

# Disabled Elderly in India

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*Very few studies show the association between gender, marital status, living arrangements and disability among older adults in India. The study seeks to understand the gender, marital status, usual activity and extent of disability of the disabled elderly according to their place of residence from the secondary data available. [ Paper Presented at International Conference 'Towards Sustainable Global Health' ]*

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The 21st century is witnessing a gradual transition to an ageing society the world over.

According to WHO, ageing is a privilege and a societal achievement. Old age consists of ages nearing the average life span of human beings, and thus the end of the human life cycle. Ageing of the population has been defined as an increase in the proportion of the aged in comparison to that of a decrease in the proportion of the young.

The process which started in developed countries is slowly shifting to developing countries like India and China. There is going to be an increase in the absolute number of elderly (60+). The age composition of India's population has been altered by the transition from high to relatively low mortality and fertility. India has the second largest number of elderly in the world with as many as 77 million as compared to China's 127 million. In India, while the elderly constituted only 24 million in 1961, it increased to 43 million in 1981, 57 million in 1991 and 77 million in 2001. By 2050, this proportion is expected to increase by 21 per cent (World Population Prospects, 2004). The reduction in fertility level, reinforced by steady increase in the life expectancy has produced fundamental changes in the age structure of the population, which in turn leads to the aging population.

## **Disabled Elderly in India**

It is a known fact that as people age their health also deteriorates. Health problems are a major concern for the elderly and they are prone to diseases and disabilities more than the younger age groups which can make them physically and economically dependent. The increasing number of elderly in the country means that they are going to make contributions to the economy. If this has to happen then they have to be healthy physically and mentally. Active and healthy ageing is possible only if the health aspects of the old people are tackled.

There are discussions about vulnerable groups like women, schedule castes and tribes etc; elderly is another important group which needs attention, because of their increasing number. There are a number of studies that look at the health conditions of elderly in developing countries. However there are few studies that look into the disability pattern of the elderly. Interestingly, most of the studies focus on the disability patterns of the younger populations. There are studies that emphasize that if the quality of life of the elderly is to be improved, then the burden of disease must be reduced [Shashi Kant et.al. 2004].

Studies in the economically advanced countries (as in the US) have also shown an association between gender, marital status and health and disability. However, there is very little information about gender differentials in disability among the elderly in developing countries, like India. Also, little is known about the association between gender, marital status, living arrangements and disability among older adults in these countries [Sengupta and Agree, 2002]

Around 5 per cent of Indian older people have problems with physical mobility. Four million Indians suffer from mental problems and 12 million are handicapped. One out of seven older people in the world has been projected to be from India in the year 2001[Sharma and Agarwal,1996]. Some 40 per cent of the elderly reported suffering from at least one disability, the incidence was slightly higher among females compared to males. The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) probed five types of disabilities of the elderly. These were visual impairment, hearing problem, difficulty in walking (locomotor problem), problems in speech and senility. Twenty-five per cent of the elderly in India suffered from visual impairment, followed by hearing difficulties (14 per cent) and locomotor disability and senility (each 11 per cent). The prevalence rates of all the five disabilities were higher in rural than in urban areas. Except for visual impairment, women were ahead in all the disabilities compared to males. About 60 per cent of the elderly in India live disability-free lives in old age. The highest proportion of no disability was reported in South India and the lowest in East India. It was slightly higher among rural areas compared to that in urban areas. Among the five disabilities under investigation in the NSSO survey, 40 per cent of the elderly reported suffering from at least one disability and this was slightly higher among females compared to males. Sex differentials were reported for the prevalence of two and three disabilities; 15 per cent suffered from, at least two disabilities and another 6 per cent suffered from three disabilities. According to [Shah and Prabhakar 1997], visual impairments in 11million Indians, 38 million have hearing impairments. According to [Dandekar 1996], about 5 per cent of old people in rural and urban India are physically immobile.

For the present study, age of the elderly is taken as people who are 60 years and over. The present study tries to examine the rural-urban differential, sex differential among elderly people in India who are affected by different types of disabilities. It also tries to understand the dependency, employment, marital status, general education level, living arrangements of elderly who are disabled. Secondary data is used for the study. Data are used from NSSO 58<sup>th</sup> round (1995-96), NSSO 60<sup>th</sup> round (2003) and Census of India 2001.

