

## **Determinants and Differentials of Elderlys' Participation in Work Force at Coimbatore**

**Dr. Kavitha. V.R.S., Assistant Professor & Head**

Dept. of Sociology, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India  
[drkavithavrs@gmail.com](mailto:drkavithavrs@gmail.com)

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### **Abstract**

Aging is a natural, global phenomenon which is inevitable, irreversible, and involuntary phase of human life that declines productivity. This low productive ageing population increases due to the decreased mortality rate, increase in nutrition awareness, advancements in medical facilities, life expectancies etc. Globally, there were 771 million people aged 65 years or over in 2022, 3 times more than the size in 1980. The older population is projected to reach 994 million by 2030 and 1.6 billion by 2050.

According to Census 2011, India has 104 million older people (60+years), constituting 8.6% of total population which has increased to 10.1% in 2021 and further likely to increase to 13.1% in 2031.

Unfortunately, the trend of honoring, greeting and valuing elderly has been changed and the life contexts have forced elderly to opt for jobs. Therefore, in the recent past, elderly employment and inclusion of elderly in employment has become a common rising phenomenon in the modern society due to the breakdown of joint families, decline of altruistic family values, rise in dual earner families, loss of family & cultural values, force to avoid boring life, loneliness, context to lead a dignified life, etc. Hence, despite aging, the elderly people make an effort to participate in the workforce.

The present study aimed to explore socio - demographic profile, reasons and differences for participating in workforce, difficulties faced during their jobs and their health at Coimbatore city. Through purposive sampling technique with inclusion criteria of working elderly, data was collected through interview schedule from 265 elderly respondents. The study findings reveal that women account for a majority of 52.83% than men which is 47.16%. The major reason for seeking employment is finance. The difficulties at work vary with white- and blue-collar workers. Auspiciously, for 85.28% of respondents their pay is enough to meet family needs and to avail themselves of health insurance. For 14.71% of the elderly people, their pay is insufficient. The calculated t value is greater than the critical t value connotes that there is a significant difference between the reasons of men and women elderly to opt for job at old age. The findings of this

study infer that the elderly continue their jobs irrespective of their sickness and difficulties in order to lead a dignified life with economic security and they make attempts for self-sustenance which would reduce financial strain and economic dependence to the family.

**Keywords:** Ageing, elderly workforce, elderly employment, difficulties in elderly jobs, elderly health.

## Introduction

A livelihood comprises people, their capabilities and their means of living, including food, income and assets (Serrat, O. 2017, Chambers & Conway1992), In the 21st century due to the vulnerability livelihoods will be needed by perhaps two or three times the present human population. The term sustainable refers to an individual's ability to provide for them in a viably long manner. Sustainable livelihood defined as subsistence ways of living as well as opportunities and incentives for people to generate income through environmentally sustainable and culturally appropriate management of the available resources (Nicole R. DeMello, 2022) The term reflects a concern with extending the focus on socially excluded people and vulnerable populations including the elderly. It offers purposeful employment that meets the social, economic, cultural, and spiritual needs of all community members—human and nonhuman, present and future—and protects biological diversity.

The notion of sustainable livelihood has arisen out of the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and in its promotion in the Agenda 21, it was demanded that everyone must have the -opportunity to earn a sustainable livelihood.

The biological ageing process is a certain and invariable phase that reduces productivity. In addition to biological changes, ageing is frequently associated with other life transitions such as retirement, moving to a better home, and losing family, peers, and partners. As they age, people find it challenging to maintain their elderly lifestyle and face a number of challenges, including deteriorating health, retirement, financial issues, loneliness, and dependency.

One in six people on the planet will be 60 or older by 2030. By this point, there will be 1.4 billion people over the age of 60, up from 1 billion in 2020. It is anticipated that the number of people in the world who would be 60 years or older will double by 2050 to 2.1 billion. Between 2020 and 2050, the number of people 80 or older is projected to triple, reaching 426 million (World Health Organization, 2022).

According to Census 2011, India has 103.8 million older people (60+years), constituting 8.6% of total population and projected to be 193.8 by 2031(NSO 2021). Unfortunately, human life expectancy increases due to the increased ability to prevent and cure disease (Gilbert, S. F., 2000) with a rise of 0.33% from 2022 (World population prospects 2022). Due to multiple factors

resembling limited or no financial income, elderly existence treated as a burden for the family or society, intergenerational conflicts, ill-treatment and elder abuse, dependence on their respective families for physical support, marginalization of the elderly in multiple ways, net worth and socio-economic situation etc.

