

LIFE AT OLD AGE HOMES: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN CUTTACK

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Abstract

In a developing country like India, ageing issues have begun to emerge as a cause of social concern. There is a great demographic, socio-economic and structural change taking place within the family because of this rapid change in the family system. Many traditional societies are facing a unique situation of providing care and support to the elderly. Consequently, old age support structures in the form of family are now extending into other alternative care facilities like old ages home. Thus, it has become a significant area for social scientists and demographers in sociological research. This paper highlights the reasons why people are shifted to old age homes It also focuses on the various government and non-governmental old age homes in providing facilities to the institutionalized elderly as an alternative form. The present paper consists of the study done in various old age homes of Cuttack, Odisha by taking a sample of 150 people. From this study, I conclude that family conflict is the major reason for shifting into old age homes. It also shows the level of satisfaction and facilities provided to them in an old home. Misbehaviour of son and daughter in law is also a common factor for many of the people to come and stay in the old aged home that I came to know from this study.

KEYWORDS: OLD AGE HOME, ELDERLY, MISBEHAVIOR

Introduction

Quality of life is defined as the sense of wellbeing which stems from satisfaction and dissatisfaction with the areas of life which are important for his or her life. Society is confronted with improving the quality of life of elderly people. For this reason, the institutional environments need to be designed to permit successful ageing to maintain the highest possible quality of life even in this living context (1). For living a satisfied life there is a need for fulfilment of the requirement. As we know, no longer India is maintaining an ethnocentric outlook about the family care of elders. The rising of modernization, westernization, prosperity has come with a hefty social price tag- the erosion of filial piety. According to the changing social landscape, many elderly people are opting to spend their years in an alternative living arrangement such as old age homes (2). Consequently, it can no

longer be assumed that elderly people are living comfortably within their families and receive the required care and support from their families. So, it has become an emerging need to pay greater attention to ageing issues and to promote holistic policies and programs for society. As in the present day, there are dynamic changes that are taking place within the family structure of Indian society. The problem of the aged people has assumed great importance. The main purpose of my study is to find out the quality of life of elderly people living in an old age home. This paper basically focuses on two areas. First, it deals with the reasons for living with their family and shifting to this new environment and secondly how old age homes are taking up the role of the family institution in providing care and support to the elderly people. Keeping these in mind, the study is conducted at a different old age home in Cuttack.

Objectives of study

- 1) To examine the demographic and socio-economic profile of the inmates staying in old age homes.
- 2) To know the reason that forces the elderly to stay at the old age home living family.
- 3) To know the perceptions and suggestions of the elderly people about the facilities and care provided by old age homes.

Methodology

An empirical study was conducted in Cuttack by taking the information from various old age homes. The data was collected from 8 different kinds of old age homes in Cuttack around 100 people together. The old age home is segregated into paid, unpaid, partially paid, or unpaid.

Literature review

Earlier few studies are conducted to document the situation of elderly people living in old age homes. In Maharashtra, 19 Old Age Homes were studied by Dandekar (1996). He found that the main reason for the aged moving into old age homes was the lack of proper care for them within the family set-up. The study found that the majority of the inmates were living free at the Old Age Homes. The study also concluded that four-fifths of the inmates liked the Old Age Homes. They wanted to live there because they had nowhere else to go to. A survey in 1999 was conducted in Kerala and Tamil Nadu by Rajan, Mishra and Sarma, covering 7 old age homes containing 120 elderly this study reveals that the majority of people living at the old age home are happy. They all are happy with the quality and quantity of the

food provided by the old age home.50 percent of them have responded that an old age home is the best place to live in old age.

Findings

Table 1: Profile of the old age home respondents

Age (yrs.)	No. of Respondents	Percentage
60-70	83	55.33
70-80	41	27.33
80-90	17	11.34
90+	9	6.0
Total	150	100
Sex		
Male	89	59.33
Female	61	40.67
Total	150	100
Area		
Rural	94	62.67
Urban	56	37.33
Total	150	100
Religion		
Hindu	79	52.67
Others	71	47.33
Total	150	100
Marital Status		
Never married/single	19	12.67
Married	34	22.66
Widowed	93	62.00
Divorced/separated	4	2.66
Total	150	100
Education		

Illiterate	49	32.67
Up to middle	47	31.33
Up to 10+2	32	21.33
Graduate or above	12	8.00
Total	150	100
Occupation		
Agriculturist	6	4
Govt. Job	27	18
Pvt. Job	21	14
Petty Job	49	32.67
N/A	47	31.33
Total	150	100

