**ABSTRACT**

Ageing the process by which older individuals come to form a proportionately larger share of the total population, is one of the most distinctive demographic events in the world today. Today all the countries, developed or developing, have to face population ageing with varying intensity at different points of time. Ageing population varies from region to region and from country to country. India had the second largest number of elderly (60+) in the world as of 2001. The rate of demographic ageing is quite high in Punjab state as compared to other states. The present study has been conducted in the state of Punjab to study the socio-economic and health conditions of elderly in Punjab. It has been based on both primary as well as secondary data. Three districts of Punjab has been selected randomly on the basis of the share of elderly population to total population - Hoshiarpur (with high share), Mansa (with moderate share) and Patiala (with low share). A stratified random sample of 450 elderly respondents has been drawn from these three selected districts. Simple statistical techniques such as percentage, chi-square test, p-value, graphs etc. have been used for presentation of data. According to census of India, the proportion of elderly among total population rose from 5.6 in 1961 to 7.5 in 2001. It has been found that there as relatively higher ratio of females to males in elderly population than in the general population for all the years since independence. Fertility decline has been the primary determinant of population ageing. The widowhood seems to be chronic problem among the elderly especially among elderly women. The female old-age dependency ratio as well as the gap between female and male old-age dependency ratio were rising over time. There was significant fall in work participation in higher age groups. Further it has also been observed that about 85% of the elderly women in India are economically dependent either fully or partially. Heart disease was the major chronic problem among both elderly male and elderly female.
From the Primary survey it has been found that as age advances the number of respondents decreases. Majority of respondents were literate, currently married and belong to nuclear families. Majority of them have left job after attaining the age 60+. Most of the respondents themselves were the heads of the family and had domestic responsibilities. Financial dependency among the female respondents is more as compared to male respondents. Most of respondents experienced a decline in their authority due to fall in economic status. Regarding the self-perception of health conditions of respondents, majority of the respondents, state that, their health condition is fairly all right. A significant difference was observed among the male and female respondents according to their health in general. Out of total number of respondents a major proportion of them have no physical disability. Majority of respondents suffer from B.P. (H.T.), Heart disease, Arthritis, Diabetes and Asthma. A major share of respondents preferred to visit private medical institution. Over the years, the government has launched various scheme and policies for elderly persons. The beneficiaries among the older persons for various schemes and programmes initiated by the government are very insignificant when compared to the very high size of elderly population and growth rate among them.