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## **UNIT 2 MANIFESTATIONS OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION**

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### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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After going through this unit, you would be able to:

- Define the impact of global demographic transition;
- Explain the present state of population aging in India and the causes of national concern;
- Identify the different manifestations of this demographic transition; and
- Describe impact on individuals and society.

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### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

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In the previous unit you have already learnt about the phenomenon of population aging and demographic transition that is taking place all over the world. In this unit you will learn about the emerging issues associated with this phenomenon and the various manifestations of the demographic transition that are taking place. This text is a brief summary of the impact of aging on society and on individuals. It explains how the rapidly increasing speed of population aging is causing serious concern in all countries of the world.

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### **2.2 AGING PROCESS**

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All living beings go through the process of aging, from birth to death. Aging is a highly individual process and as such the difference between biological and chronological age varies widely among individuals. No two persons grow old in the same way. For instance, there is a sixty years old man who is perfectly healthy and active. In the same society, one can also see a sixty years old who is fragile in health with several chronic diseases and is mostly bed-ridden. At the heart of this demographic transition has been the growth in the number and proportion of older persons. Over the past few years, the world's population has followed the transition path from a state of high birth and high death rates to one characterised by low birth and low death rates. This demographic transition is not always viewed as a blessing by many developing countries as it is often considered as one more additional burden competing for scarce resources.

## Types of Aging

Aging is a biological process and is always associated with physiological decline affecting all organ and physiological systems. This is generally known as physiological aging. Most often the aging individuals become victims of certain chronic degenerative disorders like diabetes, hypertension, coronary and cerebral vascular disorders. These are examples of pathological aging.

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## 2.3 MANIFESTATIONS OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION

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Aging of populations is nearly universal. It has often been described as a grand success story mainly due to the dramatic improvements in health and medical services and control over infectious diseases, which have brought about substantial decreases in the mortality rates, while simultaneously resulting in rising life expectancies. Today, the more developed countries have undergone change to become more aged societies. They are faced with the problem of elderly boom.

Demographic trends indicate that developing countries are aging faster than the developed countries. By the year 2025, the proportion of the elderly population to the total population is projected to be more than 12 per cent, and nearly 71 per cent of the world's elderly population is likely to reside in the developing countries. Asia would account for more than half of the world's elderly population by the year 2025 (United Nations 1989). While industrialised countries like France or Belgium took 80-100 years to double their population aged 60 + from 9 per cent to 18 per cent, nations with emerging economies, especially in East Asia and Latin America, are doubling to the same level in 20-30 years.

The global phenomenon of aging of population afflicts India also. However, this is still in its early phase and is expected to gain momentum in the coming decades.

"The absolute numbers of the elderly will be mind boggling due to rapid growth in a short time span. In India, during 100 years from 1961, while the total population will climb five times, the number of elderly would soar 13 times and reach the figure of 340 million. We have been talking of a fourth India being added to the post- independence population of the country after crossing the one billion mark at the turn of the century. Another half century later, it would be a fifth India would be a fully grey India."

Within this broad demographic picture, four major trends can be discerned. First, there is a growing tendency for the world's elderly to be concentrated in developing countries. Second, given the age patterns, growth of the aged population implies a greater increase in the number of older women than of older men. Third, is the increase in dependency ratio. The aging population often creates the problem of decline in the number of people in the workforce in proportion to non-workers, as elderly are not economically productive. Fourth, women not only outnumber men but also outlive them in virtually all countries.

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## 2.4 IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSITION

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As you have already learnt in Unit 1 of this block, demographic transition results in change of the population structure from pyramid to pillar. There is a substantial increase in the older persons. The impact of the increase in this can be described on health, economic and social scenario of a community or country.