**Table 1: Disability Among Elderly as a Proportion of All Disabled**

| Type of Disability | Rural |     |     | Urban |     |     | Total |     |     |
|--------------------|-------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|
|                    | P     | M   | F   | P     | M   | F   | P     | M   | F   |
| Total              | 5.3   | 5.5 | 5.0 | 3.9   | 4.2 | 3.6 | 4.9   | 5.2 | 4.7 |
| Seeing             | 2.8   | 2.8 | 2.8 | 1.9   | 2.0 | 1.9 | 2.6   | 2.6 | 2.6 |
| Hearing            | 0.7   | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.4   | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.6   | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| Mental             | 0.2   | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2   | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.2   | 0.3 | 0.2 |
| Movement           | 1.4   | 1.7 | 1.2 | 1.1   | 1.4 | 0.9 | 1.4   | 1.6 | 1.1 |
| Speech             | 0.2   | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.1   | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.2   | 0.2 | 0.1 |

*Note:* P-Persons, M-Male, F-Female, Figures given are per centages

*Source:* Calculated from Census 2001.

Elderly who suffer from at least one disability is 5 per cent. Among the disabilities the proportion of elderly who are having problems in seeing is the highest. It is also seen from the table that the rural elderly who are the most affected by the disabilities.

**Table 1.1: Pattern of Disabilities Among Elderly According to SC (percentage)**

| Type of Disabilities | Rural |     |     | Urban |     |     | Total |     |     |
|----------------------|-------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|
|                      | P     | M   | F   | P     | M   | F   | P     | M   | F   |
| Any type disability  | 5.6   | 5.9 | 5.4 | 4.5   | 4.8 | 4.2 | 5.4   | 5.7 | 5.2 |
| Seeing               | 3.1   | 3.0 | 3.1 | 2.3   | 2.3 | 2.3 | 3.1   | 3.0 | 3.1 |
| Hearing              | 0.7   | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.2   | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.6   | 0.6 | 0.6 |
| Mental               | 0.2   | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2   | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2   | 0.2 | 0.2 |
| Movement             | 1.5   | 1.8 | 1.2 | 1.3   | 1.6 | 1.0 | 1.5   | 1.7 | 1.2 |
| Speech               | 0.2   | 0.2 | 0.2 | 0.2   | 0.2 | 0.1 | 0.2   | 0.2 | 0.2 |

*Note:* SC- Scheduled Caste

*Source:* Calculated from Census 2001.

**Table 1.2: Pattern of Disabilities among elderly according to ST (percentage)**

| Type of Disabilities | Rural   |      |        | Urban   |      |        | Total   |      |        |
|----------------------|---------|------|--------|---------|------|--------|---------|------|--------|
|                      | Persons | Male | Female | Persons | Male | Female | Persons | Male | Female |
| Any type disability  | 5.9     | 6.1  | 5.7    | 4.3     | 4.7  | 3.9    | 5.8     | 6.0  | 5.6    |
| Seeing               | 2.9     | 3.0  | 2.9    | 2.0     | 2.0  | 2.0    | 2.9     | 2.9  | 2.8    |
| Hearing              | 0.9     | 0.9  | 0.9    | 0.6     | 0.6  | 0.6    | 0.9     | 0.9  | 0.9    |
| Mental               | 0.2     | 0.2  | 0.2    | 0.2     | 0.2  | 0.2    | 0.2     | 0.2  | 0.2    |
| Movement             | 1.7     | 1.8  | 1.5    | 1.3     | 1.7  | 1.1    | 1.7     | 1.8  | 1.5    |
| Speech               | 0.2     | 0.2  | 0.2    | 0.2     | 0.2  | 0.1    | 0.2     | 0.2  | 0.2    |

Source: Calculated from Census 2001.

When we compare the disability patterns of elderly who are in SC and STs, it is seen that the elderly who are having disability is high among STs. It is also seen from the survey conducted by NSSO 58<sup>th</sup> (2003) round that the disabilities among scheduled tribes were high compared to that among scheduled castes.

A comparison between the three tables also show that, compared to the general population of elderly, elderly who belong to SCs and STs are having a higher proportion of disability. NSSO 58<sup>th</sup> round also supports this that compared to the general population SCs and STs have a higher incidence of disabilities.

