

The Aged and their Work Status in Rural Areas

Introduction

IN 1971 India had about 33 million persons aged 60 years and over, accounting for nearly 6 per cent of the total population in the country. Assuming the same proportion of aged in the total population, the number of aged in 1981 is estimated to be about 41 million. When compared to the developed countries of the world the proportion of aged in the total population of India and of many other developing countries is apparently smaller. But what is of concern in the Indian context is the growing number of aged who, unlike their counterparts in developed countries, live in abject poverty, in the absence of old age social security and insufficient savings to look after themselves. Thus, the main ways for them to survive in old age are :

- (a) to receive support from their children, and/or
- (b) to work for pittance by sacrificing their leisure which they amply deserve.¹

In this paper our attention is on the aged in the rural areas of the developing countries with special reference to India. The paper deals with their number, expected length of life, perceptions of support in old age, realisation of the support and in particular, their economic activities. For this purpose, we have tried to gather as much information as possible from the available sources.

1. Other sources of support like landed property, business, pensions, savings, interest on loans, etc. can be safely assumed to be negligible in rural areas.

By 'aged' we refer to those persons who have completed 60 years. Data pertinent to the size of the aged population, dependency ratio, economic activities and their occupational classification are available in the decennial censuses of India. But problems arise while comparing data on 'work' due to definitional changes in the various censuses. Problems are also encountered due to misreporting of ages and other errors inherent in the census data. Data on the size, work and expectation of life of the aged of other countries of the world are obtained from the United Nations' Demographic Year Book and from the Publications of the International Labour Organisation. These are also not strictly comparable because they pertain to different years and the definitions employed vary from country to country.

Magnitude of the Aged Population

About 6 per cent of the world's population constitute those who have completed 64 years of age. Thus, out of a total of 4321 million persons in 1979, 259 million persons were those who had survived their 64th birthday.² In developed countries the proportion of aged in the population has been quite high when compared to the developing countries. According to the data compiled by the Population Reference Bureau, the per cent of population over 64 years to the total population in the developed and developing countries were 10 per cent and 4 per cent respectively.³ In Table 1, the percent of aged population to the total population, aged dependency ratio and the sex ratio of the aged population are presented for selected countries. It is evident from the table that there is a marked difference between the proportions of aged in the populations of the less and more developed countries. The difference is more prominent in the case of females than males. Among the developing countries, with a few exceptions, the proportion of aged females to the total female population is lower than the proportion of aged males to the total male population. Among the developed countries the reverse is the case. In more developed countries, in general, females outnumber males in the population over and above 60 years. Obviously, factors which had a stronger influence on the age and sex composition of the population account for this situation.

Though some of those who are 60 years and over do work, generally aged are considered as dependents. The aged dependency ratio (Population aged 60 + / Population between 15-59 years) is higher among the developed countries than among the developing countries (Table 1). This pattern is a reflection of the

2. Population Reference Bureau, *1979 World Population Data Sheet* (Washington DC : Population Reference Bureau, 1979).

3. Population Reference Bureau, cited in note 2.

TABLE 1—PERCENT OF POPULATION AGED 60 YEARS AND OVER, AGED DEPENDENCY RATIO, SEX RATIO OF THE AGED POPULATION AND EXPECTATION OF LIFE AT BIRTH AND AT AGE 60, BY SEX FOR SELECTED COUNTRIES

Country	Percent of population aged (60+) to the total population		Aged depend'ency ratio (60+) (15-59) x100		Sex ratio of the aged	Expectation of life at birth @		Expectation of life at age 60 @	
	M	F	M	F		M	F	M	F
	1	2	3	4	5*	6	7	8	9
Developing Countries									
1 India	5.39	5.29	9.96	9.85	914 (1977)	50.00 (1975)	48.70	11.77 (1960)	12.98
2 Pakistan	7.08	6.31	14.26	12.59	784 (1968)	49.40 (1975)	49.20	15.61 (1962)	15.46
3 Kenya	5.63	5.12	12.42	10.84	906 (1969)	51.50 (1975)	55.00	14.50 (1969)	15.70
4 Guyana	5.37	5.90	10.69	11.55	1115 (1974)	59.03 (1961)	63.01	13.17 (1961)	16.50
Developed Countries									
1 USA	13.26	17.02	21.48	28.25	1355 (1977)	68.70 (1975)	76.50	16.80 (1975)	21.80
2 Denmark	16.88	20.82	28.17	36.18	1259 (1976)	71.10 (1975)	76.80	17.10 (1976)	21.10
3 Switzerland	15.45	20.32	24.72	34.03	1386 (1978)	70.15 (1972)	76.17	16.74 (1973)	20.39
4 Australia	11.54	12.70	18.84	20.71	1095 (1977)	67.63 (1967)	74.15	15.77 (1967)	19.52

*Year given in the parenthesis refers to columns 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

©Year given in the parenthesis refers to both males and females.