Older people typically have to deal with a number of challenges to lead a fundamental life and sustain. Moreover, the traditional values and institutions are in the process of erosion and adaptation, resulting in the weakening of intergenerational ties that were the hallmark of the traditional family endangered the aging population to lead a vulnerable life characterized with abuse, financial constraints, loss of a spouse, lack of care, blood bond and survival needs. All these factors transform older people's social lives and force the aged to find source for sustainable life.

Tarkar.P et.al (2016) stated that "An ageing population is emerging as a major demographic trend worldwide and "Life expectancy has increased with the advances of medical science and technology" Alam.M & Arup Mitra (2012) show that in the absence of social security provisioning and safety nets for the olds, they keep working to a much longer span of life and suffer from many serious diseases and disabilities. The links between occupation and health risks come out sharply, suggesting health interventions to be made occupation specific. Sullivan E and Akram Al Ariss (2018) show that throughout the world, the number of individuals ages 60 and over is increasing faster than those of all younger age groups. By 2050, those ages 60 and over are projected to compose at least 25% of the population in all regions of the world, except Africa (United Nations, 2017).

Reddy Bheemeshwar.A (2016) points out that labor force participation rate of older persons in rural India remained almost stable between 1983 and 2011-2012, despite the rapid economic growth that India experienced during the same period. Further, the results show that among the elderly, those who belong to relatively poor socio-economic status are more likely to participate in the labor force. It is observed that a large percentage of the elderly workforce is engaged in poorly paid jobs in the informal sector, either as casual workers or as self-employed in low-skilled or unskilled occupations.

Griffin Barbara and Hesketh Beryl (2008) stated that -Large numbers of Baby Boomers are heading towards retirement - retirements that might be quite different from that of previous generations due to changing social, health and economic conditions.

Part-time or casual work in retirement, often referred to as 'bridge employment', is thought to have a number of key individual, organizational and societal benefits. Organizations face increasing skills shortage so that they will benefit from being able to draw on a pool of skilled and experienced workers. At a broader societal level, bridge employment will result in fewer

people having financial dependence on social security which has the potential for significant economic benefit. Mahmood B et.al (2016) focused on the importance of entrepreneurship in old age for sustainable livelihood. Most of the retired people confront the propositions of the disengagement theory of ageing which argue that the elderly should completely withdraw from all their roles and make way for the young. Later theories proposed that elderly people should continually be involved in their different social roles for better and sustainable livelihood.

Sustainable Livelihood approach provides deep understanding to identify the livelihood of people. Old age people counter the vulnerability arising from high levels of risk and uncertainty through deploying tangible and intangible assets. By engaging and participating in different livelihood activities, they ensure the long-term capability to survive or maintain their well-being. "Although financial considerations were mentioned most often, it was cited by considerably less than half (38%)". This suggests that nonfinancial reasons were important as well. 22% of retirees returned to employment because they did not like retirement, 14% felt they were needed or wanted to help out and 19% mentioned the intrinsic rewards (challenging tasks, social contacts, sense of purpose) offered by work.. Largely, 55% cited at least one among these three as non-financial reasons (Schellenberg G 2005).

Chattopadhyay. A. et.al (2022) et.al analyses the labor force participation among older adults (people aged 60 years and older) and their job characteristics, income, and associated social security benefits. Analysis of a cohort of 31,464 older adults shows that although labor force participation declines with age, 36% of older adults in India are working; of these, two-thirds are employed primarily in agriculture and allied services, only 5% have a full-time job, and just 6% are covered by a work-related pension scheme. The study states that older adults, who have less education, live alone, do not have a chronic disease, and lack health insurance or pension coverage are more likely to work beyond age 60. Gupta, S., & Kumar, S. (2019) states, In the old-age social security system, federals and policymakers are audacious in housing wealth as a means of sustainable livelihood for elderly homeowners. In a Vietnamese study, (Doan, T. H., Pham, H., & Tran, T. H 2020) emphasize that meaningful work has the most positive psychological impact on the intention to continue working after retirement.

Amaike. B (2016) reveals that access to multiple sources of income promotes sustainability of retirement livelihoods and quality of life with private sector retirees being more empowered and adequately protected against life vicissitudes. This culminates in vulnerability and precarious living conditions of public sector retirees.