Disabled elderly make up half the disabled population in India. According to NSSO 52<sup>nd</sup> round the proportion of disabled people was 55.8 per cent. Those who are disabled in seeing and hearing, form more than the total disabled population. The proportion of elderly disabled in hearing or with movement impairment in urban areas is more than that in the total elderly population. Female elderly suffer from disabilities over five times that of elderly men.

**Table 1.3: Comparison Between the Percentage of Total Disabled Population To That of Elderly by Type of Disability, Sex and Residence**

| Age     | Type of Disability |      |      |        |     |     |         |      |      |          |      |      |        |      |      |
|---------|--------------------|------|------|--------|-----|-----|---------|------|------|----------|------|------|--------|------|------|
|         | Seeing             |      |      | Speech |     |     | Hearing |      |      | Movement |      |      | Mental |      |      |
|         | P                  | M    | F    | P      | M   | F   | P       | M    | F    | P        | M    | F    | P      | M    | F    |
|         | Total              |      |      |        |     |     |         |      |      |          |      |      |        |      |      |
| Tot Age | 48.5               | 45.5 | 52.7 | 7.5    | 7.5 | 7.5 | 5.8     | 5.3  | 6.3  | 27.9     | 31.0 | 23.7 | 10.3   | 10.7 | 9.8  |
| 60+     | 51.9               | 49.2 | 54.7 | 3.2    | 3.3 | 3.2 | 12.6    | 11.9 | 13.3 | 27.5     | 30.8 | 24.0 | 4.8    | 4.8  | 4.8  |
|         | Rural              |      |      |        |     |     |         |      |      |          |      |      |        |      |      |
| Total   | 48.0               | 44.9 | 52.3 | 7.6    | 7.6 | 6.2 | 5.8     | 6.8  | 6.8  | 28.4     | 31.6 | 24.1 | 9.7    | 10.1 | 9.2  |
| 60+     | 52.5               | 49.7 | 55.4 | 3.1    | 3.2 | 3.1 | 12.9    | 12.3 | 13.5 | 27.1     | 30.3 | 23.7 | 4.4    | 4.5  | 4.4  |
|         | Urban              |      |      |        |     |     |         |      |      |          |      |      |        |      |      |
| Total   | 50.0               | 47.2 | 53.9 | 7.2    | 7.1 | 7.3 | 4.3     | 3.9  | 4.9  | 26.3     | 29.0 | 22.5 | 12.1   | 12.7 | 11.4 |
| 60+     | 49.5               | 47.2 | 52.1 | 3.7    | 3.9 | 3.6 | 11.3    | 10.1 | 12.6 | 29.2     | 32.5 | 25.4 | 6.3    | 6.3  | 6.3  |

Source: Census Data 2001.

**Table 1.4: Per centage of Disabled by Broad Age Groups, Type of Disability and Sex for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, India**

| Age     | Type of Disability |      |      |        |     |     |         |      |      |          |      |      |        |     |     |
|---------|--------------------|------|------|--------|-----|-----|---------|------|------|----------|------|------|--------|-----|-----|
|         | Seeing             |      |      | Speech |     |     | Hearing |      |      | Movement |      |      | Mental |     |     |
|         | P                  | M    | F    | P      | M   | F   | P       | M    | F    | P        | M    | F    | P      | M   | F   |
|         | Scheduled Castes   |      |      |        |     |     |         |      |      |          |      |      |        |     |     |
| Tot age | 48.6               | 45.2 | 53.1 | 7.3    | 7.3 | 7.3 | 5.8     | 5.3  | 6.3  | 29.1     | 32.5 | 24.6 | 9.2    | 9.6 | 8.7 |
| 60+     | 54.5               | 51.4 | 57.9 | 3.0    | 3.0 | 3.0 | 11.7    | 11.2 | 12.3 | 26.7     | 30.4 | 22.7 | 4.0    | 4.0 | 4.1 |
|         | Scheduled Tribes   |      |      |        |     |     |         |      |      |          |      |      |        |     |     |
| Tot     | 48.4               | 47.1 | 50.0 | 7.5    | 7.4 | 7.6 | 7.7     | 7.3  | 8.2  | 27.9     | 29.7 | 25.7 | 8.4    | 8.5 | 8.4 |
| 60+     | 49.8               | 48.5 | 51.0 | 2.8    | 2.8 | 2.8 | 15.3    | 15.0 | 15.5 | 28.6     | 30.1 | 27.1 | 3.5    | 3.5 | 3.6 |

Source: Census of India 2001.

