

Elderly Living in Old Age Homes- a study in some Old Age Homes of Manipur, India

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Abstract

Background: Old age was never seen as a problem in India. But recently ageing issues have begun to emerge as a case of social concern. Demographic, socio-economic and structural challenges are also taking place within the family institutes. India is now facing a unique situation in providing care for the elderly section and old age homes is one of alternate care facilities. Thus studying elderly in old age homes has become a significant area of social research. **Objectives:** The study aims to examine the socioeconomic profile of elderly who are living in four old age homes in Manipur, India. It also probes into the factors that have compelled the elderly to stay in these institutions as well as examine the facilities available in the old age homes. **Material and methods:** The paper is based on the study conducted in different old age homes of Manipur by taking a sample of 69 institutionalized elderly. The data was collected using a specially designed interview schedule and observation technique. **Results:** The study reveals that majority of the respondents are females (75.36%) and are hailed from rural areas (66.66%). Regarding age distribution, more than half of the respondents (52.17%) are aged between 70-79 years and majority (69.56%) of them belongs to OBC category. Majority of them (76.81%) are widowed, follows Hindu Religion (66.66%), 55.07% of them are illiterate. 68.11% of them came from nuclear family and earlier doing business, followed by agriculture. The most common reasons for shifting to old age homes were verbal abuse of daughter in law, financial constraints, verbal abuse of son, nobody to look after, physical abuse, tarnishing self-respect, health issues and many more. Majority of the respondents are satisfied with the facilities provided by the institute but there are rooms for improvements in many ways.

Keywords: Elderly, Old age homes, Longevity, Shifting, Facilities

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I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant demographic changes of the time is the rapidly growing number of elderly in the world population. This is the result of 'longevity' which is biggest achievement of the century. Major improvements in the field of nutrition, sanitation, medicine, health care, education, knowledge and economic wellbeing have made it possible for people to live longer. The growing elderly segment of the population will likely introduce new societal challenges for providing this group with healthcare, financial assistance and social as well as emotional support. These upcoming changes have forced the contemporary planners, researchers and policy makers to think over these issues. All these concerns are reflected in the national policy for elderly that have made various provisions for extension of support for the institutionalized elderly care apart from the participation of the voluntary and community sectors. Recognizing the importance of this particular age group, in 1990, the UN General Assembly designated 1st October as the International Day of older persons for celebrating and acknowledging the contribution of the elderly people to the society. The UN then declared the year 1999 as the International Year for older persons.

The Indian elderly population is currently the second largest in the world after China. Although old age homes started functioning from the second half of the 19th Century, the growth and development of these facilities in India is still inadequate. Studies have shown that there has been tremendous growth in old age homes in India accommodating a sizable number of the elderly. In fact, the Government of India's National Old Age Policy (NOAP) demands that old age homes be established in every district in India as a welfare measure (Panigrahi, 2012). Old age homes have become the best alternative for those who are poor, destitute and disabled. The need for old age homes has also risen in modern times. The very reason for the rapidly increasing of old age homes indicates in many ways the degree of neglect of the elderly in their own family by their near and dear ones. It is vital that the old age home should provide the inmates a cosy and comfortable place where they could spend the rest of their lives in peace, dignity and ease. In the old age homes, the inmates get all the

basic facilities for a routine living, like food, clothing and shelter. All these necessities are looked after, but the much needed love and care of the loved ones will be missed in most of the cases in the old age homes

Operational Definition

Old age homes- sometimes called retirement homes, is a multi-residence housing facility intended for the elderly. Facilities for meals, recreation activities and health care are also provided in the old age homes.

Objectives of the study:

1. To study the socio-demographic profiles of the elderly staying in the old age homes
2. To explore the reasons for shifting in the old age homes
3. To know the perceptions and suggestions of the elderly regarding the availability of facilities in the old age homes.

II. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on a sample of 69 respondents aged 60 years and above. The data was collected from four old age homes located in three districts (Imphal East, Imphal West, Thoubal districts) of Manipur. The data was collected using a specially designed interview schedule and observation technique. Prior to final data collection, the interview schedule was tested on a small sample and subsequently finalized. The data were collected in the months of January and February 2021. The information obtained was analyzed as per the objectives of the study and tabulated.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Few studies have been conducted to document the situation of those elderly who are residing in old age homes.

Dhommaraju (2016) wrote on the perspectives of ageing in India. He showed concern on the increase in elderly population of India which is projected to increase to about 300 million by 2050. Families, the traditional source of support for the elderly in India, are getting smaller as result of reduction in fertility and, in rural areas, due to migration. Changing norms and attitudes on intergenerational relations have the potential to weaken traditional social and family support structures that the elderly depend on. As institutional and welfare support systems are lacking in India, changes to the family and social support structures will have serious implications for ageing in India. The perspectives presented also raise important questions about the relationships, roles and responsibilities of individuals, families and the state.