## **Methodology**

Ageing is a global and natural phenomenon that can be defined as the time-related deterioration of the physiological functions necessary for survival and fertility. The elderly tend to cease working as they grow older, Moreover, the process of industrialization, urbanization, and globalization have emerged and replaced simple family production units into mass production, As a result, factories have led to the breakdown of joint family systems and eventually led to the nuclear family system. Other factors include negligence by children towards their old age parents and loss of familial and cultural values. Feeling of powerlessness, loneliness, uselessness, isolation in elderly and generational gap also contribute to the unfavorable situation of elderly in the society. Financial problems like retirement and socio economic dependence on their children for basic necessity, sudden increase in out of pocket expenses on treatment, Migration of young working people have impacted aging life. The young people are focused on expanding their career opportunities, the middle-aged people are working and supporting their families, and the elderly engage in some type of honorary work, manage the household duties with the help of the caregivers, or go about their daily lives.

Subsequently, elderly employment has become a rising phenomenon in the modern society due to the dissolution of joint families, the increase in dual-earner families, the loss of cultural and family values, avoidance of boredom and loneliness, the need to live a life of dignity etc. Hence, despite aging, the elderly makes efforts to get employed for a sustainable livelihood. In general, rural older adults are more likely to work in farming and allied activities, in lack of industries. Furthermore, farming activities are not associated with the concept of retirement. Therefore, present study attempts to explore urban elderly's participation in work force.

## **Objectives**

1. To examine the socio-demographic profile of the working elderly.
2. To explore the reasons for participation in work force at old age.
3. To examine the interference of health in the work force.
4. To analyze the economic sufficiency of the elderly.
5. To identify the difference between the reasons for men and women elderly.

## Population and Sample

The report -Elderly in India 2021 released by the Ministry of Statistics and programme Implementation project states that there is a substantial increase in the population of senior citizens in Tamil Nadu -- from 75.10 lakhs in 2011 to 1.04 crore in 2021. Based on the exploratory design the study was conducted in Coimbatore city, Coimbatore district, the Manchester of South India and the second largest City designated as the revenue district of state Tamilnadu. The 265 samples were identified through purposive sampling technique with inclusion criteria like men and women elderly employee continued working at post retirement phase in Coimbatore city to which interview schedule was administered comprising of socio demographic profile, reasons for participation in work force at old age, and difficulties on the job and health interference, etc.

## Findings

The findings of the study reveal that most respondents (33.9%) belong to the age cohort of 55-60 years. The next 30.9% of the respondents' age range is 61-66 years and the last 3.39% of the respondents belong to the age group of 76-80 years. It is evident that women account for a majority of 52.83% than men 47.16%. A major proportion of the respondents 81.13% are married while 17.7% of the respondents have lost their spouse and 1.13% of the respondents remain unmarried. 57.3% live along with their children while the remaining 42.64% of them live alone as elderly couples or as single elderly. With regard to reasons for elderly employment, 60.75% of the aged work due to financial reasons, while 31.32% for personal reasons, such as helping their children, avoiding domestic conflict, wanting their children to value them, continuing a passion, or fleeting the time more productively. Unfortunately, 7.92 % of them were either forced to work by their children or had no other choice but to work for mere survival. With regard to the difficulties faced by the elderly, 16.98% of the elderly employees experience loneliness at work due to uninteresting tasks or differences in interests with co-workers, while 20% of the respondents sometimes felt lonely. 63.01% of the elderly have not experienced loneliness as they felt comfort with their co-workers and actively engaged in their work. The majority (82.64%) elderly's contribution in workplace were found to be recognized whereas, 15.09% of the elderly's were not acknowledged and occasionally for 2.26% of the respondents. A major proportion of the elderly (79.98%) socialize with their younger counterparts but 21.50% of the elderly do not have the scope of socializing with their younger colleagues and 1.50% of the respondents occasionally. 45.28% of the elderly state that their health condition limits their work efficiency while 24.52% of the respondents do not feel so and sometimes 30.18% of the aged. The majority (85.28%) of respondents report that their pay is enough to sustain in

terms of family needs and to avail health insurance while 14.71% report that their pay is insufficient for a sustainable livelihood. The calculated t value indicates significant difference between the reasons of men and women elderly to opt job at old age.