In the case of both schedule castes and schedule tribes, the proportion of elderly who have disabilities in seeing and hearing are higher than the total proportion of SCs and STs who are disabled. Between the SCs and the STs the proportion of SCs with seeing and

movement disabilities is higher. In almost all the cases it is the female elderly in both SCs and STs are suffering.

**Table 1.5: Per 1000 Distribution of Hospitalized Cases During Last 365 Days of Disabled Elderly**

| Rural Male Elderly   |      |       |       |       |     |
|----------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| Disability           | 0-14 | 15-29 | 30-44 | 45-59 | 60+ |
| Locomotor            | 24   | 11    | 18    | 12    | 17  |
| Blindness*           | 1    | 2     | 2     | 5     | 12  |
| Speech               | 1    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0   |
| Hearing              | 3    | 4     | 2     | 3     | 0   |
| Rural Female Elderly |      |       |       |       |     |
| Locomotor            | 10   | 5     | 4     | 11    | 4   |
| Blindness*           | 0    | 1     | 1     | 7     | 14  |
| Speech               | 1    | 5     | 0     | 1     | 0   |
| Hearing              | 1    | 2     | 0     | 2     | 0   |

| Urban Male Elderly   |      |       |       |       |     |
|----------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
| Disability           | 0-14 | 15-29 | 30-44 | 45-59 | 60+ |
| Locomotor            | 3    | 5     | 6     | 13    | 22  |
| Blindness*           | 0    | 5     | 0     | 4     | 5   |
| Speech               | 0    | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0   |
| Hearing              | 2    | 0     | 1     | 2     | 2   |
| Urban Female Elderly |      |       |       |       |     |
| Locomotor            | 7    | 2     | 4     | 7     | 16  |
| Blindness*           | 2    | 0     | 1     | 7     | 7   |
| Speech               | 0    | 0     | 0     | 1     | 0   |
| Hearing              | 0    | 1     | 2     | 1     | 0   |

Source: NSSO 60<sup>th</sup> round reports

\* Cataract is not taken.

The 58<sup>th</sup> round of NSSO (2003)<sup>1</sup> included a survey exclusively for the disabled people in India, which treated a person as having disability if he/she has restrictions or lack of abilities to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being. It excluded illness/injury of recent origin (morbidity) resulting into temporary loss of ability to see, hear, speak or move. A clear picture emerges from the table that irrespective of the place of residence and gender, the number of elderly who are disabled is very high compared to that in other age groups.

### Marital Status and Disabled Elderly

Census 2001 data shows that almost two of every five disabled aged 60+ are 'Widowed', the proportion of widowed females is significantly higher than males. According to Rajan, Risseuw and Pereira (2005) health wise, widows constitute a vulnerable group. Widowhood consists a much greater risk factor for the aged women as compared to men. Access to resources is less for widowed women compared to men.

[Bose (2000) has found that elderly widows are the most vulnerable sections of the society. Sujaya (2000) has given some reasons for this. Because of the high life expectancy, women tend to live longer. The lack of social and economic support makes them to lead a difficult. The patriarchal system makes their lives even more difficult to live and sustain.

Living arrangement of the disabled elderly reveals that the male elderly, whether in rural or urban areas live with spouse and other relatives and female elderly live with children.

