



# Demographic Aspects of Greying Population in India

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## Abstract

Population Ageing is a global phenomenon whereby proportion of children in the population decreases and those of elderly person increases. This is the outcome of demographic transition. There has been noticed health improvements in the country when the shift from a young to an older age structure is observed along with the fact that individuals are reaching the older ages in exceptional numbers and with erratic needs and resources is likely to pose many policy challenges arising out of growing proportions of elderly and decreasing proportions of children. This tendency leads to a decreasing support base combined with higher levels of old age dependency. At the same time, the transition away from a young age structure is not uniform across the country. India is undergoing through the phase of demographic transition where reduction in fertility and mortality have resulted in population ageing. So, this paper is an attempt to study the demographic aspects of greying or ageing population in India. There is therefore a need to promote consonance between development and demographic change by growing the economic and social sources of sustenance for the elderly, among others. There are vast differences in both quantity and quality of statistics about the elderly population. This study focuses on the demographic aspects of greying population in India that is; it studies size and growth of elderly population, its dependency ratio and trends in sex ratio.

**Keywords:** Demographic Transition, Greying Population, Dependency Ratio.

## 1. Introduction

Population ageing is a demographic phenomenon in the world. It signifies the process whereby the proportion of children in the population decreases and those of old persons increases. Such population is known as Ageing of population or Greying of population. The greying of population is the outcome of the process of demographic transition. The reduction of fertility and mortality leads to increased proportion of older people in the total population. In the midst of 20th century, this phenomenon has been experienced by developed countries. And during the last three decades, it has been emerging as significant global issue. It is projected that number of people 60 years and above will increase to 2 billion by 2050, almost a triple increase and thus first quarter of 21st century is going to be called as 'The age of ageing' (Manjinder Kaur, 2015). Like many other developing countries, India is also undergoing through the phase of Ageing. According to the World population prospects, UN revision 2006, the population of aged in India is currently the second largest in the world. Since independence, the life expectancy in India has increased from 32.1 years to 68.89 years in 2011. This significant increase in life expectancy has brought fundamental changes in the age structure of the population, further leading to greying of population. So this paper is an attempt to study the demographic aspects of greying population in India.

Population Ageing is whereby proportion of children in the population decreases and those of elderly person increases and it is the outcome of demographic transition. There has been noticed health improvements in the country when the shift from a young to an older age structure is observed along with the fact that individuals are reaching the older ages in exceptional numbers and with erratic needs and resources is likely to pose many policy challenges arising out of growing proportions of elderly and decreasing proportions of children. This tendency leads to a decreasing support base combined with higher levels of old age dependency. At the same time, the transition away from a young age structure is not uniform across the country. India is undergoing through the phase of demographic transition where reduction in fertility and mortality have resulted in population ageing. There is therefore a need to promote consonance between development and demographic change by growing the economic and social sources of sustenance for the elderly, among others. There are vast differences in both quantity and quality of statistics about the elderly population. This study focuses on the demographic aspects of greying population in India that is; it studies size and growth of elderly population, its dependency ratio and trends in sex ratio.

The following chart shows the process of ageing:



*Source: Author*

## 2. Demographics Aspects of Ageing in India:

This section discusses the demographic aspects of graying population or ageing population in India.

