ELDERLY PEOPLE LIVING IN OLD AGE HOMES IN MADURAI DISTRICT

Mrs. S. Pandeeswari[1]

ABSTRACT

Ageing has been defined as the total constellation of social, biological and psychological changes that occur in the last stage of life. Ageing of the population is one of the most important demographic factors that have emerged in the 21st Century. Old age is the closing period of the life span. It is a period when people 'move away' from previous more desirable periods or times of 'usefulness'. Old age homes are a boon to those who do not enjoy the support of their children or have nobody to take care of them. At least old age homes provide them shelter, food and company. But definitely, nothing can compensate for living with affectionate children and grandchildren. The objectives of the present study are as follows: i) to understand the socio-economic conditions of inmates of old age homes in the study area, ii) to find out the living conditions of inmates of the old age homes in the study area and iii) to understand the reasons behind the joining of the respondents in old age homes in the study area. This study is based on primary data. The data were collected from Madurai District. There are 30 registered old age homes in Madurai district. From each home, 10 respondents have been selected by adopting a systematic sampling technique. The researcher has selected 300 respondents for this study. Average, Simple Percentage, Weighted Arithmetic Mean and factor analysis are used to analyze the collected data.

Keywords: Inmates, Old age Homes, Living Conditions, Nature of Home.

INTRODUCTION

Ageing has been defined as the total constellation of social, biological and psychological changes that occur in the last stage of life. Ageing of the population is one of the most important demographic factors that have emerged in the 21st Century. Old age is the closing period of the life span. It is a period when people 'move away' from previous more desirable periods or times of 'usefulness'. Old age is considered as a curse, being associated with deterioration of all physical, psychological factors, isolation from social, economic, and other activities. Socially, this stage was considered as the sum total of one's lived experiences. Hence, the society offered a space of respect to the old. In such a society, the aged were the

---

[1] Assistant Professor of Economics, Ayya Nadar Janaki Ammal College (Autonomous), Sivakasi.

repositories, transmitters, and sole authorities of wisdom and knowledge. All these provided a 'golden age' concept to this stage, old age.

Old age homes are a boon to those who do not enjoy the support of their children or have nobody to take care of them. At least old age homes provide them shelter, food and company. But definitely, nothing can compensate for living with affectionate children and grandchildren.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Old age is not a new phenomenon; it is like old human society. The elderly population in India is continuously increasing and also the problems faced by these people are increasing simultaneously. The number of people in old age homes is constantly increasing and also most of the parents are now deciding to live in the old age homes rather than living with their children. Nowadays, these people are facing the problems like lack of care, emotional support and economic support from the family *etc.* Our culture recognizes the status of the parents on par with God. A moral duty is put on the children are observing in our society is that the children are not willing to take care of their parents, they do not want to spend money on them. The wards are treating their parents as aliens, and they do not want to share an emotional bond with their parents. These children are forgetting that the foundation of their life is built up by their parents. They are forgetting their moral and ethical duties towards their parents. This is because of fast life, industrialization, money-oriented minds, *etc.* Children have no time to look after their parents, because of their busy schedules and as a consequence of this situation the elders are getting neglected. At this time, some elderly people are shifted to old age homes. Older people are considered a burden, because it is assumed that older persons have reduced physical and intellectual capabilities and are therefore dependent on the younger generation. The old people feel totally neglected and sometimes they have to take refuge in homes for the aged which are run by some social organizations. Feeling of loneliness, the social-economic status of age, changes in social roles, adjustment problems in old age, and generational gap are some important factors behind the need for the institution. Old age persons suffer from unhappiness caused by their feeling of usefulness, loneliness, economic insecurity and adjustment problem. Old age is the closing period of life span. Some spend the later part of life happily, whereas others face untold hardship and are denied even the minimal comforts of life.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are: i) to understand the socio-economic conditions of inmates of old age homes in the study area, ii) to find out the living conditions of inmates of the old age homes in the study area and iii) to understand the reasons behind the joining of the respondents in old age homes in the study area.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on primary data. The data were collected from Madurai District. There are 30 registered old age homes in Madurai district. From each home, 10 respondents have been selected by adopting a systematic sampling technique. Totally, the researcher has selected 300 respondents for this study. Average, Simple Percentage, Weighted Arithmetic Mean and factor analysis are used to analyze the collected data.