**TABLE 2:
MAJORS REASONS
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ting the old age home

Major Reasons	Respondents	Total (Percentage)
Demographic		
Un-married	14	9.33
Childless	28	18.67
Economic		
Destitute/Homeless	14	9.33
We are living in rented houses	09	6
Lack of financial resources	17	11.33
Familial/Social		
Strained relations with sons/daughters-in law	15	10.00
Conflict with spouse	05	3.33
Children settled abroad/socially not secure	06	4
Improper to stay with married daughters/no male issue	09	5.33
Psychological/personal		
Do not want to be a burden	08	5.34
Due to spouse death feeling loneliness	20	6.67
Want to live separated/personal freedom/spiritual satisfaction	07	4.67

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to their views about the old age home

AVAILIBILTY OF FACILITIES	VIEWS OF THE RESPODANTS	TOTAL IN PERCENTAGE
BASIC FACILITIES	52	34.66
MEDICAL CARE	40	26.67
RECREATIONAL AND SPIRITUAL FACILITY	20	13.33
FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS AND SPECIAL SERVICES FOR PERSONAL NEEDS	38	25.37
TOTAL	150	100 PERCENTAGE

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to their leisure time

INDOOR ACTIVITIES	NO OF RESPODANTS	TOTAL
WATCHING T. V	36	24
READING NEWSPAPER, BOOKS, MAGAZINES	20	13.33
LISTENING RADIO	11	7.34

USING LAPTOP AND COMPUTERS	14	9.33
PLAYING BOARD GAMES (CHESS, CARON, CARDS)	13	8.66
BUSY WITH SPOUSE CARE / PERSONAL CARE	10	10.66
USEFUL ACTIVITIES FOR THE INSTITUTES	7	4.67
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES		
RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES	25	16.66
OUTING	14	9.32
TOTAL	150	100.00

Table 5: Distribution of inmates according to their satisfaction with institutional facilities

SATISFACTION LEVEL	NO OF RESPONDANTS	TOTAL
DISSATISFIED	30	20
PARTIALLY SATISFIED	48	32
SATISFIED	53	35.33
HIGHLY SATISFIED	19	12.67
TOTAL	150	100.00

Discussion

Table number 1 shows the socio-economic and demographic characteristic of the respondents. (55.33) percent of them fall under the young old age category of age (60-70) years. The majority of elderly people were males, either literate or illiterate, or the spouse of them had died. Most of the males (59.33) said that as they are not that much capable and,

they hail from rural areas (62.67) and we also found that the majority of widowed (62.01) belongs to the Hindu religion (52.10) which is a little more than one-third of them are (32.67) illiterate and were earlier employed in the petty jobs (32.67).

Reasons for Shifting into old home age

As we know for the elderly first choice is always to stay with their families. But sometimes, circumstances force them to leave their families and then they opt to live at an old age home. The reasons for leaving families have been categories as demographic, economic, familial/social, and psychological/personal. Let us know their prominent reasons for shifting to old age homes. (Refer to Table 2). As regards the demographic reasons, table 2 shows that out of the total, 9.33 per cent of the inmates are unmarried and 18.67 per cent of them are childless. Thus, the absence of children prompted them to come to institutional support. Under the economic reasons of the shifting to old age homes, 9.33 per cent of the inmates are homeless and 6 per cent of them found it difficult to pay rent for the houses. These reasons were highlighted by the respondents of old age homes. Whereas 11.33 per cent of them complained that they were not getting proper facilities due to lack of financial resources and their sons do not have sufficient income to run the family. This was reported only by the inmates of an old age home. So, lack of economic resources led them to institutional care. As far as reasons about familial/social are concerned, majority of the respondents i.e. (10.00 per cent) had strained relations with their sons/daughters-in-law, 3.33 per cent of the respondents had a conflict with their spouses, 4 per cent of them said that their children have settled abroad and another 5.33 percent of them joined the old age home because they did not want to stay with their married daughters. These reasons were stated only by the elderly of old age homes, regarding psychological/personal reasons, 5.34 percentage homes because they did not want to be a burden on their families. Another 6.67 percent felt lonely due to their spouse dying and the remaining 4.67 percent of them came to the old age home for personal freedom and spiritual satisfaction of life. These reasons were given by the old age homes. To sum up, the main reason that emerged was the strained relations with sons/daughters-in-law which forced the majority of the elderly to stay in both types of old age homes. These strained relations have been expressed through abuse, neglect, and refusal to live with and care for the aged. Some of the elderly refused to give any response regarding familial relations and did not want to talk about it, clearly indicating the pain they felt. Besides this reason, the absence of family of procreation, inadequate financial resources and loneliness were also responsible

for the shifting of elderly to old age homes. Further, the respondents were also asked to reveal the availability of the facilities and services provided by the old age homes.