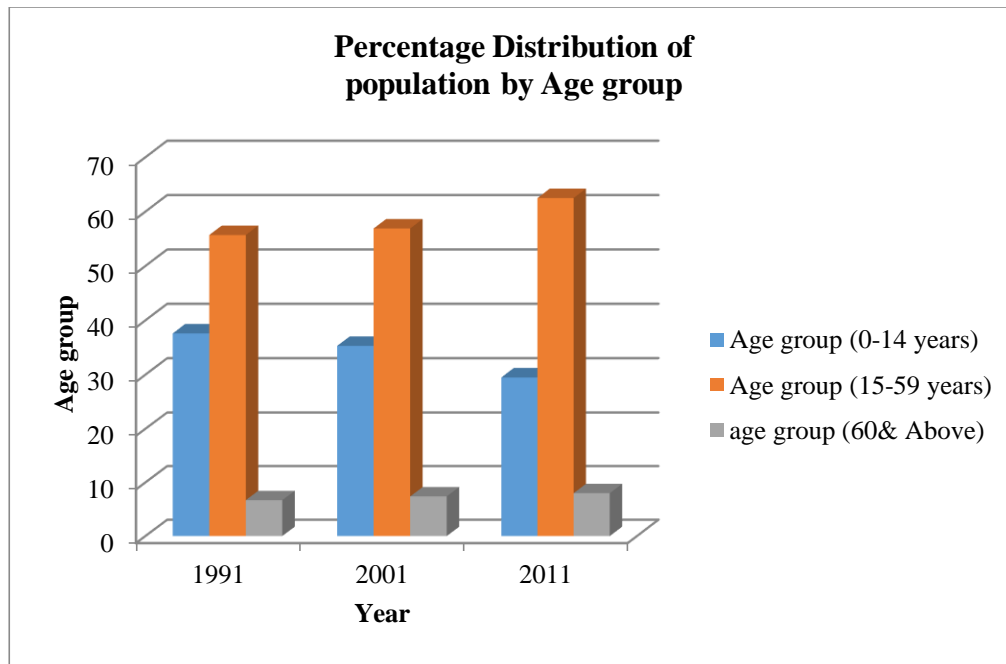
### 2.1 Share of Elderly in Total Population

The proportion of elderly population has increased in all the countries of the world. This is due to improvement in public health and medical advancement of deadly epidemic diseases along with decline in death and birth rates.

**Table 2.1: Percentage distribution of population by broad age groups**

Year	0-14	15-59	60&above
1991	37.6	55.7	6.7
2001	35.3	56.9	7.4
2011	29.5	62.5	8.0

*Source: Census of India*

**Figure 2.1: Percentage distribution of population by broad age groups**

*Source: Author*

In India, since 1991, the elderly population has been increasing continuously. This is evident from the table 1 where elderly population has increased from 6.7% in 1991 to 8% in 2011. Also it is projected that the grey population will increase by more than 10% in 2021.

## 2.2 Size and Growth of Elderly population

There has been a progressive increase in the number and proportion of aged people due to change in age composition of the population over time.

**Table 2.2: Size and Growth of Population**

Year	Size of Population of elderly age group (60 and above)			Year	Decadal growth	
	Total	Male	Female		Elderly population	Total population
1951	19.61	9.67	9.94	1951-61	23.9	21.6
1961	24.71	12.36	12.35	1961-71	33.7	24.8
1971	32.70	16.87	15.83	1971-81	33.0	24.7
1981	43.90	22.49	21.49	1981-91	29.7	23.9
1991	55.30	28.23	27.07	1991-01	25.2	21.5
2001	75.93	38.22	37.71	-	-	-

*Source: Census of India*

It is evident that size of population over 60 has increased from 19.61 million in 1951 to 75.93millions in 2001.

The decadal growth of India's elderly population and total population has been shown in the table. It is evident that growth rate of elderly population has increased from 23.9 % in 1951 to 33% in 1981. Then after that it showed a decline although it has outpaced the growth of general population.

### 2.3 Trends in Sex Ratio of Elderly Population

Sex ratio means females per 1000 males. The table 2.3 shows the sex ratio of Elderly Population from 1951-2011. The table shows the variation in the sex ratio of Elderly population in the age group sixty and above and all ages. In 2011 the sex ratio for the age group sixty and above shows 1092 females per 1000 males whereas it is comparatively less for all ages i.e 943 females per 1000 males.

