

Subtheme: Security

Stream: Poverty in Ageing

Multidimensionality of Poverty for the Older Urban Poor in India

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This paper explains the sources of old age poverty in urban India for low caste people, and especially for older women. Based on over 20 years of field research in Chennai it demonstrates, from a life course perspective, how older people accumulate disadvantage over the life course. It reveals how the burden of the urban poor's marginalisation from state services (water, lighting, electricity, legal tenure, health services, education) and the consequences of income poverty falls heaviest on the older urban poor – who are marginalised most in policy, planning and implementation. It demonstrates that the focus on family neglect misconceives the extent to which it is structural factors that determine old age poverty and that policies based on a 'blame the family' approach will have negligible impact on late life poverty.