



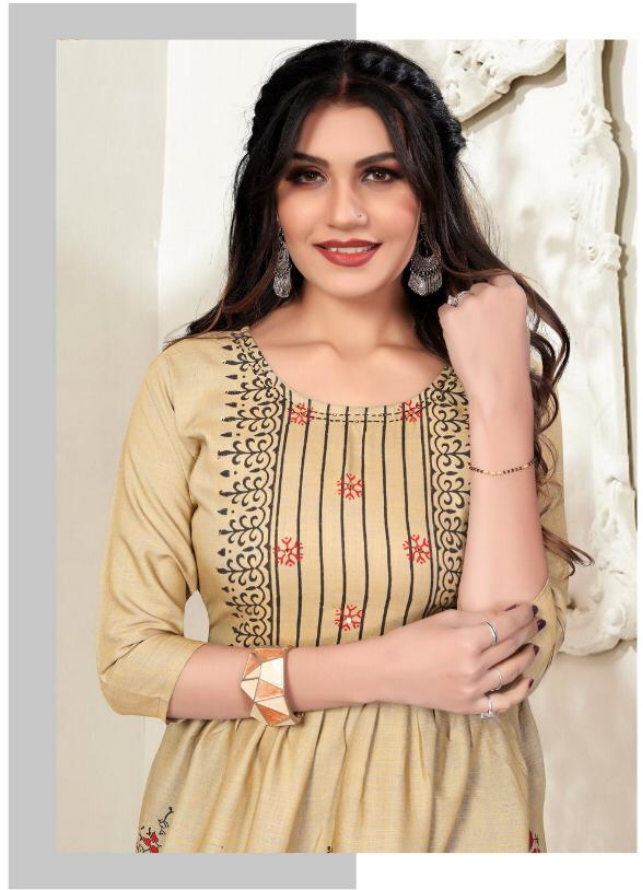
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the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are aged 65 and over has increased by 1.5 million (1990–1999) and is projected to increase by a further 1.5 million by 2010 (Office for National Statistics, 2000). The number of people aged 65 and over is projected to increase by 2.5 million by 2020 (Office for National Statistics, 2000).

There is a growing awareness of the need to develop strategies to meet the needs of the ageing population. The Department of Health (1999) has identified the need to develop a 'new paradigm' for the care of the elderly. This paradigm is based on the principle of 'active ageing', which is the process of maintaining and enhancing the functional ability of older people to live independently and to participate in the community. The Department of Health (1999) has identified a number of key areas for action in order to achieve this paradigm, including: (1) promoting the health and well-being of older people; (2) ensuring that older people have access to the services and resources they need to live independently; and (3) ensuring that older people are able to participate in the community.

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