SOURCES : 1. United Nations, *Demographic Year Book 1978* (New York : United Nations Publications, 1979), pp. 146-178.

2. United Nations, cited in note 5, pp. 542-563.

higher life expectancy at birth as well as at different ages in more developed countries compared to the less developed countries. An important point to be noted while comparing the dependency ratios of different countries is that of the difference in the definition of a 'dependent.' While some countries consider 60 years as the age at which one has to cease working, other countries regard 55 years or 65 years as the age at retirement. While in India, the census reports have accepted 55 years as the age for treating a person as 'aged', in the U. S. A., U. K. and other Western countries, it happens to be 65 years.⁴ However, in majority of the developing countries, the age at which one is treated as 'old' ranges from 55 to 60 years.

The length of life in less developed countries has remained at a lower level. The life expectancy at birth in India, for example, was 50 years for males and 48.7 years for females in 1975 compared to 68.7 and 76.5 years in the USA, 71.8 and 77 years in Japan and 71.1 and 76.8 years in Denmark.⁵ The expectation of life at birth and at age 60 are presented separately for developed and developing countries in Table-1. The table shows that the life expectancy of the aged population is high in the more developed countries than in the less developed countries and this difference is more prominent among the females than males. With a few exceptions, females in general live for more number of years than males.

Corresponding to the changes in the proportion of the 'aged' in the total population, the aged dependency ratio also changes over years. The aged dependency in rural as well as in urban India have increased during 1961-71 census period for both the sexes. Though not significant, the aged dependency ratios for males have increased at a higher rate (1.45 per cent for rural and 0.62 per cent for urban) when compared to females (0.76 per cent for rural and 0.25 per cent for urban) over this period. In relation to the child dependency, the aged dependency has increased at a faster rate both in rural and urban areas. The ratio of the aged dependents (60 +) to the child dependents (< 14) increased from 13.4 per cent in 1961 to 14.2 per cent in 1971 among rural males and from 13.7 per cent to 14.6 per cent over the same period among urban males. With regard to the females the increase over 1961-71 period was from 14.1 per cent to 14.2 percent in rural areas and 14.4 per cent to 14.5 per cent in urban areas.

From the information presented above, it is evident that in developed countries, aged have better longevity while the aged dependency is high and in developing countries like India, longevity is low while the aged dependency is also low. The main question, however, is not of aged dependency, but of the quality of life they lead till their death.

4. K.S. Soodan, *Aging in India* (Calcutta : Minerva Associates, 1975), pp. 16-18.

5. United Nations, *Demographic Year Book—Special Issue : Historical Supplement* (New York : United Nations, 1979), pp. 542-563.

Parents, Perceptions and Realization of Support in Old Age

The demographic literature distinguishes two kinds of motives of parents' desire to have children viz., the satisfaction they get by having children and the prospective tangible returns that they may accrue from children.⁶ The latter motive constitute :

- (a) the benefits parents expect from their children as productive agents by contributing to the family income directly, or
- (b) by working as substitutes for hired labour at home, on the family farm, in the family business or elsewhere, and
- (c) the security they expect from their children when they are old and disabled.

Leibenstein calls these economic benefits from children as Income Utility, Work Utility and Security Utility, respectively.⁷

Whether security utility children render to their parents during old age is an economic motive for high fertility in peasant societies is a debatable issue.⁸ The empirical evidence on the relationship between the security utility of children and fertility in rural settings are lacking. However, there are some studies, conducted in Nigeria and Thailand, on how parents perceive children as old age

6. See the following for a general reading on this aspect : T.J. Espenshade, "The value and cost of children", *Population Bulletin*, 32 (1971) : 3-47, and J.T. Fawcett, "The value and cost of children : Converging Theory and Research", In : *The Economic and Social Support for High Fertility*, ed. Lado T. Ruzicka (Canberra : Australian National University, 1977): 91-114.