### 2.4.1 Impact on Health

Life expectancy represents the mean length of time an individual is expected to live if prevailing mortality conditions persist throughout the person's life. Increase in life expectancy along with the high growth of general population is mainly responsible for rapid increases in the elderly population. Over the years, due to increase in life span, the morbidities and disabilities in elderly have also increased. This requires us to gear our health infrastructure not only to deal with the increasing

number of morbidities and disabilities but also to produce a workforce to deal with this special population — the geriatric population. As you will learn from *Block 1 of Course 2*, the assessment and management of elderly differs from that of the young, not only because their pathologies and presentations vary but also because their approach towards health facilities and its follow up are different. You also need to realise that for management of the elderly, an integrated approach of various disciplines like medical and social are required as well as multiskilling oneself with skills like good clinical signs, counselling skills etc. You will read about the different health related to the elderly in *Courses 2 of this programme*. Hence, these shall not be detailed here.

Increase in the life expectancy at birth coupled with the increase in the incidence of old age will have important implications for planning of social welfare and care provisions. Increase in longevity implies that elderly will now place greater stress on families since they were living longer and had a higher probability of experiencing disability. At the same time, the responsibility for providing care would be divided among fewer children given declining fertility rates, and those children in all likelihood would be working and likely to be more geographically distant. Increasing life expectancy and longevity will become a cause for concern because of the consequences they are likely to have on the durability of the social security system, education, housing, transportation, medical and social services and family support, as well as on the structure of the future labour market.

### Check Your Progress 1

State True (T) or False (F):

- a) There has been a transition from a state of high birth and high death rates to low birth and low death rates. (T/F)
- b) The global phenomenon of aging will not effect India. (T/F)
- c) The increase in life expectancy and increase in the elderly will effect the social welfare and care provisions. (T/F)

### 2.4.2 Social Outcomes of Demographic Transition

One of the important social outcome is single elderlies. A large proportion is single, owing to the death of the spouse, with divorce or separation from marriage partner being negligible. According to the 1981 Census, 78 per cent males were married while only 35 per cent females were married. This indicates the presence of a high proportion of widows among the population. The incidence of widowhood is much higher among the aged females than among male counterparts. This trend is in keeping with the situation prevalent all over the world. The absolute number of elderly widowed women in India is very large—4.8 million in 1991. With advancing age, widowhood rates are likely to be high.

A major life event among the elderly is that of widowhood. Women's life expectancies are longer than those of men, and the tendency for men to marry women younger than them means that widowhood is much more likely for women. Of the several transitions that are encountered by women during their life-course, widowhood is perhaps most traumatic. This transition carries with it potentials that disturb physical and mental well being of widowed individuals, thus have an impact on health.

When we think of the elderly we generally do not think of them as workers. Instead, we think of them in terms of old, sick, disabled and retired. Justifiably, one of the more persistent anxieties experienced by older adults relates to income security. Inflation, with its effect on the price of commodities has increasingly limited buying power. While money does not always produce happiness, it is related to satisfaction in later life. The need for food, clothing, shelter, recreation, transportation, and the ability to buy gifts for grandchildren and family members does not decline with age.

A large majority of the elderly persons in India, contrary to expectations, continue to work. Retirement is mandatory only for those persons working in the organised sector of the economy. The workforce in this sector comprises less than one-tenth of the country's total workforce. The vast majority of the workforce is engaged in the unorganised sector, for which economic insecurity is a major concern. They continue

working well into advanced ages, till their health and physical abilities permit them. Thus there is no concept of formal age of retirement for them. The formal labour-force participation tends to drop off between the age of 60 and 64.

All over the world, including India, agriculture is a major source of livelihood for an overwhelming majority of the population. Thus, underlining the rural character of its economy. In 1991, out of the main workers in the age category of 60 and above, 78 per cent of elderly males and 84 per cent of elderly females were engaged in the agricultural sector. However, only two per cent of elderly males and three per cent of elderly females were engaged in the household industry sector. While 20 per cent elderly males and 12 per cent elderly females were gainfully employed in activities such as manufacturing and service including professional and technical jobs.

