

Table 4.6: Per 1000 distribution of aged persons by state of economic independence for each sex

sex	state of economic independence			
	not dependent on others	partially dependent on others	fully dependent on others	total (include n.r.)
rural				
male	485 (511)	180 (162)	313 (327)	1000
female	121 (88)	146 (137)	706 (775)	1000
person	301 (340)	163 (152)	511 (508)	1000
urban				
male	515 (457)	169 (169)	297 (374)	1000
female	115 (48)	110 (91)	757 (861)	1000
person	311 (289)	139 (137)	532 (574)	1000

Note: Figures in parentheses give the corresponding estimates obtained from NSS 42nd Round (1986-87)

Nevertheless, 4 to 5 per cent were living alone. This apart, about 58 per cent of the aged were currently married and most of them (55 to 57 per cent of the aged) preferred to live with their spouses. An interesting gender-differential is observed in the living arrangement among the elderly and the pattern is similar in both rural and urban areas. More males than females lived with their spouses. On the other hand, as compared to the males, proportionately more females lived either alone or with their surviving children or lived with other relations and non-relations. Probably, this pattern is the impact of the higher incidence of widowhood among elderly females than among elderly males. The incidence of widowhood is higher because women live longer. However, the living arrangement appears to have changed over time in a favourable direction since 1986-87. The proportion of the aged living alone came

down from 6 to 9 per cent in 1986-87 to around 4 per cent in 1995-96. The proportion of the aged who lived with their spouses went up significantly from 37 per cent to 57 per cent in the rural areas and 35 per cent to 55 per cent in the urban areas. The decrease in the proportion of aged persons living with their children between 1986-87 and 1995-96 reflects the gradual break-down of the extended family system in India in both its rural and urban areas.

4.9 Economic independence:

The living arrangement describes how the physical well-being of the aged is taken care of in the family in our society. Similarly, the econ-omic

independence reveals the associated problem of day-to-day maintenance of livelihood of the elderly. The per 1000 distribution of aged persons by state of economic independence is given in Table 4.6 for each sex and rural-urban sectors of India. As many as 70 per cent of the aged had to depend on others for their day-to-day maintenance. The situation is worse for elderly females. Among them, about 85 to 87 per cent were economically dependent either partially or fully. In this respect, males were much better off -- among them 49 to 52 per cent did not depend on others for their livelihood. Compared to 1986-87, the results of the present survey indicate that the economic condition of the elderly in the urban sector has improved whereas it has deteriorated in general in the rural. However, elderly women have progressed economically over time in both rural and urban India, with a faster rate in the urban.