7. H. Leibenstein, *Economic Backwardness and Economic Growth* (London : Willey, 1957),

8. Read the following for a detailed information regarding the controversy : T.P. Schultz, "An Economic Perspective on Population Growth", In: National Academy of Sciences, *Rapid Population Growth : Consequences and Policy Implications*, 2 (Baltimore : John Hopkins Press, 1971): 148-174; W.E. Robinson and D.L. Horlacher, *Population Growth and Economic Welfare*, Reports on Population/Family Planning, No. 6 (New York : Population Council, 1971); P.A. Neher, "Peasants, Procreation and Pensions", *American Economic Review*, 61 (1971) : 380-389; C.F. Home, "Social Security and Fertility : An International Perspective", *Demography* 12 (4) (1975) : 629-644; E. Mueller, "The Economic Value of children in peasant Agriculture", In : *Population and Development : The Search for Selective Interventions*, ed. Ronald G. Ridker (Baltimore : Tohn Hopkins University Press, 1976) : 98-153; W.C. Robinson, "Peasants. Procreation and Pensions : Comment", *American Economic Review* 62 (1972): 977-978; M. Vlassoff, "Economic Utility of children and Fertility in Rural India", *Population Studies*, 36(1), (1982) : 45-59; and G. Ohlin, *Population and Alternative Investments*, International Population Conference Proceedings, 3 (London : International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, 1971) : 1703-1728.

security in rural areas.⁹ These studies highlight the observation that a significant proportion of parents mention the support they receive from their children as one of the important advantages of having a large family. It has been pointed out by these studies that parents, generally, rely on their children for old age support (financial or otherwise). Data collected from three villages in South Kanara district of Karnataka State of India corroborate the above observations.¹⁰ Besides, information from these villages indicated that parents' perceptions of old age security vary by socio-economic and educational groups.

Though there is no consensus regarding the relationship between the parental perception of the security utility of children and fertility there is agreement that parents do get support from their children during old age.¹¹ While studying the economic value of children in Java and Nepal, most of the aged parents were found to be depending upon their children by living with them or in their neighbourhood.¹² Similarly, data collected from the South Kanara District of Karnataka State also showed as high as 95 per cent of the aged parents living with their children in rural areas.

Assuming no old age social security, negligible or zero net savings of the aged and the help the aged receive from others than their children to be insignificant in rural areas, the work status of those aged who are living with their children will indicate the extent of their dependency on their children. If those aged who are staying with their children are working, then the terms 'depending on' and 'living with' cannot be used interchangeably and as a consequence, the residential pattern of the aged will cease to be a good indicator of the support received by them. Hence, data collected from the South Kanara District of Karnataka State were cross-classified by work status and residential pattern to know how many of those aged who live with their children do work. Results showed that though as high as 95 per cent of the aged stay with their children, most of them

9. H. Ware, "The Economic Value of children in Asia and Africa : Comparative Perspectives", Paper of the East-West Population Institute No. 50, East-West Center, Honolulu, Hawaii, 1978, pp. 16-17 and F. Arnold and P. Chintana, *Economic Factors in Family Size Decisions in Thailand* (Bangkok : Institute of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University and others, 1977) p.1. A.O. Okore, "The Rationale of High Fertility in Rural Nigeria : The case of the Ibos in Arochuku in Imo State", In: *The Economic and Social Supports for High Fertility*, ed. Lado T. Ruzicka (Canberra : Australian National University, 1977): 253-273.

10. Data were collected by the first author. The field work was conducted from December 1981 to March 1982.

11. M. Mamdani, *The Myth of Population Control* (New York and London : Monthly Review Press, 1972), p. 109; M. Vlassoff, cited in note 8; M. Nag, B.N.F. White and R.C. Peet, "An Anthropological Approach to the Study of the Economic value of children in Java and Nepal", *Current Anthropology*, 19(2) (1978), pp. 298-301; P.H. Lindert, "Child costs and Economic Development", In : *Population and Economic Change in Developing Countries*, ed. Richard A. Easterlin (Chicago and London : University of Chicago Press, 1976), pp. 50-52.

