

# Bio-politics of Ageing and Old Age Care in India: Law, Policy and Beyond

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## Abstract

*It is argued that due to India's young demographic composition productivity is going to witness a continual upward rise in the coming decades, propelling the nation to take its place in the topmost tier of global hierarchy. The current euphoria over the so-called demographic dividend raises important questions- are we considering the elderly population as a burden and a limiting factor in India's growth story? Whether the current treatment meted out to the elderly in India by the so-called welfare state is proportional to their economic value defined in grossly mechanistic manner? This essay is a modest attempt to answer these questions and unearth the larger systemic and political logic underlying the situation of the elderly and old age care in India. In this connection, this paper intends to present the theoretical possibilities of the concept of bio-politics in explaining some of the key concerns of the legal and policy frameworks of old age care in India with respect to Indian scenario.*

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## I. Introduction

In the new millennium India's demographic profile has generated curious admiration in several quarters. India is projected as the biggest future growth engine of the world economy due to its current population composition. India today has world's largest youth population with more than 50 per cent of its population below the age of 25 and more than 65 per cent below the age of 35.<sup>1</sup> It is argued that due to India's young demographic composition productivity is going to witness a continual upward rise in the coming decades, propelling the nation to take its place in the topmost tier of global hierarchy. The current euphoria over the so-called demographic dividend raises important questions- are we considering the elderly population as a burden and a limiting factor in India's growth story? Whether the current treatment meted out to the elderly in India by the so-called welfare state is proportional to their economic value defined in grossly mechanistic manner? This essay is a modest attempt to answer these questions and unearth the larger systemic and political logic underlying the situation of the elderly and old age care in India.

In answering the above questions, I have found Michel Foucault's concept of bio-politics as a trusted guide. Bio-politics, a concept advocated by Michel Foucault refers to a social field of power in which intervention is made in the vital aspects of human life leading to the imperceptible wielding of political control and power over all major social and biological life processes. According to Foucault prior to the eighteenth century, society sought to achieve control over death, but in the eighteenth century a new process set in through which the regulatory direction of the state and society shifted towards life and its various processes. Power over life assumed two forms. First, there was the "anatomy-politics of the human body," in which the objective was to discipline and monitor the human body (and its sexuality). Second, there was the "bio-politics of population," in which the goal was to control and regulate population growth, health, life expectancy, and so forth. In both cases, society began to perceive and understand "life as a political object".<sup>2</sup> If we go by this perspective then the modern care of the old falls within the domain of bio-politics as through modern old age care the life of the individual as well as the entire human species is infiltrated apparently in a legitimate manner by modern Government and society. Taking cue from Foucault's concept of bio-politics, this paper argues that in modern times, for regulating health and life expectancy it has become imperative to manage the social and biological condition of the elderly through both intervention and non-intervention. While intervention can be explained in terms of the attempts to secure positive bio-political goals such as high life expectancy and low death rate, non-intervention or relative neglect of old age care and security can be attributed to the bio-political logic of demographic dividend and economic productivity. In this connection, this paper intends to present the theoretical possibilities of the concept of bio-politics in explaining some of the key concerns of the discipline of Gerontology with respect to Indian scenario. Therefore, throughout my discussion, I have again and again gone back to Foucault's theory and drawn valuable insights from it. It is in this respect that this study intends to mark a break from the prevalent research on Gerontology which is heavily survey and statistics based. This study is

theoretical and qualitative in nature and deals with the larger theoretical issues which have often escaped our scrutiny.

### **Demographic Dividend and Retreat of the Welfare State**

Today the demography of the world is in a slow but constant flux. The deceleration in the population growth presently seems to be a world-wide trend. In most of the western world the share of young people in the total population is decreasing while that of the elderly is steadily rising. Though all nations are not at the similar stages of demographic transition, many developed nations are grappling with the problem of ageing. Concerns about population ageing are based mainly on perceived link between economic growth and demographic composition. It is postulated that rise in the average age of the population leads to decrease in productivity because senior citizens are regarded as an unproductive and leisurely class. The phenomenon of population ageing is also associated with decreasing saving and investment rate because earning potential decreases in the old age leading to lower level of saving and little or no investment on productive assets. Most importantly, the old people are considered an economic liability on the Government because old age care calls for higher governmental spending on pensions and health care.