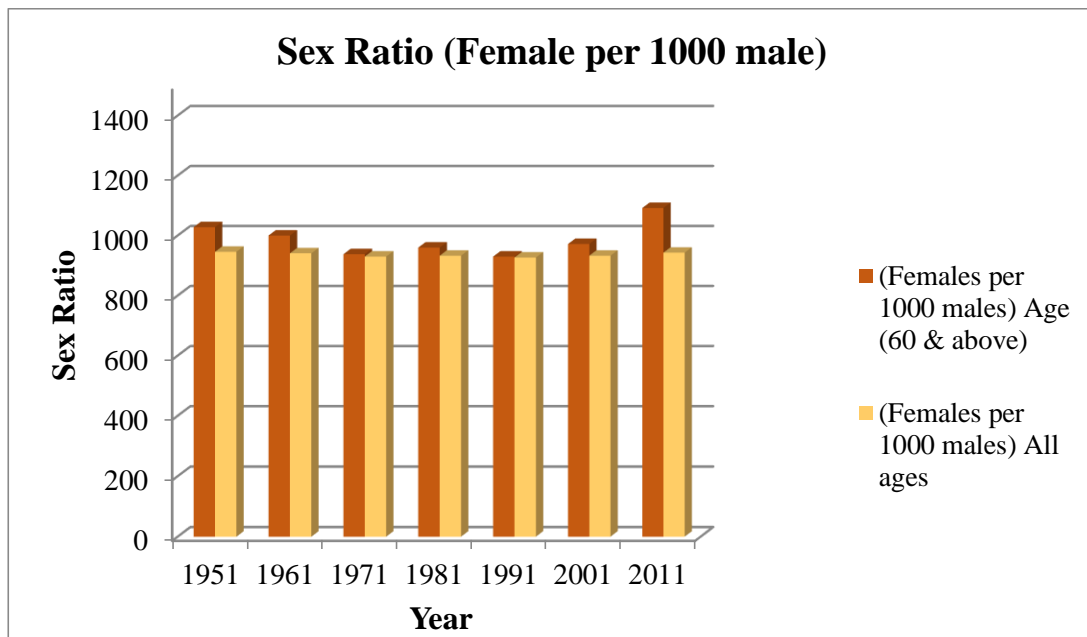
**Table 2.3: Sex ratio of Elderly population**

Year	Sex ratio (Females per 1000 males)	
	Age (60 & above)	All ages
1951	1028	946
1961	1000	941
1971	938	930
1981	960	933
1991	930	927
2001	972	933
2011	1092	943

*Source: Census of India*

**Figure 2.3: Sex Ratio**





*Source: Author*

It is evident from the above table and diagram; Sex ratio has declined from 946 in 1951 to 927 in 1991. Since 1991 it has shown a rise in sex ratio. On the other hand, elderly sex ratio has also declined till 1991 and after that has shown a considerable increase. This implies the preponderance of females than males.

## 2.4 Dependency ratio

In demography the dependency ratio is an age-population ratio of those typically not in the labour force (the *dependent* part) and those typically in the labour force (the *productive* part). It is used to measure the pressure on productive population.

The dependent part usually includes those under the age of 15 and over the age of 59. The productive part makes up the population in between, ages 15 – 59. It is normally expressed as a percentage that is;

**Dependency Ratio = (No. of persons in age group 0-14 years + No. of persons in age group 60 years or more) ÷ No. of persons in age group 15-59 years \* 1000**

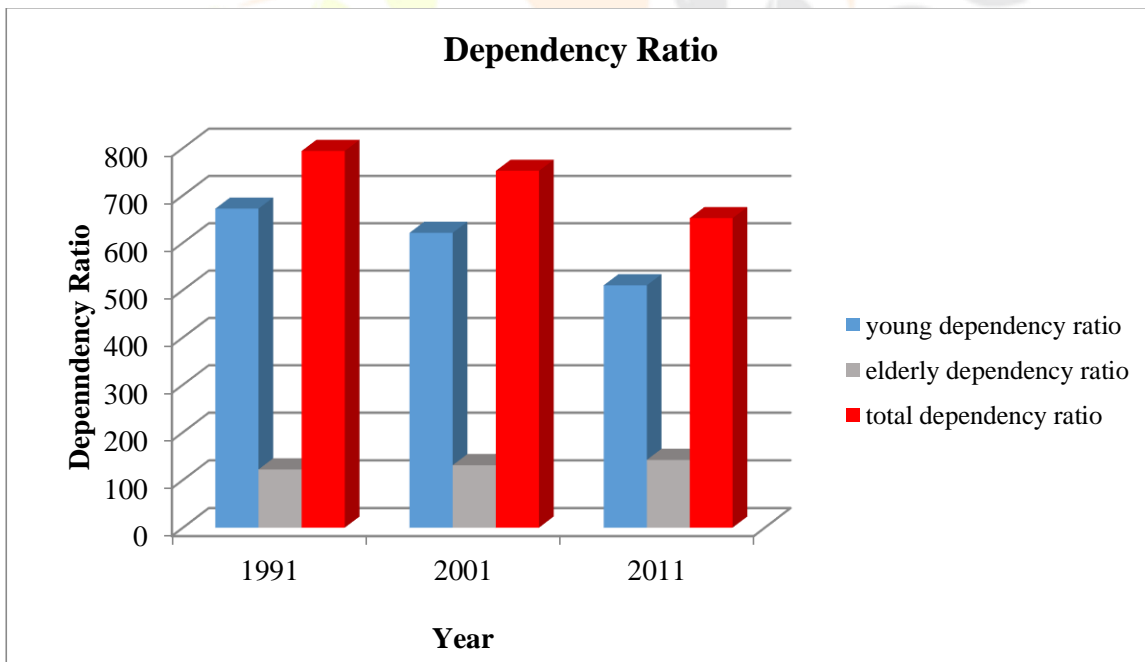
As the ratio increases there may be an increased burden on the productive part of the population to maintain the upbringing and pensions of the economically dependent. This results in direct impacts on financial expenditures on things like social security, as well as many indirect consequences.

