

Gender Disparities in Elderly Survival in Selected States of India¹

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ABSTRACT

Mortality transition has not received adequate attention of social scientists in the recent past due to the overriding concern about exceptionally high levels of fertility in the past and the consequent implications of population growth in the country. There is evidence to suggest that mortality decline has slowed down considerably during the 1970's. Some attempts are made to analyse the age pattern of survival in the country, but the emphasis of the studies has not been on the changes in old age survival. Along with the improvement in overall survival, there appears to be improvement in the survival of elderly population in India and faster improvement especially in Kerala state. The objective of the paper is to know the gender disparities in elderly survival pattern in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamilnadu and India. The paper focuses on the change in the pattern of expectation of life of elderly (i.e. at ages 60, 65 and 70) in the above states and India from 1970-75 to 2001-05 by gender and residential background. The analysis is based on the information from SRS Abridged Life Tables of Registrar General, India for various periods. Although expectation of life is the highest in Kerala but the expectation of life of elderly is the highest in Punjab. The findings suggest that the improvement in old age survival has slowed down during late 1980's as compared to 1970's. The survival chances of female elderly were higher and faster than male elderly. The rate of improvement of survival chances of old olds was higher than young olds. Due to improvement in the chances of survival at old ages, the proportion of elderly is going to increase further in the years to come. It is not the proportion but the size of elderly population is important for policy, especially in the field of health and welfare.

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