The enormous size of India's population has always been considered as an obstacle to the economic progress of the country. However, of late a fundamental rethinking has occurred regarding India's demography. It is now claimed that India is poised to enter a long-term growth trajectory since it is one of the youngest nations in the world. As per Census, every fifth person in India is an adolescent (10-19 years) and every third – a young person (10-24 years). In India, as per Census 2011, adolescent population (10-19) is 253.2 million and that of the youth (15-24) is 231.9 million, constituting 20.9 per cent and 19.2 per cent of the total population respectively.<sup>3</sup> As a result, it is predicted that India will emerge as a preferred destination for investment, business dynamism, innovation and growth riding upon a huge pool of cheap and efficient labour and a large booming market. India is slated to be the biggest source of growth in labour force. By 2030 it would contribute 41 per cent to the increase in the global labour force, compared to just 10 per cent by China. Workforce deficit in developed nations would hover between 32 to 39 million by 2020. Only India is likely to be equipped with adequate pool of human resource resources to overcome this deficit with a surplus workforce of 47 million. Even China may have to contend with a workforce deficit of 10 million by 2020.<sup>4</sup> According to the report entitled *State of the Urban Youth, India 2012: Employment, Livelihoods, Skills,* published by IRIS Knowledge Foundation in collaboration with UN- HABITAT in India the population in the age-group of 15-34 increased from 353 million in 2001 to 430 million in 2011. It is also suggested that the youth population will steadily increase and become close to 464 million by 2021 before it finally declines to 458 million by 2026. By 2020, India is expected to emerge as the youngest country of the world with almost 64 per cent of its population in the working age group. With the West, Japan and even China aging, this demographic potential will provide India some great economic advantages which if managed properly may contribute an additional 2 per cent to the country's GDP growth rate.<sup>5</sup>

However, there is a flip side of the story. With majority of its population below the age of 30, the issues and concerns of the older generations have been bypassed unceremoniously. Consequently, very few studies on the problems and situation of the senior citizens in our country have been undertaken so far. In the euphoric celebration of demographic dividend many vital facts are often disregarded and overlooked. Though a small part of the population, numerically the senior citizens form a large population group. Moreover, in the years 2000-2050, the overall population in India is expected to grow by 55% whereas population of people in their 60 years and above will increase by 326 per cent and those in the age group of 80+ by 700 per cent - the fastest growing group.<sup>6</sup> However, these vital statistics have failed to generate any informed public discussion. Afflicted with short-sighted over-enthusiasm to reap the benefits of demographic dividend the Government seems to have also shrugged them off with its characteristic nonchalance. In the process, the entire focus has shifted mainly on the utilization of the productive potential of the younger generations, relegating the needs and concerns of the elderly to the background.

A fundamental metamorphosis of the ideological apparatus of the state has also impacted the state of old age care in India. Decades after the Second World War, there was a solid connection between the political and ideological agenda of the welfare state and provisions for the social security of the people. Such a political climate configured the social psychology in a manner that "care for the older people was seen as a fair exchange for past work and services and as an indication that society no longer treated old age merely as one of the many risks in life".<sup>7</sup> However, in recent years, the role of the traditional welfare state has been rolled back considerably resulting in significant cuts on social sector expenditure. The dominant economic philosophy is now heavily influenced by neo-liberalism, which is antagonistic to state intervention and the notion of social rights. Therefore, it is of no surprise that the unproductive senior citizens are increasingly being seen as a problem 'whose needs and requirements continually deplete the resources of the state'.<sup>8</sup> This has created an adverse social climate for formulation of effective welfare provisions for the elderly people and also effective implementation of legally guaranteed social security measures for them. Many of the policy proposals mooted

by the advocates of 'market fundamentalism' amount to dismantling the old-age welfare programmes by curbing the role of government in care of the older people and leaving their welfare to the vagaries of the market.<sup>9</sup> The recent legislation which introduced New Pension Scheme is a case in point. It is a market based pension scheme and therefore, marks a significant break from past system of secure monthly payment of pension. It is heavily influenced by the neo-liberal policy prescriptions. Under such an ideological atmosphere prevailing throughout the globe, social policy's traditional commitments to altruism, social care and social rights have been abandoned to a large extent.<sup>10</sup>