Institutional Services and Facilities Provision Old age homes

There are expected to have various facilities and services that are necessary for daily living. These services and facilities provide opportunities to enhance the quality of life in these settings. The availability of facilities and services highlighted in old age homes. Let us see the facilities enjoyed by the respondents: - (Refer Table 3 Here) Table 3 shows that more than half (i.e., 34.66 per cent) of the inmates reveal that basic facilities and services (food, medical care, furniture, accommodation, or things for daily requirements) old age homes. Availability of medical care was reported by 26.67 per cent of residents of old age homes, which was more prevalent in old age homes. One-tenth (i.e., 13.33 per cent) of the elderly reported about the provision of recreational and spiritual facilities at old age homes, however, more facilities are being offered by old age homes. The remaining, a little more than one-tenth (i.e., 25.37 per cent) of them stated the availability of funeral arrangements and special services (arrange a private taxi, meditation). The expert lift system and special food needs) for their personal needs at an old age, homes are available. Further, it can also be said that all the basic necessary facilities such as food, medical care, furniture, accommodation, or things for daily requirements were available for the institutional residents for old age homes. After knowing the availability of facilities and services at the old age homes, an attempt has also been made to analyze the leisure time activities of the respondents at the old age institutions. Leisure time activities are categorized as indoor activities and outdoor activities.

Leisure Time Activities of the Institutionalized Elderly

The Elderly has a lot of free time and does not know what to do with it. They engage themselves in various types of activities and an effort has been made to study leisure. Time activities at the old age homes. (Refer to Table 4 Here) Table 4 illustrates that one-fourth (24 per cent) of the respondents spend their leisure time watching T.V, which was pronounced in old age homes. While one-fifth (i.e., 15.34 per cent) of the elderly read newspapers, books, and magazines, which was more prevalent in old age homes. 7.34 percent of them listen to the radio in their free time, i.e. 12 percent of the respondents use lap-top and computers as their leisure time activity, which was indicated only by educated old age institutions. About 8.6 percent of them play games like cards, carom and chess and do physical exercises, yoga, meditation, and these kinds of activities were more precisely seen in old age homes. Further,

data also shows that 6.66 per cent of respondents in old age homes are busy with spouse care or personal care tasks, and a little more than one-tenth (i.e., 16.66 percent) of them performed various activities for the old age homes, these include help in the kitchen, gardening and maintaining old age homes accounts).

As far as outdoor activities are concerned, a little less than one-fifth (i.e., 9.32 per cent), visit a nearby temple or engage in religious activities such as service in temple/ Satsang, kirtan, Prayer, Worships outside the old age homes. Another, a little less than one-tenth (i.e. 9.3 per cent) of them reported that they go shopping or outing during their free time, On the whole, it can be said that when we analyze the responses of the institutionalized elderly in b. old age homes, the results show that most of the inmates residing in old age homes spend their leisure by participating in activities such as watching T.V, playing board games (chess, carom and cards) + exercise, yoga, meditation, busy with spouse's care/personal care tasks, useful activities for the institutes and shopping or outing. While in old age homes the respondents enjoy their free time in reading newspapers, books, magazines, listening to the radio, use laptop and computers and participating in religious activities. Further, it can also be concluded that most of the elderly engage themselves in various types of indoor activities. They keep themselves busy in some of the other activities so that they can maintain their physical mobility. Some of the elderly feel that there should be the provision of picnics, discussions, arts and crafts, interaction with the kids and more such activities which can enhance the lives of the elderly emotionally, socially, and cognitively. After knowing the leisure time activities performed by the inmates, further, let us see the level of satisfaction of the institutionalized respondents with their institutional facilities and services.

Satisfaction with the Institutional Facilities and Services

When more elderly are opting to stay in old age homes, it would be interesting to study their adjustment patterns in the new environment. Levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in old age homes. Here, an attempt has been made to know the perceptions of the inmates regarding their satisfaction with the facilities and services provided at the old age homes. As is evident from Table 5 that more than half (i.e., 35.33 per cent) of the respondents were satisfied with the services provided to them by old age homes. Almost one-third of the inmates are dissatisfied and partially satisfied. While one-tenth (i.e., 12.67 per cent) of the elderly are

highly satisfied, Thus, it can be concluded that most of the residents of the old age homes were satisfied with the institutional services and facilities provided to them and this was reflected in their satisfaction

Results of Study

To know the quality of life spent in an old, aged home, it is important to study the socio-economic background of the elderly people living in old age homes.

Conclusion

As per the overall analysis, we saw that institutionalized elderly in Cuttack are 60-70 years old male and they hail from rural areas. Out of which the majority are Hindu religion is illiterate and has petty jobs. From which we can conclude that the major reason for shifting to old age homes is the conflicting relations with their family members in both kinds of old age homes. The availability of services is more prevalent in old age homes. The peoples were more satisfied with their institutional services and facilities. Therefore, the results suggested that by considering the demographic change, the change in the family context and the rise of old age homes. The state and centre should take several attempts to assist the elderly wherever possible. The government should focus on the proper implementation of the policies formulated for elders and also should establish more old age homes, at least one old age home in one district should be there for the elderly with a good institutional living arrangement, as the demand for such care is likely to rise in the future.