Prasad (2011) tried to document different aspects of deprivation in the old age by taking up economic, health and social aspects of deprivation and how it varies across space and gender. He talks of deprivation as a much broader term than poverty and it includes all kinds of denial or being excluded from a minimum standard of living. The process of ageing is always accompanied by a decline in the wellbeing that results in rising economic, health as well as social insecurity among the aged. He also cited the existence of disparity across states, sex and sector in different cases of deprivation. Women are found to be more disadvantaged as compared to their male counterparts in the old age. The relative advantage is also found to be higher in case of urban areas in comparison to the rural areas.

Kumari et al. (2016) conducted their study in two selected old age homes of Uttar Pradesh with the objective of knowing the reasons for the elderly shifting in old age homes. They found out the major reasons to be loneliness, having no son, settlement of children abroad, misbehaviors of sons and daughters in law, life threats from children, adjustment problems etc. They considered that in the present scenario, old age homes are better alternative to reside and as such there is a need to generate emotional support facilities in the old age homes and the government as well as other voluntary agencies must make better arrangements for institutional support and care for the elderly.

Bansod and Paswan (2006) conducted a study in Amravati district of Maharashtra and found that most of the elderly residing in the old age home was from the rural background, illiterate, widowed and were economically dependent. It was found that many of the elderly left their home due to neglect by their adult children and relatives and nobody to look after them. Nearly 50 percent of the inmates felt that staying in old age home was far more peaceful and homely than staying at their own homes.

Hoe et al. (2018) conducted a study in Malaysia to explore an understanding elderly people perspective on factors leading to their admission into old age homes. Findings revealed that elderly people perceived their admission due to societal changes and modernization in lifestyle and mindset, their poor health and reduced mobility and changing family structure. They do not harbor feelings of anger and abandonment on their family's decision. They realized that the best option for them is to be admitted into OAHs where they can be cared for by full time trained personnel. The overall findings revealed that the elderly are satisfied with their lives living apart from their own family and assisted by caregivers in OAHs.

Kumar et al. (2012) in their study found the older adults living in old age homes face problems of adjustment with tight and rigid schedules; total or near-total separation from their family, friends and society; anxiety over entrusting oneself to a new environment; diminished physical ability and close and frequent encounters with death and ailments in the institution. For many of them social support is almost absent and this leaves older adults with the feeling that he or she does not belong, is not loved or cared for, esteemed or valued.

Showkat (2016) highlights the need for establishment of old age homes in the present day by conducting a sociological study in Srinagar district of Jammu and Kashmir. He stated that modernisation has been a major cause for diminishing traditional values. In the modern society elderly were not well looked after and cared for, which leads them in a state of complete loneliness. He also gave a different account of elderly from high income and those in middle or lower income groups. The elderly belonging to upper income group need old age homes as living in old age homes will help them to interact with the people of their genre. Majority of elderly from middle and lower income groups were pushed to stay in old age homes because of financial factors. In this way, he highlighted the need for establishment of old age homes and day care centre in Kashmiri society. Old age home will not only serve the need of proper care but is a way to entertain, share and make the life of the elderly happy in a healthy environment

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The problems of the elderly differ from society to society. Old age has never been a problem in a country like India where a value based joint family system prevailed. The Indian family system is often held at high position for its qualities like love, support and care for its elderly. But due to various factors such as urbanization, modernization, industrialization and globalization have brought drastic transformations in the structural and functional changes of family. Due to these socio-demographic changes, elderly at times are compelled to shift from their own place to old age homes.

To study the life of elderly in old age homes, it is essential to study their socio-economic background.

Table No.1: Brief Socio-economic profile of the respondents

Sex	No. of respondents	Percentage
Male	17	24.63
Females	52	75.36
Total	69	100
Age (in years)	No. of respondents	Percentage
60-69	27	39.13
70-79	36	52.17
80+	6	8.69
Total	69	100
Area	No. of respondents	Percentage
Rural	46	66.66
Urban	23	33.33
Total	69	100
Community	No. of respondents	Percentage
Meitei	63	91.20
Tribal	4	5.79
Others	2	2.89
Total	69	100
Religion	No. of respondents	Percentage
Hindu	46	66.66
Meitei	18	26.08
Christian	5	7.24
Total	69	100
Caste	No. of respondents	Percentage
General	2	2.89
OBC	48	69.56
ST	4	5.79
SC	15	21.73
Total	69	100
Education	No. of respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	38	55.07
Primary	9	13.04

