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Q8(c)

What is 'Ageing'? Discuss the major problems of aged people in India

UPSC Civil Services Mains 2023 · Sociology GS 2 · 10 marks · Tribal communities in India

Tribal communities in India: Definitional problems; Geographical spread; Colonial policies and tribes; Issues of integration and autonomy.

Core demand of the question

- What is ageing? Discuss the major problems of aged people in India
- Keep a 10-mark length

Revision summary

Ageing is growing older and the rising share of older persons in the population.

Indian problems are income insecurity, illness, isolation and elder abuse.

Older women, especially widows, are more exposed.

Migration stretches family care without a full public substitute.

Regional demographic ageing is uneven.

Introduction

Ageing is both a personal process of growing old and a population process in which the share of older persons rises. In India it now meets thinner joint households, uneven pensions, and a care load that still falls on women.

Body

Concept

- **Chronological markers such as sixty years sit beside social ageing:** widowhood, retirement, and loss of the karta role.
- Demographic ageing in India is faster in Kerala and Tamil Nadu than in high-fertility states, so problems are regional as well as national.

Major problems

- **Income insecurity:** informal workers lack pensions; agricultural old age depends on sons, plots, and schemes that are thin.
- **Health:** multiple illness, costly private care, and poor geriatrics in public hospitals.
- Isolation and neglect as adult children migrate; the continuum of rural-urban life can leave the aged in the village with a phone and little daily help.
- Widowhood, property denial, and patriarchal dependence make older women the more vulnerable face of ageing.
- Elder abuse, including property harassment, is under-reported; the **Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007**, is unevenly used.

- Digital welfare and banking exclude many who cannot navigate apps, which is a new exclusion Yogendra Singh's modernity can produce.

Sociological note

- Beteille's family as an institution still carries care because the public system is weak.
- Caste and class decide whether old age is a pensioned leisure or a continued field labour.

Flow diagram

Population and personal ageing -> Income health isolation
Migration thin pensions -> Income health isolation
Gendered widowhood -> Income health isolation
Income health isolation -> Care gap

Conclusion

Ageing in India is a rising share of older persons facing income, health, isolation, and gendered neglect. The family remains the main welfare site; that is a problem when the family is stretched by migration and inequality.

Facts & figures

Sixty-plus marker

Common policy threshold for senior citizens in Indian schemes.

MWPSC Act 2007

Law for maintenance of parents and senior citizens, unevenly implemented.

NPOP 1999

National Policy on Older Persons as an early framework for ageing.

Kerala-Tamil Nadu

States further along in demographic ageing than high-fertility northern states.

Informal workforce

Most Indian workers reach old age without an occupational pension.