ANALYSIS OF THE STUDY
AGE-WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

Generally, the aged people thought that in the home, their wards have not considered them in taking any decisions in family matters and felt isolated. Hence, it is very essential to classify the sample respondents based on their age and the same is displayed in Table 1.

TABLE 1
AGE–WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	Age in years	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Below 60	123	41.00
2.	60 – 70	126	42.00
3.	70 – 80	36	12.00
4.	Above 80	15	5.00
Total		**300**	**100**
Minimum Age – 52		**Average Age – 63**	**Maximum Age – 86**

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

It is evident from Table 1 that, out of 300 respondents, 126 (42.00 per cent) respondents belong to the age group of 60 years to 70 years. The remaining 123 (41.00 per cent), 36 (12.00 per cent) and 15 (5.00 per cent) respondents are in the age group of below 60 years, 70 years to 80 years and above 80 years respectively. The minimum age, average age and maximum age of the inmates are estimated and the values are 52 years, 63 years and 86 years respectively.

GENDER–WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

Gender plays a vital role in all aspects. According to the Hindu Undivided Family Law, the right to hold property is vested in the hands of the male members and not in female members. Normally male children are having more rights to get parental properties than female children. Hence, to get property share from their parents to some extent the sons try to look after their parents. But the parents are taken care of more by the female children than the male children. If a parent has a female child is lucky enough compared with a male child. But now – a – days, by Law both male and female children are having equal rights to get parental property and at the same time the taking care of parents by their children in general (both male and female) declined. In this regard, the researcher wanted to classify the sample respondents based on their gender. Accordingly, the researcher classified the respondents on the basis of gender and the same is shown in Table 2.

TABLE 2
GENDER–WISE CLASSIFICATION OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	Gender	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Male	113	37.67
2.	Female	187	62.33
Total		**300**	**100**

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

It is evident from Table 2 that out of 300 respondents studied, 187 (62.33 per cent) respondents are female and the remaining 113 (37.67 per cent) respondents are male. In the study area, the female inmates are more in number compared to male inmates. The main reason behind this is no property, no savings in the names of female members. Even though there is a Law for equal property rights for males and female, the male members are dominating and give only very less share to their female heir. This tendency should be changed and equal property share should be given to the female members. Because of this share of parental property, the women at the old age can be taken care of by their wards.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

The researcher wanted to identify the socio-economic status of the sample respondents in the study area because the ultimate aim of the researcher is to identify from which socio-economic group, more people come and reside in the old age homes. Accordingly, the researcher has collected information and the same is depicted Table 3.

TABLE 3
SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE SAMPLE RESPONDENTS

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Upper Class	12	4.00
2.	Middle Class	124	41.34
3.	Lower Middle Class	105	35.00
4.	Upper Lower Class	40	13.33
5.	Lower Class	19	6.33
Total		**300**	**100**

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Table 3 shows that out of 300 respondents, 124 (41.34 per cent) respondents are from a middle-class family. Another 105 (35.00 per cent) respondents are from a lower middle-class family. The remaining 40 (13.33 per cent), 19 (6.33 per cent) and 12 (4.00 per cent) respondents are from upper middle, lower and upper-class families respectively. It is understood from this table that a majority of the respondents are from the middle class and lower middle class. If we put it together nearly 76 per cent of the sample respondents fall under these socio-economic groups. From this table, one can conclude that the middle and lower-middle socioeconomic groups are not taking care of their elders and sent them to old age homes.

NATURE OF HOME

The old age homes are of two types. One is a free home, where the inmates have not paid any fees for the stay and the facilities provided. The second type of home is a paid home, where the inmates have to pay money to the home authorities for the stay, facilities provided and the care taken. In this context, the researcher wanted to classify the sample respondents on the basis of the nature of homes. Accordingly, the researcher has collected and classified the information and the same is presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4
NATURE OF HOME

Sl. No.	Nature of Home	No. of Homes	Percentage
1.	Free Home	12	40.00
2.	Paid Home	18	60.00
Total		**30**	**100**

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

Table 4 clearly depicts that out of 30 homes taken for the study, 18 (60.00 per cent) homes are paid homes. The remaining 12 (40.00 per cent) homes are free homes. It is identified that out of 300 respondents, 180 (60.00 per cent) respondents are staying in paid homes and the remaining 120 (40.00 per cent) respondents are staying in free homes. It is inferred from this table that nearly 2/3rd of the sample respondents are staying in paid homes. It means money is not a problem.