The entire process, which has pushed the elderly into the domain filled with insignificance and indifference is embedded in the larger systemic logic of bio-politics that strives to nourish the power impulses pervading the entire socio-political cosmos. The regulation of life by the state is a universal function at the level of society. No section of the society seems to escape the clutches of the state's regulatory function. However, the reach of such universal function of the state remains uneven. The lives of the elderly do not invite much intervention from the state particularly because the source of power of the nation, which is reified in the state, lies in the productive part of the population. Today from various policy documents it is clear that the Indian Government seeks to particularly focus on the younger part of the population and harness its productive potential to the fullest. It is strongly felt that investing in younger segment of population is the best way to leverage the nation's competitive advantage – its demographic dividend.<sup>11</sup>

### **The Logic of Productivity**

The state today is demonstrating enormous reluctance to fund extensive welfare measures for the old. It is averse to the idea of spending valuable resources on unproductive human capital. Rather, it has diverted its efforts towards transformation of unproductive and stagnant human resources into productive assets. Today the increasing old-age dependency ratio is an issue of grave concern for the Government. Old age dependency ratio is defined as the number of persons in the age-group 60 or more per 100 persons in the age-group 15-59 years. The old-age dependency ratio rose from 10.9 per cent in 1961 to 13.1 per cent in 2001 for India as a whole. For females and males the value of the ratio was 13.8 per cent and 12.5 per cent in 2001.<sup>12</sup> Of late there seems to be some realization that by re-inclusion of some part of the old population, particularly those who are physically capable into the productive economic structure the state can to some extent relieve itself of the burden of old age care and also augment its total economic capacity. Various policy documents have emphasized the need to involve the elderly people in income generating activities after the age of 60. However, it should be reminded that if someone is forced by circumstances to get involved into economic activities, then such involvement can militate against the right to public assistance in old age, as contemplated in Article 41 of our Constitution. Article 41 states that "The state shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to public assistance in cases of old age". Apparently voluntary economic activities in the old age may be an outcome of adverse economic situation and ultimately result in not only ill health but also psychological ailment resulting out of unfulfilled urge for leisure. The National Policy for Senior Citizens, 2011 also acknowledges this fact when it states, "Most of them (senior citizens) will never retire in the usual sense of the term and will continue to work as long as physically possible. Inevitably though the disability to produce and earn will decline with age. The absence of savings will result in sharp declining in living standards that for many can mean destitution. Therefore, this is the challenge of old age income security in India".<sup>13</sup> However, the same policy document states that "Employment in income generating activities after superannuation will be encouraged".<sup>14</sup>

In India nearly 40 per cent of persons aged over 60 years and above are working. In rural areas 66 per cent of elderly male population and 23 per cent of elderly female population are economically active. In urban areas the corresponding figures for economically active elderly male and female population are 39 per cent and 7 per cent. In developing nations high work participation rate in the age group of 60-80 results out of lack of social security provisions or the insufficient coverage and miserly orientation of social security net.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, the attempt of the state to extract enhanced economic performance from the senior citizens despite such high work participation rate testifies to the hidden agenda of gradual abandonment of governmental responsibility of welfare of the senior citizens as far as possible.

It is a known fact that in old age a person should desist from engaging in manual or semi-manual type of work. But mostly in India's rural areas and also in urban areas due to financial constraints most of the old people have to engage themselves in manual and semi-manual work. Given the scarcity of jobs in the organized sector (even for the young people), the staggering data of 40 per cent old-age work participation points to the massive engagement of the elderly in manual jobs. In a scenario like this, the policy of the Government should be directed towards lowering involvement of the elderly in manual and semi-manual work which are likely to be hazardous for their health. Therefore, the focus should be on creating age-appropriate voluntary employment opportunities for the elderly. However, while stating "Employment in income generating activities after superannuation will be encouraged" the National Policy for Senior Citizens makes no mention of age-appropriate employment for the elderly. Under such circumstances, it seems probable that the so-called welfare

state of India is focused more on extortion of maximum economic output rather than actual welfare and well-being. In the current eagerness to engage the elderly in all sorts of economic activities the twofold motives of the state have become clearly manifest- appetite for optimum production and distaste for costly welfare responsibilities.

