

Successful Aging and Poor Rural Elderly Population in India

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Letter to the Editor

The rate of increasing of the elderly population is increasing and India's aged population is second largest in the world after China, which would be 137 million by 2021 [1]. Socio-economically the elderly population of India is in critical because most of them live below the poverty line with the absence of efficient social security [2]. Thus, the safety of elderly is built socially weak. To add to it, broken family network due to unemployment and urban affinity of the younger generation affects the lives of elderly [3]. Poverty, social inferiority, social isolation, physical weakness, vulnerability, seasonality, powerlessness and humiliation of the aged are the hindrance of successful aging in rural India [4]. The World Bank study (1994) tells the same that elderly poor is vulnerable due to their dependency. We find that the poor elderly have to work for earning up to their death.

A study was conducted to explore the situation of the poor elderly population aiming to assess the obstacles of successful aging. For the purpose of this study, 200 elderly populations of 60 years and above age had been selected randomly from a community development block of the rural area of West Bengal, India. The gender ratio was 1:1 and all of them belonged to below the poverty line. Occupationally, they were mainly agriculture labour, daily wages labour and rural artisans. The result showed that they had no any relaxation in their rest life and they had to manage their own needs. They lived with hunger and their

health care and other urgent needs were unfulfilled. The social as well as family support and assistances was very thin or virtually absent. There was also absent of government social security i.e. old age pension and rationing facilities. But, they were the voters and only during the election period, they used to receive honour with some facilities i.e. food grains, cloth and others. Sometime, they used to get enough assurance for an old age pension. But practically, it was vanished after election days. Thus, their poor economy was the main burden for their successful aging. Changing family dynamics and relations had been failed to assure care of the elderly by their off-springs. So, successful aging is a dream to bring happiness of the poor elderly population in their rest of the life. It is a huge lack for strengthening the slogan - 'respect senior, secure their survival and ensure happy death'.

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