Middle	12	17.39
Matric	8	11.59
Secondary	1	1.44
Graduation and above	1	1.44
Total	69	100
Marital status	No. of respondents	Percentage
Unmarried	7	10.14
Married	5	7.24
Divorced/Separated	4	5.79
Widow/Widower	53	76.81
Total	69	100
Past Occupation	No. of respondents	Percentage
Government Job	2	2.89
Private Job	11	11.94
Petty jobs	9	14.04
Business	26	37.68
Agriculture	16	23.18
Not applicable	5	7.24
Total	69	100
Family Type	No. of respondents	Percentage
Nuclear family	47	68.11
Joint Family	22	31.88
Total	69	100

Socio-economic characteristics of the elderly are very important to understand the problems among the elderly, which are presented in Table 1.

Out of 69 respondents, women constitute 75.36% per cent and remaining 24.63% were men. Women outnumber the men. The inferences drawn from the above table is that the women concentrate more in number than men in the old age homes. The age of an individual determine his/ her position in the given social structure. It is also the deciding factor for health of the individual. It is seen that the majority (52.17%) of the respondents come under the age group of 70-79 years of old. The 39.13% per cent of the respondents belong to the 60-69 age category and the remaining 8.69% per cent of the respondents are 80 and above. It is also seen that 66.66% of the respondents hails from rural areas while the remaining 33.33% hails from urban areas.

Manipur is a state which is composed of various ethnic groups such as the Meiteis, the tribals, the pangals and some non-Manipuri groups coming from outside. The study depicts that majority of the respondents belong to Meitei community (91.20%), followed by tribals(5.79%) and non Manipuris(2.89%). People of Manipur follow various religions. The religion in many ways, determines the beliefs and value system of individual .The thinking and deeds are conditioned by the religious faith of an individual. The table details the religious faith of the inmates. It is understood that majority (66.66%) of the respondents belong to the Hindu religion, 26.08% belong to Meitei religion and remaining 7.24% of the inmates belong to Christianity.

India has a peculiar social stratification system. Among the social stratification system, the caste system is a unique system which decides the position, social mobility of the individual. The interactions and social relationships are clearly demarcated on the caste line. We came to know that the majority of the respondents (69.56%) belonged to OBC, 21.73%of the respondents belong to Schedule Caste, 5.78% belong to Schedule Tribe and only 2.89% of the respondents belong to general category.

Education is one of the important tools to standardize the life of an individual. It opens the various avenues to have a better life. It is observed by the researcher that the majority of the inmates 55.07% are illiterate, 13.04% of the respondents have primary education, 17.39 have attained the middle class, 11.59% have completed metrics, 1.44% has attained the secondary level and 1.44% has completed graduation and above. According to NSSO Employment -unemployment survey, even in 2007-2008 only 50 per cent of elderly men and 20 per cent of women aged 60 years or more were literate through formal schooling.

Out of 69 respondents, maximum numbers of respondents (79.81%) were widow/widower, 10.14% of the respondents were unmarried, 7.24% of the respondents were married with a living spouse and 5.79% were separated. The data also depicts that 37.68%of the respondents were engaged in handloom sectors before shifting to old age homes and 23.18 %of respondents were engaged in agriculture and other allied activities, 13.04% of the respondents were daily wage earners and 11.94% of the respondents did private job and business.7.24% of the respondents were home makers and 2.89% of the respondents were government employees.

Our traditional joint family is a security measure to the vulnerable sections like elderly. The disintegration of the joint family drastically affects the elders and paves the way to secondary institutions like old age homes. According to the data, 68.11% of the inmates belong to the nuclear family setup and remaining 31.88% come under the category of joint family setup. The data support that the disintegration of joint family definitely disturb the elderly.

Table No. 2: Distribution of respondents by factors which force them to shift in OAH

Incident	No of respondents	Percentage
Tarnishing self-respect	3	4.34
Verbal abuse of son	7	10.14
Verbal abuse of daughter in law	29	42.02
Physical abuse	5	7.24
Financial constraints	10	14.49
Health problem	3	4.34
Nobody to look after	6	8.69
Any other	6	8.69
Total	69	100

The first choice of the elderly is always to stay with their families. But sometimes many factors forced them to leave their near and dear ones and join old age homes as the last resort. The reasons cited by the elderly for shifting to old age homes were many and varied from one individual to another and are provided in table 2. The most common reasons were verbal abuse of daughter in law (42.02%) and financial constraints (14.49%). Other factors were verbal abuse of son (10.14%), nobody to look after (8.69%), physical abuse (7.24%), tarnishing self-respect, health issues and many more. Some of the respondents refused to give any response regarding familial relation and this clearly indicates the pain they felt.

