



ELDERLY VULNERABILITY IN WEST BENGAL: AN ASSESSMENT

**Priya Biswas**

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, P.N. Das. College, Santinagar, Palta, Kolkata,  
West Bengal 743122.

**Chandralekha Ghosh**

Professor, Department of Economics, West Bengal State University, Barasat, North 24  
Parganas, Kolkata-700126.

**Debaprasad Sarkar**

Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Barrackpore Rastraguru Surendranath  
College, 85 Middle Road, Barrackpore-700120.

**ABSTRACT**

Older adults' vulnerability is the result of processes constructed throughout the lifecycle. Although there is a typical family setting, heterogeneity in terms of social, economic, physical, and psychosocial factors affects the vulnerability of the elderly. Insufficient public support system has also played a role in the safety net for older adults. In this context, the in-depth elaboration of Socioeconomic, Relational, Loneliness, physical, and mental health vulnerability of the elderly has been assessed through a structured primary survey in and around Kolkata.

**Objective:** The present paper assessed the vulnerability of the elderly living inside and outside old age homes through a structured primary survey adjacent to Kolkata empirically through a structured primary survey.

**Method:** This paper uses information from 1,000 elderly living inside and outside old age homes on different subjective health attributes, socioeconomic arrangements, and required support systems. The Constant Comparative Method has been used to assess the subjective vulnerability of the elderly.

**Results:** Some of the attributes related to physical and mental health, socioeconomic factors, loneliness factors, and relational factors have been identified to characterize the 'vulnerability of the elderly'. In terms of physical health elderly living inside and outside old age homes are found in mild vulnerable situations. But in terms of mental health elderly living inside old age homes are more severely vulnerable than those who live outside old age homes.

**Conclusion:** The multidimensionality of the elder vulnerability highlighting the peculiarities of physical and mental status during ageing and identification of related factors has policy urgency. Few older people are in vulnerable situations primarily due to then on-availability of resources with their own and their social support system to cover all needs, especially for the daily needs and access to the old.

**Keywords:** Elderly, Physical Health, Mental Health, Loneliness, Relational Vulnerability.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Fast and abrupt growth of the elderly population growth, especially in developing countries has been the new feature and is considered as one of the most relevant demographic transitions in the absence of adequate monitoring of social and economic progress. As per the international statistical projections between 2000 and 2050, the proportion of elderly over 60 in the planet will double from 11% to 22%. The percentage of the elderly population in India has been increasing at an increasing rate in recent years and the trend is likely to continue in the coming decades. The share of the population over the age of 60 is projected to increase from 11% in