12. M. Nag, B.N.F. White and R.C. Peet, cited in note 11, pp. 298-299.

were reported to be working. But the term 'work participation' has a broader connotation in the sense that it is inclusive of both those who are 'willingly working' without any monetary motivation and those who are 'forced to work' for monetary benefits. In the present context, these two distinguishable terms have to be borne in mind, for, those who are willingly working are doing so not because they do not get adequate support from their children, but, may be, to keep themselves away from boredom at home. During the field work in the South Kanara district when an old man living with three sons was asked to remark on why he reported himself as working for 6 hours on normal days, his instantaneous emotional response was as follows:

"Listen young man, I was taught to work by my parents when I was 6 years old. Now I am 65. I got addicted to this hard work as I got to the beedi (indigenous locally or hand made cigarette). I am smoking now. By God's grace I have 'land' to work and 'sons' to support; still I won't abstain from work unless mighty fate deprives me of it". This remark is an example of aged men's willingness to work.

Activities of the Aged

We have attempted below to highlight the activities of the aged with special reference to the aged in India. Table 2 presents the labour force participation rates of the aged for selected developing and developed countries of the world as provided by the ILO for 1960. A cursory look at the table reveals that, regardless of all the data problems, there exists marked difference in the labour force participation of the aged between developed and developing countries. The difference is clear for the males as their participation rates are very high among the less developed countries compared to those for the more developed countries. However, there is no clear pattern in the labour force participation of the aged females.

Higher labour force participation of the aged in developing countries does not imply that their productivity is higher. When the productivity of the population in the economically productive age group (15-59) of the less developed countries are severely affected by malnutrition, the productivity of the aged whose nutritional standards are poor is expected to be very poor. The aged are prone to old age ailments which adversely affect their working capacities. In the Lucknow City of India, for example, more than 90 per cent of the aged were actually suffering from constipation and nearly 60 per cent of them were handicapped due to indigestion. Chronic backaches and urinary troubles were the other ailments they were suffering. It was also observed that more than 85 per cent of the aged in the Lucknow city and in the states of Bihar and Rajasthan were physically disabled due to impaired eye-sight. Blindness among the aged is found to be very high in the rural areas of the districts of Cuttack, Indore, and

TABLE 2—LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES OF THE AGED
(60+) IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

Country	Labour Force Participation Rate (1960)	
	Male	Female
Developing Countries		
1 India	68.67	15.48
2 Pakistan	81.16	9.60
3 Kenya	73.44	31.00
4 Guyana	54.26	10.64
Developed Countries		
1 U S A	30.25	10.39
2 Denmark	34.52	7.42
3 Switzerland	42.28	11.03
4 Australia	21.41	4.50

Source : International Labour Organisation, *Labour Force Projections : Methodological Supplement—Part VI* (Geneva : International Labour Office, 1973), pp. 60-62.

Madurai. In rural areas where the nutritional standards are poorer and the medical facilities are inadequate the health conditions of the aged are expected to be much below the urban standards.

Census data indicate that more than 75 per cent of the aged males in India were working. Table 3 presents the various activities in which the aged of both sexes were engaged in at two census years viz., 1961 and 1971. But these data are not comparable mainly due to differences in the definition of work. While the 1971 census defines 'work' only in terms of main activity, 1961 census did not regard marginal workers and main workers separately. However, data presented in the table show that both in 1961 and 1971 aged male workers outnumbered aged female workers. While 88.68 per cent of females were non-workers in 1971 and corresponding figure for males was only 22.58. Out of 89 per cent female non-workers, about 42 per cent of them were dependents and about 43 per cent of them were engaged in household duties. Among male non-workers, quite a high proportion of them were dependents according to both 1961 as well as 1971 census data.

TABLE 3—PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE AGED IN INDIA IN DIFFERENT ACTIVITIES

Distribution of the aged	Rural				Urban			
	1971 Census		1961 Census		1971 Census		1961 Census	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Total aged population (60+)	14095208	13176820	10465783	10507714	2779117	2648586	1890904	1847708
1 Percent workers	77.42	11.32	79.89	24.31	55.36	6.42	58.44	11.42
2 Percent engaged in household duties	1.05	43.30	0.29	31.32	0.83	45.67	0.40	42.26
3 Percent dependents	17.63	42.42	15.80	40.36	19.87	42.89	18.66	39.37
4 Percent retired rentiers and persons with independent means	2.76	1.98	2.97	3.04	21.15	3.98	19.58	5.57
5 Others*	1.10	0.99	0.97	0.92	2.79	1.03	2.42	1.33

*Include students, beggars and vagrants, inmates of penal, mental and charitable institutions and others.

