

Factors Associated with Healthy Ageing: A Comparative Study between Two Tribal Communities of Assam

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Abstract: The proportion of elderly in India has been growing at a steady pace and is expected to accelerate in future. In Assam the proportion of elderly as per the 2011 census is 6.5%. The present study examines the effects of sex and ethnicity on some selected ageing related factors, involving the domains of both biology and culture, considering two scheduled tribes namely the Tiwa and Karbi living in the Morigaon district of Assam. The two tribes living in the same ecological and geographic region are having somewhat similar occupational and social structure. The study was conducted on 1012 elderly persons of both sexes in the age range of sixty years and beyond inhabiting 24 Tiwa and Karbi villages. Information on socio-demographic factors, living arrangement, activity status, ailments profile, type of treatment and functional ability were collected by using pre-tested questionnaire, while nutritional status was assessed using Body Mass Index. The results of the study reveal significant sex difference in respect of socio-demographic profile, activity status, and chronic ailments irrespective of ethnic groups. Effect of ethnicity is discernible in case of living arrangement, activity status, treatment for ailments, nutritional status and functional ability measured in terms of independently prepared meals.

Key words : Correlates of healthy ageing, scheduled tribes, sex, ethnicity, Assam