**Table 2: Marital Status and Disabled Elderly**

| Type of Disability | Marital Status |      |     |         |      |      |         |      |      |                    |     |     |
|--------------------|----------------|------|-----|---------|------|------|---------|------|------|--------------------|-----|-----|
|                    | Never Married  |      |     | Married |      |      | Widowed |      |      | Divorced/Separated |     |     |
|                    | P              | M    | F   | P       | M    | F    | P       | M    | F    | P                  | M   | F   |
| Total Disabled pop | 3.2            | 4.4  | 2.0 | 56.7    | 76.5 | 35.4 | 39.3    | 18.5 | 61.9 | 0.7                | 0.6 | 0.8 |
| In seeing          | 2.3            | 3.2  | 1.4 | 56.7    | 78.1 | 35.9 | 40.5    | 18.3 | 62.2 | 0.5                | 0.4 | 0.6 |
| In speech          | 9.3            | 11.7 | 6.7 | 56.6    | 71.6 | 39.6 | 32.9    | 15.7 | 52.5 | 1.1                | 1.0 | 1.3 |
| In Hearing         | 1.9            | 2.7  | 1.2 | 52.2    | 74.2 | 31.0 | 45.1    | 22.5 | 67.0 | 0.7                | 0.6 | 0.7 |
| In Movement        | 3.8            | 4.8  | 2.4 | 59.3    | 76.4 | 35.6 | 36.2    | 18.2 | 61.1 | 0.7                | 0.6 | 0.8 |
| In Mental          | 9.7            | 13.0 | 6.2 | 54.4    | 69.8 | 37.7 | 33.7    | 15.4 | 53.7 | 2.1                | 1.9 | 2.4 |

Source: Census 2001

**Table 2.1: Disabled Elderly Persons by Marital Status per 1000 Distribution**



| Never Married         | Currently Married | Widowed | Divorced/separated |
|-----------------------|-------------------|---------|--------------------|
| Rural Persons         |                   |         |                    |
| 23                    | 487               | 479     | 11                 |
| Rural Male            |                   |         |                    |
| 36                    | 715               | 238     | 10                 |
| Rural Female          |                   |         |                    |
| 10                    | 264               | 714     | 12                 |
| Urban Persons         |                   |         |                    |
| 20                    | 496               | 479     |                    |
| Urban Male            |                   |         |                    |
| 29                    | 755               | 210     | 5                  |
| Urban Female          |                   |         |                    |
| 10                    | 235               | 749     | 6                  |
| Rural + Urban Persons |                   |         |                    |
| 35                    | 724               | 232     | 9                  |

Source: NSSO 58<sup>th</sup> round reports

### **Employment and Disabled Elderly**

Among the elderly aged 60 years and above, one in five disabled workers has been reported to be 'Main worker<sup>2</sup>'. This is so for almost all type of disabilities. Male-female differentials of disabled 'Marginal workers<sup>3</sup>' are less pronounced elderly aged 60 years and above. For the disabled elderly 'Non-workers', more non-workers are seen for female disabled elderly (Census 2001). From the NSSO 58th round data it is seen that among elderly people who are having mental retardation, only rural male elderly are working and that too mainly self employed in agriculture. Rural male elderly may be working there mainly as helpers. Elderly in other categories like rural females, male and female elderly in urban areas are not working anywhere. Most of the mentally disabled people do not get any employment. They are not given any training properly so that they can be employed. Among those elderly who are blind, elderly in all the categories are working and they work in agriculture that too self employed. In both urban and rural areas women were found to be working as casual laborers. Elderly whether they are in rural or urban areas, work, even if they are

having hearing disability. In the case of elderly who are self employed, it is the rural male elderly who are highest in number. One of the reasons for this can be that agriculture is the main activity in the rural areas. Some of them work in regular employment also. But in the case of male elderly who are in rural areas, nobody is employed in regular jobs. But there are a number of them working in self employed agriculture sector. Number of elderly working in casual employment is also high in this case. Those elderly who have loco motor disability, male elderly in rural and urban areas are regularly employed than female elderly in these two areas. Compared to the rural female elderly, urban female elderly are at a disadvantage. It is seen that, rural male elderly are mostly employed in self employed agriculture what ever be the disabilities that they have.

**Table 3: Number of Elderly by Usual Activity4 Status per 1000 Disabled Elderly Persons**

| Self-employed in agriculture | Self-employed in non-agriculture | Regular | Casual |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------|--------|
| Rural Male                   |                                  |         |        |
| 167                          | 22                               | 3       | 52     |
| Rural Female                 |                                  |         |        |
| 25                           | 19                               | 1       | 21     |
| Urban Male                   |                                  |         |        |
| 103                          | 11                               | 17      | 19     |
| Urban Female                 |                                  |         |        |
| 13                           | 7                                | 5       | 10     |

Source: NSSO 58th round, 2003 report.