Table No. 3: Distribution of respondents according to their leisure time activities

Leisure time activities	No. of respondents	Percentage
Watching television	12	17.39
Listening radio	23	33.33
Reading	2	2.89
Talking with inmates	12	17.39
Playing indoor games		
Gardening	9	13.04
Other useful activities for the institute	11	15.94
Total	69	100

Elderly in old age homes have a lot of free time. So engaging in something is quite necessary to divert their mind from their sad past. An effort has been made to study the leisure time activity of elderly in the old age homes. Table 3 illustrates that one third of the respondents listen radio in their free time and the radio programs includes news and entertainment programs like songs, dramas etc. 17.39% of the respondents spend their leisure time by watching television. A same percentage (17.29%) of the respondents spend their leisure time by talking and interacting with their fellow inmates. 15.94% of the respondents engaged in performing some useful activities of the old age home like sweeping, group activities etc. 13.04% of the respondents loves gardening and maintain the gardens in the premises of the institution. A very meager percentage (2.89%) of the residents is engaged in reading.

Table No. 4: Distribution of respondents according to their views about the facilities provided in the old age homes

Facilities	Fully Satisfied	Satisfied to some extent	Fully Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied to some extent
Basic facilities	11	43	0	15
Medical facilities	14	36	3	16
Recreational Facilities	25	30	0	14

Old age homes are expected to provide a number of facilities to enhance the quality of life of the inmates. Facilities like basic services of food clothing shelter, medical facilities and other recreational facilities are studied. All these facilities are provided in all the four old age homes but the level of their satisfaction is illustrated in the above table.

Table No. 5: Suggestions made by the respondents

Suggestions	No. of respondents	Percentage
No need of any improvements	31	44.92
Need more staffs/caregivers for elders personal care	9	13.04
Need better medical care	10	14.49
Need more facilities	15	27.73
Allowed to go outside	4	5.79
Total	69	100

The respondents were asked to give or express their suggestions regarding improvement of working condition of the old age homes. Most of the respondents (44.92%) when asked how to improve the institutional facilities, stated that there is no room for improvements. Further 27.73% of the respondents made suggestions regarding the need for more facilities like provision for a resident doctor in the institute; providing of pocket money etc. 14.49% of the respondents want a better medical care facilities, 13.04% of the respondents reported that more staffs or caregivers are needed and 5.77% of the respondents want the institution to allow them to go outside freely.

In a nutshell, majority of the inmates did not give any suggestions as the old age homes are freely providing the facilities and hence not demanding and vocal regarding their preferences.

Policy implication

It comes out from this study that most of the elderly respondents are economically dependent and do not have any one to look after them for some reason or the other. So some policy should be framed to provide more government support in the form of cash and kind. Provision for the elderly in the society has become one of the constitutive themes of our modern welfare state. Since most of the elderly are suffering numerous medical problems, government should provide better medical facilities in the old age homes. Some of the old age homes are quite far away from the city and as such emergency facilities like vehicle, oxygen cylinder should be provided all round the clock. Resident doctors should be a must in the old age homes. There is a need for the government to provide financial support to all the senior citizens who do not receive any pension. NGOs and private trusts should be encouraged to start more old age homes and adopt these vulnerable elderly as many of the respondents cited that if there were no old age homes, they would have ended up homeless by now.

V. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that most of the elderly in the old age homes were from rural background, illiterate, widowed and are economically dependent on others. The female residents were more in number. The findings revealed that the factors that compelled them to join old age homes are verbal abuse of daughter in law, financial constraints, verbal abuse of son, nobody to look after, physical abuse, tarnishing self-respect, health issues etc. Majority of the elderly blamed their daughter in laws for their present condition. Most of the elderly were satisfied with the facilities provided in the institute and many more expressed their view that when everything is provided for free when even their own family doesn't, there is nothing to complain about.

Old age is the age when humans feel more in need of care and someone to interact and share feelings with. But what the elderly in the present generation are facing is just the opposite. Due to various factors, the number of elderly in old age homes are increasing day by day The number of old age homes is also constantly increasing and also many of the old parents are now deciding to live in old age homes rather than living with their children as they faced many problems like lack of care, emotional support and economic support from the family. It is vital that the old age home should provide the inmates a cozy and comfortable place where they, the inmates get all the basic facilities for a routine living, like food, clothing, shelter, proper medical care, recreational facilities etc. To create normal life of these elderly with proper care and protection is indeed very essential.

Limitations:

The study was carried out in a limited time period on a small sample of old age home and thus may not be generalized on general population.

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