### **Institutional Care, Social Change and the Policy Response**

In the prevalent social scenario, the welfare intervention for the elderly has become all the more necessary. It is contended that in the traditional Indian society the age-old joint family took good care of the social and economic needs of the elderly people. Though there is no solid historical evidence in support of this contention, it is generally acknowledged as a social fact which very few will dispute. It is not reasonable here to divert much attention to the historical authenticity of this general notion. What is pertinent in the scope of this discussion is the relevant social dynamics associated with the break-up of joint family system and the consequent emergence of nuclear families. As a result of the break-up of joint families the elderly people have become exposed to emotional, physical and financial insecurity. However, the Government has little control over society and social engineering is not a desirable policy option in a rich and vibrant democracy. Therefore, the welfare policy of the Government should be sufficiently equipped with necessary malleability to respond to the changing social scenario. Recognizing the changing social scenario many have advocated institutional care for those elderly people who are not well treated by the family members. However, National Policy for Senior Citizens, 2011 discourages institutional care. It states "The policy will consider institutional care as the last resort. It recognises that care of senior citizens has to remain vested in the family which would partner the community, government and the private sector".<sup>16</sup> This means that neither the Government will release much of its resources for building old-age centres nor much encouragement will be provided to the non-Governmental Organizations and private agencies for setting up old-age homes. The Government favours old age care to be administered through the age old institution of family and thus puts aside the responsibility of old age care largely beyond scope of state action. Such an attitude seems to be oblivious of the social battle for survival which the institution of family is facing in modern age. Moreover, it also fails to appreciate that the Government is incapable of invading the privacy of the family and ensure that the elderly members of the family are well treated by younger ones. A reasonable policy option would be to recognize the changing socio-cultural dynamics and design appropriate policy response by building adequate infrastructure for institutional care for the elderly. Industrialisation and urbanization have significantly increased mobility and internal migration. Younger people are constantly moving to urban centres and booming metropolitan cities in search of greener pastures. Due to relatively small and congested residential space and excessively high rents, migrants often decide to leave their parents in their native place. Moreover, high living costs in the urban areas often discourage young people to spend money for the care of their parents. Under such circumstances development of institutional care is a valid policy option and the Government should allocate adequate resources for developing old age centres and homes in the PPP (Public Private Partnership) mode. Moreover, it could also consider developing a financial incentives structure for proper treatment of the elderly by their family members. However, at this point the Government seems to have no plans to provide any such financial incentives and it has already expressed its aversion for institutional care.

There are also other reasons which make a valid case in favour of institutional care. According to Census, 2001 in the age-group 60 to 64 years 88% of males and only 58% females are married. Moreover, in all the age-groups the percentage of elderly women married is markedly lower than the percentage of men married.<sup>17</sup> Thus, a significant portion of the elderly people in India doesn't have any family and in need of some form of institutional care. By dismissing institutional care as a preferable policy option, the state has turned its back on these people. Therefore, the negative attitude of the Government towards institutional care is based either on gross ignorance about the actual situation or a careful nonchalance towards old age care. Moreover, abandonment is not the only form of mistreatment and often separation from the family relieves an old person from mistreatment at the hands of his or her family members. Linking housing and other concepts, such as 'staying put' and 'Care & Repair' results in forceful confinement of the older people to their dwellings even if this does not fulfil their physical and emotional requirements. Therefore, consent of the elderly in building their accommodation facilities is a missing link to policy. In this context, the state should strive to achieve 'Housing with care' which being an alternative concept to residential care attempts to juxtapose independent living with relatively high levels of care.<sup>18</sup> The basic idea is that the elderly in the new millennium must have facilities of accommodation which are not only comfortable but also satisfy their individual needs.<sup>19</sup>

But in order to ensure the care of the old by their children within the structure of family, the Indian state of late has taken the route of punitive action rather than welfare initiatives. The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 was enacted in December 2007 to ensure family-oriented maintenance for senior citizens. This Act has introduced penal provision for abandonment of senior citizens and made maintenance of Parents/ senior citizens by their children/ relatives obligatory and justiciable through Tribunals. It also consists of provisions such as revocation of transfer of property by senior citizens in case of negligence



by relatives.<sup>20</sup> However, litigation is not only costly but also a hazardous option that few people prefer to take recourse to unless severely compelled by the situation. Under such circumstances, the state should make provisions for institutional care and initiate required welfare measure for the protection of the elderly. The enactment of The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 is a welcome measure but it should be adequately backed by suitable welfare measures and institutional care. However, little efforts have been made in this direction. A Non-Plan Scheme of Assistance to Panchayati Raj Institutions/ Voluntary Organisations/ Self Help Groups for Construction of Old Age Homes/ Multi Service Centres for Older Persons was started in 1996-97. Grant-in-aid to the extent of 50% of the construction cost subject to a maximum of Rs. 15 lakhs was provided under the Scheme. However, the Scheme was not found attractive by implementing agencies and was discontinued at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan (2006-07).<sup>21</sup>

