

## PREFACE

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This study contributes to the understanding of the different dimensions of ageing in the light of social class, participation in economic and non-economic work and active participation in different social roles. Class has a significant impact on the life of the elderly women in determining their educational status, nature of occupation of their own and of their spouse, resources held by them and their participation in economically gainful work. This in turn affects their economic and social status in the family; and in determining the extent of health care and support received by family members. Elderly women of the poor stratum though are economically more self-reliant and active than those of the middle class, but their poor educational status, nature of their work, socio-economic background of their family often fail to provide them control over their own resources and fail to ensure their acceptance among their family members. Besides these irrespective of class, the above factors are also found to have a significant bearing on their adjustment to role loss and changes experienced by them at old age; and the extent of care and support received from their family members. Widowhood is found to increase their dependency on others and lower their acceptance in their family, especially in case of poor families where she is economically inactive. This study gives a critical perspective of the Activity theory of ageing in looking at their economic status and dependency, social status, social acceptance, role losses and the health care and support received by them.

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