

# **WOMEN AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION**

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# ELDERLY WOMEN AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN RURAL INDIA

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## INTRODUCTION

Ageing population is on increasing side across the globe. In that elderly women outnumber the elderly men. The signs of female ageing include physically weak, tired, financially dependent, becomes burden, bedridden etc., this was the picture of the female aged in general. The present study aims to find out whether the elderly women are engaged or disengaged in the routine life and work. As far as rural areas are concerned, elderly women are physically strong, economically an earning member and well informed that during old age they have to take care of themselves. They engage themselves in 100 days work scheme, running a shop, selling vegetables in markets and also working as housemaids. By doing this, they are active at the same time very much productive. They also act as motivators for the younger generation by which the young learn to be independent and confident to live on their own. Thus the aged inspire, motivates and contributes silently, but it is less visible, sometimes even ignored and not recognized. This study attempts to focus on the silent contribution of rural elderly women towards social transformation through case studies.

**Active Ageing:** The World Health Organization (WHO, 2002) defines Active Ageing "as a process of optimizing the opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age". "Trees grow stronger over the years, rivers wider. Likewise, with age, human beings gain immeasurable depth and breadth of experience and wisdom. That is why older persons should be not only respected and revered; they should also be utilized as the rich resource to society that they are" (United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan). Active Ageing provides space for the aged to make them to understand their capacity about their physical, social and mental well-being throughout their life. To prove this, the rural elderly women do not remain idle but with strong self-confidence; courage and will power find a new way and set a new path for their survival which becomes a model for the upcoming generations. Each woman according to their physical ability and economic capacity finds their own way of generating income.

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