

## A study on social integration and health status of elderly people living in old age homes of Coimbatore

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### Abstract

The world in near future is going to experience the major challenge of aging population. Increase in the share of the aged population in the total population is going to be a tough task before the governments and the families supporting the elderly. Old age is a stage marked by physical weakness, psychological issues, loneliness and isolation. Social integration is a major issue that haunts the elderly. With a high prevalence, and an increasing number of older persons, social isolation will have impact on the health, well-being, and quality of life of numerous older adults now and in the foreseeable future. Social integration means a dynamic and principled process where all members participate in dialogue to achieve and maintain peaceful social relations. India like many other developing countries in the world is witnessing the rapid aging of its population. Urbanization, modernization and globalization have led to change in the economic structure, the erosion of societal values, weakening of social values, and social institutions such as the joint family. The last stage in the life span is frequently subdivided into early old age, which extend from age sixty to age seventy, and advanced old age, which begin at 70 and extends to the end of life. People during the sixties are equally refer to as “elderly”- meaning somewhat old or advanced beyond middle age- and “old” after the reach the age of seventy. This study aims at studying the health status of elderly people in old age homes, knowing the kind of relationship the elderly people maintaining with their relatives, finding out the major problems faced by the elderly people living in old age homes in Coimbatore.

**Keywords:** Social integration, Health status, Elderly, well-being

### Introduction

The world in near future is going to experience the major challenge of aging population. Increase in the share of the aged population in the total population is going to be a tough task before the governments and the families supporting the elderly. Old age is a stage marked by physical weakness, psychological issues, loneliness and isolation. Social integration is a major issue that haunts the elderly. With a high prevalence, and an increasing number of older persons, social isolation will have impact on the health, well-being, and quality of life of numerous older adults now and in the foreseeable future.

Social integration means a dynamic and principled process where all members participate in dialogue to achieve and maintain peaceful social relations. India like many other developing countries in the world is witnessing the rapid aging of its population. Urbanization, modernization and globalization have led to change in the economic structure, the erosion of societal values, weakening of social values, and social institutions such as the joint family. Social integration is a major problem among community-dwelling older adults, leading to numerous detrimental health conditions. With a high prevalence, and an increasing number of older persons, social isolation will impact the health, well-being, and quality of life of numerous older adults now and in the foreseeable future. In this changing economic and social milieu, the younger generation is searching for new identities encompassing economic independence and redefined social roles within, as well as outside, the family. By 2050 many of

the less developed countries are likely to transform into the societies of aged persons. Aging of population is taking place mainly because of the drastic decline in the levels of fertility and mortality and thereby, tremendous increase in the expectation of life of male and female population.

### Aged Population in India

In India, by and large, the number of elderly population aged 60 years or older is steadily increasing. Such trend is more conspicuous after 1961 onwards mainly because of the significant reduction in death rate and consequent improvement in the life expectancy of persons. There has been a steady rise in the share of elderly population (aged 60 years or above), which was reached to a level of 8.58 by 2011 census period. One may perceive that this percentage share is small at each consecutive census period, but if we take into consideration the actual number of elderly persons, the figures are 24.7 million and 103.8 million during the corresponding census periods.

### Elderly Population across Tamil Nadu State

The per cent distribution of elderly (age 60+ year) population in Tamil Nadu by their place of residence during the last six census periods is increasing in the share of elderly population in Tamil Nadu state over a period of time (from 5.59% in 1961 to 10.41 % in 2011 according to population aging census) such pattern is somewhat higher during the last two census periods (2001 and 2011), which indicates the population in Tamil Nadu has become more and more aging from 2001 onwards.

### **Theoretical orientation of the study**

Human life is divided into different stages such as childhood, adolescence, youth, adulthood, old age etc. Old age is generally the chronological age, which tells very little about a person. Even the yardstick of chronological age varies for geographical reasons in a country. It also varies at different points of time. Chronological age is generally used as an instrument of power and control. In advanced societies like Japan, the majority of the people continue to work, except when they stop work voluntarily or for health reasons. The last stage is in the life span is

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### **Concept of Ageing**

- Ageing is a broad concept that includes physical changes in our bodies over adult life, psychological changes in our minds and mental capacities and social changes in how we are viewed, what we can expect, and what is expected of us.
- Old age is usually regarded as synonymous with pensionable age or age at retirement. (Encyclopedia of social work in India vol.3)
- The definition of aged officially accept in India was 55 years, the age of superannuation when the raised to 58 years. (Dr. sachdeva,1995 )

### **Characteristics of old age**

Like every other period in the life span, old age is characterized by certain physical and psychological changes. The effects of these changes determine, to a large extent, whether elderly men and women will make good or poor personal and social adjustments. The characteristics of old age, however, are far more likely to lead to poor adjustments than to good and to unhappiness rather than happiness.

- Old Age is a period of decline.
- There are individual differences in the Effects of Aging.
- Old Age is judged by Different Criteria.
- There are many Stereotypes of Old People.
- The Elderly have a Minority-Group Status.
- Aging requires Role Changes.
- Poor Adjustment is Characteristic of Old Age.
- The desire for Rejuvenation is Widespread in Old Age.

### **Problems of the elderly**

In the western countries elderly persons are living a life, which is independent of their children, in developing societies like India, where joint family system is still working, the old persons generally live in the family. India's joint family has a built-in system of social security for its weak and the aged. Those in the western world, who have something to do with the caring of the elderly, feel inclined in favour of strengthening the Indian joint family system. In the earlier days, the number of older persons was small. With the advancement of medical and social sciences, availability of medical, social welfare and social security measures have

resulted in increase in average life expectancy and accordingly enabled a rise in the population of the aged and the chronic-ill. Therefore, in the modern society, care of the aged has assumed greater importance than in the past. Moreover, because of the electoral strength of the aged and their status in the society the elderly as a class has assumed greater importance. Nevertheless the problems of the aged are not only becoming complex but they are being recognized by the society. Moreover, the aged are not a homogenous group. Their needs and problems vary according to their age, society, health, and economic status, living environments, etc.

### **Scope of the present study**

This study is expected to throw light on the elderly people living in old age homes in Coimbatore city, Tamil Nadu. The researcher was intended deeply to explore the deplorable conditions of the Older people. Firstly the study is to describe their relations with their family, health conditions of the elderly people living in old age homes. Secondly the study is to identify the major problems and satisfaction of the elderly people in old age homes. So concrete recommendation can be made to the government for the increase of the old age pensions which enhances the older people in their income generation.

### **Objectives of the study**

1. To study the socio demographic details of elderly people in old age homes.
2. To know the health status of elderly people in old age homes.
3. To understand the satisfaction of elderly in old age homes.
4. To know the kind of relationship the elderly people maintaining with their relatives.
5. To find out the major problems faced by the elderly people living in old age homes.

### **Research design**

This study is a descriptive one which portrays the lifestyle and health condition of the elderly people living in old age homes of Coimbatore city. This study describes the relation with inmates and family, satisfaction of old age homes and it identifies the major problems faced in old age homes with a view to promote their social status. Hence it is a descriptive study.

### **Universe of the study**

The universe of the study is the two old ages homes which is located in Vadavalli and Thondamuthur of Coimbatore. There are about 115 elderly people are living in this two old age homes.

### **Sample**

The researcher has collected the data from the elderly people living in old age homes in Coimbatore. There are about 115 members residing in Neyam and Bridhavan old age homes. The researcher collected data from 70 respondents from the two old age homes.

### **Sampling Design**

The researcher adapted accidental sampling method which is a non-probability sampling method. Here the researcher

