

concentrated in a few states. There is a slight dispersal of activities in the unorganized segment. New forms of organization of production promoted industrial growth in it. But regions dominating the organized sector were able to increase their share in value added in the unorganized segment also.

While talking about the industrial performance, he raises the issue of missing dynamism. He argues, “after a long period of hibernation, the recent show of dynamism in terms of growth in the Indian economy has raised expectations about the percolation of this growth more evenly across the population.” (P. 179). He deals with the rational and consequences of globalization via trade liberalisation. He believes that in terms of both output and employment, there has been growth. But existing units had to employ modern labour-replacing and capital augmenting technology to achieve efficiency an economy in their scales of operations. While openness of the economy has increased, the role of trade as an engine of growth has yet to be realized. Besides, the fundamental features of the oligopolistic structure have not changed with the coming of the reforms.

His conclusion is that the industrial policy has witnessed major policy changes since the mid-1980s. There are disparate trends in it. There is a kind of duality in it. He writes, “The overall trend in industrial performance in India has shown sluggish growth combined with ‘mini-boons’, which has had an overwhelming influence on the trend rate of industrial growth since the 1990s.” (P. 196).

Broadly speaking, these are the contents of this book. It can be read with interest both by academicians as well as policy-makers.

Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics,  
Pune

N. Benjamin

Udaya S. Mishra and S. Irudaya Rajan (Eds.), *India's Aged Needs and Vulnerabilities*, Orient Black Swan, Hyderabad, 2017, pp. 254, Price ₹ 825/-.

Many countries of the world are facing the problem of aging population. A notable exception is the countries in Africa. Both fertility and mortality rates are on the decline. Hence, the proportion of aged population in the total population is on the increase. This has serious socio-economic implications. India is not an exception to it. Hence, the book under review has not come a day too soon.

In the very beginning the editors introduce the problem. They point out that the WHO has highlighted that the elder population aged 85 years and above is increasingly becoming significant in the total elderly population aged 65 years and above in the world as a whole. A larger and faster growing share of the elderly population calls for an increase in healthcare spending and investment in health system infrastructure, human resources and technology. This is true in the Indian context also. With the ongoing demographic transition, by the year 2050

the elderly population will account for 20 per cent of the total Indian population. This is a matter of fundamental policy concern. Juxtaposed to it, "... the issue of population ageing is yet to receive any significant attention in the policy agenda of the central and state governments" (p. 16).

This introduction is followed by ten chapters dealing with various aspects of the elderly in India. To begin with, T.R. Dilip writes about the changing economic dependence of the elderly as evident from the NSSO surveys in 1983 and 2009-10. About one fourth of the households have elderly members and there is an increase in the number of households with two or more elderly and elderly living alone. A sizable section of the elderly is economically active in the later years of their life. Syam Prasad discusses 'Dependency in the elderly in India.' He points out that insecurity is aggravated as age goes up and dependency increases in old age. The pace of aging is likely to be faster in the days to come as a result of demographic transition. However, increase in the number of elderly in the workforce can have an adverse impact on productivity and, therefore, on the economy. At the same time, since lifecycle income is inadequate to generate a surplus and social security protection is nearly absent, vulnerability in old age is a cause of concern. The NSSO shows that over 50 per cent of the elderly are fully dependent. Sanjay K. Mohanty and Akanksha Srivastava concentrate on population aging and household health spending. The elderly population is faced with diminishing health and income, increasing expenditure on healthcare, low pension and health insurance coverage as well as lack of engagement in meaningful activities and increasing threat to life and property. Public health centres are essentially struggling to meet the maternal and child care needs and the elderly become a vulnerable group as the increase in longevity at older ages is associated with increase in medical care and cost of treatment. William Joe shows concern about healthcare utilization among the elderly. He thinks that elderly healthcare utilization has a pro-rich bias and notwithstanding greater needs, the poorer sections of the society have much lower utilization. This is more so in the case of SC, ST and OBC communities. He suggests incentives like tax benefits to people who assist the elderly.

S. Irudaya Rajan and Anjana A. analyse disability-free life expectancy among the elderly. Although the linkage between aging and disability is a biological phenomenon, the risk of disability increases with increasing age. It is less in people of higher socio-economic classes and those residing in urban areas vis-à-vis those belonging to the weaker classes and living in rural areas. Also, disabilities are more among females than among males. But aging can be delayed by policy interventions. Major categories of disability include problems related to vision, hearing and mobility. S. Siva Raju raises issues regarding living arrangements of the elderly and their implications. He says that the family is the most important support institution for the elderly. Living in old-age homes is not popular and it also attracts criticisms for the immediate family members. Living alone is normally due to widowhood, childlessness or migration of children. The result of absence of social security system and poverty is that even at 80 years of

age, 20 per cent of male elderly and 13 per cent of female elderly continue to work. A majority of the elderly depend on their children for financial support. Finally, he calls for government intervention for the well-being of the elderly. He suggests that the corporate sector, trusts, individual donors and others should join hands for the well-being of the elderly.

Shalini Rudra raises questions regarding the health of the elderly living with family. On the basis of tables and graphs, she says that with respect health, well-to-do elderly are better placed than their counterpart who living in impoverishment. She makes suggestions to resolve the problem. Through information campaigns families should be motivated to take care of the elderly. Tax benefits and other incentives can be offered to families which do the needful. Public health system also needs to be strengthened.

Tannistha Samanta concentrates on the living arrangement and health of the elderly. The author answers an important question, what is the micro (individual and household characteristics) and macro (urbanization and institutional support) level factors that influence the relationship between the household structure and elderly well-being? Living with children or others as opposed to living independently reduces the odds of being sick with minor illnesses. The elderly in urban areas are better in terms of health as against the elderly in rural areas because the former are from wealthier and more educated households. S. Irudaya Rajan and S. Sunitha make a case study of Kerala. Life satisfaction is more among the male elderly, Hindu and Christian elderly, and those elderly living with family and not having disability. But as age increases, dissatisfaction with life among the elderly also increases. The last chapter deals with food and nutritional security among the elderly by Anil Kumar. Both under-nutrition as well as overweight and obesity prevail among the elderly with inter-state and socio-economic variations. They are likely to increase in the future as aging gathers pace. He refers to some NGOs which have taken initiatives for promoting the welfare of the elderly.

These are the contents of this book. The subjects it has covered are important. The policy prescriptions which some authors have provided need to be taken seriously. Right now the problem is in its initial phase. With the passing of years it may assume more serious proportions. Hence, steps need to be taken with immediate effect to face it.

Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics,  
Pune

N. Benjamin