SOURCES : 1 Census of India 1971, *Series I, INDIA, Part IIB (i), General Economic Tables* (Delhi: Controller of Publications, 1977), pp. 18-21.

2 Census of India 1971, *Series I, INDIA, Part II-B (ii), General Economic Tables* (Delhi: Controller of Publications, 1978), pp. 417-423.

3 Census of India 1961, *Volume I, INDIA, Part II-B (ii), General Economic Tables* (Delhi : Manager of Publications, 1965), pp. 86-87.

4 Census of India 1961, *Volume I, INDIA, Part II-B (iii), General Economic Tables* (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1965), pp. 590-593.

There are rural urban differentials in the activities of the aged. The proportions of workers in the aged population are found to be high in rural areas than in urban areas for both the sexes in the 1961 as well as the 1971 census. In urban areas per cent of retired, rentiers and persons with independent means are high, especially in the case of aged males, than in rural areas.

Majority of aged workers are cultivators. A look at Table 4 reveals us that nearly 70 per cent of the aged male workers are cultivators in rural areas. The census definition of 'cultivators' includes owner cultivators as well as those who cultivate as lessee of land held from Government or as a tenant cultivator of land held from private persons. But the censuses do not give information to draw distinction between different types of cultivators. However, our study of the three villages in the South Kanara district of Karnataka State shows that more than 90 per cent of the family workers, most of the time work on their own land.

The various capacities in which cultivators perform activities as defined by the census of India include cultivation of land by self or by supervision or by direction. Anyway, information in this regard are not available from census publications. These information are of paramount importance for any indepth analysis of work participation, especially with respect to the aged in rural areas.

Most of the aged workers who work for wages in cash or kind are agricultural labourers. Data presented in Table 4 regarding the various activities in which the aged workers were engaged in 1961 and 1971 are comparable to a certain extent with respect to agricultural labourers. Supposing, the percentage of agricultural labourers had not increased during 1961-71, the 1971 census figures showing the percentage of agricultural labourers in terms of main activity would have been lesser than the 1961 census figures. If there was actual increase in the percentage of main agricultural labourers over the period just to offset the percentage of marginal workers of 1961 census, the figures showing the agricultural labourers of 1961 and 1971 census would have been the same in spite of definitional changes. But the 1971 census figures showing the percentage of aged agricultural labourers are much higher than 1961 figures for both the sexes. This implies that there was an actual increase in the percentage of agricultural labourers during 1961-71 period. Similarly, aged who are engaged in trade and commerce have also actually increased considerably in urban areas over 1961-71. Therefore, the trend of increased participation in wage labour among the aged in India is clear. This may be due to different factors like decrease in the intensity of old age security the aged obtain from their children, persisting poverty, the changing attitudes of the aged in recent years, etc.

According to the 1971 census, in rural India, 45 per cent of the aged male workers other than cultivators are production and related workers, transport

TABLE 4 -INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION OF THE AGED WORKERS IN INDIA

Classification of workers	Rural				Urban			
	1971 Census		1961 Census		1971 Census		1961 Census	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Total workers	10911994	1491488	8361482	2553936	1538634	170054	1105076	210910
1 Percent cultivators	69.95	40.16	73.06	58.93	14.27	9.43	15.29	14.11
2 Percent agricultural labourers	17.92	49.08	10.07	23.47	6.79	19.49	2.86	9.33
3 Percent engaged in live stock, forestry, fishing, hunting, plantation orchards and allied activities and in mining and quarrying.	1.60	1.35	1.78	1.12	2.37	1.83	2.47	1.77
4 Percent engaged in manufacturing, processing, servicing and repairs and construction.	4.88	4.20	6.73	8.31	25.21	19.03	25.78	25.99
5 Percent engaged in trade and commerce, transport, storage and communication.	2.69	2.31	2.92	2.21	33.70	19.29	28.53	14.37
6 Percent engaged in other services.	2.96	2.91	5.44	5.97	17.66	30.92	25.08	34.44

SOURCES : 1 Census of India 1971, *Series I, INDIA, Part II-B (i), General Economic Tables* (Delhi: Controller of Publications. 1977), pp. 18-21.
 2 Census of India 1961, *Volume I, INDIA, Part II-B (i), General Economic Tables* (Delhi: Manager of Publications, 1965), pp. 86-87.

equipment operators and labourers. Rest of the aged male workers are mainly concentrated as sales workers, farmers, fishermen, hunters and related workers and service workers in that order. Nearly 45 per cent of aged female workers in rural areas are concentrated in production and related activities and as transport equipment operators and labourers. Another one-third of them are sales and service workers.