Thus, social policy of old age in India has traditionally neglected housing as an integral constitutive component of sustained community care. Treating older people as a separate group has been criticized as it portrays 'old age' as a problem.<sup>22</sup> As the housing problem in the context of ageing has been imbued with a medical model of old age, dwelling chiefly upon dependency, it has been branded as a social construction. While there is a need to discredit such a model, at the same time it is also necessary to recognize that, housing is an extremely important component of holistic old age care.<sup>23</sup> This is in view of the relatively greater duration of time spent by the older people in their home than other groups in society. Therefore, it is necessary to design appropriate policy responses which can effectively address the accommodation related problems of the senior citizens. However, no efforts in this direction seem to be forthcoming. The modern Indian nation state, restless for growth and development, is fiercely deriving the source of its power from the young, working and productive sections of its human capital while the older generations are considered a drag on its economic performance and growth. Foucault's ideas appear insightful in this context. According to Foucault bio-power is an integral element in the development of the productive forces of capitalism. For Foucault, capitalism would never have come into existence unless it made possible "the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes".<sup>24</sup> The elderly and old are unproductive and therefore, outside the capitalist mode of production or production system. The capitalist system rarely cares for someone who is unable to make any contribution to the forces of production in terms of his or her productive capacities. Therefore, the neglect of the elderly people by the state and society largely dominated by the bourgeois ethos is a natural phenomenon. Thus, the limited outreach of the welfare state to this particular segment of the population arises from the larger systemic logic. Following this logic, it can be said that economic dependency and positionality outside the productive system of the society have relegated the elderly to the experience of social exclusion and economic marginalization. This is the reason why the Indian welfare state has kept its the scope of its social altruism sufficiently limited in the sphere of old age care. It has so far demonstrated an allergy for welfare measures which are costly and resource draining and a penchant for careful shifting of the burden of old age care from Governmental institutions to the age-old institution of family, which in the modern setting is itself in a state of constant dissolution. This attitude of the state clearly emanates from the reluctance to apply the techniques of bio-politics to those sections of the population which are insignificant contributors to the augmentation of bio-power. According to Foucault bio-politics at some level is focused on the human body. It is directed towards the acquiring of "the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls".<sup>25</sup> Therefore, where the avenues for optimization of the capabilities of a particular segment of population and the extortion of their productive forces through their integration into the economic system are limited, the bio-political intervention into their life processes becomes largely superfluous. Since in a purely mechanistic perspective the productive capacities of the senior citizens are regarded insignificant even after fullest optimization, the activation of bio-power in the field of harnessing and management of the sociological and biological experience of old age often gets muzzled, resulting in inadequate and infrequent forays into the lives of the elderly.

### **Discovering the Rationale behind Limited Welfare**

So far I have attempted to argue that the state being obsessed with the economic advantage of demographic dividend is demonstrating a lackadaisical attitude towards the welfare of the elderly. Does this mean that the elderly have been completely left to their own fate? Of course not. The welfare policies of the state have been formulated in a manner that they can guarantee physical preservation and prolongation of lives without ensuring basic economic and social well-being. Such policies are not situated in the humane sensibilities of the state. The reason for this lies in the pluripotent nature of power that tends to expand itself through incessant mutation and re-mutation. Foucault has pointed out that death is power's end point.<sup>26</sup> It is impossible to bring a dead person within the ambit of power. By dying a person escapes the domain of power. That is the reason why in a modern state physical survival of a person is given more importance than his economic survival. The state remains unmoved by the deplorable economic plight of its people till starvation deaths, suicides of elderly couples and farmers hit headlines and create ripples of concern in the power circles. Seen critically state,

the repository of organized power is always actuated by the incentive to keep a person alive. In a modern state system such incentives generate efforts directed towards achieving lower death rate. In states like India which are supposedly going through a modernization process, figures of death rate and mortality rate are generally understood as indicators of level of modernization and development. There has been a steady decline in the age-specific death rates over the years. However, favourable figures concerning death and mortality can be explained not only in terms of development initiative of the state but also its power drive. Rather such development initiatives are nestled in omnipresent power impulses impregnating the body social and politic.