The (total) dependency ratio can be decomposed into-Child (Young) dependency ratio and Aged (Old) dependency ratio

- **Child (Young) dependency ratio** =(No. of persons in age group 0-14 years ÷ No. of persons in age group 15-59 years \*1000
- **Aged (Old) dependency ratio** =(No. of persons in age group 60and above ÷ No. of persons in age group 15-59 years \*1000

**Table2.4: Dependency Ratio**

Year	Young dependency ratio	Elderly dependency ratio	Total dependency ratio
1991	672	122	794
2001	621	131	752
2011	510	142	652

*Source: Census of India***Figure 2.4: Dependency Ratio***Source: Author*

The above shows that dependency ratio has declined from 1991 to 2011. But elderly dependency ratio has increased implying burden on the productive part of the population.

### 3. Challenges of greying population

- i. Large economic dependency on the working population for their livelihood and wellbeing
- ii. Eroding of prospective demographic dividend as a result of increasing dependency ratio
- iii. Increased government spending on health care and pensions.
- iv. Adds to socio-economic burden in the family
- v. Loss of status and decision making power
- vi. Maltreatment and elderly abuse
- vii. Old people generally surrender their legal rights in the property owned by the family which leads to their poverty. So the legal problem of elderly arises.
- viii. Decline in the overall wellbeing of the aged due to increased expenditure on medical treatments, loss of productivity etc.
- ix. Vulnerability of mental disorders among aged population.
- x. Emotional Insecurity arises.

### 4. Suggestion and Policy Recommendations

- Encourage pension programs not only in govt. sector but also in private institutions. It will generate income to elderly people.
- The initiatives like extension of retirement age of employees should be taken. This will reduce the fiscal burden as well as dependency.
- The policy makers should focus on the spread of awareness about insurance especially medicare program for elderly.
- Provision of care and support are required by govt, NGO like old age homes
- Time to time counselling sessions should be organized by the govt for ageing population to deal effectively .
- Need of reform in welfare policies of greying population.

### 5. Conclusion

India is a vast nation and ranks second most populous nation in the world. Almost 17.5% of the world's population lives in India. There is wide range of heterogeneity in population of the country as it shows diversity in literacy, health, employment, urbanisation, socio-economic status etc. There are vast differences in both quantity and quality of statistics about the elderly population. This study focuses on the demographic aspects of greying population in India that is; it studies size and growth of elderly population, its dependency ratio and trends in sex ratio.



The study found that percentage distribution of elderly population has increased since independence due to improvement in public health and medical advances. The size of elderly population has increased over the decades. The decadal growth has increased from 1951 to 1981 but since then there has been a decline in the growth rate. It is also evident that sex ratio has declined till 1991 but after that due to initiation of certain programs sex ratio has increased. This implies the preponderance of females over males in elderly population. On the other hand, if we look at dependency ratio, it is observed that overall dependency ratio has declined since 1991 but there has been steady increase in elderly dependency ratio. This indicates financial burden on the productive population. Thus, ageing of population is an emerging challenge for a developing country like India. This calls for the integrated and collective effort in setting up of a required institutional framework which could serve to the wellbeing of the greying population.

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