The elderly who spent most of their working lives in the unorganised and informal sector do not receive pensions when they are unable to work and call it a day. This has significance for their quality of life in that they have difficulties in meeting their basic needs. As a result, they are likely to suffer from malnutrition, leading to depression and mental confusion. Not only does poverty affect a substantial proportion of older people, but also when it does, it is likely to be an enduring experience. The high incidence of poverty and low incomes among older people is reflected in other measures of deprivation. The majority of elderly people still live in or on the margin of poverty.

Another pressing problem of old age is dependency. Dependency, like many other phenomena of aging, is seen primarily as a product of decline and deterioration. Aging is characterized by a shift from independence to dependence as a result of loss of income or loss of spouse or loss of physical mobility either single or in combination. Disengagement from jobs is manifesting itself in decline in authority, greater alienation and economic invariability. The shift from independence to dependence often signals changes in the ability of an elderly individual to control and influence the behaviour of others. This type of power is differentially distributed amongst the elderly. The elderly suffer a double disadvantage because they have neither individual nor social power. Dependency can occur in multiple domains (e.g. mental, physical, economic dependence, or a combination of these). It is important to recognise that dependence is not unitary phenomenon and that individuals may exhibit a unique configuration of one or more types of dependency, depending on their context. Dependency is not necessarily synonymous with old age. You will read more about dependency in Block 5 of Course 1.

The aging of the population has brought with it a new concern about the relations between age groups.

### 2.4.3 Economic Aspects of Demographic Transition

The demographic 'dependency ratio' also called the 'support ratio', is commonly used by demographers and social scientists to assess the impact of age structure on economic well being. Child dependency ratio, elderly dependency ratio and total dependency ratio are frequently employed. These ratios express the proportion of assumed non-working population, namely, children (0-14) and/or elderly (60 years and plus) to working population, namely, adults (15-59). There has been a steady increase in the elderly dependency ratio from 9.8 in 1951 to 11.3 in 1991. Aging of population is identified with the increasing population of less productive population, which becomes economically and socially more and more dependent with further increase in age. It indicates a gradual shift of the dependency burden from younger to older population over a time period, with several far-reaching policy implications in future years.

#### Check Your Progress 2

Fill in the blanks :

- Single elderlies are mainly.....
- Elderlies work till advancing ages mainly in the.....
- The elderly dependency ratio in 1991 was.....

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## 2.5 LET US SUM UP

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Aging occurring universally in all populations has resulted in change in the demographic picture from pyramid to pillar. This demographic transition has a marked impact on the health, economic and social aspects with an increase in the life expectancy. There is an increase in the morbidities and disabilities with a decrease in birth rate. On the other hand there are fewer children to look after their aging parents.

One of the major social problems is that of single elderly most of them are women. There is also an increase in the dependency ratio of elderly as a result of the increase in morbidities and disabilities.

Elderly specially in our country work till advanced ages. Also most of them work in the informal and unorganized sector and do not get pensions. Economic dependency ratio is an issue of growing concern.

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## 2.6 KEY WORDS

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- Aging** : This is a biological process through which all living organisms go through from birth to death. Aging in human being is a highly individual process and is associated with biological decline, the extent of which differ from one individual to another.
- Dependency Ratio** : It is expressed as percentage of population who are economically non-productive to the population which are economically productive. As the country ages, the percentage of dependent population increases at the expense of economically productive population.
- Life Expectancy** : It is the expected number of years that a newborn individual would live in the midst of environmental factors which are existing in the country. It is expressed as life expectancy at birth or at any fixed age (e.g. life expectancy at 60 years). The life expectancy in India of an individual at birth is 64 years for males and 66 years for females.
- Population Aging** : It means the demographic process in which the aging individuals consistently increase in number as compared to the total population. As a result, the percentage of individuals of 60 years and above of the total population increase every year.
- Widowhood** : The period through which an elderly woman passes after the death of her husband. This is usually a period of economic dependence, social isolation and physiological decline in a woman's life.

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## 2.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- a) T
- b) F
- c) T

### Check Your Progress 2

- a) women.
- b) unorganized and informal.
- c) 11.3.

NOTES