Elderly in all the categories are seen to be highest in number in self employed agriculture. There is a large number of elderly are employed as casual labour. Disabled elderly in casual labour, are mostly in urban areas. In self-employed non-agriculture and casual labour elderly males residing in rural areas are at an advantage. Except for self employment in agriculture and regular employment, rural females are at an advantage. It was also found

that the general education level was very low among disabled elderly in rural areas particular among rural females. Those who were illiterate was found to be high.

### **Extent of Physical Disability**

Rural female elderly are the most disadvantageous group when it comes to the category of people who have not tried for aid/appliances or for whom these are not available. Urban male elderly are found to be highest in number in the category of disabled elderly who can take care of themselves without any aid /appliances. But rural male elderly can take care of themselves only with aid/appliances. In the case of urban female elderly, the condition is such that they cannot take care of themselves even with aid/appliances.

**Table 4: Number of Physically Disabled Elderly Persons by Extent of Physical Disability per 1000 Physically Disabled Persons**

| Cannot take Care Even With Aid/Appliance | Can Take Self-care only with aid/appliance | Can take care without aid/appliance | Aid/appliance not tried/not available |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Rural Male                               |  |                                     |                                       |
| 177                                      | 291  | 436                                 | 94                                    |
| Rural Female                             |  |                                     |                                       |
| 208                                      | 234  | 447                                 | 110                                   |
| Urban Male                               |  |                                     |                                       |
| 175                                      | 286  | 480                                 | 58                                    |
| Urban female                             |  |                                     |                                       |
| 218                                      | 262  | 453                                 | 63                                    |

*Source:* NSSO 58<sup>th</sup> round reports, 2003.

### **Results and Conclusion**

Results show that elderly with disabilities are a very high proportion of all elderly. It is also seen that widowed females elderly are more likely to be disabled than men. When it comes to employment of the elderly disabled they are more likely to be self employed and that too in agriculture. The majority of disabled elderly are engaged in self-employed

agriculture work. The mentally disabled elderly other than rural males do not go for any work.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Disability increases with age. There is an urgent need to look into the condition of the rural female elderly. According to [Gupta et.al. 2003], any policies targeting the elderly will have to be taken on the basis of two variables economic conditions and living arrangements. The well being of the elderly has to be taken care of by considering them as the most vulnerable group in the society. National Policy for Persons With disabilities speaks about giving homes of aged disabled women. There are provisions for promoting self-employment for persons with disabilities. This will be done by giving vocational training courses and by providing financial support. It is found that majority of the disabled elderly are illiterate. So efforts in this area will be beneficial for them. The training of care givers of disabled senior citizens can improve the condition of the elderly who are suffering and also the care giver. If the care giver knows how to properly take of the suffering person then the job becomes easy. Policies for the destitute elderly have to be taken. Those who don not have any place to go should be given admission in old age homes. There is the need for more geriatric wards and doctors specialized in geriatrics. There are other studies which have shown the importance of providing support to elderly persons in India by the government. For example, according to [Rajan, Risseeuw and Pereira 2005] most of India's elderly being economically dependent, the cost of treatment proves to be a burden on the household, especially in respect of poor households. Thus there is a great need for an appropriate insurance scheme for enabling the elderly to meet their medical expenses. According to [Sujaya 2000] because of the high life expectancy,

women tend to live longer. The lack of social and economic support makes them to lead a difficult. The patriarchal system makes their lives even more difficult to live and sustain. More social security schemes should be diverted to this direction. The mentally disabled are given proper care and treatment they can be at least self employed. Elderly persons in the country should know about the schemes given by the government. Awareness about the schemes is important. The experience and the knowledge of the elderly can be imparted to the younger generations. More policies should be designed for the welfare of the elderly so that they can contribute efficiently to the economic development of the country.

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<sup>1</sup> At the all-India level, 45571 and 24731 households having at least one disabled person, selected from 4637 villages and 3354 urban blocks respectively, were surveyed.

<sup>2</sup> According to Census, "main workers" refers to those who had worked in some economic activity for the major part of the year, which is for a period of six months (183 days) or more.

<sup>3</sup> Marginal workers" refers to those who had worked for some time during the previous year, but not for the major part, i.e. less than 183 days.

<sup>4</sup> The usual activity status of an individual is the activity situation obtaining for the person in respect of his/her participation in economic or non-economic activities during the reference period of 365 days preceding the date of survey.