



Geography

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Ageing population of urban Bihar : A case study of Patna Urban Agglomeration

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Abstract : *India's demographic contour suggests a steep rise in ageing population in the coming decades as a result of declining fertility, increasing expectancy of life at birth and consequent ageing of population. According to 2001 census, Bihar has about 6.9% of elderly population (60+) among the total population while their proportion is 6.2% in urban areas. Patna Urban Agglomeration has about 6.28% of population aged 60 and above. Since longevity of female population is more compared to their male counter part at*

higher age, the proportion of female elderly population is slightly high (6.32%) compared to their male counter part (6.18%) in Patna. A fast rise in aged population adds to various socio-economic challenges in a country like India. In urban areas, many women work outside home and as a result, cease to be the traditional carers of old people. The function of a family as a social safety net for the elderly is eroding fast. Further, two-third of the elderly females are illiterate and a large number of them are single. Thus, the level of dependency is quite high among them. There are about 52.8% and 46.2% fully dependent elderly population in Bihar and India respectively (NSS survey 52nd round). Being economically unproductive, they are considered as burden in the family. Further, the problem is aggravated due to limited availability of social security offered by pension schemes. It is available only to 10% of population retiring from organized sector. Unlike industrialized country, where pension system covers the economic needs of all the aged population, 7.8% of Indian elderly and 8.6% of elderly population of Bihar could not meet their basic needs (NSS 52nd round). During the time of medical emergency, these hapless people depend on the meagre government medical services. Most of the illiterates and poor aged people are not aware of the government schemes for destitute population. Many of them are not able to fill the relevant forms or produce age certificates. The condition is even