**TABLE I: SOCIO – DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF WORKING ELDERLY**

<b>S.no</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
1	55-60	90	33.9%
2	61-66	82	30.9%
3	66-70	56	12.13%
4	71-75	28	10.56%
5	76-80	9	3.39%
	Total	265	100%

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Male	125	47.16%
2	Female	140	52.83%
3	Total	265	100%

<b>S.No</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Single	3	1.13%
2	Married	215	81.13%
3	Widow	47	17.7%
	Total	265	100%

### Staying with Children

S.no		n	%
1	Yes	152	57.3%
2	No	113	42.64%
	Total	265	100%

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**TABLE II: REASONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN WORK FORCE AT OLD AGE**

S.No	Reasons	n	%
1	Personal/Physical health	83	31.32%
2	Economical	161	60.75%
3	Socially forced	21	7.92%
	Total	265	100%

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**TABLE III: DIFFICULTIES FACED BY THE ELDERLY DURING THE WORK FORCE**

S.No		n	%
1	Yes	45	16.98%
2	No	167	63.01%
3	Sometimes	53	20%
4	Total	265	100%

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF WORK

S.No		n	%
1	Yes	219	82.64%
2	No	40	15.09%
3	Sometimes	06	2.26%
4	Total	265	100%

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### SOCIALISING THE YOUNGER WORKERS

S.No		n	%
1	Yes	204	79.98%
2	No	57	21.50%
3	Sometimes	04	1.50%
4	Total	265	100%

**TABLE IV: HEALTH INTERFERENCE IN THE WORK FORCE OF ELDERLY**

S.No	Health interfering work	n	%
1	Yes	120	45.28%
2	No	65	24.52%
3	Sometimes	80	30.18%
4	Total	265	100%

**TABLE V: ECONOMIC SUFFICIENCY OF THE ELDERLY**

S.No	Economic sufficiency	n	%
1	Yes	226	85.28%
2	No	39	14.71%
3	Total	265	100

**TABLE VI: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE REASONS OF MEN AND WOMEN ELDERLY.**

S.NO	Elderly	N	Mean	SD	t Value	df	P Value
1	Men	125	41.66	26.04	2.63**	263	1.984
2	Women	140	46.66	33.82			

## CONCLUSION

Ageing is an irreversible and inevitable phenomenon with several changes and significance. The aging population in India is growing substantially and the proportion of elderly who work after old age has also increased. The survival of aging has become challenging which forces elderly to earn and sustain life with elderly jobs. However, with one or more other reasons. Despite difficulties and health interferences, elderly work to make up their life, maintain employment, means and standard of living, not to disturb the resources of future generation, provide financial support or profit to the family etc. The reason to continue opt for jobs at old age is to stay healthy and fit to continue employment for economic self-reliance. They feel that refusing to work or sitting around doing nothing can consume negative impact on their sustainable livelihood, social status, physical and mental health. Fortunately, elderly labor force enables the chances to retain honor, value, decision making power, economic security, economic self-reliance etc.

## Discussion

Majority of the elderly work at old age for mere economic reasons like means of living, and it declines to various social context like avoiding boredom and conflict among family members, to stay healthy and fit, which concurs with the activity theory of aging (Robert J. Havighurst, 1961) and other researches (Ghosh and Husain 2011; Kavitha VRS & Surya Prabha K 2023) in postretirement jobs, 55% of elderly work due to financial reasons, 43.12% for personal reasons, such as helping their children, avoiding domestic conflict, wanting their children to value them, continuing a passion, or fleeing the time more productively. It concurs with several studies that older people who continue to work after retirement are happier and healthier than those who no longer work (Kim & Feldman, 2000; Zhan et al., 2009) as noted by many researchers (Chalofsky & Krishna, 2009; Steger et al., 2012; Lepisto & Pratt, 2017; Wrzesniewski, 2003), because work is not only meant for financial security but considered as a significant factor relating to psychological and social aspects in life that verves beyond fundamental needs. Meaningful work can create a significant motivation (Atchley, 1989), the most positive psychological impact (Doan, T. H., Pham, H., & Tran, T. H 2020) for older workers to continue working after retirement. Post-retirement working has a statistically significant positive effect on a range of mental health outcomes (Maimaris, W., Hogan, H., & Lock, K., 2010).

## Implications

1. The socio-cultural values pertaining to the elderly must be preserved and transferred to the next generation which would protect and support the elderly.
2. Despite working at old age, elderly could not attain economic sufficiency. Therefore, social security measures provided by government must be enabled to get easy access for economically backward, destitute, widows, widowers, and childless elderly to comfort old age life.
3. Based on changing lifestyle of the elderly, awareness on saving and health scheme must be enforced to plan for healthy elderly life.
4. Awareness must be created on welfare of senior citizens and family maintenance act 2007 to promote smooth elderly life.
5. Community based integrated care approaches must be designed to fulfill the fundamental and significant needs for reliant older person.

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