This explains the moderate level of intervention in the lives of the elderly in India. By moderate level of intervention, I mean welfare measures which are limited in their scope and directed more towards bodily survival than towards reasonable standard of life. The amount of pension which the old people receive in our country is so meagre that it can guarantee nothing more than physical sustenance. Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOPS), which is currently the only pension scheme for the poor senior citizens who are not in the organized sector, is a case in point. Under this scheme BPL (Below Poverty Line) persons in the age group of 60 to 79 years are entitled to a monthly pension of Rs. 200 and BPL persons of the age of 80 years and above are entitled to a monthly pension of Rs. 500.<sup>27</sup> Time and again various policy documents have highlighted the need to expand the coverage and financial benefits of such pension schemes.<sup>28</sup> But such rate of enhancement has always fallen below the rate of inflation. Therefore, it appears that such incremental increase has been directed towards lowering the death rate rather than ensuring economic well-being. Most importantly, even the pension facilities for the senior citizens of the Governmental sectors have been rolled back through the introduction of New Pension Scheme (NPS) for the new recruits to Government service. It has been introduced to facilitate the retreat of the state from the pension sector. The NPS was introduced from 1 January 2004, for new entrants to central government service in order to lessen the cost liabilities of the Government owing to the payments of pension to the elderly. On retirement, the employees have to invest at least 40% of their pension fund in an annuity, thus exposing themselves to the vagaries of the market forces. This means that there will no longer be benefits of defined and minimum assured returns, which are enjoyed by the current pensioners.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the Indian state is steadily withdrawing its resources from the sector of old age care and abandoning its erstwhile commitment towards social security of the elderly. Such a posture by the state will adversely impact the economic plight of the elderly in years to come. However, as I have explained, the state is likely to remain unmoved so long as minimum physical survival of its population will be guaranteed.

### **Why have we Begun to Bother?**

In our daily life we are encountered by numerous instances where dependent old people are routinely victimized and end up being shelter less and lonely. But very rarely we are moved by their sad plight. Unfortunately, old age impoverishment is still not a prominent concern in the current debates about marginalization and exclusion. We seem to have largely failed to imbibe the principle of welfarism in our social psychology and the limited outreach of the welfare state in India is, to some extent, a reflection of this inability of the society to internalize and assimilate the principle of welfarism. However, though there is no large-scale outrage against the situation of the elderly in India, the development of the discipline of Gerontology in India and the increasing involvement of many NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) in the area of old age care have resulted in an important breakthrough. A process seems to have set in through which the general mass and academia are becoming sensitive about the concerns of the old. What explains such break-through in the prevailing climate of anti-welfarism and neo-liberalism? Here also Foucault seems instructive. Foucault has argued that after some point of time the development of life as a political object "turned back against the system that was bent on controlling it. Life now became the issue of political struggle. The "right" to life, to one's body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs, and, beyond all the oppressions or "alienations," the "right" to rediscover what one is and all that one can be, this "right" -which the classical juridical system was utterly incapable of comprehending-was the political response to all these new procedures of power which did not derive, either, from the traditional right of sovereignty" that consisted in the right to decide life and death.<sup>30</sup> Seen in this light the emergence of the discipline of gerontology which is broadly focused on the life of the elderly and the new found concerns for the elderly in India can well be seen as a response to the emergence of life as a political object. Here, it must be noted that questions of rights of the elderly along with other human rights came to agitate the modern Indian mind much later, mostly in the post-colonial ideological setting of welfare state, while such questions had been raised in the western world in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The reason for this lies in the late politicization of life in our country. Therefore, seen from this perspective gerontological concern for the old in India though of a very recent origin carries the welcoming germs of dissent and criticism against policies of the state concerning old age care.

