho-social/ psychotic/ mental diseases. In which mainly anxiety, tension, panic, depression, inconsistent fear, delusions, hallucinations etc. Therefore, for the solution of the above psycho-social problems of older women, trained counselors should be appointed at the Panchayat / Primary Health Center so that the counselors can regularly contact the elderly women and provide proper counseling to solve their psycho-social problems. . To solve the problems related to harassment and abuse of old women, by running awareness programs at the family, community and society level by the government, NGOs, civil society organizations, community based organizations (CBOs), Panchayati Raj Institutions, etc., develop sensitivity among the citizens of the country. To be done Along with this, the police and administration should be made more and more aware and sensitive to solve the problems related to the safety of old women and take prompt action in their complaints and if possible, a separate cell should be set up in each police station for the complaints of old women and this The cell should include social workers trained in micro-social work. In Indian society and culture, our elders have held the highest and important place since the beginning, but due to the influence of westernization, materialism and consumerist culture, our values have declined. Due to which the highest ranked old people are finding themselves neglected, lonely and helpless and in contemporary old women are also not untouched by this because old women have to face many problems and challenges in the form of old age, discrimination of being a woman and widowed old woman. Used to be. Therefore, there is a need for the government and the society to take effective steps at the earliest by adopting multi-pronged strategies for the complete protection of old women, so that they can be given a dignified, respectable and valuable and pre-established high position in the Indian society.

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