REASONS FOR JOINING THE OLD AGE HOMES

One of the important objectives of the study is to identify the reasons behind the joining of old age homes. In this regard, the researcher wanted to identify the reasons for joining the old age homes by the sample inmates on the basis of five-point scale scores and the same is given in Table 5.

TABLE 5
WEIGHTED ARITHMETIC MEAN

Sl. No.	Particulars	W.A.M.	Rank
1.	To meet out the basic needs	42.01	VII
2.	Rejections by family members	44.69	I
3.	Unproductivity	43.23	II
4.	No one cares after the demise of spouse	42.53	IV
5.	Not having own children to care	43.00	III
6.	Not to be a burden for family members	42.34	V
7.	My own interest	42.20	VI

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

The researcher ranked the weighted arithmetic mean values to identify the most and least important factors. It is evident from Table 6 that the most important reason for joining the old age home is rejection by family members and it stood first rank. The least important factor is to meet out their basic needs and it stood the seventh rank. There are seven factors given to the respondents and got their perceptions towards that using five-point scales. Out of these seven points, no one cares after demise of a spouse fall on the middle band or the border line dividing the reasons into three most important factors and three least important factors. Accordingly, the three most important factors are rejection by family members, unproductivity, and not having own children to take care fall on first, second and third places respectively. The three least important factors are not to be a burden for family members, my own interest and to meet out the basic needs fall on fifth, sixth and seventh places respectively.

TABLE 6
LIVING CONDITIONS OF INMATES OF OLD AGE HOMES

KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
	Chi - Square Value	'P' value
0.917	3.301E3	0.000

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

It could be seen from Table 6 that the Bartlett's Test is significant with P = 0.000 being less than 0.05. Sampling significant measured using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) of 0.917 is taken as acceptable. Thus, the factor analysis may be considered an appropriate technique for analyzing the data.

TABLE 7:FACTOR LOADING COMPONENT MATRIX

Factors	Statements	1	2	3
F_1 = Basic Needs Provided by the Old Age Homes	Bathing	**.875**	.125	.120
	Medical Facilities	**.874**	.127	.062
	Pooja Room	**.836**	.132	.113
	Food	**.810**	.140	.113
	Water Facilities	**.769**	.091	.251
	Security	**.704**	.235	.175
	Toilet	**.684**	.224	.063
F_2 = Emotional Identification	Feelings of Co-inmates during visit	.186	**.899**	.128
	Entertainment Activities	.162	**.888**	.129
	Ritual activities after the death of inmates	.182	**.869**	.146
	Frequent visit made by the relatives of inmates	.147	**.868**	.177
	Feelings of inmates during visit	.223	**.813**	.224
F_3 = Hospitality	Period of stay in old age homes	.082	.192	.786
	Distance from inmates' native place to old age homes	.177	.068	.781
	Nature of Home	.161	.158	.774
	Number of Accommodation	.131	.200	.752

Source : Compiled from Primary Data

FACTOR: I – BASIC NEEDS PROVIDED BY THE OLDAGE HOMES

It is obvious from Table 7 that the factor loading values for different components come under Factor – I are bathing facilities (0.875), medical facilities (0.874), pooja room (0.836), taste of food (0.810), water facilities (0.769), security (0.704) and toilet facilities (0.684). The variables given in the table relate to the **facilities provided by the old age homes.** Hence, the Factor - I is named as "**BASIC NEEDS PROVIDED BY THE OLDAGE HOMES**". The Eigen value of the Factor - I is (6.875) and the percentage of variance is (42.971).

The components come under Factor – II are feelings of co-inmates during visit (0.899), entertainment activities (0.888), ritual activities after the death of inmates (0.869), frequent visit made by the relatives of the inmates (0.868) and feelings of inmates during visit (0.813). The above items relate to the **perception towards the emotional feelings of the inmates.** Hence, the Factor - II is characterized as "**EMOTIONAL IDENTIFICATION**". The Eigen value of the Factor II is (2.685) and the percentage of variance is (59.753).

The variables pertaining to Factor – III are period of stay in old age homes (0.786), distance from inmates' native place to the old age homes (0.781), nature of homes (0.774) and number of accommodation (0.752). The above variables are related to the **conditions of the old age homes.** Hence, the Factor - III is termed as "**HOSPITALITY**". The Eigen value of the Factor III is (1.851) and the percentage of variance is (71.324).

SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study found that most of the inmates of the old age homes are economically dependent and less educated. Further, the health conditions of the inmates are not satisfactory. In this regard, the researcher has made the following suggestions to improve the status of the inmates of the old age homes:

- Parents always want to spend all their earnings for the growth and development of their children with the faith that they will take care in the future. Because of that only many parents won't make any savings for their future. It means, they think only about the future of their children not their future. But now – a – days, many children not react according to their parent's action. Hence, it is safe, if the parents make some savings for their future.

- Previously in schools, moral classes are included in the curriculum and moral and ethical values were taught to the young one. But now – a – days, due to the modernization in education, we won't give importance to the moral classes and giving importance to the moral values are detonated in schools. It should be taken care off. The educational authorities should take initiatives regarding this and impart moral values in the minds of the younger children. In higher educational institutions, the UGC has introduced "Grant – Parents Club" to understand the importance of elders in the family and how essential to take care of them. This type of clubs should be started in the school levels and the most important one is giving freedom to the teachers to inculcate the good habits among small children.

- Recreational facilities should be made available in the old age homes apart from providing TV. The elderly should be encouraged to become the members of social organization and actively participates in civic engagements. There is also a need to introduce income generating activities for the elderly who are fit to work in the old age homes.

- Due to the age factor and loneliness, the elderly people in the old age homes are affected both physically and mentally. They should need counselling to remove mental stress and health facilities to free them from physical problems. To examine the health conditions and provide medical facilities to the inmates of the old age homes, geriatric homes should be constructed by the Government.

- The feel of the inmates in the old age homes is that in the old age they are not taken care of by their children. For the first one or two months, they come and visit, after that, they won't turn back. Hence, the authorities of the old age homes should instruct the person who accompanied the elderly people at the time of admission or their relatives to come and visit at least once in a month. Because at the time of data collection, the researcher experienced the pathetic conditions of the inmates, their expectations, the pain in their hearts *etc,* No word to express it. Their expectations are once in a month they want to talk with their kith and kins. In this regard, the researcher suggested making visits by the wards of the inmates to the homes at least twice in a year and asking them to spend their time with the inmates. It will not only give some joy to the inmates but also the children understand the reality and the feelings of elderly people. Definitely, it will make our children positively and not to send us to the old age homes.

REFERENCES

1. Biswajit Mandal. and Biswaranjan Mistri., (2016): "Socio – Economic Status of Aged People at Dewli and Getugachhi Gram Panchayat in Chakdaha C.D. Block, Nadia District, West Bengal", *International Research Journal of Interdisciplinary & Multidisciplinary Studies (IRJIMS),* ISSN: 2394 – 7969, Vol. II, Issue. I, pp. 8 – 18.

2. Rishi Panday. *et al*., (2015): "A Study on Quality of Life Between Elderly People Living in Old Age Home and Within Family Setup", *Home Current Issue Archives about Us about the Journal Author Instructions Abstracting and Indexing Advance Online Publication Forum,* pp. 1 – 12.

3. Sobha George. *et al*., (2015): "Depression among Elderly: A Comparative Study among the Elderly Living in Old Age Homes and Own Homes in Ernakulam, Kerala State, India", *International Journal of Emerging Technology & Research,* Vol. 2, Issue: 4, ISSN: 2347 – 6079, pp. 62 – 67.

4. Anitha Rayirala. *et al*., (2014): "A Cross Sectional Comparative Study Assessing the Psychiatric Morbidity in Elderly Living in Old Age Homes and Community", *AP J Psychological Medicine,* Vol. 15 (1), pp. 86 – 92.

5. Bindu M Bhatt. *et al*., (2014), "Ageing and Health: A Health Profile of Inmates of Old Age Home", *National Journal of Community Medicine,* Vol.5, Issue: 1, p-ISSN: 0976 3325, e-ISSN: 2229 6816, pp. 1 – 5.

6. Geetha Mani. *et al*., (2014): "Perceived Levels of Stress and its Correlates among Residents of Old Age Home in Kanchipuram District, Tamil Nadu", *Original Article,* Vol.7, Issue.6, pp.728 – 731.

7. Parul Tripathi., (0214): "Elderly: Care and Crisis in Old Age Home", *International Journal of Research Science and Medical Science,* Vol. 2(2), ISSN: 2320 8236, pp. 86 – 90.

***