## Summing Up

In India the elderly population has been surviving on the margins of the domain of bio-political intervention. This is because bio-political zeal of the state is sparked off by the possibilities of greater productivity and amplification of power. However, there are some domains where the life of the old has been subjected to the intervention of bio-power. However, whenever such intervention has been attempted, it has been directed toward either metamorphosis of unproductive human resources into productive assets or forestalment of death. In the former case the bio-power has a mutative and regenerative agenda while in the latter case it has functioned on the basis of the instinct of self-preservation.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Priya Virmani, "Note to India's Leaders: Your 150m Young People are Calling for Change", *The Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/apr/08/india-leaders-young-people-change-2014-elections> (accessed 9 November 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 138-140.

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Population Fund-India, *A Profile of Adolescents and Youth in India* (2014), p. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Vishnu Saraf, *India and China: Comparing the Incomparable* (Delhi: Macmillan, 2008), p. 63

<sup>5</sup> IRIS Knowledge Foundation and UNHABITAT, *State of the Urban Youth, India 2012: Employment, Livelihoods, Skills* (2013), pp. 7-9.

<sup>6</sup> India, *National Policy on Senior Citizens, 2011*, pp.1-2.

<sup>7</sup> C. Phillipson and S. Biggs, "Population Ageing: Critical Gerontology and the Sociological Tradition", *Education and Ageing*, 14, 2 (1999): 161.

<sup>8</sup> Jan Reed and Charlotte L. Clarke, "Nursing Older People: Constructing Need and Care", *Nursing Inquiry*, 6, 3 (1999): 208-15.

<sup>9</sup> Robert H. Binstock, "Advocacy in an Era of Neo-conservatism: Responses of National Aging Organizations", *Generations*, 28, 1 (2004): 49-55.

<sup>10</sup> Kwong-Leung Tang and Jik-Joen Lee, "Global Social Justice for Older People: The Case for an International Convention on the Rights of Older People", *The British Journal of Social Work*, 36, 7 (2006): 1137.

<sup>11</sup> *Size, Growth and Composition of Adolescent and Youth Population in India* (presentation), by Dr. Sanjay Kumar, National Programme Officer, UNFPA-India, New Delhi, July 17, 2014.

<sup>12</sup> India Central Statistics Office- Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, *Situation Analysis of the Elderly in India*, 2011, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> *National Policy on Senior Citizens*, 2011, 2

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>15</sup> *Situation Analysis of the Elderly in India*, 2011, 15.

<sup>16</sup> *National Policy on Senior Citizens*, 2011, 4

<sup>17</sup> *Situation Analysis of the Elderly in India*, 2011, 20.

<sup>18</sup> Judith Phillips, Kristine Ajrouch and Sarah Hillcoat-Nallétamby, *Key Concepts in Social Gerontology* (London: Sage, 2010), p. 129.

<sup>19</sup> John Bond and Peter Coleman, "Ageing into the Twenty-first Century", in *Ageing in Society: An Introduction to Social Gerontology*. eds. John Bond, Peter Coleman and Sheila Peace, 332-350. (London: Sage, 1993).

<sup>20</sup> India The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007

<sup>21</sup> *Situation Analysis of the Elderly in India*, 2011, 25.

<sup>22</sup> Frances Heywood, Christine Oldman and Robin Means, *Housing and Home in Later Life* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2002)

<sup>23</sup> Miriam Bernard and Judith Phillips, *The Social Policy of Old Age* (London: Centre for Policy on Ageing, 2000).

<sup>24</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Volume I, 141.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>27</sup> India-Ministry of Rural Development, *Annual Report*, 2014-15, p. 90.

<sup>28</sup> National Policy on Older Persons, 1999 states that “The base of pension coverage needs to be considerably expanded. It would be necessary to facilitate the establishment of pension schemes both in the private as well as in the public sector for self-employed and salaried persons in non-governmental employment, with provision for employers also to contribute. Paramount considerations in regard to pension schemes are total security, flexibility, liquidity and maximisation of returns. Pension Funds will function under the watchful eye of a strong regulatory authority which lays down the investment norms and provide strong safeguards”. See, *National Policy on Older Persons*, 1999, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> M.G Warrier, “What Ails the New Pension Scheme?”, *Moneylife*, <http://www.moneylife.in/article/what-ails-the-new-pension-scheme/27305.html> (accessed 9 November 2015).

<sup>30</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, Volume I, 145.

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