The occupational concentration of the aged workers other than cultivators in rural India are presented in Table 5. The table shows that the aged male workers other than cultivators are concentrated in traditional activities like shoe and leather goods making, carpentry are related wood work, glass forming, pottery and related work, spinning weaving and related work, laundry, dry cleaning and pressing, hair dressing, etc. The aged female workers are concentrated in shop keeping and trading, shop assisting and related work and in cooking and other house keeping services. The concentration in traditional activities could be attributed to high illiteracy among the aged in rural India. While the literacy level of the adult population is very low in rural areas the literacy level of the aged in particular could be expected to be the lowest as they belong to an older generation.

Summary

The proportion of aged population in the total population of developing countries is smaller when compared to the developed countries. In a country like India though the aged proportion in the total population is a small figure the actual number of aged is large. In developing countries where poverty is persisting, the morbidity conditions of the aged in particular is expected to be very poor. As a consequence their expectation of life has remained at a lower level. What matters in developing countries is not the dependency ratio of the aged but the quality of life they lead.

Majority of parents in less developed countries perceived children as the major source of old age support. In rural areas, the aged do realise these support (may be partly or fully) from their children. Generally, most of the aged parents live with their children, especially with their sons. However, data are not available to know whether they are completely dependent on their children in the true sense of the term.

Labour force participation of the aged is high among the developing countries when compared to the developed countries. Higher participation does not imply higher productivity, especially when the nutritional standard and the morbidity conditions of the aged are poor. Within a country like India there are rural urban differentials in the participation rate of the aged. In rural areas, aged workers other than cultivators are concentrated in traditional activities. This type Of concentration is understandable when the literacy levels of the

TABLE 5—OCCUPATIONAL CONCENTRATION OF THE AGED (60+) IN
RURAL INDIA, 1971 CENSUS @

Occupational groups as given in the census of India	Occupation	Percentage of aged workers (60+) to the total workers in the group	
		M	F
40	Merchants and shop keepers, wholesale and retail traders	8.98	12.53
43	Salesmen, shop assistants & related workers	6.24	11.48
52	Cooks, waiters, bar tenders & related workers (domestic & institutional)	3.72*	6.23
53	Maids & other house keeping service workers	4.30*	7.30
55	Launderers, dry cleaners & pressers	8.79	5.33
56	Hair dressers, barbers, beauticians and related workers	8.33	0.68*
68	Fishermen and related workers	7.71	5.09*
75	Spinners, weavers, knitters, dyers and related workers.	7.31	4.43
77	Food and beverage processors	7.09	5.90
80	Shoe makers and leather goods makers	12.89	4.77*
81	Carpenters, cabinet and related wood workers	9.20	8.03*
83	Blacksmiths, tool makers and machine tool operators	8.01	4.52*
89	Glass formers, potters and related workers	9.05	4.55
94	Production and related workers without any classification	9.13	6.21
	Cultivators	11.31	6.53
	Agricultural labourers	6.44	4.81

@Only those occupations in which more than 30,000 aged males and 3,600 aged females were engaged in are considered.

*Total persons engaged-in are less than the number mentioned in the above note.

Sources : 1 Census of India 1971, *Series I, INDIA, Part II-B (v), General Economic Tables* (Delhi : Controller of Publications, 1978), pp. 393-692.

2 Census of India 1971, *Series I, INDIA, Part II-B (i), General Economic Tables* (Delhi : Controller of Publications, 1977), pp. 18-21.

aged are very low. Most of the aged workers in rural India are cultivators. But data on the nature of activity they perform within cultivation are not available. Besides, other information like the intensity of work, the wages earned etc., calls for an in-depth study of the activities of the aged in rural areas.

The year 1982 being the International Year of the aged it has become obligatory on the part of *the* Government to look into the problems of the aged and to launch programmes of support for the aged especially in rural areas. In a country like India these programmes should include work programmes and programmes to give attention to the health of the aged. The work programmes should aim at utilising the skill and experiences of the aged and should not come in the way of the employment programmes for the unemployed youth.