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A STUDY ON DEPRESSION IN ELDERLY INMATES LIVING IN OLD AGE HOMES IN MADURAI DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT

Ageing has been defined as the total constellation of social, biological and psychological changes that occur in 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 living with affectionate children and grand children. The objectives of the present study are as follows: i) to find out the problems faced by old age people in the study area, ii) to examine the perceptions of the sample respondents towards staying in old age homes in the study area and iii) to suggest measures to reduce old age homes and improve the conditions of existing homes. 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 systematic sampling technique. Totally, the researcher has selected 300 respondents for this study. Average, Simple Percentage and Factor Analysis are used to analyze the collected data.

Keywords: Elderly Inmates, Old age Homes, Age, Gender, Health Problem, Living Conditions, etc.

INTRODUCTION

Ageing has been defined as the total constellation of social, biological and psychological changes that occur in 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 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 living with affectionate children and grand children.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Old age is not a new phenomenon; it is as 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. Now-a-days, 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 parents. These children are forgetting that the foundation of their life is built up by the 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 schedule and as a consequence of this situation the elders are getting neglected. At this time, some elderly people are shifted to the 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, social economic status of aged, change in social roles, adjustment problems in old age, generational gap are some important factors behind need for 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 later part of life happily, whereas others face untold hardship and denied even the minimal comforts of life.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of the study are: i) to find out the problems faced by old age people in the study area, ii) to examine the perceptions of the sample respondents towards staying in old age homes in the study area and iii) to suggest measures to reduce old age homes and improve the conditions of existing homes.

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 systematic sampling technique. Totally, the researcher has selected 300 respondents for this study. Average, Simple Percentage 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 decision in family matters and felt isolated. Hence, it is very essential to classify the sample respondents on the basis of 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. 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 the parental properties than the 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 more by the female children than the male children. If a parent having female child is lucky enough compared with male child. But now – a – days, by Law both the male and female children are having equal rights to get the parental properties 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 on the basis of 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 male 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.

HEALTH PROBLEMS

The analysis of National Sample Survey data reveals that a majority of the elderly people are chronically ill. Cough and problem of joints are the most common health problems of aged people. The health decline in ageing refers to the physical changes because of the decline in the normal functioning of the body resulting in poor morbidity, vision, hearing, inability to eat and digest food properly and various chronic conditions. In this regard, the researcher wanted to know the health problems faced by the sample respondents in the study area. Accordingly, the researcher has collected, classified and shown the information in Table 3.

TABLE 3
HEALTH PROBLEMS

Sl. No.	Health Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Eye Sight Problem	156	64.46
2.	Joint Pain	181	74.79
3.	Ear Problem	47	19.42
4.	Heart Problem	39	16.12
5.	Blood Pressure	54	22.31
6.	Disturbed Sleep	167	69.01
7.	Back Pain	88	36.36
8.	Breathlessness	76	31.40
9.	Diabetes	142	58.68
10.	TB	86	35.54
11.	Thyroid	37	15.29

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

From Table 3 it is evident that out of 300 respondents, 181 (74.79 per cent) respondents are having joint pain problem. Another 167 (69.01 per cent) and 156 (64.46 per cent) respondents have disturbed sleep and eye sight problem respectively. One hundred and forty two (58.68 per cent) and 88 (36.36 per cent) respondents affected with diabetes and back pain problem respectively. The remaining 86 (35.54 per cent), 76 (31.40 per

cent), 54 (22.31 per cent), 47 (19.42 per cent), 39 (16.12 per cent) and 37 (15.29 per cent) respondents are affected by TB, breathlessness, blood pressure, ear problem, heart problem and thyroid problem respectively in the study area.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

With growing age, aged person experiences various physiological changes. Old age persons suffer from unhappiness caused by their feeling of loneliness, economic insecurity *etc.* Old age is the closing period of every one's life span. Some spend later part of life happily, whereas others face untold hardship and denied even the minimal comforts of life. Generally, the aged people feel insecure, loneliness, stress, decline in memory and the inability to control certain physiological functions and behave like a child. In this sense, the researcher wanted to know the major psychological problems faced by the sample respondents. Accordingly, the researcher has collected the information and the same is depicted in Table 4.

TABLE 4
PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Sl. No.	Psychological Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Feeling Loneliness	149	49.67
2.	Feeling Burden	83	27.67
3.	Mental Stress	53	17.66
4.	Feeling Helplessness	15	5.00
Total		300	100

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

It is understood from Table 4 that out of 300 respondents, 149 (49.67 per cent) respondents felt that loneliness is the major psychological problem faced by them. Another 83 (27.67 per cent) respondents informed that, they themselves felt and said that they are not only burden to the family, but also burden to the society and during interview they said that they are counting their days. The remaining 53 (17.66 per cent) and 15 (5.00 per cent) respondents are of the opinion that, the major psychological problem is mental stress and feeling helplessness respectively.

EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

The researcher wanted to identify the emotional problems faced by the inmates of the old age homes in the study area. Accordingly, the researcher collected the information and the same is picturised in Table 5.

TABLE 5
EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

Sl. No.	Emotional Problems	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Difficulty in Recollecting Things	19	6.33
2.	Lack of Motive to Live	38	12.67
3.	Life Feels Like Burden	135	45.00
4.	Lack of Concentration	91	30.33
5.	Negative Tendency	17	5.67
Total		300	100

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

It is explained from Table 5 that out of 300 respondents, 135 (45.00 per cent) respondents felt that life feels like burden is the major emotional problem. Another 91 (30.33 per cent) and 38 (12.67 per cent) respondents informed that, they themselves felt that lack of concentration and lack of motive to live. The remaining 19 (6.33 per cent) and 17 (5.67 per cent) respondents informed that, the major emotional problem is the difficulty in recollecting things and negative tendency respectively.

VISITS MADE BY THE SONS, DAUGHTERS AND RELATIVES

Many blood and distant relatives have not turned up after admitting the aged into the old age homes. It is the real experience of the researcher while visiting the homes. In this regard, the researcher wanted to know the visit made by the sons, daughters and other blood relatives of the inmates of the old age homes. Accordingly, the researcher has collected the information and classified and the same is presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6
VISITS MADE BY THE SONS, DAUGHTERS AND RELATIVES

Sl. No.	Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	243	81.00
2.	No	57	19.00
Total		300	100

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

It is understood from Table 6 that out of 300 respondents, 243 (81.00 per cent) respondents informed that their blood relatives like sons, daughters, other relatives and friends looked away regularly. The remaining 57 (19.00 per cent) respondents opined that after admission into the old age homes, nobody has met them in the home. It is concluded from this table that nearly 1/5th of the respondents very sadly informed that so far no one has turned up after admitting them in the homes and they told that they are very unfortunate that their blood and other relatives have not turned up. It is a sorry state of affairs and this attitude should be changed.

FEELINGS OF INMATES DURING THE VISIT OF THEIR RELATIVES

The researcher wanted to know the feelings of the inmates, when their relatives and friends came and visited them. Accordingly, the researcher has collected the information from the sample respondents and the same is depicted in Table 7.

TABLE 7
FEELINGS OF INMATES DURING THE VISIT OF THEIR RELATIVES

Sl. No.	Feelings of Inmates	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Happy	109	44.86
2.	Emotional	62	25.51
3.	Angry	43	17.69
4.	Doesn't Make any Difference	18	7.41
5.	Refused to Answer	11	4.53
Total		243	100

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

It is evident from Table 7 that out of 243 respondents studied, 109 (44.86 per cent) respondents informed happy during the visit of their relatives. Another 62 (25.51 per cent) and 43 (17.69 per cent) respondents get emotional and angry respectively while their relatives and friends came and visited. The remaining 18 (7.41 per cent) and 11 (4.53 per cent) respondents informed that no difference at all and refused to say answer respectively. It is concluded from this table that only 50 per cent of the respondents only reveal their real feelings when their relatives and friends came and visited them at home. Because, having all relatives and friends a person is admitted in the old age homes is horrible and it is a sin.

LIVING CONDITIONS OF INMATES

TABLE 8
BARTLETT'S TEST OF SPHERICITY

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

Source: Compiled from Primary Data

It could be seen from Table 8 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 9
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

It is obvious from Table 9 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:

- In the olden days, most of the people were in joint family and had a chance to live with each other and share their views and ideas. It has created affection and attachment with each other. Give and take policy was inculcated among the children in their younger age and the most important is nurtured the habit of giving respect and taking care of the elders. But in the modern age, we are all separated and forgotten the values of joint family system and follow nuclear family, no chance or rare chance for meeting relatives, helping one another *etc.* Totally the moral and social values developed by our forefathers are depleted. Sending our fathers and mothers to the old age homes is the reflection of the above said. Hence, all the parents should take initiate to impose the value of joint family system, respect to the elders *etc.*, to avoid the mushroom growth 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.

- Due to the age factor and loneliness, the elderly people in the old age homes are affected both physically and mentally. They should need counseling to remove mental stress and health facilities to free 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 values and importance of elders in the family should be imparted to the young minds and make them safeguard every one's parents and control the mushroom growth of the old age homes. Severe Law should be introduced in this regard. Counselling should be given to both the parents and children.

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